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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)



# The Greeks and the Secret War among Venice, Spain and the Ottoman Empire: the Plans for the Occupation of Nafplio on the Eve of the Fourth Venetian–Ottoman War (1570–1573)\*

by KOSTAS G. TSIKNAKIS\*\*

**ABSTRACT:** The occupation of Nafplio by the Ottomans during the Third Venetian–Ottoman War (1537–1540), intercepted a long period of Venetian rule over the city. In the next few years, the reconquest of the city remained among the prime goals of the Venetian policy. Discussions were intensified on the eve of the Fourth Venetian–Ottoman War (1570–1573). Secret agents from both the Venetian and Spanish sides, who toured the Ottoman-occupied Greek territory, collected detailed information about the state of the fortress so as to seek ways for its siege and occupation. Such a possibility, as planned, would trigger general developments and would result in the release of the entire Peloponnese. During the War, however, the forces of the Christian fleet undertook no serious attack against Nafplio. This negative development was due to disputes arisen in the meantime between Venice and Spain concerning their presence in the East.

**KEYWORDS:** VENETIAN *STATO DA MAR*, NAFPLIO, PELOPONNESE, OTTOMAN–VENETIAN WARS, SPAIN, SECRET AGENTS, 16TH CENTURY.

**I**n the first decades of the 16th century, the Peloponnese became an area of conflict among the three potent political forces of the city. The gradual Ottoman penetration in the Peloponnesian peninsula had severely restricted the movements of the Venetians, who had lost most of their footholds in the area.

\* For more on this, see my article, «Το Ναύπλιο και τα σχέδια κατάληψής του στις παραμονές του Τέταρτου Βενετοτουρκικού Πολέμου (1570–1573)», *Ναυπλιακά Ανάλεκτα* 9 (2017): Eftychia D. ΛΙΑΤΑ (Ed.), *Της Βενετίας τ' Ανάπλι. 300 χρόνια από το τέλος μιας εποχής 1715–2015. Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο. Ναύπλιο, 9–11 Οκτωβρίου 2015. Πρακτικά*, Nafplio, Municipality of Nafplion – Cultural Foundation “Ioannis Kapodistrias”, 2017, pp. 155-175, 390 Figs. 1-2. My heartfelt thanks to Sandy Kouretzi for editing the English text.

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Now the two rivals were joined by Spain, which, since establishing a consulate in Corfu in 1515,<sup>1</sup> had started showing interest in the Greek territory, particularly discussing the possibility of campaigning against the Peloponnese. Charles V of Spain's late interest in the peninsula, as it later emerged, served other ends. His main goal was to create a diversion intended to split up the Ottoman forces attacking Vienna, to disrupt the maritime connection between Constantinople and Algiers, and establish permanent bases in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup>

The conflict among the three forces reached a peak during the Third Venetian–Ottoman War (1537–1540).<sup>3</sup> In the summer of 1540, when the continuation of combat operations seemed impossible, the Venetians made contact with the Ottomans and accepted to sign peace. In this context, the Venetian authorities of Nafplio were ordered to inform the local population of the upcoming surrender of their besieged city to the Ottomans. Being opposed to such a prospect, the locals notified Charles V to send forces so that they would surrender the city to him. Viewing this development positively, the Spanish side moved swiftly. Andrea Doria, in command of the fleet, headed for the Ionian Sea, so as to follow the developments closely and be ready to take action. In the meantime, the Spanish army officer Petros Sekoulas was sent to Nafplio by the Viceroy of Sicily, Ferrante Gonzaga. Petros Sekoulas, who originated from Nafplio, was or-

- 1 Gerassimos D. PAGRATIS, «Οι απαρχές της παρουσίας των Ισπανών στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο μετά τις γεωγραφικές ανακαλύψεις: το προξενείο “το αυθέντη ρηγός της Ισπανίας” στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κέρκυρα (1515)», *Κερκυραϊκά Χρονικά*, 6 (2012): Λορέντζος Μαβίλης. *Εκατό χρόνια από τον θάνατό του. Πρακτικά Επιστημονικής Διημερίδας*. 28–29 Απριλίου 2012, pp. 235–245.
- 2 See the relevant essay of Ioannis K. HASSIOTIS, «Η Πελοπόννησος στο πλαίσιο της μεσογειακής πολιτικής του Καρόλου Ε΄», *Πελοποννησιακά*, 15 (1982–1984), pp. 187–240. The article was also translated in Spanish: «El Peloponeso en el marco de la política mediterránea de Carlos V», *Erytheia*, 19 (1998), pp. 79–115 (without the publication of the documents of the first edition). It is also included in the following book: Ioánnis HASSIOTIS, *Tendiendo puentes en el Mediterráneo. Estudios sobre las relaciones Hispano-Griegas (ss. XV–XIX)* (Miscelánea de Estudios Bizantinos y Neogriegos 1), Editado por: Encarnación MOTOS GUIRAO, Coordinación de traducciones al español: Panayota Papadopoulou, Granada, Centro de Estudios Bizantinos, Neogriegos y Chipriotas, 2008, pp. 221–269. Therein-after reference will be made to the Greek language article.
- 3 The developments of the Third Venetian–Ottoman War, which led to the fall of Nafplio and Monemvasia, are commented on in detail by Athanasios N. KONDYLIS, *To Ναύπλιο (1389–1540). Μια ευρωπαϊκή πόλη στην Ελληνο-βενετική Ανατολή*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Athens, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of History and Archaeology, 2006, pp. 43–52.



dered to make contact with his compatriots so that they would jointly define an action plan. Venice became aware of all the above and acted methodically. After complaining to Charles V about the Spanish actions in the Ionian Sea, it took care to send its own fleet to the area to control the situation. With the help of Venetian officers sent to Nafplio, Venice managed to convince the locals of the need to surrender the city to the Ottomans. Finally, they alerted the latter of the imminent arrival of Petros Sekoulas and, once arrived in the Greek territory, he and his men were all arrested. They were taken to Constantinople where, after being subjected to torture, they were beheaded.<sup>4</sup>

With the surrender of Nafplio and Monemvasia, on 21 and 23 November 1540, all the Peloponnese came under the Ottoman rule. Any hopes of Venice or Spain taking control of the area were dashed. The future of the peninsula was no more a pending challenge. The two new possessions were gradually incorporated in the existing administrative system of the new rulers and life there soon returned to normal.<sup>5</sup>

A few months after the occupation, the people in Nafplio sent an embassy to Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah I, asking for the reestablishment of the Metropolis. Their request was positively considered. In 1541, Dorotheos<sup>6</sup> was appointed as Metropolitan of Argos and Nafplio, with seat at Nafplio. In 1576, as Theodosios Zygomalas notes in his *Οδοιπορικόν*, the Metropolitan of Nafplio had 150 priests and 4,000 houses (*ιερείς 150 και οσπίτια χιλιάδας τέσσαρας*).<sup>7</sup>

4 See the relevant study of Ioannis K. HASSIOTIS, *Σχέσεις Ελλήνων και Ισπανών στα χρόνια της Τουρκοκρατίας*, Thessaloniki, 1969, pp. 37-38. More detailed information is provided by the relevant archive material, in HASSIOTIS, «Η Πελοπόννησος στο πλαίσιο της μεσογειακής πολιτικής του Καρόλου Ε΄», cit., pp. 211-216, 233-239 docs. Ε΄-Η΄. Cf. KONDYLIS, *Το Ναύπλιο*, cit., pp. 48-49.

5 On the surrender of Nafplio from the Venetian general proveditor of the Sea (*provveditore generale da Mar*), Alessandro Contarini, to Kasim Pasha, governor of the Peloponnese, on 21 November 1540, see Apostolos VAKALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, Vol. 3: *Τουρκοκρατία 1453-1669. Οι αγώνες για την πίστη και την ελευθερία*, Thessaloniki, 1968, pp. 160-161. Cf. KONDYLIS, *Το Ναύπλιο*, cit., p. 49.

6 Periklis G. ZERLENTIS, «Ανασύστασις της μητροπόλεως Ἀργους και Ναυπλίας κατά το 1541», *Αθηνά*, 27 (1915), pp. 202-207. Cf. Dimosthenis STRATIGOPOULOS, *Ο Νικόλαος Μαλαζός, πρωτοπαπᾶς Ναυπλίου, και το συγγραφικό του έργο* (Βυζαντινά κείμενα και μελέται 47), Thessaloniki, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Centre for Byzantine Reserch, 2008, p. 93.

7 Émile LEGRAND, *Notice biographique sur Jean et Théodose Zygomalas* (Recueil de textes et de traductions publié par les professeurs de l'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes,

In the years to come, due to its strategic importance, the Peloponnese continued to remain a key concern for Venice. In the context of general rearrangements, which were to take place in the wider region, reconquering the peninsula was one of Venice's tacit priorities.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the international situation made Spain, which during the reign of Phillip II appeared to have withdrawn interest from the eastern Mediterranean, change its stance. Phillip II was worried by the continuous expansion of the Ottomans in northern Africa and the revolt of the Crypto-Muslims (*moriscos*) in Andalusia in 1568. Such developments were deemed to have the potential to challenge his position in the future and, for this reason, had to be met with prompt and forceful response. Under these circumstances, he started to seek ways to penetrate the eastern Mediterranean again. His ultimate goal was to create a climate of tension in the region, which would compel the Ottomans to enter into negotiations about the future of the Mediterranean as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

Spain's renewed interest in the Greek territory preoccupied Venice. Another strong adversary had been added, claiming a region in which Venice had traditionally had great influence, and thus changing the existing balance of power.<sup>10</sup>

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à l'occasion du VIIIe Congrès International des Orientalistes tenu à Stockholm en 1889, Tome second), Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1889, p. 192. Cf. STRATIGOPOULOS, *O Nικόλαος Μαλαζός*, cit., p. 93.

8 The information about the peninsula, published by Maria Pia PEDANI FABRIS (Ed.), *I "Documenti Turchi" dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, Inventario della miscellanea con l'edizione dei registi di Alessio BOMBACI† (Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, Strumenti CXXII), Venice, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1994, *passim*, are of great importance.

9 For Spain's interest in the region in the following years, see José Manuel FLORISTÁN, «Felipe II y la empresa de Grecia tras Lepanto (1571–78)», *Erytheia*, 15 (1994), pp. 155-190. Also, Pedro BÁDENAS, «Η διστακτική πολιτική της ισπανικής μοναρχίας στην Ανατολή. Διπλωματία και κατασκοπεία στο ΙΣΤ΄ και ΙΖ΄ αι.», in Lenos ΜΑΥΡΟΜΜΑΤΗΣ and Katerina ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ (Eds.), *Βαλκάνια και Ανατολική Μεσόγειος 12ος–17ος αιώνες. Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Συμποσίου στη Μνήμη Δ. Α. Ζακυθινού. Αθήνα, 14–15 Ιανουαρίου 1994* (Το Βυζάντιο σήμερα 2), Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 1998, pp. 11-28.

10 To better understand the developments of that period, see Ioannis K. HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου. Εκκλήσεις, επαναστατικές κινήσεις και εξεγέρσεις στην ελληνική χερσόνησο από τις παραμονές ως το τέλος του Κυπριακού πολέμου (1568–1571)*, Thessaloniki, Society for Macedonian Studies, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1970. Cf. Manoussos ΜΑΝΟΥΣΣΑΚΑΣ, «Lepanto e i Greci», in Gino BENZONI (Ed.), *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del '500 alla luce di Lepanto*, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 1974, pp. 215-241.

The competition between the two powerful political forces of the west assumed great dimensions on the eve of the Fourth Venetian–Ottoman War (1570–1573). During this time secret agents from both sides are touring the Greek peninsula. The movements of all these people are very similar. Moving cautiously, they collect information about the defense capability of the Peloponnesian fortresses, detect flaws and seek to include strong local actors in the conspiracy plans they are elaborating. In order to win their support, they do not hesitate to promise them future restoration of their authority.<sup>11</sup>

The focus of almost all the initiatives taken by both the Venetians and the Spaniards was on the Peloponnese. As a first step, both sides were considering organizing the necessary movements aiming to liberate the peninsula from the Ottomans. In the context of a general revolt, occupying Nafplio, which was the center of the Peloponnese, was of great importance.

Among the plans regarding the Peloponnese presented to the Spanish authorities at the time, three stand out. The first was submitted in the early spring of 1569 by the commander of the *stradioti* or *estradiotes* (mercenary light cavalry corps) of the Spanish army of Flanders Petros Menagias.<sup>12</sup> The second plan was submitted in 1569, with Ioannis Varelis and Ioannis Akkidas arguing about its

11 As to the Spanish network of spies acting in the Greek territory, see Giovanni K. HASSIOTIS, «Venezia e i domini veneziani tramite di informazioni sui Turchi per gli Spagnoli nel sec. XVI», in Hans-Georg BECK, MANOUSSAS MANOUSSACAS and Agostino PERTUSI (Eds.), *Venezia. Centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV–XVI). Aspetti e problemi*, Vol. 1, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 1977, pp. 117–136, esp. 131–133. Cf. Katerina F. ZARIDI, *O Μέγας Πρωτοπαπάς Κερκύρας Αλέξιος Παρτούρος. Λόγιος του 16ου αι. (1504–1574)*, Corfu, Ionian University, 1995, pp. 84–85. For details, see Paolo PRETO, *I servizi segreti di Venezia. Spionaggio e controspionaggio ai tempi della Serenissima*, Milan, Gruppo editoriale il Saggiatore S.p.A., 2004, pp. 117–123.

12 For more details about Menagias' plan, see HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 37–48, 236–237 doc. B'. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., pp. 219–220; Kostas G. TSIGNAKIS, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο στα τέλη του 16ου αιώνα», in Helen G. SARADI (Ed.), *Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου: Δύμη: Φραγκοκρατία – Βενετοκρατία – Α' Τουρκοκρατία. 1–2 Οκτωβρίου 2005*, Patras, Municipality of Dymi – Region of Western Greece – 6th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Patras – Ethnological Society of Peloponnese, 2012, pp. 218–219. On the corps of the *stradioti*, see Stathis BIRTACHAS, «*Stradioti, Cappelletti, Compagnie* or *Milizie Greche: 'Greek' Mounted and Foot Troops in the Venetian State (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)*», in Georgios THEOTOKIS and Aysel YILDIZ (Eds.), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea: Aspects of War, Diplomacy and Military Elites*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 325–346.

paternity, both descending from families of coders and Greek manuscript dealers, and having common interests.<sup>13</sup> The third conspiracy plan was submitted in June 1570. Its author was Georgios Mizoteris from Tripolitsa, who had served in military groups of both Venice and Spain as a commander of the Greek *stradioti* for many years.<sup>14</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in one of those plans, that of Petros Menagias, there was a rough sketch of the Peloponnese, on which the Ottoman military headquarters in the peninsula were marked (Fig. 1).<sup>15</sup>

All three submitted plans provided for the liberation of the Peloponnese. They differed, however, depending on the author, as to the region where the revolutionary movements would take place. In the plan of Petros Menagias, coming from Pyrgia of Kyparissia, the center of action was placed in the area of Messinia, while in that of Ioannis Varelis and Ioannis Akkidas, in the northern Peloponnese, and, finally, in that of Georgios Mizoteris, who came from Tripolitsa, in the central Peloponnese.

According to Ioannis Varelis and Ioannis Akkidas' s plan, Nafplio was one of the cities that had to be occupied.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of evidence collected by Petros

13 For Varelis–Akkidas' plan, see HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 48-76, 244-245 doc. Η'. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., pp. 221-222; Kostas G. TSIGNAKIS, «Η Μονή Ταξιαρχών του Αγίου στα τέλη του 16ου αι.», *Πελοποννησιακά*, 21 (1995), pp. 57-59; TSIGNAKIS, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., pp. 219-221.

14 For Mizoteris' plan, see HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 76-85. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 220; TSIGNAKIS, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 221. His action in Madrid at the end of 1570 and the beginning of 1571 is described by the Venetian ambassador at the Spanish court at the time, Leonardo Donà: Mario BRUNETTI and Eligio VITALE (Eds.), *La Corrispondenza da Madrid dell'ambasciatore Leonardo Donà (1570–1573)*, Vol. I (Civiltà Veneziana – Fonti e Testi V), Venice & Rome, Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1963, pp. XVI-XVII, 132 (October 26, 1570), 185-186 (January 19, 1571) and 292 (May 28, 1571).

15 This sketch, today kept in ARCHIVO GENERAL DE SIMANCAS (AGS), Mappas, planos y dibujos (MPD), 06, 036, has been published at least three times so far: in HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 41; José M. FLORISTÁN IMÍZCOZ, *Fuentes para la política oriental de los Austrias. La Documentación del Archivo de Simancas (1571–1621)*, Vol. 1, León, Universidad de León, Servicio de Publicaciones, Con la Colaboración de la Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de León, 1988, between pp. 260 and 261; TSIGNAKIS, «Το Ναύπλιο και τα σχέδια κατάληψής του», cit., p. 390 fig. 1.

16 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 61. Cf. FLORISTÁN, «Felipe II y la empresa de Grecia tras Lepanto (1571–78)», cit., p. 162.



1 Map of the Morea peninsula and adjacent coasts and islands [Mapa de la península de Morea y de las costas e islas adyacentes]; by Petros Menagias, 1568? ARCHIVO GENERAL DE SIMANCAS (AGS), Mappas, planos y dibujos (MPD), 06, 036. Courtesy of: Spain. Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport [España. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte], Archivo General de Simancas.

Source: <http://www.mcu.es/ccbae/es/consulta/registro.do?id=176769>

Menagias, 600 men were protecting its mighty fortress.<sup>17</sup> There is no information, however, about conspiracy movements being organized in the city. For the success of the plans, the participation of groups of *stradioti* serving in the military units of Flanders and Italy in the operations was deemed indispensable. In fact, according to all evidence, the pressure put on these groups to take action proved to be of crucial importance.

In an effort to lure the Spanish side and make it adopt their plans, the secret agents stressed the importance of the Peloponnese in the East. In the beginning, their proposals aroused the interest of the Spanish side but later on, with the exception of Ioannis Varelis–Ioannis Akkidias' plan, which seemed more feasible, interest was lost. This was due to the great extent of the military operations and

17 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 43.



the huge costs required for a positive result.

Venice was aware of all the above movements, calmly watching the developments and examining ways of responding to Spain's penetration in the Greek territory,<sup>18</sup> even though it was in an extremely difficult position, as it had to take action in great secrecy so as not to cause problems in its diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. The opportunity it had hoped for more vigorous action was soon be given.

With the outbreak of the Fourth Venetian–Ottoman War, in spring 1570, the scene was set for change. In response to the Ottoman attack on Cyprus, apart from taking military action, it was considered necessary to organize revolutionary movements within the Greek territory. These would confuse the enemy, who would find it difficult to focus on the main target. Many secret agents were mobilized in this direction, with impressive results. Any information about the military capacity of the Ottomans would be valuable.

At the critical time, the contribution of the Greek community in Venice proved crucial. Once the Venetian intention to take military action in the Greek territory became apparent, the mobilization within the Greek Brotherhood of Venice was intense.<sup>19</sup>

Particular interest was shown by the members of the Brotherhood coming from Nafplio.<sup>20</sup> With memories still fresh of their hometown, they thought there was now hope for its reoccupation. One of them was the scholar Grigorios Malaxos, who suggested fomenting a revolutionary movement in the Greek territory, which would be supported by the Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III.<sup>21</sup>

18 For the reactions to the Spanish plans, see *Ibid.*, pp. 85-90. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., pp. 222-223; ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 222.

19 On the mobilization that took place, see HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 105-106.

20 For the strong Nafplian presence in the Greek Brotherhood of Venice at the time, see FANI ΜΑΥΡΟΙΔΙ, *Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Ελληνικής Αδελφότητας Βενετίας στο ΙΣΤ΄ αιώνα. Έκδοση του Β΄ Μητρώου εγγραφών (1533–1562)*, Athens, Notis Karavias' Bookstore, 1976, p. 65; Sotiris ΚΟΥΤΜΑΝΙΣ, «Ναυπλιώτες στη Βενετία (16ος – 18ος αιώνας). Η κοινότητα της διασποράς ως τοπική ιστορία», *Ναυπλιακά Ανάλεκτα*, 9 (2017): Eftychia D. ΛΙΑΤΑ (Ed.), *Της Βενετίας τ' Ανάπλι. 300 χρόνια από το τέλος μιας εποχής 1715–2015. Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο. Ναύπλιο, 9–11 Οκτωβρίου 2015. Πρακτικά*, Nafplio, Municipality of Nafplio – Cultural Foundation “Ioannis Kapodistrias”, 2017, pp. 211-219.

21 On his proposals, see HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 23, 60 and 124-133.



Among those who expressed concerns at the time was a person who knew the Greek territory very well; that person was the Nafplian scholar Andreas Londanos. He was a graduate of the University of Padua and a knight of the Tuscan order of San Stefano.<sup>22</sup> He was married to Izabeta Kouvli, daughter of the rich merchant and shipowner Andronikos, son of Kanakis Kouvli,<sup>23</sup> also Nafplian and a man of high status in the Venetian circles.

In the spring of 1570, he started examining the direction in which the Venetian military operations had to move, and soon enough his proposals were made concrete. On June 7, 1570, he appeared before the Heads of the Council of Ten (*Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci*) and submitted two proposals concerning military operations in Greece, in which local populations would be keen to participate, according to written assurances which he had received by residents of Albania, Himara and Mani.<sup>24</sup>

In accordance with his first proposal, which was to be implemented promptly, a large Venetian military force would sail from Corfu to Parga, to then head for Moscholouri, where it would steal all goods gathered in town on the occasion of the trade fair that was to be held. In this context, a revolt of the people of Thessaly

22 For him, see *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109, fn. 2. Also, Elli GIOTOPOULOU-SISILIANOU, *Αντόνιος ο Έπαρχος. Ένας Κερκυραίος ουμανιστής του ΙΣΤ΄ αιώνα*, Athens, 1978, pp. 181 fn. 2, 257-258. More recent bibliography in Michela DAL BORGO's article, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano alla Repubblica di Venezia (1570)», *Mediterranean World*, 20 (2010), pp. 133-150.

23 For Izabeta Kouvli and her marriage to Andreas Londanos, see MAVROIDI, *Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Ελληνικής Αδελφότητας Βενετίας*, cit., p. 141 fn. 4; Despina Er. VLASSI, «Δύο διαθήκες των αρχόν του 17ου αιώνα από το Παλαιό Αρχείο του Ελληνικού Ινστιτούτου Βενετίας», *Θησαυρίσματα*, 31 (2001), pp. 183-190, 198-203 no 1; Despina Er. VLASSI, «Le ricchezze delle donne. Pratica testamentaria in seno alle famiglie greche di Venezia (XVI-XVIII sec.)», in Chyssa MALTEZOU and Gogo VARZELIOTI (Eds.), *Oltre la morte. Testamenti di Greci e Veneziani redatti a Venezia o in territorio greco-veneziano nei sec. XIV-XVIII. Atti dell'incontro scientifico. Venezia, 22-23 gennaio 2007* (Convegni - 11), Venice, Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 2008, pp. 87, fn. 13, 93 and fn. 34, 94 fn. 37, 98 fn. 57, 100; DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 133-134.

24 As to his movements and plan, see HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 107-117, 238-239, doc. Δ΄. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 223; TSIKNAKIS, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 222; Kostas G. TSIKNAKIS, «Το φρούριο του Πόρτο Κάγιο στη Μάνη και η καταστροφή του από τους Βενετούς το 1570», *Λακωνικά Σπουδαί*, 20 (2012): *Τιμητική προσφορά εις Ελένην Μπελιά-Βαγιακάκου. Ανθών. Πάσιν άνθεσι πεποικιλμένοι Πλάτ. Πολ. 55c*, pp. 449-450.

against the Ottomans was bound to break out.<sup>25</sup> The Venetian authorities appeared uninterested in this plan due to it being impossible for them to mobilize military forces as quickly as suggested for the success of the operation.<sup>26</sup>

The second proposal provided for a concrete plan of action in the Peloponnese centered on the Isthmus of Corinth. It was based on a similar earlier successful operation, carried out between 1537 and 1540 by the Nafplian Georgios Saras, an Arvanite *stradioto* in the service of Venice, together with some companions. According to planning, a Venetian military force of 500–1000 men would disembark in the region of Isthmus of Corinth, cutting off communication between Central Greece and the Peloponnese. Immediately thereafter, they would start capturing the major Ottoman military centers in the peninsula.<sup>27</sup>

Londanos provided information about every fortress of the Peloponnese, its defense state, the number of soldiers stationed in it, and the population composition of the wider area. In his descriptions, he often incorporated historical background, coming from books of ancient authors.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, in order for the military expedition to be successful, he proposed certain improvements concerning its siege system, and therefore designed two new weapons which he considered to be more effective. These were *geranium* and *triena ferrea*. He also proposed the type of galley he considered to be the best for their operations.<sup>29</sup>

This proposal immediately aroused the interest of the Council of Ten (*Consiglio dei Dieci*), which took care to write it down in a separate twelve-page

25 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 109-110, 238-239, doc. Δ'.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 110-116, 238-239, doc. Δ'. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 223; ΓΙΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΣΙΣΙΛΙΑΝΟΥ, *Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος*, cit., pp. 257-258; ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΗΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 222; ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΗΣ, «Το φρούριο του Πόρτο Κάγιο στη Μάνη», cit., pp. 449-450; Chryssa MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», in Giorgio VESPIGNANI (Ed.), *Polidoro. Studi offerti ad Antonio Carile*, Spalato, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2013, pp. 529-530.

28 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 111-112 and fn. 1, 238-239 doc. Δ'. See also DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 142-145, 150; MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., p. 529.

29 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 112 and fn. 2.

booklet (measuring 32×22cm).<sup>30</sup> This way, it would be easier for it to be read.<sup>31</sup>

The Heads of the Council of Ten, who at the time were busy following the developments concerning the Ottoman attack against Cyprus, avoided taking a position on the submitted proposal suggesting undertaking military operations in the Peloponnese, postponing the discussion until later. They asked Londanos, however, to hand over all the copies of his plan and not show them to anyone. On being informed by Londanos himself that he had already delivered a copy to the captain of the galleys (*capitano delle galee grosse*), they were obliged to intervene. By sending him a confidential letter on June 29, 1570, they asked him to return the copy as well as any other copies which he had possibly made.<sup>32</sup>

For obvious reasons, Londanos was analytical in his plan concerning the region he came from, particularly focusing on the state of its fortifications. Two depictions of Nafplio of approximately the same period constitute valuable sources for understanding his descriptions. The first is a 16×25,5 cm copper engraving, which is included in the Venetian cartographer Giovanni Francesco Camocio's *Isole famose, porti, fortezze, e terre maritime*, printed in Venice, probably in 1574 (Fig. 2).<sup>33</sup> The second is a 15×26,5 cm two-page miniature, included in the Cretan painter Georgios Klontzas' illuminated manuscript, which was completed between 1590 and 1592 (Fig. 3).<sup>34</sup>

According to Londanos, Nafplio was stretching out to the sea like a turtle. It could not be hit by artillery if it were not from the north. But there was Bourtzi

30 *Ibid.*, p. 110 and fn. 4; DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 133 fn. 1.

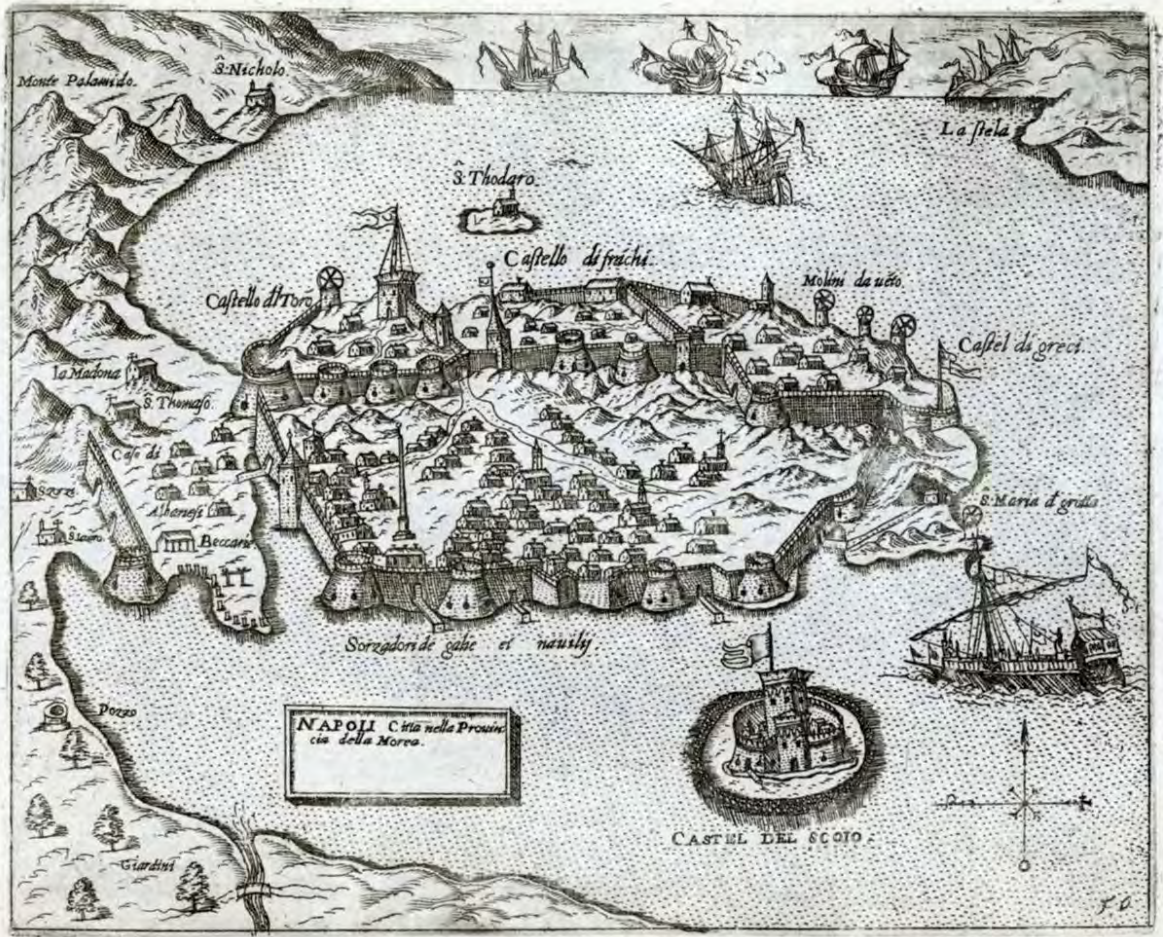
31 ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI VENEZIA (hereafter: ASVE), *Consiglio dei Dieci, Miscellanea Codici*, register (hereafter: reg.) 110, fols. 3r-12r. Text edited by DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 141-150. Cf. HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 112-116, where the Greek translation of the text.

32 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 135 and fn. 15.

33 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 libreria del segno di S. Marco, [c. 1574], p. 70. Cf. HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 112-113 fn. 7 (publication of the plan on p. 113).

34 BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE MARCIANA DI VENEZIA (BNMV), Cl. VII, 22 (=1466), ff. 125v-126r. Cf. Athanasios D. PALIOURAS, *Ο ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας (1540 ci. – 1608) και οι μικρογραφίες του κώδικος αυτού*, Athens, Grigoris Publishers, 1977, pp. 132, 231 and plan 270.





2 Map of Nafplio [«Napoli [di Romania] Citta nella Provincia della Morea»]. Source: Giovanni Francesco CAMOCIO, *Isole famose, porti, fortezze, e terre marittime sottoposte alla Ser.ma Sig.ria di Venetia, ad altri Principi Christiani, et al Sig.or Turco, novamente poste in luce*, Venice, Alla libreria del segno di S. Marco, [c. 1574].

(*Castel Scoglio*), which was surrounded by artificial, not natural, inner breakwaters (*porporelle*), and it would be highly dangerous for an armada to enter; it provided great security and rendered this side of the city impregnable (*inespugnabile*). On the side of Palamidi hill (*monte Palamedo*) though, carrying out an attack would be much easier. No artillery was deployed on that side by the Ottomans, as they felt sovereign over land, which also explained why the moat (*fossa*), once being deep and filled with water, was now filled with soil. Its





3 Nafplio [«Το Ανάπλι»], 1590–1592. BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE MARCIANA DI VENEZIA (BNMV), Gr. VII, 22 (= 1466), ff. 125v-126r. Courtesy of: Italy. Ministry of Culture – Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Reproduction forbidden [Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura – Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Divieto di riproduzione].

counterscarp (*contrascarpa*) was now covered with crops almost up to the hill, and the part of the wall between the bastions (*cortina*) had been damaged; as a consequence, it was easy for someone to cross the city by night and get to the Land Gate (*Porta di terra ferma*).

On the other side of the city, namely on the side of the gulf, there was a not quite big cave (*grotta*) and a narrow passage starting from that point and leading up to the Castle of the Greeks (*Castel dei Greci*). Many could climb up to the

Castle through this passage, although, because of its narrowness, no more than one at a time. During the last war, someone having reached that point, ordered that a hundred more soldiers be sent, and they all stayed there to protect the Castle of the Greeks. This had happened a number of times in the past. Now the Castle of the Greeks had no garrison or walls, but only a few artillery pieces (*pochi pezzi d'artiglieria*). The above entrance to the Castle of the Greeks was secret. On that side of the city, where the Albanian houses were, the walls were low (*puocco alta di terra*) and vulnerable to attacks. A man of those living there offered, together with a few other men, to secretly enter the Castle from that point, as he had already examined this possibility many times. In the night hours, there were eight garrisons around the city walls and four on the Castle of Torri (*Castel Torron*), the Castle of the Franks (*Castel di Franchi*) and that of the Greeks.

The city garrison consisted of 300 mercenaries. In the Castle of the Greeks there was an agha (*aga*), in the same grade as the castellan (*castellano*). It was his responsibility to keep the keys of the above Castles and resided in the city's episcopal residence, which was in the Castle of the Greeks. In the Castle of Torri, there was another agha with 150 Ottomans. His responsibility was to take care of the supplies, which amounted to approximately 20.000 *stara*.

Christians were forbidden to live in the Castles. They were well equipped with artillery, mostly on the side of the Argolic Gulf, to fight enemy armadas. In the city, there were also 400 Ottomans and 150 Janissaries (*gianiceri*). Among the 400 Ottomans, many were useless for military service, as, for the most part, they were families and children.

For the aforementioned reasons, on the side of the sea there were many pieces of artillery, while on the side of the land only a few. On Bourtzi there were 60 Ottomans and enough artillery. They collected rain water in two tanks (*cisterne*). The city used water, which was conveyed from outside sources through conduits.

Colonel (*colonello*) Agostino Cluson, military commander of the city in the previous war, claimed one could enter from the side of the moat (*banda del fosso*), where the old gate that used to remain closed, had now been walled up by the Ottomans. In Londanos' view, choosing this particular side to enter the city from, would be the least easy way to do so, compared to the other options.

Londanos' description of the city concludes by saying that there were 400 Christian men living in Nafplio, all devoted to the Venetian Republic, as well as



Arvanites living in many villages.

He also added that 60 miles away of Nafplio, at *Capo Schilo*, there was the Castle of Thermisi (*Castel Termissi*), which was of strategic importance as it was in control of a region with large and efficient salt lakes. Its garrison comprised 80 Ottoman soldiers. All the residents of the local villages were Christians, dissatisfied with the Ottoman administration and willing to leave their land for good, even if they had to abandon their homes and possessions.<sup>35</sup>

We can see that Londanos' proposal provided a complete picture of the state of Nafplio at the time.<sup>36</sup> He had managed to gather all this information about his hometown from his compatriots who lived in or travelled to Venice.

In the meanwhile, developments were proceeding quickly. In the summer of 1570, the Ottomans managed to occupy the biggest part of Cyprus with relative ease and were now besieging Famagusta. Acting without a proper planning, the Venetian fleet failed to stop them.<sup>37</sup>

During this eventful period, Londanos saw his plan remain unimplemented. In parallel, he had also delivered a treatise, entitled *le battaglie navali con molta*

35 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 146-147 (on p. 139 sort reference to the relevant passage). Also, see HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 112-114 (translation of the passage of «Descrizione»).

36 On the fortifications of the city, see Giuseppe GEROLA, «Le fortificazioni di Napoli di Romania», *Annuario della Regia Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente*, 13-14 (1930-1931, ed. 1934), pp. 347-410. Cf. Iordanis E. ΔΙΜΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, «Η πύλη της ξηράς των ενετικών οχυρώσεων του Ναυπλίου», in *Πρακτικά του Δ' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακών Σπουδών. Κόρινθος, 9-16 Σεπτεμβρίου 1990*, Vol. 2: *Αρχαιότητα και Βυζάντιον* (Πελοποννησιακά. Παράρτημα 19), Athens, Society for Peloponnesian Studies, 1992-1993, pp. 297-323, esp. 298-300 [= *Scripta Minora. Έρευνες στην αρχιτεκτονική και έργα για τη συντήρηση των μνημείων* (Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου αρ. 88), Athens, Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture, 2005, pp. 329-346, esp. 330-332]; Ioanna Th. STERIOΤΟΥ, «Συμπληρωματικά αμυντικά έργα στις οχυρώσεις της Πελοποννήσου (1684-1715). Δύο σχέδια του τείχους της πόλης του Ναυπλίου (18ος αι.) από το αρχείο της Βενετίας», in Charis KALLIGA (Ed.), *Η εκστρατεία του Morosini και το "Regno di Morea". Μονεμβασιώτικος Όμιλος. Γ' Συμπόσιο Ιστορίας και Τέχνης 20-22 Ιουλίου 1999*, Athens, "Hestia" Publishers, 1998, pp. 135-154, esp. 140-143.

37 Kostas G. TSIGNAKIS, «Η Κύπρος στη δίνη του ανταγωνισμού των ευρωπαϊκών δυνάμεων (15ος-16ος αι.)», in Nikos G. MOSCHONAS (Ed.), *Κύπρος. Σταυροδρόμι της Μεσογείου* («Επιστήμης Κοινωνία». Ειδικές Μορφωτικές Εκδηλώσεις), Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation – Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Athens, "House of Cyprus", 2001, pp. 97-101.

*prudentia et experientia trattate in lingua greca elegantissimamente da Leone Sapiente imperator di Constantinopoli*, to the Heads of the Council of Ten.<sup>38</sup> When exactly he delivered this text remains unknown. In his letter including his proposals for military operations in the Greek territory, submitted to the Council of Ten on June 7, 1570, he made some allusions: «Fui anco studioso in mostrar istoriate sopra la carta le varie foggie et maniere de ordinanze maritime, secondo che mi hano ricordato gli antichi autori et moderni greci, con diversi strataggemi et instrumenti che contra gli inimici se potrebbon usar nelle galere et navi approvati dall'esperienza».<sup>39</sup>

In the months to come, Londanos would keep pressuring the Council of Ten to undertake a military operation in the Peloponnese, while receiving the services of the experienced Georgios Saras. The Heads of the Council of Ten asked Londanos to provide them with more information about him. At the same time, they ordered him to go to the Senate's member Agostino Barbarigos' house and give him the aforementioned *battaglie navali* to read. That is what happened. After studying the text carefully, the Venetian official asked Londanos to translate it in Italian, which the latter promised to do.<sup>40</sup>

Londanos described all the above moves in a letter to the Heads of the Council of Ten, which most probably, although not dated, was drawn up on January 26, 1571. In this letter he repeated his ideas about undertaking military operations, already expressed in writing a few months before. He underlined the fact that Georgios Saras, who was then serving in Dalmatia, could offer them valuable services. He came from Nafplio, was knowledgeable about the Peloponnesian peninsula, spoke Turkish, Greek and Albanian and could therefore easily rouse the local population and persuade them to take the side of Venice.<sup>41</sup>

On January 26, 1571, in another handwritten letter to the Heads of the Council

38 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 136 and fn. 18, 137 and fn. 25. Cf. MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., p. 529.

39 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 238-239 doc. Δ'. Cf. MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., p. 529.

40 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 135-136 and fn. 18, 137 and fn. 25. Cf. MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., p. 529.

41 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 136 and fn. 18. Cf. MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., p. 529.

of Ten, he pointed out that Georgios Saras was known to Fabio da Canal, cavalry provveditor in Dalmatia (*provveditor ai cavalli in Dalmatia*) as well as to all the cavalry men of the region. He would very willingly offer his services to the Venetian State.<sup>42</sup>

In view of these developments, the Venetian authorities started reconsidering the plan to recapture the Peloponnese, submitted by Londanos a few months earlier. Along with this, they had another similar operation plan in their hands, also submitted to the Heads of the Council of Ten. The author of this plan, which included suggestions for naval operations in Greece, was the Corfiot scholar Antonios Eparchos, who in the spring of 1570 was in Venice as head of a delegation of his compatriots.<sup>43</sup>

On January 29, 1571, the Council of Ten finally decided that the new Sea provveditor, Agostino Barbarigo (elected to the post on January 6), be given a *copia del libretto del cavalier Londano circa l'impresa del Morea* as well as the *libro dato dall'Eparco circa le battaglie navali*, so that he would be informed. He also ordered on arrival in Zara, to contact and take the Nafplian Georgio Saras, at the time serving in Dalmatia and knowledgeable about the topography of the Peloponnese, on board his galley, so as to use his services where need be. Lastly, the Council handed him letters sent by residents of *Braccio di Maina* and other regions expressing their intension to revolt against the Ottomans.<sup>44</sup> From then on, it was Agostino Barbarigo and the Sea general captain (*capitano generale da mar*), Sebastiano Venier, who were to undertake the support of the revolt having

42 DAL BORGIO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 136 and fn. 18.

43 HASSIOTS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 116-117. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 223; GIOTOPOULOU-SISILIANOU, *Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος*, cit., p. 6 fn. 2; Georgios S. PLUMIDIS, *Αιτήματα και πραγματικότητες των Ελλήνων της Βενετοκρατίας (1554-1600)*, Ioannina, University of Ioannina, 1985, p. 33 no 111; PRETO, *I servizi segreti di Venezia*, cit., pp. 317, 326 fn. 146; DAL BORGIO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 135-136 fn. 17. A summary of the naval action plan was published by MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., pp. 532-535.

44 HASSIOTS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 117. Cf. MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 223; DAL BORGIO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., pp. 135-136 and fns. 16-17; TSIGNAKIS, «Επανάστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 222; MALTEZOU, «Il riuso di testi militari bizantini nel XVI secolo», cit., pp. 529-530.

started in Mani (Fig. 4) and meant to expand it in the rest of the Peloponnese.<sup>45</sup>

Finding it impossible to meet the ever-growing demands of the war operations, Venice addressed Pope Pius V, asking him to mobilize the Christian forces of the West. He took action immediately pushing in different directions.<sup>46</sup> His efforts bore fruit resulting in the establishment of the Holy League (*Sacra Liga*) on May 20, 1571, with Don Juan de Austria (1547–1578) being in command of the Christian fleet. The three admirals, Giovan Andrea Doria, Marcantonio Colonna and Sebastiano Venier, heads of the Spanish, papal and Venetian galleys respectively, also played a decisive role in the operations.<sup>47</sup>

In an effort to create bridgeheads, Don Juan took advantage of the secret plans, devised both by Venetians and Spaniards, in the best way, and sought to foment a nationwide uprising in almost the entire Ottoman-occupied Greek territory.<sup>48</sup>

It was in such an encouraging climate that the Christian armada set sail for the Greek seas. However, once the occupation of Famagusta was known, the Christians restricted themselves to the Ionian Sea. Finally, on October 7, 1571, the Christian Holy League faced the enemy galleys at the Echinades Islands, *Curzolari* according to the western sources, small islands off Lepanto, in a battle which ended with an almost complete destruction of the Ottoman fleet.<sup>49</sup>

The Peloponnese was one of the first areas to revolt. Centered at Mani, whose inhabitants had been at odds with the Ottoman rulers for years, revolts soon expanded to the biggest part of Messinia.<sup>50</sup> That would also be the case in the region of Achaia. The revolted inhabitants of Aegialia would soon be joined by those inhabiting the region opposite Aegialia, namely that of Parnassida.<sup>51</sup> The region

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45 HASSIOTIS, *Oi Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 117, 170, 221.

46 See Aldo STELLA, «Lepanto nella storia e nella storiografia alla luce di nuovi documenti», *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 51 (2006), pp. 216-221.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

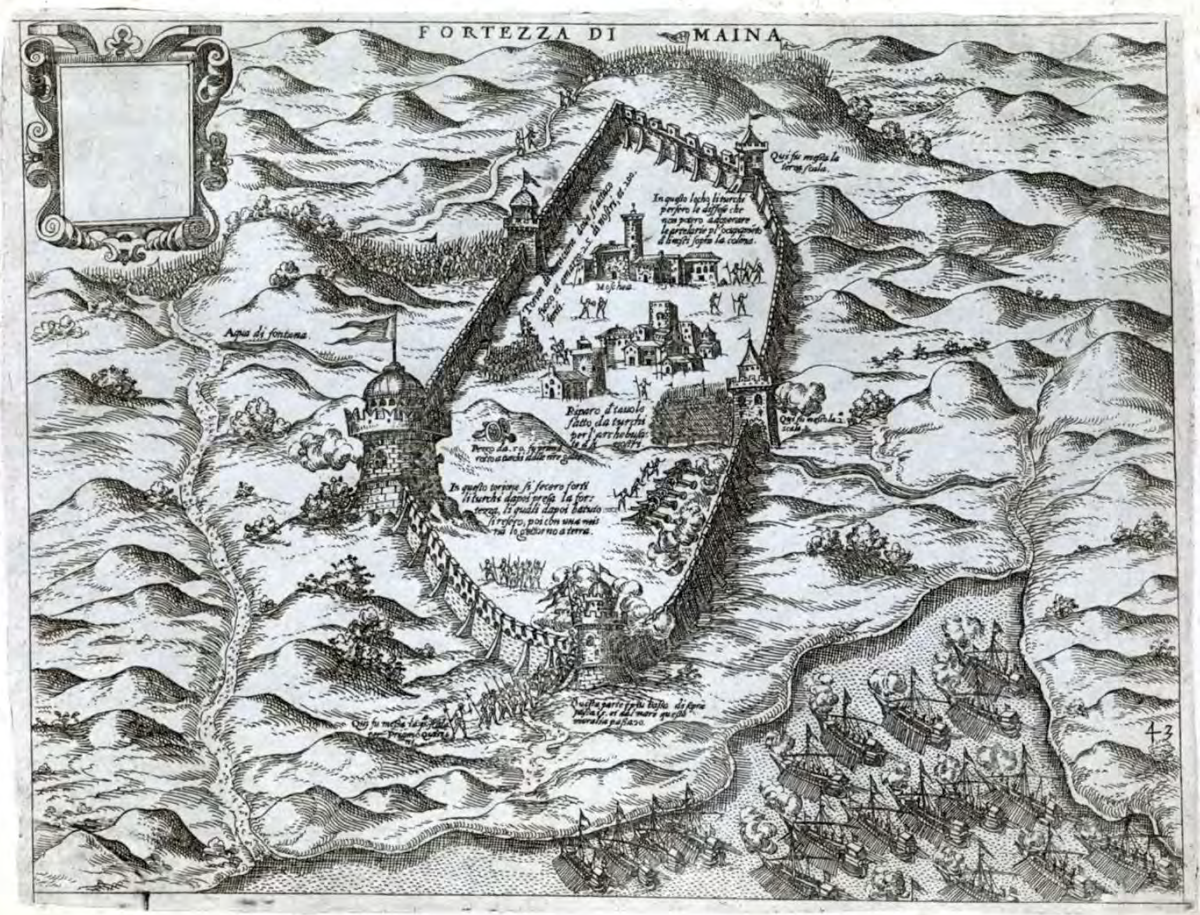
48 Kostas G. TSIGNAKIS, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου και οι επαναστατικές κινήσεις στον ελληνικό χώρο», in Kostas G. TSIGNAKIS (Ed.), *Πρακτικά της Επιστημονικής Συνάντησης: Η απήχηση της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου στην ευρωπαϊκό κόσμο (Ναύπακτος, 13 Οκτωβρίου 2012)* (Συνέδρια – 16), Athens & Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice – Demetrios and Aegli Botsaris Foundation, 2013, pp. 53-89, where all the relevant bibliography.

49 STELLA, «Lepanto nella storia e nella storiografia», cit., pp. 231-236.

50 TSIGNAKIS, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., p. 59 and fn. 26.

51 Michel LESURE, *Lépante, la crise de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris, Julliard, 1972, pp. 94-95 and





4 The Castle of Porto Kagio in Mani (Maina) [«Fortezza di Maina»] besieged by the Venetians in 1570. Source: Giovanni Francesco CAMOCIO, *Isole famose, porti, fortezze, e terre marittime sottoposte alla Ser.ma Sig.ria di Venetia, ad altri Principi Christiani, et al Sig.or Turco, novamente poste in luce*, Venice, Alla libreria del segno di S. Marco, [c. 1574].

of Nafplio, guarded by a large number of forces, appears not to have participated in the mobilization that had started.

There was much that could be done in the immediate future. However, the Venetians' appeals for the Christian fleet taking more action so as to conquer cities in the Peloponnese and Euboea were not heard. The powers that had formed

193; MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., p. 233; TSIGNAKIS, «Η Μονή Ταξιαρχών του Αιγίου στα τέλη του 16ου αι.», cit., p. 60; IDEM, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., pp. 225-226; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., p. 63.

the Holy League set different priorities. As a result, the possibility to reconquer a substantial number of revolted regions of the Ottoman-occupied Greek territory was lost.

Taking advantage of the absence of concerted action from the side of the Christian coalition, the Ottomans managed to suppress revolts in almost all Greek regions. We have no information on the region of Nafplio. It was only in the northwest side of the Peloponnese that some revolutionary cells were still found.<sup>52</sup>

Over this period of time the Greeks who lived in Venice were following these developments with mixed emotions. Early optimism soon changed to disillusionment over the turn of events. These developments were naturally of particular interest to Londanos, who, experiencing them, must have had unpleasant feelings given that his plan had not been implemented; still, he did not give up trying. Searching for ways to get more political forces involved in the issue of liberating the Peloponnese, he did not hesitate to turn in another direction; hence, in February 1572, he sent a more complete plan of intervention in the Peloponnese to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici. He, though, did nothing more than express his satisfaction at reading it.<sup>53</sup>

And while discussions on the Christian fleet taking new action started in the summer of 1572, the Venetians kept seeking ways to proceed into the Ottoman-occupied Greek territory. In this climate of war, with various confusing and conflicting opinions as to the points of the final attack, the idea to retake Nafplio was not abandoned; the issue was raised by individuals coming from Nafplio, who could see that the occupation of their hometown was not in the plans of the Christian forces.

One of them was Georgis Mormoris, who was in Venice at the time.<sup>54</sup> He was

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52 MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., pp. 234-235; TSIKNAKIS, «Η Μονή Ταξιαρχών του Αιγίου στα τέλη του 16ου αι.», cit., pp. 60-61; IDEM, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., pp. 225-226; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., pp. 67-71.

53 DAL BORGO, «La descrizione del Peloponneso di Andrea Londano», cit., p. 137 and fns. 23-24.

54 On his activity in the city in those years, see Kostas G. TSIKNAKIS, «Μεταφορές αρχαιοτήτων και μαρμάρων από την Κρήτη για την επισκευή του Δουκικού Παλατιού της Βενετίας το έτος 1576», in Gogo K. VARZELIOTI and Kostas G. TSIKNAKIS (Eds.), *Γαληνοτάτη. Τιμή στη Χρύσα Μαλιτζού*, Athens, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Theatre Studies – Benaki Museum, 2013, p. 773 and fn. 33, where the relevant



born to the well-known Nafplian family,<sup>55</sup> whose members, after the fall of the city, settled mainly in Crete.<sup>56</sup> On his merchant ship, he often travelled back and forth between Crete and Venice, serving many needs. On one of his trips, he had apparently visited Nafplio, so by a letter submitted to the Heads of the Council of Ten on April 21, 1572, he developed concrete proposals on the occupation of the city.<sup>57</sup> Due to lack of space, his plan, which was a mixture of wishful thinking and risky ventures, cannot be detailed here. I propose to deal with this in another essay, in which I propose to discuss all his moves, which, among other things, aimed at the liberation of Nafplio. However, it is worth noting that his views aroused the interest of the Council of Ten, which dealt with his case on May 5.

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55 For Mormoris' family, see HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., pp. 140-141 fn. 3. As to the most recent bibliography about the family, see mainly Dionysios BERNICOLAS-HATZOPOULOS, «Emmanuel Mormori and the Alfonso Piccolomini incident», *Thesaurismata*, 19 (1982), pp. 90-101; Dionyssios HATZOPOULOS, «New information on the Mormori family», *Thesaurismata*, 21 (1991), pp. 358-367; Angeliki TZAVARA, «Devozione, violenza e uva passa. Le famiglie di Mourmouris e Catello di Nauplion nel XV secolo», in Chryssa MALTEZOU, Angeliki TZAVARA and Despina VLASSI (Eds.), *I Greci durante la venetocrazia: Uomini, spazio, idee (XIII–XVIII sec.)*. *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Venezia, 3–7 dicembre 2007)* (Convegni 13), Venice, Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 2009, pp. 597-611; Katerina B. KORRE, «Η Νάπολι di Romania των stradiotti (15ος–16ος αι.): πώς ο αγώνας για την κατοχή του χώρου μετασηματίζεται σε πατρίδα», *Ναυπλιακά Ανάλεκτα*, 9 (2017): Eftychia D. LIATA (Ed.), *Της Βενετίας τ' Ανάπλι. 300 χρόνια από το τέλος μιας εποχής 1715–2015. Επιστημονικό Συμπόσιο. Ναύπλιο, 9–11 Οκτωβρίου 2015. Πρακτικά*, Nafplio, Municipality of Nafplio – Cultural Foundation “Ioannis Kapodistrias”, 2017, pp. 109-110.

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57 ASVE, *Consiglio dei Dieci, Segrete*, filza 16 (March 1572–February 1573): letter submitted by Georgios Mormoris (April 21, 1572). Cf. HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 225 fn. 1.

In fact, in an effort to keep the case of Nafplio alive, the Council encouraged Mormoris' initiative.<sup>58</sup>

In the meantime, with great difficulty and after strong pressure from Venice, the Christian fleet was reestablished. Again, it was Don Juan de Austria who was appointed head of it, accompanied by Marcantonio Colonna, Giacomo Foscarini and Gil d'Andrada, representatives of the three main forces of the Holy League.<sup>59</sup>

One of its first decisions was to take action in the Greek peninsula, in some regions of which, during the winter of 1571–1572, the revolutionary climate was renewed. Secret agents acting on behalf of the Venetians and the Spaniards, sought to form new alliances with influential local figures.<sup>60</sup> Despite rumors that the Christian fleet would soon be operating in Greek waters attempting the final attack to conquer the Peloponnese, none of the aforementioned ambitious plans materialized.<sup>61</sup> The fleet's delay in setting sail, in early September, was indicative of its intentions. After some wasted movements in the Ionian Sea, it focused its efforts on conquering Methoni (Fig. 5), unsuccessfully, though.<sup>62</sup> The hopes of

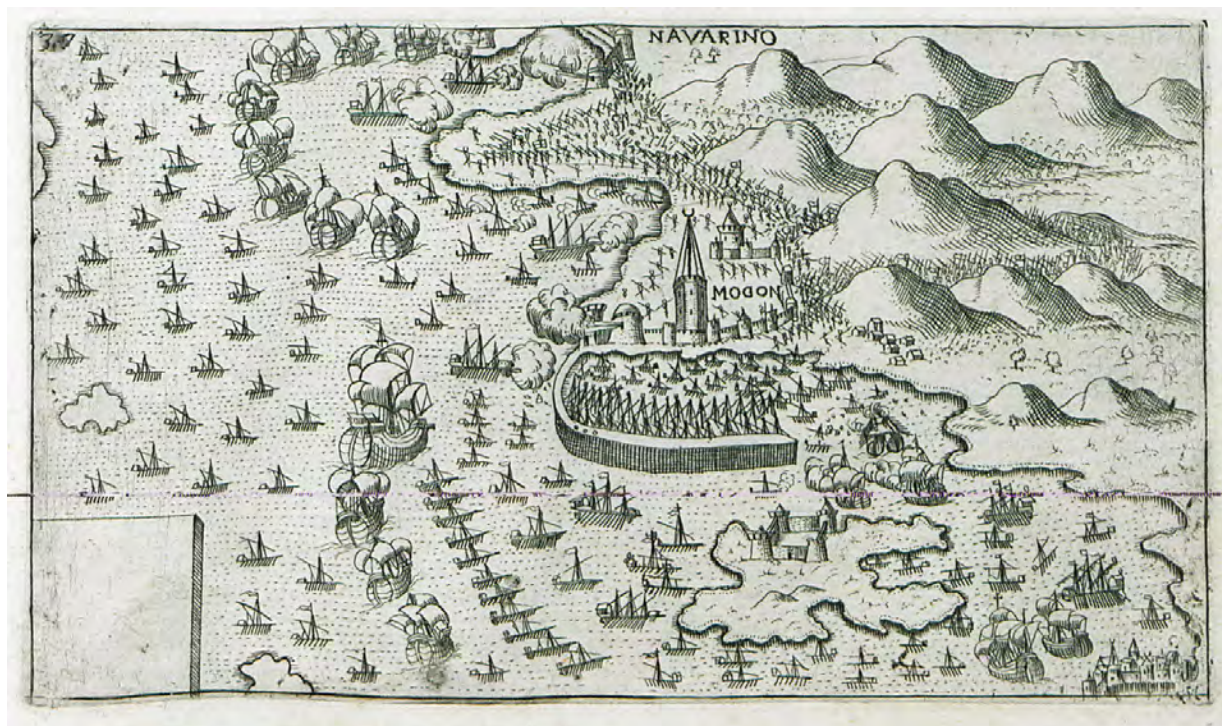
58 ASVE, *Consiglio dei Dieci, Segrete*, reg. 10 (March 1572–February 1573), ff. 25v–26r. Cf. HASSIOTIS, *Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*, cit., p. 225 fn. 1; Katerina B. KORRE, *Μισθοφόροι stradioti της Βενετίας. Πολεμική και κοινωνική λειτουργία (15ος–16ος αιώνας)*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Corfu, Ionian University, Department of History, 2017, p. 375 and fns. 1221–1222.

59 For the rapid developments in those months, see ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 230–231; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., p. 75. For more detailed information, see Kostas G. ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Η νοτιοδυτική Πελοπόννησος θέατρο πολεμικών επιχειρήσεων το 1572», in Athanasios Th. ΦΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (Ed.), *Πρακτικά του Γ' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Ανατολικών και Αφρικανικών Σπουδών: Η Πελοπόννησος κατά την Τουρκοκρατία και τη Βενετοκρατία (1460–1821) (Γαστούνη, 5–7 Σεπτεμβρίου 2008): Αφιέρωμα εις Μιχαήλ Β. Σακελλαρίου*, Athens, 2022, pp. 576–603 (in print).

60 ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 231; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., p. 75–84; IDEM, «Η νοτιοδυτική Πελοπόννησος θέατρο πολεμικών επιχειρήσεων το 1572», cit.

61 ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., p. 231; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., pp. 84–86; IDEM, «Η νοτιοδυτική Πελοπόννησος θέατρο πολεμικών επιχειρήσεων το 1572», cit.

62 MANOUSSACAS, «Lepanto e i Greci», cit., pp. 237–238; ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Η νοτιοδυτική Πελοπόννησος θέατρο πολεμικών επιχειρήσεων το 1572», cit. For more detailed information about the failed siege of Methoni, see Kostas G. ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΙΣ, «Η Μεθώνη στη διάρκεια του Τέταρτου Βενετοτουρκικού Πολέμου (1570–1573)», in Angeliki ΡΑΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (Ed.), *Πρακτικά της Επιστημονικής Διημερίδας: Η Μεθώνη και η περιοχή της από την αρχαιότητα έως τα νεότερα χρόνια. Αρχαιολογικές και ιστορικές προσεγγίσεις (Μεθώνη, 16–17 Μαΐου 2015)*, Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute of Historical Research –



5 The siege of Pylos (Navarino) and Methoni [Modon(e)] by the fleet of the Holy League (1571). Source: Giuseppe ROSACCIO, *Viaggio da Venetia, a Costantinopoli: per mare, e per terra & insieme quello di Terra Santa [...] opera utile à mercanti, marinari & à studiosi di geografia*, Venice, Giacomo Franco, 1598.

the locals, who expected their struggle for liberation to be supported, were disappointed. With the departure of the Christian fleet from the area at the beginning of October, the final remnants of the Greek resistance in the southwest Peloponnese were violently crushed by the Ottoman forces.<sup>63</sup>

In the following months, the new Pope, Gregory XIII, would seek to reestablish the Holy League and send the Christian ships back to the Greek seas.<sup>64</sup> His

Association of Friends of the Castle of Methoni, 2022 (in print).

63 ΤΣΙΚΝΑΚΗΣ, «Επαναστατικές κινήσεις στη βορειοδυτική Πελοπόννησο», cit., pp. 231-232; IDEM, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., pp. 86-87; IDEM, «Η νοτιοδυτική Πελοπόννησος θέατρο πολεμικών επιχειρήσεων το 1572», cit.

64 On Pope Gregory XIII's efforts to prolong the Holy League's action, see Gaetano Coz-

initiatives, however, met with firm opposition from Spain, which was reluctant to offer help in this perspective. Seeing that the continuing war was making its situation worse, Venice speeded up negotiations with the Ottomans, aiming at its ending. The signing of the peace treaty on March 7, 1573, formally ended the Fourth Venetian–Ottoman War.<sup>65</sup>

All information presented here is extremely valuable as it sheds light on a practically unknown period in Nafplio's history, that is, the first decades after its occupation by the Ottomans. As is apparent from plans of all the secret agents, the city constituted a powerful military center in the Peloponnese.

Andreas Londanos' and Georgios Mormoris' proposals are worth lingering over for a moment. There is so much anguish hidden in the descriptions of the documents, as is always the case with this kind of documents. Dozens of people collaborated under extremely difficult conditions to gather this information. Certainly, the result is not far from reality. We are provided with a complete picture of Nafplio's defense potentials over the last decades of the 16th century. Despite any deficiencies, conquering it presented considerable difficulties. This played an important role in the *Serenissima's* decision not to go ahead with its siege. However, in order not to displease the Nafplians living in Venice, whose services were of major importance to them, the Venetian authorities took care to clarify that their issue was not abandoned but postponed indefinitely.

In this same period Spain's attitude gives rise to a number of questions. While encouraging initiatives for rebellion against the Ottomans, once these mature, it distances itself letting them fade. However, this seemingly contradictory attitude is easy to justify: it is the result of a broader policy of skepticism regarding the area of the eastern Mediterranean, which Spain adopted at the time.<sup>66</sup>

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ZI, «Un documento sulla crisi della “Sacra Lega”: le confidenze del padre Francisco Toledo all'Avogadore di Comun Nicolò Barbarigo (ottobre 1572)», *Archivio Veneto*, s. 5, 67 (1960), pp. 76-96. Cf. TSIGNAKIS, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., p. 86.

65 For the talks before signing the Peace Treaty and the side effects caused by the Venetian initiative, see Mario BRUNETTI, «La crisi finale della Sacra Lega (1573)», in *Miscellanea in onore di Roberto Cessi*, Vol. 2, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1958, pp. 145-155. See also STELLA, «Lepanto nella storia e nella storiografia», cit., pp. 245-249; TSIGNAKIS, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., pp. 86-87.

66 Spain's attitude is commented on by ΒΑΔΕΝΑΣ, in «Η διστακτική πολιτική της ισπανικής μοναρχίας στην Ανατολή», cit., pp. 11-28.



Among the above tactics of the powerful political forces, simple citizens are experiencing the developments in a different way. Away from their hometown, Nafplians living in Venice felt disappointed by the turn of events. Different, however, were the feelings of their compatriots still living in Nafplio, who, alone and defenseless, were left to cope with the ever-increasing Ottoman aggression in the years to come.

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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).

## Venetian-Ottoman Wars

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