

Section: General History

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THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE VENETIAN-TURKISH WARS IN THE 16th CENTURY IN THE SOUTHERN ADRIATIC

After the discovery and transmission of geographical focus of operations from the Mediterranean to the west coast of Europe, Venice's economy was declining. Because of that the Republic sought to preserve with all the forces their economic and political position in the Adriatic Sea [5. p. 263-264]. The east coast of the Adriatic was of great strategic importance for the Republic. Although leading a peaceful policy, Venice could not allow the Turkey to take over her possessions. With a variety of provocations, and finally the invasion of Corfu on August 27th 1537, Turkey forced Venice to war. Republic has succeeded to enter into alliance of the Holy League with Charles V and Pope in 1538, against Turkey. With the Agreement between the Allies, Venice was granted the right to Herceg Novi. Venetian towns on the southern Adriatic, Kotor, Budva, Bar and Ulcinj were poorly defined. Therefore, the Senate sent to these cities an emergency help in personnel and supplies. The combined Venetian-Spanish fleet took on October 27th 1538 Herceg Novi. Then the Risan was conquered, without a fight, and the Turks responded with the attack on the Bar and Ulcinj, which were saved the by Venetian fleet. Venice was satisfied with taking Herceg Novi, the war threatened her trade and on March 20th 1540, they signed quarterly truce with the Turks. The Turks were determined to regain Herceg Novi, a that task was entrusted to the famous Hayreddin Barbarossa. Venice has learned about this move of the Turkish fleet, and further intensified the provision of Kotor. In Venetian towns on the southern Adriatic panic reigned, because they feared that the Turks will break quarterly truce. Through diplomatic measures and negotiations with the Allies, Venice tried to prevent the

arrival of the Turkish fleet in the Bay. The Venetians then decided to buy rights on Herceg Novi from the Pope for 10.000 ducats, and deliver it to the Turks. But the Spanish refused to surrender the city and they decided to defend it. Great Turkish fleet attacked Herceg Novi, and on August 27th 1539, the town was taken. Upon the occupation of Herceg Novi Hayreddin Barbarossa took Risan and with the part of a fleet Turks attacked Kotor, but soon withdrew. In this war the Venetian possessions in the southern Adriatic, had suffered, cities and their surroundings were in serious condition. In December 1539, Bar sent a delegate to Venice, with a request for urgently food aid and cash. Kotor has also pointed to the destruction and sought help. However, Venice has preserved all their possessions in the southern Adriatic in this war. During the war, none of the Venetian city fell into the hands of the Turks. Especially in the war highlighted the citizens of Perast and in 1540. Council of Ten has determined for Perast help of 200 ducats in the next ten years. During the war Crmnicans tried to overthrow Turkey and accept the Venetian government.

This war complicated question of the borders between the two countries. Porte requested revision of the borders to Kotor, Budva, Bar and Ulcinj. The dispute over the boundary was settled, but the Turks continued to press the Venetian possessions. Surroundings of Bar and Ulcinj were exposed to constant Turkish incursions, and Venezia filed a protest to the Porte because of the looting. Ulcinj for the protection of the Turkish bands held 25 mercenaries for the defense. Kotor modeled on Ulcinj has organized additional defense of the city. In 1568, the Perast was robbed by pirates, and same year the Venetian government approved 300 ducats for the lifting of Forts in Perast. The Turks had pretensions to Paštrovići, so they sent them a letter as well as other Venetian subjects, to accept Turkish rule. Paštrovići rejected this, and there was an armed conflict between them and the Turks. Due to such Turkish actions Venice filed protest to the Porte to prevent such occurrences. Although these incidents did

not seriously threatening the peace, they produced constantly strained situation on the Venetian-Turkish border. Turks were with deliberate provocations sought war with Venice, which 1570, refused the request of Turks to give them Cyprus. Thus began the Cyprus war, which lasted from 1570 to 1573 year. The Republic has gained powerful allies, the Venetians, Pius V (1559-1565) and Austria signed on May 21st 1571, alliance against Turkey, known as Lepantska league. The alliance joined other Christian countries Genoa, Malta and Spain [5, p. 393-396]. Condition at the southern Adriatic was extremely unfavorable for Venice. The Republic has entered into this war unprepared and limited to the defense of their possessions in the Adriatic. Immediately after the outbreak of the war representatives of Paštrovići, Bar and Ulcinj, came to Venice to seek help. These Venetian possessions became the scene of bloody fighting, and suffered a fatal change. The first Turkish attack was directed against Paštrovići. Part of Paštrovići locked himself in St. Stefan castle in defense, while others took refuge in Budva and Kotor. All Venetian towns on the southern Adriatic survived tough days. Kotor was threatened by sea and land. Due to the large influx of refugees in 1570, in Ulcinj famine occurred. Turkey was in the military supremacy, and the Venetians made great efforts to win over to their side Christian population under Ottoman rule. The Venetian government in the early 1571, sent to Kotor Vlatko Kosača, Crnojević Peter and Francesco Dukagjin. These were all descendants of the former independent dynasties, who were supposed to contribute to the uprising of Herzegovinians, Montenegrins and the Dukagjins against Turks. This initiative which financialy costed Venice had failed.

At that time Kotor was in a difficult situation, in early 1571, plague in town killed around 3.500 people. Plague ravaged and Herceg Novi and the Venetians used it to carry out sabotage in the city, which was to blow up the ammunition into Herceg Novi citadel, which was not carried out. Venetian

towns on the southern Adriatic were the most vulnerable in the summer of 1571, with a strong Turkish naval offensive. Turkish ground forces were sent from Constantinople to the central Balkans and the naval forces to the Adriatic Sea. At this news Venice became panic-stricken, urgent measures were taken for the protection of eastern cities, while Bar i Ulcinj were left to fate. In late July, the Turkish fleet in cooperation with ground forces attacked Ulcinj. The city was defended by French and Italian mercenaries, who resisted the Turks for eight days. Then the whole crew of of Ulcinj surrendered. When citizens of Bar found out for surrender of Ulcinj, and they have surrendered the Turks, although the Bar was well stocked and ready for defense. Venetians renounced Ulcinj and Bar, in the hope that it will save some of their other cities, but after Ulcinj and Bar Turks conquered and Spice. Fearing from Turkish attack the Venetians leave Budva, which was then destroyed by the Turks. Turkish fleet then went to the Bay, where the Turks requested from providur of Kotor to surrender the city. People from Kotor refused to surrender and Turkish fleet soon left the Bay of Kotor. The Turks devastated the Venetian possessions from Bojana to Kotor, Ulcinj and Bar have been irretrievably lost, and Budva destroyed.

But Turks were not so successful on other fronts, at the same time a major naval battle took place at Lepanto, on October 7th 1571. In this battle Turkish fleet was destroyed, but the situation in the southern Adriatic had not improved in favor of Venice. Since Kotor was constantly threatened by the Darwinian Turks, Venice attacked Herceg Novi. In May 1572, General Vanier landed with the army near Herceg Novi. During the attack the Venetians managed to push the Turks into fortress, but they ran out of ammunition. Thus failed this attempt of taking over Herceg Novi, which prompted the Turks to attack Kotor, the town has been exhausted with the plague and without a strong defense, so it could easily fall into the hands of the Turks. Turks were attempting to block the Kotor, and they built fortress on Verige. Venetians have taken extraordinary measures

to liberate the city blocks, but only in January 1573, they succeeded, when the Venetian fleet destroyed the Turkish fortifications in the Bay. The struggle for Kotor was the last significant action in this war, after which Venice was exhausted, seeking a way out of this situation. The only way out for her was peace, which after several months of negotiations was concluded on March 7th 1573 [5, p. 59-60]. The consequences of this war for the Venetian possessions in the southern Adriatic were disastrous. The whole area was devastated, and Ulcinj and Bar lost. People from Kotor had lost all their income and they have remained bare lives. Budva and Paštrovići were in terrible state. Turkish borders shifted to Paštrovići, which further aggravated their situation. From the powerful Venetian strongholds in the southern Adriatic Sea at the end of the sixteenth century remained only Kotor and Budva and its surroundings in the Turkish environment. Although the Turks pushed it from the part of the Adriatic coast, Venice was firmly resolved to defend their remaining possessions and to not let be thrown out of them. Republic after the war entered the era of retreat from its position in the Mediterranean policy, less and less playing the role of one of the key forces in the region.

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