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“VENETIAN” ALBANIA AND SCANDERBEG¹

In the XIV-XV centuries, the Republic of Venice, or the Seignory as it is otherwise known, was a powerful political and military state of the time. It raised and strengthened as an aristocratic merchant republic in the XI century and had a powerful maritime fleet to controll the stocks circulation in the Mediterranean, Aegean and in the Adriatic mere.²

Byzantium palyed a significan role in Venice’s establishment and empowerment. Venetian merchants, agents and consuls were established time ago in the cities and trade centers of the Byzantine Empire; the Venetian merchants were early established in the coastal cities of the Albania.³

Anna Komnena, the Byzantine historian, said there a merchants’ colony from Venice has been in Durrës since the XI century.⁴ Merchants, agents and consuls from Venice could also be found in the markets of the XIV-XV centuries that flourished in the rivers’ outfalls such as Shirq in Buna, Dieval in Seman, Spinarica in Vjosa and the

¹ This presentation is part of the discourse segments.

² The Seignory wouldn’t allow in the Adriatic Sea the Balshaj and Topia families to carry warships. (see L.Malltezi. *Flota luftarake tregtare e Balshajve*. The Newspaper “Bashkimi”, February 18, 1989; (reprint) Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut. Tiranë, 1989, vol.2, p. 3-15-16.

³ Venetian merchants might have entered in the cities and regions of Albania since after the occupation of Constantinople during the IV crusade, at least. We think so as based on the division treaty of the Byzantine Empire (*Partio Terrarium imperii Romanie*), Venice took on 1205, 1/3 of Empire’s lands, “Durrës and Albania’s province” (Provincia Dirrachij et Arbani), Gllavinica, Vagenetia area, the provnce of Ioannina and of Drinopoja. (*Acta et Diplomata Res Albaniae Mediae Aetatis Illustrantia* (Hereinafter: *AAlb*), collegerunt et digesserunt dr. L.de Thalloczy, dr.C, Jirecek et dr E.de Sufflay.Vindobonae MCMXIII, I,129,130).

⁴ Byzatine storyteller sources on the history of Albania, X-XV centuries. Prepared for publishing by K. Bozhori & F. Lico. Tiranë 1975, p. 96-99.

markets in Drin, Mat and Ishëm's outfalls.⁵ The Venetian consuls could also be found in Durrës (1249),⁶ Vlora (1359),⁷ Ulqin (1370) etc.⁸

In the XIV-XV centuries, in the cities and markets of the country there were also merchants from Ragusa, Ortona, Rimini, Zara, Barletta, Molfetta, Kotorr, Ancona. In the XIV century, there were Ragusan merchants in Novobërda, Trepça, Janjeva, cities of Kosova. On April 1332, the Great Council of Ragusa also appointed a consul in Prizren which should be interested about Ragusan merchants operating in Kosova.⁹

Byzantine emperor granted commercial privileges (chrysobull) so generous and comprehensive that they would form the foundation of Veneto-Byzantine relations. Such privileges were granted to the Seignory in 1082, 1108 and 1198.

The salt that was produced in Durrës and Vlora and the country's cereals were the main interest of the Venetian merchants in Albania.

Oil, honey, wine, salt fishes, eels, metals (iron and lead, silk threads, vesicules, meat, horses, swine, animal leather, soles and fabrics were the products exported in Ragusa, Kotorr, Ancona, Bari, Brindisi. From the country's cities and markets were exported abroad mainly in Ragusa kinds of different woods crafted in the country's construction sites etc.¹⁰

Shkodra, Ulqin, Tivar, Albanian coastal cities, were in the second half of the XIV century under the Balsha rule. Durrës was under Karl Topia rule. The above mentioned lords were in serious clashes and conflicts among them.

⁵A. Ducellier. *La Façade Maritime de l'Albanie au Moyen Age*. Thessalonki, 1981.

⁶A.Alb.I, 192; A.Alb. II, 79, 310; AAV, II, 347.

⁷A.Alb.I, 144.

⁸A.Alb. I, 264; ASV 253, 380.

⁹Mitic I. *O Dubrovackim konzulima na Ballkanu*. Balcanika VI, Beograd, 1975, p. 88-67; Malltezi L. *Qytetet dhe roli i tyre në lidhjet ekonomike midis krahinave shqiptare në shek. XIII-XV*. Studime Historike, Tiranë 1982, 4, 135-144 (reprinted:) Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut, Tiranë, 1989, I, 78- 90.

¹⁰Malltezi L. *Qytetet e bregdetit shqiptar gjatë sundimit venedikas (Aspekte të jetës së tyre)*. Tiranë, 1988, p. 36.

The Seignory had contacts with them. In August 1385, the Seignory was granted by Karl Topia the exclusive right of buying cereals from his possessions.¹¹

Meanwhile, the political situation in Albania radically changed; in the '80s the Ottoman Turks started the attacks to occupy the Albanian lands; Balkan's lords organized in 1389 a wide Balkan coalition to protect themselves against the Ottoman danger, but this coalition was broken.¹² Karl Topia kept relations with the Seignory since 1388 for the protection of Durrës. The Seignory exploited many times the difficult situation in which Karl Topia was found to take "under protection" with the proper forces the coastal castle, but Topia refused. However, in 1392, years after his death, the Seignory could take Durrësi from Gjergji, his son. The situation was already serious also for the other lords. Under these circumstances, the Seignory took Lezha from the Dukagjini family in 1393, and Shkodra and Drishti from Gjergj II Balsha in 1396.

The Seignory took these cities in agreement with the aforementioned gentlemen.¹³

The Turks didn't recognize the Seignory "possessions" in Albania and continued their attacks. The records of the time inform us how grave the situation was in Shkodra and Drishti from 1396 to 1400 because of the continuous Turkish attacks. It is documented the complete devastation of vineyards and crops out of Shkodra walls.

The Seignory decided on July 27, 1400 to send soldiers in Shkodra and corns to face the situation.¹⁴ This situation continued to be dangerous until 1402, when the Turks were beaten in the battle of

¹¹ AAV, III, 315, 316.

¹² Malltezi L. Beteja e Fushë Kosovës dhe shqiptarët (1389). Tiranë, 1998.

¹³ Malltezi L. *Përpjekjet dhe synimet e Venedikut për pushtimin e Durrësit (1386-1392)*. Studime Historike, Tiranë 1977, 2, 145-171. (reprinted) Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut, Tiranë, 1989, 2, 120-152.

¹⁴ "Quod consideratis terminis in quibus se reperiunt civitates nostre scutari et drivasti, quibus turchi dederunt guastum bladorum et vinearum ac aliorum rerum ...est omnino danda eis subuentio bladorum et aliarum rerum necessarium, ut non pereant, nec vadant ad manus turchorum..." (AAlb, II, 645; J.Valentini. *Acta Albaniae Veneta* (Më tej AAV), Tomus Tertius, 819)

Ankara from Timurlenk forces.¹⁵ In this battle Bayezid I (1389-1402) was taken prisoner and died in the hands of Timurlenk.

The death of Bayezid I paved the way for power succession among his successors; the wars that broke among them averted the danger from the Ottoman menace from the Albanian land until 1415.

Durrësi, Shkodra, Drishti, Ulqini and Tivari, fallen under the Seignory rule, were developed as autonomous communes; they enjoyed many rights and privileges of self-administration.¹⁶

The ambassadors of these cities in Venice, in XIV-XV centuries speak many times about these rights. Durrës commune has not enjoyed for so long that could not be remembered the right to supply with its salt the markets that flourished in the rivers outfalls north of the city in the XIII century; the trade rules on salt – as the commune stressed out – had been eternal. (*ordines super Sali qui fuerant in perpetuum*)¹⁷

The Venetian rule caused problems to the people of the cities. On September 3, 1399 in Shkodra erupted a revolt against the Seignory. The Venetian governor of Shkodra Nicola Polani, notified the Seignory that in the rebellion participated Shkodra and Drishti region (*tota contrata rebellauit nostro dominio*); and that he considered the situation of re-establishing the previous one with its forces hopeless.¹⁸

Rebellions in Shkodra's area also erupted after, from 1404 to 1405,¹⁹ from 1409 to 1410,²⁰ and in 1448.²¹

¹⁵ Barleti M. Historia e jetës dhe e veprave të Skënderbeut. Translated from the original in Latin by Stefan I. Prifti. Second publishing, Tirana, 1967, 53.

¹⁶ Nadin L. Statuti di Scutari : dalla prima metà del secolo con le addizioni fino al 1469. Viella, 2002.

¹⁷ ASV., Sen. Misti R 48/14v-15.

¹⁸ AA/b, II, 629; S. Liubic. Listine 4,421; ASV, Misti del Senato, 44, p. 27.

¹⁹ Bogdani P. *Lufta kundër Venedikut për çlirimin e krahinës së Shkodrës dhe qytetëve të saj në fund të vitit 1404-mesi vitit 1405*. "Studime Historike", nr.2. p.1983, p.151-172; (re-published) Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut, Tiranë, 1989, nr.2, p. 197-223.

²⁰ ASV., Sen. Misti R.48/107v; R.48/148. (140,145),171 (161,168) v,183(173,180) v; Avog. Com. 666.Lett. L.2 (s.n).

²¹ Radonic J. Gjuragj Kastrioti Skenderbeg i Arbanija u XV veku. (*hereinafter* Radonic. Skenderbeg), Beograd,1942, 18.

The reasons that encouraged the people to rise against the rule were many; let's mention some of them.

The Seignory decided on 1402 the national monopoly on the wheat in her possession in Albania.²² The consequences were hard for the communes; the establishment of the monopoly on the grains harmed the old economic trade relations among the Albanian cities' markets. The communes demanded once and again Venice to remove the monopoly, but the Seignory didn't alter her stance.²³

The situation also worsened by the violation of statutes and customs of the cities and downtroddening their judges.²⁴

The governors that the Seignory sent to rule these possessions made the situation worse, because many of them tried to enrich themselves in different ways and forms during their biennial governance becoming responsible for the cities abandonment from the inhabitants.

In October 1494 the commune of Tivar compared the governor Giacomo Delfino in Venice with the emperor Nero of Rome for his wicked rule and downtroddening the city nobles.²⁵

The Seignory herself in the trials against her corrupted governors accused the Drishti governor "signor Andrea Lauredono" as someone who managed to steal the coffer of the state and vanish without trace²⁶ (*cum ipsa pecunia se absentasse*).

The Seignory accused on February 3, 1419 Matteo Gradonico, Durrës bajlos and chieftain, because he stole from the economic chamber of Durrës 600 ducats.²⁷

A difficult situation was also passing the Durrës merchants for the salt's sale in Lezha and Shkodra. The ambassador of Durrës commune asked the Seignory on June 1409 to order these governors to not put

²² ASV. Avog. Com. Delib. MCA 1252-1454 XXVIII (x) 12 (22).

²³ Malltezi L. *Rreth monopolit të shtetit venedikas mbi drithin në Shqipëri në shek. XV*. "Studime Historike", Tiranë, 1986, 1, p. 129-148; (re-published in) "Studime për Epokën e Skënderbeut", I, Tiranë, 1989, p. 210-233;

(French:) Malltezi L. *Le monopole d'Etat de Venise sur le céréales en Albanie au XV^e siècle*. "Studia Albanica", Tiranë 1987, 1, p. 139-160.

²⁴ See for more L. Malltezi. *Abuzime të aparatit qeveritar në zotërimet e shtetit venedikas në Shqipëri (1392-1478)*. (hereinafter L. Malltezi. *Abuzime*) "Studime Historike" nr.3, 1984, p. 110-135; re-published in "Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut". Tiranë 1989, I, 112-130.

²⁵ Documents about the history of Albania (1479-1506). Second part, 1499-1506. Prepared for publishing by I. Zamputi, Tiranë, 1997, 53 (86); ASV. Sen. Mar R 3 159 (158) -160 (159) v.

²⁶ ASV, Avog. Com, Raspe 6/84.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 7/57 (529) rv; Sen. Misti R.52/148v.

their hands on the salt revenues that Durrës inhabitants sent for sale in the above- mentioned cities.

The ambassador informed that there were many merchants who have not paid for years for the salt they had sent in Shkodra.²⁸

Abuses were also made with measures and weights.

On August 19, 1401, the Seignory herself speaks about the complains arrived in Venice about Vittorio Delfino, the Governor of Lezha, who according to Seignory has taken a larger quantities of salt from the merchants than the usual.²⁹

Such abuses were common for the salt that was sold in Shkodra:

“In the past - is written in a Venetian act of 1410 - in Shkodra and in other Albania’s areas, the salt of our municipality was sold on trust (*incredentia*) to different persons, but the latter sold the salt in other measures at the detriment of private persons.³⁰ On May 1439, Durrës commune complained in Venice that the governors who took the salt of Durrës didn’t pay to the commune the money (*in pecunia numerata*) but with stocks, coating much more expensive compared to their value. From this speculation the merchants of Durrës, endured a harm of 25 to 30%.³¹

Another way to get rich for the governors was their participation in trade activities at a time when it was forbidden.

At the trial the Seignory organized on 1416 against Shkodra’s governor Paolo Quirini it is said that he together with the “nobleman” signor Laurentio Mimio started the wine trade. To secure its selling, Paolo Quirini forbade all the other merchants to sell wine in Shkodra and closed all the taverns where the wine was sold retailed. Paolo Quirini has issued an order that no one but Medeo Armeno (his collaborator), to be allowed to sell wine by retail (*ad minimum*) in Shkodra.³²

²⁸*Ibid*, Sen Misti R 48/14v-15.

²⁹*Ibid*, R. 45/99 (98).

³⁰*Ibid*, 48/129 (134,137).

³¹*Ibid*, R.60/139 v-140. (For more information, see about the problems with salt: L Malltezi, *Konflikte dhe intriga në tregtinë e kripës në Shqipëri në shek. XII-XIV*. “Shkenca dhe Jeta” magazine. Tiranë, 1988, 6.

³²*Ibid*, Avog. Com. Raspe 5/240(107) v-241(108)v. AAV, Pars Secunda, Tomus VIII, 2021.

Also, according to the Seignory, even in Durrës, the governor Matteo Gradonico ordered the customs officials to introduce those who brought silk cocoon (folexellos) only to him and none dare to buy the silk cocoon.³³

This kind of orders was strictly followed. So, when the merchant Bitri Jonima refused to sell to Shkodra governor the silk cocoon, he was immediately arrested; to frighten and humiliate him and the others, the merchant was plucked out his eyebrows and eyelashes and his head and beard were shaved.³⁴

Drisht inhabitants also complained about the cocoon; here the Seignory auctioned the cocoon at the custom. On May 7, 1403, Drisht inhabitants demanded to Seignory to remove this practice because the person who bought the cocoon to the custom fixed the price himself; his abuse was so extreme according to the commune because he achieved to buy with a "perper" so much cocoon that might be bought with three or four perpers.³⁵

The deputy bajlos-chieftain of Durrës, Bartolomeo Bruto also was keeping a ship to trade stocks services on his interest.³⁶ Bartolomeo traded outside Durrës also military men, and thus has achieved to sell to the people around Durrës weapons and *balestra*.

In the first 20 years of the XV century, the Seignory had difficult relations with Balsha III (1403-1421) lord of Ulqin and Tivar.³⁷ Balsha III tried to secretly take Shkodra away from Seignory on 1404,³⁸ but in the fighting he lost Ulqin and Tivar.³⁹

Because of the support he was enjoying in the local lords, the Seignory was forced to find an acceptable solution with him; the

³³ *Ibid*, Avog.Com,Raspe 7/57 (529 rv; Sen.Misti R.52/148v.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ ASV, Sen Misti R.46/83 (82)v-84 (83).

³⁶ ASV, Rason V .Notat.I/132v.

³⁷ Gelcich G. La Zedda e la Dinastia dei Balscidi.Spalato, 1899. (Balsha III was the son of Gjergj Strazimiri who on 1396 emitted to Seignory Shkodra, Drisht. Gjergj Strazimiri has been prisoner of the Turks on 1395).

³⁸ Maltezi L. *Shkaqet e luftës së Balshës III kundër Republikës së Venedikut në 20 vjetet e parë të shek. XV*. Studime Historike, 1980, 2, 179-195; (republished) Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut, Tiranë 1989, II. 176-196.

³⁹ G. Gelcich. La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi. Spalato 1899.

solution was the agreement they achieved. According to the agreement, the Seignory was obliged to give him annually a specific amount of money. As the Seignory had problems with Balsha III, she was hoping to find peace with him through this agreement. However, this didn't happen. Venetian governors in Shkodra failed to pay him the specific amount, and under these circumstances Balsha III attacked Seignory possessions. This situation forced the Seignory to draw the attention of Shkodra's governor in September 1418 and to make him known that the Seignory was obliged to pay him the specific amount according to the agreement. 'This amount,' – she stressed out, 'the governors failed to pay him in time; but even when it was paid, he received no money but clothes (*dati fuerunt panni*) with a price 40% higher compared their value.'⁴⁰

Also, Gjon Kastrioti complained to the Seignory about the governors.⁴¹ On January 10, 1410, he complained about the governors changing annually the quantities and the weights in Durrës, Lezha and Shkodra.⁴² He complained also about the riots at customs being a detriment to him, on August 17, 1428⁴³ and May, 1433.⁴⁴

...

The relations with the local lords worsened with the first efforts of the Ottoman rule made in the '30s of the XV century to occupy the Albanian lands.

⁴⁰ "Quia sicut sumus informati dati fuerunt pannj in solutum ad xl pro centenario plusquam ualeant domino Balse pro sua prouisione, quam debeat habere annuatim a nostro dominio propter quod multipliciter per literas suas nostro dominio missas se grauati et conquestus est" (AAV, X, 2274).

⁴¹ Gjon has had good relations with Seignory before: See the document of January 28, 1422 where is spoken about the secret relation between Gjon and Seignory towards the Serb despot that was trying to take Shkodra. Gjon was at the side of Seignory in this conflict (S.Ljubic, *Listine o odnosajih izmedju Jznoga Slavenstva i mletacke Republike*, (in) *Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*), Zagreb, (*hereinafter* S.Ljubic. *Listine*, VIII, 211-214; F. Noli. *George Kastrioti Scanderbeg (1405-1468)*. (*hereinafter* Noli. *Scanderbeg*), New York, 1947, 3, 108-122.

⁴² On January 10, 1410, Gjon Kastrioti presented this demand to Seignory "Ad tertium vero capitulum per quod dicit, quod mesure et ponderis vidualium et rerum, ac mercationum, que expendiuntur in Durrachio, Scutaro, et Alexio semper solita in suo statu permanere quasi singulo anno mutantur per officiales dictorum locorum cum maxima confusione habentium agere in dictis locis" (Ljubic, *Listine* VI, No.XLVIII p.51; F. Noli. *Scanderbeg*, dok 2, p. 107).

⁴³ Radonic, 5 p. 4; Jorga N. *Notes et extraits pour server a l'histoire aux Croisades au XV e siècle*. (*hereinafter* Jorga, *Notes*), Paris 1890, I, 474-476..

⁴⁴ Radonic, 6 p. 4; Jorga, *Notes*, I, 558

The local lords made a stubborn resistance to the Ottoman Turks,⁴⁵ and asked in vain in this case for the help of Seignory, but the Seignory was interested in having an understanding with the Ottoman Turks to trade in the lands of the empire with an annual specific amount to be paid.

Such an agreement was signed with the Ottoman Turks after the fall of Thessaloniki at their hands in March 1430.

The Seignory ordered after the '30s the governors of Durrës to not intervene in the conflict between the Albanians and the Turks in the vicinities of the city. Also Shkodra's governor was ordered on 1433 to not allow Nikollë Dukagjini and other rebellion commanders against the sultan enter the city, to not give them shelter, support, money and properties. Interested in the preservation of peace with them, the Seignory was ready to give Danja (that Seignory has conquered before Nikollë Dukagjini) back to them. The Seignory refused on 7 May 1434 the demand that the lords of Vlora presented to conquer by attack the stronghold of Kanina and to raise in it the San Marco flag.

The relations with Scanderbeg

Scanderbeg as military and politician knew certainly well the political situation within the country, the Seignory relations with Balsha III and the Albanian lords.

According to Stefan Magno, the Venetian chronicler, Scanderbeg proclaimed himself on 1444 successor of Balsha. Such a stand makes us think that our hero aimed to drive the Seignory out of her possessions in Albania, or to put under his control under Bashaj's possessions Shkodra, Drisht, Ulqin and Tivar.

However, this Venetian information makes us drive "conclusions" should be left aside because they do not find support from the documents of the time.

On the contrary, the archival sources inform that on February 12, 1445, Gjergj Kastrioti and his brother Stanish were in good relations with the Seignory; they asked Seignory to confirm their "chapters and concessions" that Seignory had confirmed to Gjon Kastrioti on May 28,

⁴⁵Malltezi L. *Kryengritja antiosmane e Gjergj Arianitit*. "Ylli" magazine, Tiranë, 1980, p. 4.

1438. They asked in this case to be recognized as “Venetian citizens” as their father has been. The Doge approved these requests.⁴⁶

Scanderbeg’s relations with Seignory broke down in May 1448 because of the issue of Danja’s possession. After the death of Kojë Zaharia, Danja’s lord, the Seignory took its possession. On the contrary, Scanderbeg refused to recognize the Venetian rule in Danja; our national hero pretended that Danja after the death of Kojë Zaharia belonged to him.⁴⁷

The archives inform us about a brutal war between them. The Doge gave many instructions to his administrator to not lose Danja. The Seignory encouraged the Ottoman Turks and other lords of the time such as Pal and Nikollë Dukagjini to rise against Scanderbeg; she even tried to “liquidate from the face of the earth” Scanderbeg, secretly encouraging his killing by a man of hero’s inner circle.⁴⁸

The Seignory was forced to openly wage war on Scanderbeg on July 1448; the documents made known that in July when our hero passed Tivar with 10 thousand troops, the highlanders of Tivar commune kept his side. There were fierce fightings during the passing through Tivar. According to Tivar’s governor, Scanderbeg had 1.600 warriors killed and many prisoners. This happened because of Markovic that was living in the upper valley on Tivar. Tivar's mayor, “not knowing how to

⁴⁶ In the respective documents it speaks about for other two demands of Gjergj Kastrioti and Stanish on which Seignory had remarks; as the demand to return on him (Scanderbeg) his opponents that would escape in Seignory lands. The Seignory accepted to give them if there would be not condemned before by the Seignory. Also, the Seignor didn't approved Scanderbeg's request to permit the Venetian merchants to manage his customs that were situated in Venice's territories. The Seignory objected this demand because was in contradiction with the State's rules and practices. (S. Ljubic. Listine IX , 214-215; J. Radonic. Skenderbeg, 12 p. 8).

⁴⁷ Malltezi L. *Lufta e Skëndebeut kundër Venedikut (1447-1448)* “Poeta nascitur, historicus fit - ad honorem Zef Mirdita”. (Ed. A. Ramaj), St.Gallen-Zagreb, 2013; p. 189-200.

⁴⁸ 1448, 4 maii. “Cum quidam fidelis subditus noster, qui est persona bone reputationis et pratica et sagax, dici fecerit nostro dominio, quod haberet modum dandum dandi vel dari faciendi mortem Scanderbego, inimico nostro sed vult habere provisionem ducatorum C. in anno; vadit pars, quod quod respondeatur sibi quod, si ipse dabit vel dari faciet mortem Scanderbego predicto, volumus sumus contenti dare sibi in vita sua provisionem predictam Et ut libentius ad hanc rem se ponat, dicatur ei, quod volumus habere eum in gratia nostri domini in omnibus licitis et honestis precipue comendatum” (S.Ljubic.Listine IX, 268-269; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 17 , f. 9-10.

break his enemies" encouraged the Ottoman Turks against "Stefan Crnojević and Scanderbeg."⁴⁹

After brutal fighting that were held between them, the parts were forced to make peace.⁵⁰ The peace agreement was signed on October 4, 1448 "in the army of the great Scanderbeg near Lezha"⁵¹ in presence of Scanderbeg and Nikollë Dukagjini who signed the agreement themselves and other lords, members of the League of Lezha.⁵²

According to the agreement, Seignory kept Danja's possession, but Scanderbeg got for himself and his successors a reward of 1400 ducats per year. In this amount were included also 200 ducats that the Kastrioti family members have been from Durrës taking long time.⁵³

Also, Scanderbeg had the right to get annually 200 horses with salt tax-free from Durrës. The Seignory had give two clothing with "scarlati" drapery annually, while Scanderbeg was obliged to give her every year two *levierë* and two *astorë* according to an old tradition.⁵⁴ The parts agreed to give a solution to the conflict between Pal Dukagjini and Venice. Pal Dukagjini has kept for a while some villages belonging to Danja. Scanderbeg and Nikollë Dukagjini were committed to force Pal Dukagjini return Danja the villages into question. In case of failure, the Seignory was free to act as she wished, and the lords into

⁴⁹ The fightings passing Tivar were severe; Scanderbeg lost 1.600 warriors and many prisoners. The Venetians achieved victory was because of Markovic that were living in a valley over Tivar. Tivar's mayor, not knowing how to break his enemies could encourage the Ottoman Turks against "Stefan Çernojevic and Scanderbeg". "1448. Iuglio scrive Jacomo Delfin da Antivari, che Scanderbeg con 10.000 uomini, uniti a quelli della Montagna, calò sopra Antivari ma che fu rotto con morte di 1.600 uomini e molti prigioni; che questa vittoria s'ebbe per il buon portamento di quelli Marcovich, che è una vallata su quell di Antivari, e che gli altri contadini sono ribelli...Gli Antivarini spedirono ambasciatori a Venezia, chiedendo inter cetera, che ai villain ribelli sia aumentato il tributo e ad essi, come fedeli, mentre fin'ora pagavano la decimal di vini, si conceda, che por avanti pagino il quintdecimo, cçioè da ogni 15 solo uno. E così fu lor concesso a 7 agosto" (Radonic, Skenderbeg, 20, p. 14).

⁵⁰ Peace between Scanderbeg and Venice was achieved in August 1448 "In agosto si ebbe dall'Albania, che Andrea Venier ibi ambasciator, strinse la pace con Scanderbeg, dandoli ducati 1.400" (Ibid).

⁵¹ "in exercitu magnifici Scanderbeg apud Alexium" (S.Ljubic.Listine, IX.pp.282-283; Noli, Scanderbeg, Appendix. dok.9. p. 115).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

question, i.e., Scanderbeg and Nikollë Dukagjini would not oppose her stand⁵⁵.

According the agreement, Aranit Komneni had the right to get bread tax-free from Durrës, as previously done.⁵⁶

Scanderbeg took from Seignory the specific amount according the agreement because was being delayed to join Janosh Hunyadi in the war against the Ottoman Turks.⁵⁷

On December 30, 1448, the authorities in Venice made the confirmation of peace.⁵⁸ The Seignory expressed by this occasion the opinion that it was better to have good relations with Scanderbeg for the protection of Shkodra, which was located near to his possessions.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, the agreement did not make get Scanderbeg closer with Venice because the Seignory didn't fulfill of his requests. So, on April 21, 1449, the Seignory accepted his request to ratify the achieved peace on October 4, but refused to make expenses for the *balistarë* that he was asking from Seignory.⁶⁰ The Seignory accepted to supply him with *balestra* for the fortifications, but the expenses were to be charged to Scanderbeg himself. Also, the Seignory refused his request for protection although Scanderbeg was ready to give Seignory the census of 6 thousand ducats that he was paying to the Turks; The Seignory replied that could not do take that into consideration because of the agreement she had with the Ottomans.⁶¹

By this last reply, Venice created a problem to Scanderbeg; Venice didn't like to have problems with the Turks in Albania. On October 20,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "pro statu et commodio rerum nostrarum partium Albanie multum faciat, quod Scanderbegus nobiscum bene vivat et vicinetur, habito principaliter respectu ad casum occursum, civitati nostre Scutari, que est caput illius provincie et cum per eius debiles conditiones in omni parva novitate subiaceret manifestissimo periculo" (S. Ljubic, *ibid*; Radonic, Skenderbeg, 28, p. 18).

⁶⁰ "Ad partem ballistiariorum, quos a nobis requirit, contenti sumus sibi compagere, quod si pro custodia terrarum et fortiliciorum suorum indigere ballistariis, illos de terries et locis conducere possit sumtibus suis, sic que scribemus et mandabimus rectoribus nostris Albanie" (S.Ljubic. Listine, IX, pp. 301-302; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix, dok.10 p. 117).

⁶¹ "Quod protectionem sui status accipiamus, et offerat obis dare illum annualem censum ducatorum VI.m., quem de presenti dat Teucro, non possemus, salvis capitulis pacis, quam cum Teucro habemus..." (*ibid*).

1449, Scanderbeg asked to Seignory to give him Meda and Velipoja (*loça Medoa et Vilipolje*), but she refused. The Seignory allowed him to graze the livestock in these fields. The Seignory allowed him to take salt and clothing from Durrës as before, while the money (the provision) of the agreement has to be taken from Lezha's possession.⁶²

On May 14, 1450, the sultan Murat II besieged Kruja for the first time.⁶³ The first siege of Kruja created a difficult situation to the Albanians. The question laid was whether they were able to stand the danger. As Barleti, one of the chroniclers of the time, informs Scanderbeg in his letters sent to the chancelleries of the time after the victory, wrote that Albanians fought with extraordinary heroism until the Turks were forced to withdraw in shame on October 26, 1450.⁶⁴

The documents show that during this siege where Albanians were fighting for life or death against the Turks, the Venetians merchants provided the Turks with fresh flour and bread.⁶⁵ Rightfully angered of their stand, Scanderbeg attacked their convoys of stocks to force them change attitude. The Seignory, who found itself in a difficult position by Scanderbeg for this stand, was forced to order the count of Durrës to help Albanians and not the Turks.⁶⁶

In October 1450, again, the Seignory refused Scanderbeg's request to give him Kruja,⁶⁷ because it meant war with the Turks.

Under these circumstances, Scanderbeg was forced to seek other powerful allies from the West to drive the Turks out, so that he could

⁶² Ad instatiam oratoris domini Skenderbegi ad ea que petit, scilicet ut dentur domino suo loca Medoe et Velipolje, respondeatur : quod damus ei liberam facultatem pascendi gregem suum in terries nostris et quod in antea habebit salem et vestes a Durachio annuatim et denarios quos habere debet ab Alexio (Ibid).

⁶³ Maltezi L, Rrethimi i parë i Krujës dhe dëshmitë e Skënderbeut. *Gazeta "Bashkimi"*, Tiranë, May 17, 1980; *Rrethimi i parë i Krujës*. Revista "Ylli", Tiranë, 1989, 1.

⁶⁴ Noli, Scanderbeg, III, p. 43-44.

⁶⁵ "Si ha lettere d'Albania, che il Turco si trova a campo sotto Croia, che Scanderbeg si difende valorosamente, e che se il conte di Scutari non somministrasse farine e pane fresco al Turco, questi avrebbe levato il campo". (S. Ljubic. *Listine*, VI, p. 4; Radonic, *Skenderbeg*, 35, p. 20).

⁶⁶ Jorga N. *Notes et Extraits pour Servir a l'Histoire des Croisades*. Paris, 1902, III, p. 260-261.

⁶⁷ Jorga. *Notes*, vol.III, f.260 "Le 23 novembre, le senat repond aux lettres du 14 octobre d'Augustin de Renerio provediteur de Dagno, qui annonçait que Scanderbeg avais offert à la Republique per illum abbatem Croia, qu' il cederà en cas de refus aux Turcs. Venice veut bien reconcilier Scanderbeg, avec le Sultan; elle appris avec satisfaction la fin du siege de Croia, mais elle prie Scanderbeg de garder Croia pour lui-même".

protect the country from a powerful state as the Ottoman Empire. So, an agreement was reached Alfonso V of Naples, on March 26, 1451 in Gaeta, Italy.⁶⁸

Scanderbeg had bad relations with Seignory. On December 3, 1451, the Seignory accepted the demand from the Commune of Kotorr (under her possession at this time) to interfere and ask the Pope of Rome to grant this commune 1/3 of the amount of 1500 ducats that the Pope has promised Scanderbeg. This amount was asked for “*per la subvencion dela giexia chatedral.*”⁶⁹

The relations with Seignory were improved in September 1452, when Rasha's despot tried to take Kotorr from Seignory; Scanderbeg took the occasion to approach with Seignory to serve her with his forces.⁷⁰ Similar stand Scanderbeg took also on 1453, when the Seignory has sent her fleet to protect Constantinople from the Ottoman conquest.

After the conquest of Constantinople on April 29, 1453, Mehmet II proclaimed war to Seignory. Scanderbeg considered this moment as an opportunity to strengthen his relations with Seignory. He sent his ambassador to Shkodra's count, through whom he expressed his will to respect “chapters and agreements” that he had with Seignory,⁷¹ the desire to have good relations with the governors and the readiness to help Seignory approach with the Serb despot.⁷²

⁶⁸See the peace treaty signed in Gaeta between Scanderbeg and Alfonso V of Naples representatives. (Archivio de la Corona de Aragona, 2697, fol. 100 ab; F. Cerone Archivio Storico per le province napoletane, XXXVVV (1903). 172; Radonic, Skenderbeg, 38 p. 23; Noli.Scanderbeg. 11 p.118- 120).

⁶⁹ ASV, Senato Mar.Vol IV, c.95; S.Ljubic, Listine IX, 107; Radonic.50, f.

⁷⁰ On September 14, the Seignory informed by Kotorr's count about the victory against Rasha's despot, ordered the distribution of a drapery quantity as gift for him and other important officials. About this event the document informs: “Et cum magnificus Scanderbegus sponte se obtulit ad servitia nostra cum persona et gentibus suis sine ullo premio contra dictos hostes nostros sicut comes Scutari et alii rectores nostril Albanie scripserunt, et faciat pro dominio nostro gratificare se cum dicto magnifico Scanderbego in illa humana, amicabile et honorabili forma verborum. Quo Collegio videbitur, ostendendo oblationis suas dominio nostro fuisse et esse gratissimas”. (S.Ljubic.Listine. IX, 450-451; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 59, p. 38)

⁷¹ “ad observationem capitulorum et conventionum quas nobis habet ab bene et amabili vicinandum cum ipso comite nostro ac cum omnibus Rectoribus terrarum et locorum nostrorum in partibus illis” (S. Ljubic. Listine X, 17; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 69, p. 40-41).

⁷² “vadit pars, quod scribatur et declaretur dicto comiti Scutari, quod sumus contenti, quod per interpositionem dicti magnifici Scanderbegi et aliter, ut melius sibi videbitur, facere possit

On August 29, 1453, Scanderbeg sent also a letter to Seignory⁷³ through which he expressed his desire to approach with the governors in the territories under her possession. Scanderbeg asked the Seignory to allow Lezha's administrator to escort him in a journey in Rome and Naples, and the Seignory positively granted his demand on October 9, 1453. Although it wasn't her practice to allow her governors to make such journeys, she accepted to allow her administrator to accompany Scanderbeg in Rome and Naples.⁷⁴

In February 1454 the parts came even closer to each other.

The Seignory was informed by him that there were major Turkish forces were expected to come and fight against him and Venetians possessions in Albania.⁷⁵

Scanderbeg suggested to Seignory collaboration to face the danger, and asked the Seignory to order the governors in Albania to come to terms with. So that he with his troops, the Seignory and the troops of other Albanian lords could prevent to protect the cities and the population in Albania.⁷⁶

The Seignory approved this suggestion, because according to her, there wasn't other choice for her future in Albania, but to unite against

pacem cum dicto per illud longius tempus, quod facere poterit hac condicione quod qui habent teneant". (Ibid). (Scanderbeg from his part had good relations with the Serb despot. (See Radonic, Skenderbeg , 70-71, p. 41).

⁷³ S. Ljubic. Listine, 18 ; Radonic. Skenderbeg 72, p. 41-42.

⁷⁴ "Ad partem autem, qua scribitis de deliberatione vestra eundi Romam et Neapolim et petites, quod licentiam concedamus nobili viro Petro Marcello, provisorio nostro Alexii, veniendi vobiscum, licet non sit de more nostro concedendi, quod rectores nostri a regiminibus suis discedun tattamen ut magnificentie vestre complacemus , iussimus dicto nostro provisorio, quod cum magnificentia vestra venire debeat" (Ibid). The Seignory ordered administrator Pietro Marcello to go in this service with Seignory's expenses, to take with him one of his servants and one of the stipendiaries serving in Lezha's stronghold; he ordered to appoint in his duty the successor Marcus Solomono and in his absence, Johanes de Canali. The Seignory ordered to be given them half salary of the mentioned administrator. (Ibid).

⁷⁵ "Quoniam per litteras magnifici Scandarbegi et omnium rectorum nostrorum Albaniae ac per alias multas vias habetur Turcum omnino esse venturum tempore novo cum potentissimo exercitu ad partes Albanie ad destructionem dicti Scandarbegi et ad accipiendum mones terras et loca nostra Albaniae..." (S. Ljubic. Listine, X 27; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 75, p. 43).

⁷⁶ "ipse Scandarbegus requirat, ut velimus mandare rectoribus nostris partium illarum, quod cum sua magnificentia subito taliter se intellegant, quod sua magnificentia possit conservationi civitatum et saluti animarum illarium parcium consulere et in tempore providere, et coadunatis apud se omnibus viris nostris, suis et aliorum dominorum Albaniae, possit, auctore Dio, resistere impetui dicti Teucris et future eius furie". (Ibid).

the Ottomans.⁷⁷ The Seignory thanked Scanderbeg for this suggestion and ordered her governors to meet him and take together the decisions for the protection of the country.⁷⁸

On 1455, the Seignory made the first efforts to turn Durrës into an island. Such an advice was given by Muzak Topia, the brother-in-law of Scanderbeg. On February 25, 1455 “the majestic Muzak Topia” made known to Seignory that he was ready to put at her disposal 6.000 men to open the channels (*folearum*) that would turn the city into an island. He was also committed to bearing himself the expenses.

The Seignory considered his proposal by granting a “provision” (reward) of 300 ducats per year for Muzak Topia with the condition that “the majestic Muzak gives Seignory 6.000 men to open the channel whenever required by her.

The turning of Durrës into an island was of great interest for Scanderbeg and for the Albanian lords fighting alongside him, because it was this city where they could withdraw in case of danger.

The Seignory seriously took this problem: on March 13, 1455, Francesco Foscari, the doge, appointed Andrea Bollani administrator in Durrës and other Albania’s territories (*partes Albanie*).⁷⁹ He was ordered to investigate generally the situation of the possessions and take appropriate measures for the improvement of the situation.

To fulfill the duty, the administrator was allowed to suspend and dismiss from any responsibility, arrest and put in jail “tied with bars” clerks of every level, (bajlos-chieftain included), in case of contradictions with the state’s instructions. Bollani could raise or

⁷⁷ “Et sicut omnes intellegunt conservationi status nostri in Albania nulla alia securior neque melior provisio fieri possit, quam ordinare, quod nostri rectores talem intelligentiam capiant cum dicto Scanderbego quod omnes gentes et vires Albanie colligantur in unum ad oppositum dicti Teucri ; vadit pars quod ad literas Scanderbegi respondeatur in illa forma, que melior et utilior videbitur dominio laudando sapientes et utiles commerationes suas circa provisiones ad oppositum Teucri, et hortando ac animando eius magnificentiam ad potenter et magnamine se parandum contra illum...” (Ibid).

⁷⁸ “ Et ex nunc sit captum, quod mandetur omnibus rectoribus Albanie, quod his habitis, omnes convenire debeant in illo loco, qui comodior sit Scanderbego, excepta civitate Scutari et cum sua magnificentia conferre et deliberare debeant de remediis et modis cum quibus resisti possit dicto Tucro et salvare terras et animas illius provincie, capiendo talem intelligentiam cum dicto Scanderbego, et aliis dominis Albanie, quod omnes potentie illarum partium sint unite ad oppositum dicti Teucri pro honore Dei et salute illarum partium”. (Ibid).

⁷⁹ Radonic. Skenderbeg, 90, p. 49-52.

reduce the taxes and the obligations of the citizens if seen this appropriate.

Bollani was ordered to meet Scanderbeg and to talk with him about important national questions including the turning of Durrës into an island.

Bollani was ordered to be firstly introduced to the Bajlos of Durrës, to make him known the task assigned and then to start working. Bollani, together with the Bajlos Durrës and other people that he would consider necessary, should investigate the places where the channels (*cavationes*) are to be opened. The channels according to Seignory should be opened in the upper and low part of Durrësi's "mud". Bollani was adviced to take the workforces from the Venice possessions in Albania, Durrës, Shkodra, Drisht, Lezha, Tivar, Ulqin and Danja. For this he might ask Scanderbeg, Gjergj Araniti, Muzak Topia and other lords of Albania for the workers. Also, Bolani has to make Scanderbeg known the promise Muzak Topia made about the 6000 workers to be at his expenses for the necessary works.

The Doge informed him further that in Albania there existed many persons fined by the state for quarrels, beatings etc. who were hiding in the surroundings of Durrës to escape the punishment. He was advice to use this contingent of people as workers and removing their punishment. He has to daily provide the workers with "bread and wine", and the money should be taken from the treasury of Durrës and cover should cover the expenses for the workers, his salary and the salary of the bajlos, castellan and the soldiers serving in Durrës, and the payment that the Venetian state had to make Scanderbeg and Muzak Topia as based on the agreement.

In order to have the necessary revenues for the assigned tasks, Bolani had to inspect Venice possessions in Albania, set taxes and obligations to the population, and if neccessary diminish the expenses. The Doge informed Bolani that the necessary tools for work would also be sent.

Later sources inform that Bollani was provided with shovels, pickaxes, crowbars and stalls. The Seignory sent also an engineer-surveyor to Durrës to lead the workings, and his name was Peregrin Cila as reported by the records of the time.

The sources inform that Bollani progressed with the works of turning Durrës into an island, but he passed away on December 1455 as it is shown in the records. The Seignory replaced him with the noble Francesco Venerio who was instructed by the Doge on April 26, 1456.⁸⁰ As in the case of Bollani, the instructions about turning Durrës into an island are more or less the same. The Doge informed Venerio that the work started by Bolani is to be concluded by him. *“We want to accelerate your journey in Durrës, because we very much desire (magnopere optamus) that the breechings and the workings we previously ordered to be made at Durrës mud from the noble man Johannem Bolani, must absolutely conclude in such a way, that when there is mud, should enter the water of the sea and when is water outflow to go to the sea, thing that is good for the inhabitants health - LM)/ and of the fortification of our very loyal city /of Durrës/.”*⁸¹

Nevertheless the efforts for turning Durrës into an island, the relations of Scanderbeg with Venice were unsuccessfully made.

On July 8, 1457, Scanderbeg raised many problems in Venice through his representative Gjergj Pelini. He complained about not being given the provision of 1400 ducats that he was to take on bases of Danja treaty. Also, even when it was granted, was given in coins using another exchange rate at his detriment in stead of ducats.⁸²

*“Pay attention”, instructed Scanderbeg his ambassador, “for the ducats that that are given to me for 42 /coins -LM/, I want to be given to me with 48.”*⁸³ *“When I sent /your governors-LM/ the letters /the agreements, the orders-LM/ of your Seignory”, continued further Scanderbeg, “they want to do nothing.”*⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Radonic. Skenderbeg, 110.f.63-66.

⁸¹ “Nos Franciscus Foscari, Dei gratia dux Venetiarum etc., ..Et quoniam magnopere optamus, quod cavationes et laboreria, ordinata fieri ad baltam Dyrachii per olim nobilem virum Johannem Bolani de nostro mandato. omnino fiant et compleantur, ut crescentibus aquis marinis, intrent dictam baltam, et decrescentibus exeant ad mare pro sanitate et fortificatione illius civitatis nobis fidelissime”. (ibid).

⁸² In prima supplicati a la signoria de Venesia per la mia provision chomo me la dano, et quello che me dano meglio saria a no darmella (Radonic. Skenderbeg, 141, p. 84-86).

⁸³ “Guarda per li ducati, che me dano a quaranta do et non ha voiudo che me dagno a quaranta octo quello, che no me hano dado, e che scrivani a questo che acontano et che me danno, quello non me ano dado”. (Radonic. Skenderbeg, 141, p. 84-86).

⁸⁴ “quando li mando le letere de la vostra signoria, lor non vuol far nulla”. (Ibid).

Scanderbeg asked the Seignory to consider the possibility that his provision should be 2000 ducats.⁸⁵ He complained about the governors for having more words than work to find a solution to the problems he was raising to them.⁸⁶ Scanderbeg asked to be free, to go whenever he wanted to, to not be obstructed from the Venetian officials, otherwise he would be forced to behave as he knew and if happened like this, "Godspeed" to this work.⁸⁷

From the documents from the archive of Venice we are informed that on August 18, 1458 to Seignory was again presented Scanderbeg's ambassador, the abbey of Saint Rotac Benedictine monastery near Tivar, Gjergj Pelini. The mentioned abbey presented in Venice the peace agreement between Scanderbeg, Venetian governor of Shkodra and of the special Venetian administrator.⁸⁸

On June 1459, Scanderbeg informed again that had problems with Seignory; the captain of the Bay, Laurent Mauro, based on Albania's rectors information's, accused him that has grabbed Shat's land. Scanderbeg declined this accusation and said that "this land has been grabbed by him from the enemy's hands."

Venice approached to collaborate with Scanderbeg on 1463, when waged war to the Ottoman Turks.

The parts made an agreement between them on 20 August 1463.⁸⁹

The conditions of the agreement were presented from Scanderbeg through protonotary (*prothonotarius*), Rotec' abbey of Saint Mary monastery and the Ambassador Andre Snaticcho.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ "Inprima supplicati a la signoria de Venesia per la mia provision chome me la dano, et quello che me dano meglio saria a no darmella; mo supplicati a la signoria, che me aiutano in questo mio servixio qualche do millia ducati, zioè 2000 de la mia provision, et supplicati molto forte". (Ibid).

⁸⁶ "perchè mi ho abudo asay parole e pochi fati de questi rectori e dali proveditori" (Ibid).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ S.Ljubic. Listine, X, No.CXXXVI, p. 133-135 Aug. 18, 1458). According to Noli, the reconciliation between the parts was so cordial that Scanderbeg returned to Venice the castle of Shat that was taken from the Turks.

⁸⁹ Noli. Scanderbeg, p. 66-67.

⁹⁰ The conditions of the agreement (*capitula*) were presented in Venice from Scanderbeg's representative (*oratorius*), the protonotary (*prothonotarius*) and the abbey of the Saint Mary Monastery of Rotac and Ambassador Andre Snaticcho. (S.Ljubic. Listine. X, pp.264-266; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 35, p.134-137; J. Valentini. Acta Albania Veneta, dok.7449). We summarize as follows: Scanderbeg accepted to be on the battlefield with his soldiers (se offere star im campo cum le sue zente), but demanded from the Seignory Italian soldiers and infantry men (dandoli favor de zente d'arme e fanti italiani) in such a measure that Seignory might seem

The Seignory joyfully awaited the approach with Scanderbeg; The Great Council informed Scanderbeg in the beginning of the agreement that was inclined to accept everything in his honor⁹¹.

The Council accepted:

(1) the demand to pass on him the Italian soldiers in the parts of Albania,⁹² as well as the demand to give him in the future 500 knights and 100 Italian infantry men;⁹³

(2) the demand to grant him that year 2000 ducats for his works;⁹⁴

(3) the demand that his son be commander of the mentioned forces /troops/ and Scanderbeg their governor;⁹⁵

(4) granting Scanderbeg the money for these troops aiming to not dealing again with this problem with the Venetian governors in Albania.⁹⁶

(5) the Seignory accepted to keep in Albania not one but more tireme ships and other ships in support of the anti Ottoman war;⁹⁷

appropriate, this support would be sent him as soon as possible; the money (pagamenti e denari) for the army should be granted to him (Scanderbeg) from Seignory to be avoided like this the previous scandals with the governors; to be kept by the Seignory a galley (galia) from April to August when the Ottoman Turks attacked Seignory's territories; in case that Seignory made peace with the Turks in this peace Scanderbeg had to be included; the son (of Scanderbeg) that was 8 years old to be considered Venetian "noble"; if would be banished from the Turks from his country, to be granted by Seignory a some place (qualche vostro luogo e terra) and financial aid (provision) that could live hoping to return in his country; in case that was indepted in his provision, this debt was to be liquidated in this country because the Seignory many times had ordered the administrators and the rectors to be liquidated this debt but these orders were not carried. (Noli. Scanderbeg. Appendix 35 p. 136-137; J. Valentini. AAV, dok.7449).

⁹¹ "sumus ...dispositi ad omnia que honorem et commode suas concernere possent". (Ibid).

⁹² contenti sumus et sibi promittimus gentes nostras italicas, que sunt in partibus Albanie, et ultra hec favores aliarum gentium subditorum et locorum nostrorum ipsarium partium. (Ibid).

⁹³ Sumus ...contenti et offerimus magnificentie sue pro tempore nove mittere ad favores suos equites V centum italicos et pedites V centum, ut potentius hosti bellum inferri possit. (Ibid).

⁹⁴ Sibi dari faciemus ducatos II mille, ut rebus suis melius satisfacere possit. (Ibid).

⁹⁵ Contenti sumus eius filius sit capitaneus, idem vero magnificus Scanderbegus gubernator. (Ibid).

⁹⁶ Ad secundum, quia cupidi sumus in omnibus possibilibus sue magnificentie satisfacere contenti sumus quod in facto istarum pecuniarum non habeat habere agree cum recoribus seu provisoribus nostris Albanie, nam mittemus hinc magnificentie sua dictas pecunias. (Ibid).

⁹⁷ Ad tertium : certum ex nunc esse volumus dominum Scanderbegum nos continue maxime stante bello cum Turco habituros esse in partibus Albanie et Dalmatie non unam sed plures tiremes et alia navigia, que in omnem casum erunt ad omnia commode terrarium et locorum tam sue magnificentie quam nostrorum.

(6) the Seignory accepted that in case of an agreement for peace reached with the Turks, Scanderbeg would also be involved;⁹⁸

(7) to make the son of Scanderbeg be included in the ranks of the nobles in the Great Council;⁹⁹

(8) also accepted in case of unsuccessful the war against the Ottoman Turks, to take under protection Scanderbeg in her possessions;¹⁰⁰

(9) the Seignory accepted to grant Scanderbeg his provision.¹⁰¹

On October 17, the Seignory ordered Gabriel Trevizani:

(1) to detach from the Venetian governors in Albania the military forces and to put them under his command, as a first step to put them under Scanderbeg's command.¹⁰²

(2) - to reconcile Lekë Dukagjini and other Albanian lords with Scanderbeg, and to join the fight along with Scanderbeg¹⁰³ as would do the Venetian forces in Albania.¹⁰⁴

The Seignory ordered the commander of the forces in Albania, Cimarosta to act accordingly the agreement dated 20 August, 1463, to fight against the Turks.

In November 1463, the Pope Pius II call on the Christian countries to organize a crusade against the Ottoman Turks.¹⁰⁵ The Seignory responded to the call. She even tried to attract Scanderbeg in the

⁹⁸ Ad quantum dicimus quod si quo tempore deveniemus ad pacem ad concordiam ullam cum Turco, erimus semper libenter memores magnificencie sue, et nominabimus et comprehendere faciemus eam cum statu et suis subditis in ipsa pae et concordio tamquam bonum adherentem et recomendatum nostrum ita quod in pace et bello sit unum et idem nobiscum (Ibid).

⁹⁹ Ad quantum contenti sumus et gratum admodum nobis est quod filius suus sicut petit fiat et sit nobilis de nostro maiori consilio, in qua re expedienda bene et votive procedemus iuxta ordines et leges nostras, sicut in his casibus

¹⁰⁰ Ad sextum; dicimus quod speramus. Quod in divina bonitate confidimus nos esse modo aliquot eventurum talem casum immo procul tenendum est, quod perfidus hostis iste propulsabitur ex Europa, quoniam ultra vires nostras et ipsius somini, summus pontifex et alii potentatus ut ex omni parte potenter comprimi possit; sed nihilominus in satisfactionem prefati domini dicimus quod si forte occurreret casus predictus certus sit quod loca nostra sua semper reputari poterunt, et magnificencie sue taliter providebimus, quod de nobis poterit merito contentari, (Ibid).

¹⁰¹ We think this is about the provision of 1400 ducats that he received from Seignory after the war of Danja.

¹⁰² S. Ljubic. Listine, X, 279-281; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 255, p. 146-147.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Radonic. Skenderbeg, dok. 256, 257.

crusade. Scanderbeg was encouraged by the Durrës bishop to support the crusade.¹⁰⁶ On November 27, he declared his support.¹⁰⁷

On 1464, the pope Pius II arrived in Ancona to head the crusade; he would travel from Ancona to Ragusa to meet the king of Hungary and Scanderbeg. On August 14, 1464 Pius II died taking together with him the crusade's project.¹⁰⁸

On September 13, 1465 Scanderbeg sent Pal Engjëlli, the bishop, to Venice to present the Seignory the following demands about the agreement of August 20:

(1) to be renewed the company of 500 Venetian knights and infantry men, because the first one was dispersed because of its commander Cimarosta, didn't obeyed to him and withdrew in Durrës. The dissolution has happened according to Scanderbeg because the governors hadn't paid Albanians the money belonging to them;¹⁰⁹

(2) from now on the money should be given to Scanderbeg himself;¹¹⁰

(3) Scanderbeg further ordered Pal Engjëlli to demand the Seignory on his behalf to respect the agreement for the Venetian galleys presence in the Albanian seashore;¹¹¹

(4) that Seignory should intercede for Scanderbeg to the pope Paul II to take him "under protection" and to give a him a part from the 100 thousands ducats that the pope has granted as aid for the countries fighting the Ottoman Turks;¹¹²

(6) to return to him (Scanderbeg) the confiscated boats with wheat from the Venetian fleet and to pay him the money from the provisions belonging to him.¹¹³

(7) the Seignory should take measures for the protection of Shkodra castle.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁶ Biemmi G. *Istoria di Giorgio Castrioto Scander-Begh*, Brescia.1742, 422- 427, Barleti, Vita, IX, 316 -320.

¹⁰⁷ Biemmi, 427.

¹⁰⁸ Noli. Scanderbeg, p. 67; K. Frashëri. *Skënderbeu. Jeta dhe vepra. (hereinafter K. Frashëri. Skënderbeu)*, Tiranë 2002, p. 417.

¹⁰⁹ S. Ljubic. *Listine*. X, p. 334-336; Radonic. *Skenderbeg*, 301, p. 172-174.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

On March 18, 1466 the Seignory ordered the college to take measures about sending the soldiers and weapons in the Shkodra region, because it has been said that "Turks will come to conquest Albania's cities and places and Shkodra, our city."¹¹⁵

The Seignory gave Pal Engjëlli a letter for Scanderbeg where thanked him for the advices given about the defense of Shkodra.¹¹⁶ The Seignory made known that 2000 warriors were recruited and ready to be sent in Albania. For the rest of the soldiers, was giving to the administrator in Albania 3.000 ducats to recruit local peasants as knights. The Seignory informed that was sending four bombardas, ten stone-throwing machines and twenty barrels of powder.¹¹⁷

On April 18, the Seignory concerned about the Turks "coming to occupy Albanian cities and places"¹¹⁸ decided to send military enforcements in Shkodra's defense.¹¹⁹

On April 28, 1466, the Seignory replied to the two letters from Scanderbeg sent to her by Pal Engjëlli, the bishop of Durrësi.

Scanderbeg asked in the first letter for Gjon Kastrioti, his son, to be appointed General Captain of the Venetian soldiers and he be appointed Governor. About these demands the Seignory replied that: "these would be fulfilled when the army would be raised."¹²⁰

About the money to be given as salary for the warriors,¹²¹ the Seignory informed that had replied before, viz for no other reason the Seignory would keep her administrator at those parts, but to fulfill with

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ S.Ljubic.Listine, X,362; Radonic.Skenderbeg, 312, f. 180-181.

¹¹⁶ S.Ljubic.Listine, X, 359-360; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 311, p. 170-180; K. Frashëri. Skënderbeu. p. 422.

¹¹⁷ S. Ljubic. Listine, X,362; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 312, p. 180-181.

¹¹⁸ "Quondam undique nunciatur Turcum venturum esse ad oppugnationem urbium et locorum Albanie et civitas nostra Scutari" (S. Ljubic, Listine X, 362; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 312, p. 180-181). The Seignory ordered on 18 April to be sent as soon as possible in Albania two *komestabla*, 100 armed *balestarë*. 50 riflemen (sclopeterii) with a *komestabël*. These troops should be sent for the defense of Shkodra" (*Ibid*).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ "hoc est quando fiet exercitus gentium nostrarum illis in partibus" (S.Ljubic.Listine X, 362-364); Radonic. Skenderbeg, 316, p. 182-183).

¹²¹ "Ad secundem, quo petit pecunias pro solutione stipendii gentium sibi mitti" (*Ibid*)

his majesty the necessary payments.¹²² To this administrator would be sent time after time the wages for his soldiers.¹²³ Regarding Janucci the Greek, the late count of Johannes Mocendigo who has taken the ship of his lord with wheat and salt meat, the Seignory replied that Janucci wasn't in Venice, but once he returns, the Seignory would take the necessary measures to make justice rule.¹²⁴ Regarding the ship that was mentioned taken from him by the late mayor of Budva, Andrea de Molino, the Seignory replied that had no information because he was killed, and since his death, much money from his possession was lost.¹²⁵ About the question that such things should not happen again in the future, the Seignory replied that was immediately ordering all rectors in Albania to not interfere in the affairs of His Majesty (Scanderbeg), but added that even His Majesty was pleased to show the proper attention to not allowing that under his name to be introduced in those places things at detriment of the Seignory.¹²⁶

Regarding the issue raised about the *komestablin* Marco Summa, the Seignory replied that had no information. Once he returns to Venice, the Seignory would ask for him to be judged.¹²⁷

About Scanderbeg's demand to take possession of the wealth of his opponents that were allied with the Turks, and were found in Venice's possessions in Albania, the Seignory made known that would reply after being informed by her men in Albania's possessions.¹²⁸

¹²² "Ad secundum, quo petit pecunias pro solutione stipendii gentium sibi mitti, quando in exertitu erunt, ut diutius secum perseverare habeant, respondeatur : Nos superiore tempore super hoc particulariter respondisse, nostramque declarasse intentionem, quo est, quod nulla alia causa provisorem nostrum illis in partibus tenemus nisi pro faciendis cum magnificentia sua provisionibus neccessariis" (*Ibid*).

¹²³ *Ibid*.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ "Ad quantum quod bona rebellium suorum, qui ad Turchos defecerunt, in terris et locis nostris existentium petit, respondeatur : Quem admodum reverende paternitati sue notum esse potest nos magnificum dominum Scandarbegum unice amare esseque propensos omni honeste requisitioni magnificentie sue libenter satissfacere. Verum quia res huiusmodi bonorum rebellium nobis nova est et super ea nullam aliam informationem habentes, existimantesque illam maximi ponderis esse, nos videmus quo modo sine ulla informatione pro presenti ei respondere possimus. Scribemus ideo rectoribus nostris partium ipsarum, ut nos informant, qua informatione habita, curabimus magnificentie sue facere quicquidem honeste facere poterimus" (*Ibid*).

About the amount of nearly two hundred ducats that was asking from the late Scaramutio de Lorio, the Seignory replied that agreed the liquidation of this money to be granted to "his majesty" from Durrës chamber for four years, viz every year 50 ducats.¹²⁹

About the galley he was asking for, the Seignory replied that "we, continuously keep in Kotorr one or two galleys, and one of these she (the Seignory) is ready to give to "His Majesty" anytime Scanderbeg would ask for."¹³⁰

Meanwhile the Ottoman Turks began on June 1466 the second siege of Kruja. The situation in Albania was very difficult. The peasant population had escaped, and who could had passed with ships in the front shores.

In a letter sent to the duke of Burgundy, the Pope Paul II, wrote as following about the tragic fate of the Albanian refugees:

"Cannot be seen and without having tears in the eye those ships that flee the Albanian shores and take shelter in the Italian harbors, those miserable and naked families evicted from their homes that stay in the sea sand with hands raised to the sky, filling the air with laments..."

Barleti, one of the the Ottoman and Byzantine chroniclers, give many data about the stand of Albanians.

On 7 July 7 1466 Pal Engjëlli was sent in Venice by Scanderbeg to present to the Seigniory the stand of Scanderbeg and asked in his name the application of the agreement dated in August 20 1463 about sending the forces and paying a contribution of 3 thousand ducats.¹³¹

After the words full of respect for Scanderbeg, the Seignory replied that:

(1) apologized for the money,¹³² because had many expenses "in land and sea" in Albania, Dalmatia, Morea, Negroponte and other countries in the east;

(2) about the fact that her soldiers were not sent, replied that except the infantry men of signor Cimarosta also other soldiers at those parts were about to be under his command;¹³³

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ S.Ljubic. Listine, X, 371-372; Radonic.Skenderbeg, 332, p. 190.

¹³² "Et circa pecunias quas petit ... certificamus eum, maximas et intolerabiles esse expensas, nobis occurrentes, tam mari quam terra, et non solum in Albania et Dalmatia sed in Amorea, Nigroponto et in illis partibus orientis".

(3) about the money, the Seignory replied that was trying to give him two thousand ducats and one thousand ducats were to be given through the administrator in Albania;¹³⁴

(4) regarding Ivan Cernojevic, who was keeping a bad stand towards the Seignory, (although the latter has saved him from prison and death), she accepted for the sake of Scanderbeg to return him the places and possessions that has taken from him. Therefore he had to sent his envoy to the Venetian authorities to solve this problem;¹³⁵

(5) about the children of the late Pjetër Spani, friend and ally of Scanderbeg, the Seignory accepted for his sake to take them under her protection.¹³⁶

Regardless the cooperation with the Seignory, the things in Albania were going bad for Scanderbeg. The wars had destroyed the country, and the sultan built in 25 days, from June to July the stronghold of Elbasan.¹³⁷ The Seignory received in Venice many letters from its people in Albania about the danger arising from the construction of this stronghold located close to her possessions and the rich material that was found there for ship construction (*fusta, naviglia*). According to the Seignory these ships could sail into the sea through Shkumbin River.¹³⁸

¹³³ “Et quoniam magnificentia sua gravari videtur de favoribus non missis ad eum gentium nostrorum, respondemus quod in observantiam promissionum nostrarum misimus sibi ultra pedites nostros dominum Cimarostum, conductorem nostrum, cum comitiva sua notabili et bene in puncto, ut simul cum aliis gentibus nostris illarum partium ad obedientiam et servitia ipsius domini Scanderbegi et ad omnia concernentia honorem et comoda magnificencie sue” (*Ibid*).

¹³⁴ *Ibid*.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

¹³⁷ Roman construction of IV century build at all odds in the age of the Constandin the Great. (Gj.Karaiskaj. *Pesë mijë vjet fortifikime në Shqipëri*. Tiranë, 1981, p. 101). The construction of the stronghold was done within 25 days, June-July 1466.

¹³⁸ “Omnes, qui scribunt ex Albania, existimant rem periculosam et nocivam statui nostro Albanie instaurationem, quam fecit Turcus illius civitatis Valme, tum propter vicinitatem suam locis nostris, tam propter copiam materie ad fabricandum fustas et alia navigia, et comoditatem per illud flumen descendendi et illabendi ad mare”. (S.Ljubic. *Listine*, X, 372-373; Radonic.Skenderbeg, 334, p. 191-192).

Concerned by the news, the Signory informed Scanderbeg that the building of the castle so close to his possessions would be a permanent danger for him and Signory.¹³⁹

The Signory ordered Shkodra administrators to meet Scanderbeg and to make him known the Signory's desire to destroy with his forces and the forces of Signory the Valmi stronghold,¹⁴⁰ and in case of acceptance, the Signory would send him 300 ducats more.

Ordering the sending of the ducats, the Signory also ordered her soldiers in Albania that in case Scanderbeg accepted to undertake the campaign for the destruction of Valmi stronghold, they have to be ready be under his orders.¹⁴¹

The things in Albania were getting worse and worse.

On November 9 1466, the ambassador of Sforza in Venice informed that the son of Scanderbeg has come from Albania "to ask" from the Signory "soldiers and money", otherwise threatened that would leave Albania.¹⁴² The Signory was found in a crossroad. "They", he continued, "were tired and bored from the war that seemed to them was better to throw the money into the streets rather than supporting Scanderbeg."¹⁴³

In November, Scanderbeg decided to go himself to Venice.¹⁴⁴ The Signory sent a letter to the Pope on November 29 1466 to inform him

¹³⁹ "quod scribatur ...magnifico domino Scanderbego, quod velit habere bonam considerationem pro eo, quod ista pestis, que potest dici esse in visceribus suis et nostris, quotidie damnosior et periculosior erit" (ibid).

¹⁴⁰ "Item scribatur provisoribus nostris Scutari et Albanie, quod de hac re conferre debeant cum prefato Scandarego et intelligere cogitationes suas ac commemorare sibi, quod si stat sibi animus et per situm loci et numerum hostium cum securitate fieri possit, ut congregatis omnibus gentibus nostris indigenis ac etiam italicis pedestribus et equestribus, insimul cum omnibus suis copiis, que omnes procul dubio, facient bonum numerum et multo maiorem quam sunt hostium, adoriri posit dictus locus, et eiectis Turcis illum dirui, multum nobis placebit et gratissimum habebimus" (Ibid).

¹⁴¹ "Et precipi debeat omnibus gentibus nostris ut sint ad obedientiam preafiti domini Scandarbegi et provisoris nostris Albanie, qui ire debeant in societatem cum prefato Scandarbegi" (Ibid).

¹⁴² "È venuto lo figliolo de Scanderbecho pur per chiamar gente et dinari con protesto, che altramente li conviene habandonare l'Albania" (Archivio di Stato di Milano. Carteggio gen. Sforzasko ad annum 1466; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 336, p. 192).

¹⁴³ "Non so come farà. Costoro sono ormay si strachi de quella impresa, che li pare zitare li denari in canale chi spendano de là" (Ibid).

¹⁴⁴ The documents from the archive of Ragusa inform that on November 2 1466, Scanderbeg was coming closer to the mentioned city. On this day the Small Council elected three nobles to welcome Scanderbeg (ad eundum obviam domino Schenderbegh) (Arkivi

about that the extremely serious situation in Albania. The Turks seemed to have fought with him, and he has gone to Italy to ask for help. Meantime the Turks have taken his possession. The Seignory writes that "in front of the Turks stands only the castle of Kruja protected with the help of Venetian soldiers."¹⁴⁵ The Seignory begged Pope to help Scanderbeg to regain his possession.¹⁴⁶

Scanderbeg stayed in Rome and Naples for some months, from December 1466-February 1467. The Venetian ambassador in Rome, Johannes Arrivabene, informed on December 14 1466, that Scanderbeg was in presence of the Cardinals with the Pope. He arrived there on 12 December.

The description of our national hero is very moving for the reader.

"*He is a very old man*", he writes, "*over the sixties, has come with few knights and seems to be a poor man.*"¹⁴⁷ "*I am informed about Scanderbeg's arrival in Rome*", writes cardinal Gozaga in a letter sent to Ludwig of Mantua on December 15.¹⁴⁸

The abovementioned persons inform that Scanderbeg has come in Rome to ask for help. The journey in Italy wouldn't assure the Albanian courageous man the right support for war, because of the quarrel and disagreements among Italian states were in them.¹⁴⁹

Shtetëror Dubrovnik, Consilium Minoris, XXII, 40; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 337, p. 192). The same day, the Rector and the Small Council, decided to present themselves in front of Scanderbeg and to beg him not to come in Ragusa "ob bonum respectum" (viz, because they were afraid of the Turks) but should provide him different food as appropriate. (mittendi domino Scanderbegh de rebus cibarris quantum ipsis videbitur et placuerit in eorum discrezione) (Radonic. Skenderbeg, 338).

¹⁴⁵ "certissima res est provinciam Albanie reductam esse in malis terminis, quoniam, pulso ex ea dominio Scandarbeg supersesit ex omni dictione nisi oppidum Croie, conservatum a nostris peditibus et custoditum usque ad presens custoditurque nostris impensis" (S. Ljubic. Listine, X, 384; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 339, p. 193-194).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ "El Signor Scandarbego gionse qui veneri (=12 decembre) et incontra li forono mandate le famiglie de' cardinali. E homo molto de tempo, passa li 60 anni, cum puochi cavalla èvenuto; è da povero huomo (L.v. Pastor. Geschichte der Papste. II. 361.n.41; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 340, p. 193).

¹⁴⁸ Radonic. Skenderbeg, 341, p. 193.

¹⁴⁹ The Pope Paul II encouraged Scanderbeg to write his ambassador in Venice that he (the Pope) refused to grant him financial aid "without being firstly assured for the stabilization of the situation in Italy, viz for not have any more here because all the Italian powers with exception of Venetians" were ready to sign an agreement. The Pope promised 500 ducats to Scanderbeg in case that would convince Venice to participate in this holy league. In the ceremony were all the papal curia, the pope Paul II gave Scanderbeg, "skull-cap and a sword";

Ferrante, the king of Naples, from his side begged the Pope to help Scanderbeg by giving 15.000 ducats.¹⁵⁰

After returning to Albania, the chieftains of the country including Lekë Dukagjini who has been Scanderbeg's rival, supported him with all their strengths.

Ballaban pasha was appointed by Mehmet II at the head the Ottoman army. The Signory informs on February 18 1467 that Ballaban pasha was keeping Kruja under a strong besiege and was trying every day to subdue the country. The Signory has sent three galleys and was arming other ships to fight the Ottomans.¹⁵¹

On March 20 1467 the Signory presents Scanderbeg's request, presented by the bishop of Durrës Pal Engjëlli, for the past year provision and the present one taking into considerations the risks where he finds himself.¹⁵²

The Signory ordered to be given the mentioning bishop 2 thousand ducats of the old and new provision together with the apology for this stand, taking into consideration the difficulties he was meeting.¹⁵³

The Albanian army liberated Kruja on April 23, 1467. In this fighting also participated Venetian forces under the command of Nicola Moneta.

The Signory was concerned about the events in Albania. On June 2 1467, she wrote to the pope that the Turks were trying to occupy Albania "to then throw themselves towards Italy."

The Signory was especially concerned about stronghold in Valmi, because according to her, the Ottoman Turks aimed to occupy Durrës.

the consistory that was gathered on 7 January 1467 gave 5000 ducats." The documents inform that Scanderbeg was "very dissatisfied and desperate" from this stand. Scanderbeg was informed in Rome that the Signory was making pressure to the pope for not helping the Albanian courageous man in the war against the Turks.

¹⁵⁰ F. Trichera. Codice Aragonese. I, 54; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 349, p. 194).

¹⁵¹ Item si dice, che Balabanbeg he molte grosso in Albania et dietim strapazzare quello paese et tiene assediata Croye in modo che mal si poteria sucorere. La Signoria ha gia mandato via tre galie et le alter si vano Armando ala zomata" (Radonic, Skenderbeg, 350, p. 196).

¹⁵² "Rogare nos instanter fecit magnificus Scanderbegus per reverendum patrem dominum archiepiscopum Dyrachiensem, oratorem suum, ut sibi dari facere velimus provisionem anni preteriti, quam habere restat. Item provisionem anni presenti. ut in periculis presentibus rebus suis consulere possit" (S.Ljubic. Listine X, 387-388; Radonic. Skenderbeg, 351, p. 196-197).

¹⁵³ "dari debeant eidem domino ducati duo mille, ponendi ad computum eiusdem provisionis sue, tam anni preteriti quam presentis, excusando nos, quod angustia temporum presentibus non permisit nos integre sue petitioni satisfacere" (*Ibid*).

“After the occupation of Albania’s coast (may God save us)”, she writes, “to the enemy remains nothing but to jump anytime to Italy to destroy from the roots Christianity.”

Scanderbeg attacked once again the stronghold in Valmi.

Meanwhile the Turks undertook the third campaign to conquer Kruja. On 8 July, Giacomo de Katalani informed king Ferrante of Naples from Brindisi that the Ottoman troops took position along Argenta (Erzen) river 5 miles far from Durrës, and that Saturday the Turks were awaited to stand at the gate of the city. *“The city”, he further informed, “is strengthened at the best, there are found 19 Venetian galleys commanded by Giacomo Veneri, commander of the Bay.”*

A letter of July 16 informs that the tragic situation in which was found Durrës: *“the city of Durrës is almost totally abandoned from its citizens that have passed in Brindisi in fear ...there have remained only some foreign infantry men arrived from Venice. There is also the captain of their armada with 15 galleys.”*

Meanwhile, The Turks, who were keeping Kruja besieged, attacked Durrës in July with 15 thousands cavalry men but the city could afford the attack.

Forthwith the Turks also attacked Shkodra; from a decision of Seignory, we are informed that on 24 July, the population was panicking from the Ottoman attacks; the Seignory instructed her ambassador in Rome to inform the Pope the situation in which were found her possessions in Albania and to ask for his help because her financial resources were used up.

Regardles the difficulties, the Albanian and the Venetians successfully afforded the third siege of Kruja.

On July 28 1467, the Seignory sent a letter to Scanderbeg expressing her will to continue the war for the defense of Shkodra and Durrës as Scanderbeg would think appropriate.

In October, Scanderbeg sent in Venice Gjon Kastrioti and Pal Engjëlli to seek the sending of military and financial aids and the supply of Kruja with food reserves. On October 15, Gjon Kastrioti was welcomed with honors in Venice. About his demands, the Senate promised to:

(1) send 400 infantry men and would try to find others in the spring;

- (2) send the usual annual provision of 1400 ducats as based on Treaty of Danja;
- (3) provide Kruja with food for a year;
- (4) undertake the expenses for 200 castle guards; but gave a negative response for the building of Rodon stronghold.

In the effort to face the Turks, Scanderbeg, according to Barleti, addressed lords of the country to renew the League of Lezha, but he fell ill and died in Lezha, on January 17 1468.¹⁵⁴

On February 13, the Seignory was informed about the death from the Rector of Durrës." The death of "the late grand Scanderbeg", he wrote," shocked deeply the whole country."¹⁵⁵

The Seignory decided to send in Albania on February 13, the bishop Pal Engjëlli who had days staying in Venice as the representative of Scanderbeg.

The Seignory praised him as "wise man, loyal towards the Venetian state". The bishop, according to Seignory, enjoyed the trust and full authority on Scanderbeg's wife and his son and also to the relatives and officials of Scanderbeg¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁴ The precise year of Scanderbeg's death is given by chronicler Frances, a Byzantine "Mense Ianuario ejusdem anni 6976 (1468) Albanitarum Princeps Scantares morbo orbit". The death of Scanderbeg is mentioned in the Venetian records about on February 13 1468: "Sicut per litteras vicerectoris nostril Dyrachii intelligitur, mortus est magnificus quondam Scanderbegus". Girardo de Collis from Venice informs on 12 February 1468 that Scanderbeg died in three days from fever: "Scanderbeg è passato da questa vita; haveva la febre, et essendo corsi certi Turchi nel paese, volsi montar a cavallo, e mori in tre giorni". Volaterrano (Book VIII,cc p. 188) marks that Scanderbeg died "poisoned"; Sagredo informs that the death came as physician's inexperience. Barletius gives the year of death on "1466"; so does Muzaka (Ch. Hopf. Chroniques, p, 299); from him the death of Scanderbeg on 1466 has been taken from Lavardini, Rinaldi, Spondano, Sagredo, Duponcet, Radotà, Farlati, Sismondi, Hammer, Zinkaisen, Paganel, Pisko, Galanti, Cuniberti, Barbarich, etc. (Noli. Scanderbeg. Notes, 61).

¹⁵⁵ Sicut per litteras vicerectoris nostri Dyrachii intelligitur, mortuus est magnificus quondam Scandarbegus ob cuius obitum universa illa provincia in magno tumultu trepidatione est constituta" (S.Ljubic. Listine, X, pp. 404-405; Noli Scanderbeg, Appendix 43, p. 145-146). (On Scanderbeg death see also: Malltezi L. 540 vjet nga vdekja e Skënderbeut "Studime Historike", Tiranë, 2008, nr.3-4.

¹⁵⁶ ...vadit pars, quod cum omni possibili celeritate expediatur hinc, et in provinciam illam redeat reverendus dominus archiepiscopus Dyrachii, qui apud nos diu stetit orator nomine prefati quondam domini Scanderbegi, et est persona multum prudens et nobis statuique nostro fidelis et devota, habeat preterea, et apud uxorem et filium ceterosque tam familiares quam subditos prefati quondam domini Scanderbegi creditum et auctoritatem cuius presentia et

The Seignory sent the bishop as her man to Albania.¹⁵⁷

The same day, the Seignory ordered Signor Francesco Capello, who was sent as general administrator in the possessions of Albania, to approach his arrival date in Durrës and Lezha to be near Scanderbeg's wife and son. Signor Capello had to try that with the help of the bishop Durrës to take possession of Kruja and "some other places" in order to prevent the cities from falling in the Ottoman hands.¹⁵⁸

The Seignory instructed the administrator that in case he and the bishop find out that "the places" of Scanderbeg couldn't be protected by the son of Scanderbeg, they have try to come into terms with his mother that these places would pass under the Venetian rule promising that with the calming of the situation would be returned to them. In case that Gjon Kastrioti and Donika would ask something as promise, Capello should grant it to them without hesitation, but should ask that this promise should be kept secret by them.¹⁵⁹

The Seignory decided that day to sent in Albania 100 knights, 200 infantry men, 100 *balestarë* and riflemen with their *komestablat* and

consilio sperandum est, res illas facilius dirigi et stabiliri posse. (S. Ljubic. Listine X, pp. 404-405; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 43, p. 145-146).

¹⁵⁷ Et quoniam reverenda paternitas sua habere debet, ut asserit, a nostro dominio ducatos circa 220, captum sit, quod denari predicat eidem domino archiepiscopo dari debeant, et bonis verbis hortetur, ut alacriter vadat et operetur, sicut est consuetus, quoniam dominium nostrum erga eum utetur gratuitate, et ita ut laborum et fidelium operationum suarum merito poterit contentari. (S. Ljubic. Listine, X, pp. 404-405; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 43, p. 145-146).

¹⁵⁸ Et scribatur viro nobili Francisco Capello qui profectus est provisor noster ad illas partes, ut acceleret navigationem suam omni cura et diligentia, et pretermisiss locis et partibus inferioribus, Alexium et Dyrachium se conferat, ubi sit cum uxore et filio prefati quondam domini Scandarbegi, et utendo medio et opera prefati domini archiepiscopo, studeat omni cura et diligentia, ut tam civitas Croye, quam quocumque alia loca existential in fide conserventur, et in manus Turcorum non deveniant...protegendo et conservandi loca eadem sub nomine filii suprascripti quondam domini Scanderbegi omnibus viribus nostri domini, et non secus ac propria loca nostra (S. Ljubic. Listine X, pp. 404-405; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 43, p. 145-146).

¹⁵⁹ Inter cetera vero committatur eidem provisor, ut habita collatione cum suprascripto domino archiepiscopo, si intellexerint, loca eadem et subditos sub devotione filii suprascripti condam domini conservari non posse, et periculum imminere, et in manus turchorum deveniant, et sub nostro dominio et dominio posse melius tueri, et si qui iam deveniasset, facilius reduci sint cum uxore et filio eiusdem condam domini, et illos certificent, quod pacatis rebus dominatio nostra illis omnia eorum loca restituent, sed pro presenti, ut eorum rebus melius consulatur, contenti esse velint, ut nomine nostri domini loca ipsa teneantur et gubernentur. Et si quam ipsi exigerint huius nostre promissionis certitudinem et declarationem, provisor ipse illam eis faciat, sed illos hortetur, ut omnia secreta pro proprio eorum commodo teneant. (S. Ljubic, Listine, X, pp. 404-405; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 43, p. 145-146).

their chiefs; to add the number of the infantry men to 600 men, and to send 3000 half a bushel wheat in Albania.

The Seignory ordered the General Captain of the Fleet to send in Durrës, Albania three military ships (galleys) to encourage the inhabitants of the city. Also, the Seignory instructed Albania's Giovanni Matteo Contareno, administrator to Albania to carefully exercise the country's governance until the arrival of the nobleman Leonardo Boldi.¹⁶⁰

On February 24 1468, to the widow of our national hero were presented the condolences by the ambassador of the king of Naples Ferdinand (1458-1494),¹⁶¹ Ieronimo de Carcincoi.

*"Dear Lady and loving mother", the ambassador started to say, "not without great pain we learnt that the most illustrious Scanderbeg, your loving husband and almost a parent to us, has passed away as has been the wish of our Lord. His death is not less painful for us than the death of our honorable father King Alfonso who is for life remembered."*¹⁶²

Ferdinand informed the aforementioned lady that has sent his man, the nobleman Ieronimo de Carcincoi to talk with her in his behalf. Ferdinand begged the lady to have complete trust in him.¹⁶³

The ambassador begged the lady in the name of the king, to go in his kingdom. He assured her that she and her son would be honored and respected. Ferdinand promised that will grant them the possessions that were granted to Scanderbeg and also would bestow "other goods" whenever necessary might be.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Scanderbeg had close cooperation with Alfonso V of Naples. The relations started with the treaty of Gaeta on March 26 1451. Alfonso's support is related with the battle to take the stronghold of Berat by Scanderbeg, which ended in defeat. Alfonso V understood from this defeat the anti Ottoman war dimensions that the Albanian were carrying; after this event he withdrew from his previous policy to jump beyond Adriatic shores. Scanderbeg appraised him after death when he fought in southern Italy supporting his son, Ferdinand.

¹⁶² Illustrissima Domina tamquam mater carissima. Non senza grandisimo dispiacere havemo inteso ch'el Illustrissimo Scanderbeg, vostro marito carissimo, ad nui come ad patre, secundo e stato piacere ad nostro Signore Dio, e morto. La quale morte ad nui e dispiacuto non meno che quella de nostro reverend patre Re Alfonso di imortale memoria (Trinchera, Codice, Vol, I, pp, 439-440; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix 44, f.147).

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ "da parte nostra li esponderite che loro venuta ad nui sera multo piacere, et ad nui haveranno quelle carize et honeri che figlio deve fare ad matre et patre ad figliolo, et non solamente li lassaremo quello che havemo donato, ma quando bisogno fosse li donaremo de li

After Ferdinand's request, Donika and Gjon Kastrioti, went in the Kingdom of Naples, in the Monte Sant Angelo and San Giovanni Rotondo estates.

With Scanderbeg's death are closed his relations with the Republic of Venice. The Seignory continued the war against the Ottoman Turks in Albania. Important events were the wars for the defense of Shkodra on 1474 and 1478.¹⁶⁵

Albanian lords and citizens from Shkodra participated in these wars.

On January 25 1479, the Seignory was forced to make peace with the Turks by leaving them Shkodra and other possessions in Albania. With the fall of Shkodra the city inhabitants migrated to Venice. In the peace sealed with the Ottoman Turks, the Seignory didn't include Albanian nobles such as Gjon Muzaka who has kept her side in the anti-Ottoman war.

altri nostri boni". (Trinchera, Codice Aragonese, Vol,I ,Naples, Giuseppe Cataco , 1866 pp. 440- 441; Noli. Scanderbeg, Appendix, 44, p. 47-148.

¹⁶⁵ I. Zamputi. Dokumenta të shekullit XV për historinë e Shqipërisë. vol. 4, pt. 1. Tiranë 1967.