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**THE REPUBLIC OF RAGUSA STAND TOWARDS THE
ANTI OTTOMAN WAR OF GJERGJ KASTRIOTI-
SCANDERBEG**

Since the beginning of the Ottoman invasions in the Balkans, Ragusa served as a center of information for the Christian Europe related to the circumstances in Albania due to the wars against the Ottoman invader, and through Ragusa were kept the connections with the Hungarian king Sigismund.

Therefore, most of the Ragusan documents on Scanderbeg's forerunning period report about the information that Ragusa offered to Sigismund on the situation in Albania and Bosnia. The emperor himself and the Hungarian king would send to lord Andrea Topia and some other Albanian leaders' letters and instructions always through Ragusa. This communication way is also proved by Andrea Topia himself, who wrote to the emperor that we don't have your letters, but indirectly we are informed by Ragusa. Therefore, the Senate of Ragusa, which recognized the emperor's sovereignty on Ragusa, systematically informed him on the permeation of the Turkish armies, the liberation war of Albanians and their victories.

The present study is based on the special position and status of Republic of Ragusa relation with the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, we inform about the stands of Ragusa regarding Scanderbeg's anti-Ottoman war.

Exactly, the development of the trade relations with Albania and the stand of the Republic in relation with Scanderbeg, were also defined by this special status that Ragusa had with the great conqueror of the time, the Ottoman Empire. At least, since 1460, the Republic of Saint Blaise faced the complete Ottoman domination in the Balkans. At this time, the Turkish army was coming closer to Ragusa borders. On 1463, the Ottomans defeated the Bosnians, and also killed the last Bosnian king.

Two years later, the Ottoman invaders, almost conquered Herzegovina - a territory that has been a special political unit within the kingdom of Bosnia, since the first half of the XV century – becoming direct neighbors of the Republic of Ragusa. The Ragusans, as merchants they were, had realized much earlier that this would happen and had established diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. The first official contacts began on 1392, while the Ragusans efforts to negotiate the guarantee for their trade in the Balkans with the *Sultan Bayezid I* (1389-1402), were crowned on 1396. After that, the contacts continued. The Ragusans intensified their efforts for a *modus vivendi*¹ with the Ottomans after the battle of Varna on 1444.²

On 1447, the Ragusan authorities negotiated a treaty with the Turks allowing them the free trade in the Balkans, but 1458 marked a new and a very important event. The Ottomans insisted the Ragusans pay an annual tribute, while Ragusa tried to avoid this at all costs, because the it could place the city in the position of vassalage towards the Ottomans. Nevertheless, after the fall of Byzantium and the death of the despot Đurađ Branković on 1456, as well as with the new sultan's insistence and capability, Ragusa was forced on 1458 start paying the tribute to the Ottomans. In that time, this tribute consisted of a relatively small amount of money, only 1.500 ducats and presents for the Turks dignitaries, but during the future two decades the amount of the tribute gradually raised, and finally on 1481, went up to 12.500 ducats per year. With a short interruption in 1684 - when Ragusa hoped to have the protection of the Austrians - the Ragusans remained loyal to their obligations towards the Ottomans until 1808.³

The Ottomans allowed the Ragusans to continue their activities in the Balkan's conquered territories, and Ragusa gained a lot from these concessions. At the same time, the city established brilliant relations with the Kingdom of Aragon in Southern Italy at the second half of the

¹ The Latin expression "*modus vivendi*" means "*way of living*", but in this case is used to undermine an agreement or a way that allows the opposite parts to co-live-in peace (a kind of compromise).

² Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries: A City Between East and West*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma 1972, p. 58; Bogumil Hrabak, "Dubrovnikasit dhe Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu", *Përparimi*, Vjeti XIII, nr.4 (Prishtinë, 1967), 58.

³ Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries*, p. 59.

XV century; it observed sympathetically the efforts *Pope Pious II* made to organized a new crusade against the Turks, as well as the courageous war of Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg in Albania and that of the Hungarian and Croatian king, *Matthias Corvinus*, in the north against the Ottomans. However, seen from the political aspect, all these efforts, were considered by them very small to make an essential change in the Balkan's situation. They were convinced that by preserving their position in the Balkans through their agreements with the Ottomans, they were doing the only reasonable and positive thing that could be done in the present circumstances. Moreover, Ragusa itself was in a suitable geographic position from which the Ottomans could keep an eye in the western Christian world.⁴

Though Ragusa had served as mediator for informing the Catholic Europe on the circumstances in Albania since on 1433, while some Albanian territories were facing the Ottoman invaders and the rebels establishing connections with the king Sigismund through Ragusa, even though the Ragusans escorted to Albania the emperor's envoy to be informed about the situation in the Albanian territories on May 1435⁵ and showed their interest about Gjergj Kastrioti in the first period of his war against the Ottomans, Ragusa was reflected only as observer of events in this neighboring country. On the other hand, the communications between Scanderbeg and *Janosh Hunyadi* and later with the king *Matthias Corvinus*, also were passing through Ragusa, which served as promoter of the Scanderbeg's intervention on the Neapolitan quarrels for the royal throne on 1461 as well, because the king Ferrante favored the Ragusan merchants.⁶

The connections between the Kastrioti family and Ragusa are presented early in the documents. On March 21, 1413, Gjon became citizen of Ragusa, after the decision of the Council of Senators

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62; 167-168.

⁵ "*Que habentur ex Albanis cum Teucris nova reservavimus prefato domino Frussin, qui per litteras suas, quas deferunt harum latores, ad noticiam prefate Maiestatis ea deducit, que per nunc nostris exarare preterimus*", Hrvatska-Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku (hereinafter: HR-DADU), HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XI (1430-1437), fol. 244v; Jovan Radonić, *Durađ Kastriot Skenderbeg i Arbanija u XV veku: istoriksa grada*, Beograd: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija (Spomenik XCV, Drugi razred 74), 1942, no. 7.

⁶ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog. XVII* (1461-1463), fol. 7; 14r; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 213.

(Rogatorum).⁷ These connections were intensified on 1420,⁸ with the trade agreement between Gjon Kastrioti and Ragusa in the bases of which, the Ragusan merchants would pay only a custom through Gjon's possessions, while he would guarantee them the safety of passing through his territory; to achieve a higher level on 1439, when the Republic decided to grant Gjon Kastrioti's sons the citizenship.⁹

When Scanderbeg returned to Albania in 1443, the Albanian noble Arianiti was granted the right of Ragusan citizenship by the Commune of Ragusa. Arianiti had urged Albanians into rebellions. Ragusa send also to Arianiti the flag, but turned down his demand to send a bombardarda for the rebellion necessities.¹⁰ For the establishment of the close relations with the Christian Europe, Scanderbeg exploited Ragusa, the most suitable and the earlier channel. His demands addressed to the Pope and the Hungarian barons, on April 1446, were sent through Ragusa's diplomatic service.¹¹ A year later, Ragusa granted to the Albanian hero 500 pounds of bombardarda gun powder.¹² Responding to the call of Hunyadi to attack the Turks, on October 1448, Scanderbeg asked for a loan in Ragusa, but the Senate of Ragusa

⁷ Since 21 March 1413, according the decision of the Council of Senators (Rogatorum), Gjon has become a citizen of Ragusa, "on accepting the lord Gjon Kastrioti as our citizen and neighbor with all the privileges and immunities, that are granted to the honorable citizens" (HR-DADU, *Reform.*, vol. XXXIV (1412-1414), fol.188r).

⁸ HR-DADU, no.793; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 2; *Zakonski spomenici srpskih država srednjega veka*. Peta knjiga / prikupio i uredio Stojan Novaković. Beograd : Štampano u Državnoj štampariji kraljevine Srbije, 1912, no. 10; Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma. Knjiga I: Dubrovnik i susedi njegovi, II deo* (Srpska Kraljevska Akademija. Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i knjizevnost srpskog naroda; I odeljenje. Spomenici na srpskom jeziku. Knj. XXIV), Beograd-Sr. Karlovci, 1934, no.157; Tefik Geci, "Mbi sfragjistiken e Kastriotëve", *Simpoziumi për Skënderbeun – Simpozijum o Skenderbegu* (9-12 maj 1968), Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës 1969, p. 241.

⁹ On this occasion it has to be mentioned another important moment, respectively that has to do with the Saint Blaise Senate verdict to grant to the sons of Gjon Kastrioti the citizenship of that city. (HR-DADU, *Acta Cons.Rog.*, vol. VII (1438-1441), fol. 76; *Studime për epokën e Skënderbeut*, vol. II, Tiranë 1989, p. 352).

¹⁰ Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XVe siècle*, vol. II, Paris: E. Leroux, 1899, pp. 395-396; Ivan Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turka u XIV i XV veku*, Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1452, p. 100.

¹¹ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. IX (1444-1446), fol. 238r; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 13.

¹² HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. X (1446-1448), fol. 102r; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no.14.

declared that couldn't grant him the required amount, but instead granted him 200 golden ducats.¹³

The advance of the Ottoman armies in the Balkans, their approach to the borders of the Catholic Hungary, their exit in the Adriatic shores, the scope of the sultans to enter the Central Europe and pass in the Italian Peninsula concerned Rome. The concern of the Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447) increased even more after the Council of Florence (1439), because his project for a common crusade with the Eastern Church proved to be unsuccessful. Exactly in these circumstances, Scanderbeg's resistance against the Ottoman armies, gained a special strategic, political, military and religious importance for Rome, as church and state. Albania along with Hungary and Bosnia, was considered as *Basilio Pandzic* wrote, one of the three neuralgic points of the crusade, which the Pope Eugene IV have proclaimed on May 26, 1443.¹⁴

The one who considered Scanderbeg a factor in Rome's projects, was the successor of *Eugene IV*, the Pope *Nicholas V* (1447-1455), who once was crowned on Saint Peter's throne (1447), started to think about Albania, which represented the hope for the Christian Europe, menaced by the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, in 20 June 1447, the same pope sent the Franciscan *Antonio de Oliveto* as "*nunzio of the Holy See in Albania and Dalmatia's territories*" (ad partes Albaniae et Sclavoniae), who might be the first apostolic *nunzio* officially coming to Albania instructed to do the utmost to convince the Christian believers to support the war against the Ottomans led by Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg. He expressively said: "*let's give to our beloved son, the noble man Gjergj Kastrioti lord of Albania the support and aid against the Turks*".¹⁵ However, the same *Antonio Oliveto*, was nothing more

¹³ The Senate of Ragusa apologizes to Scanderbeg for not having the chance to grant him a loan for the war against the Turks. It decided to grant him 200 golden ducats – "*Prima pars est de donando dicto Scanderbech ducatos auri ducentos*", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XI (1448-1451), fol. 14r.

¹⁴ Basilio Panzić, "Franceskanët në shërbim të Shqipërisë gjatë epokës së Skënderbeut", *Hylli i Dritës*, Vjeti XXVIII, 4 (Shkodër, 2009), p. 42.

¹⁵ In Breve among others was said: "... *nostrum et Sedis apostolicae Nuncium, ad praesens mittimus, cupientes illas tibi iacere concessiones, in quarum vim christifidelibus carum partium tu possis gratiorem reddere ac utilioem... Caeterum, quia cupimus dilecto filio, nobili viro Georgio Castrioto, Domino in Albania, a fidelibus christianis favores et praesidia praestari adversus Turcas...*", *Bullarium Franciscanum continens constitutiones, epistolas, diplomata*

but Father *Antonio de Napoli*, that the Pope *Eugene IV* had appointed pontific *nunzio* in Ragusa in 1443-1447.¹⁶ Antonio's main duty according the papal letter was the collection of the assets from the believers, supporting the war against the Turks, led by Scanderbeg, whom is expressively mentioned. Perhaps Father Antonio took with him in Ragusa the pontific letters. Indeed, on July 1447 he is found in Ragusa,¹⁷ and has likely addressed them to Scanderbeg immediately. In the following months, respectively on December 1447 we find him in the kingdom of Naples, as Scanderbeg envoy asking for help to Alfonso V, mainly for ships. Alfonso V, in replying to Scanderbeg, on 14 December 1447, praising his brave war against the Turks, promised to send some ships. At the same time, he pledges that would secure shelter to Scanderbeg and his family in case he was forced to leave his country.¹⁸

From what the documents reveal, Scanderbeg visited for the first time Ragusa on the second half of December 1450. In this occasion, he again demanded aids in money from the Ragusan government, but his demand was again turned down. Again, he was granted an amount as a gift of 500 ducats.¹⁹ The Ragusans hesitation to loan money Scanderbeg, was again seen in the beginning of 1451, and we would speak in the following lines. In the established circumstances, the authorities of Ragusa asked the Pope their free from previewed annual tribute on the occasion of the jubilee 1450, justifying their claim that according to them, they have made great services to Christendom, especially supporting Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg.²⁰

Romanorum pontificum Eugenii IV et Nicolai V ad tres ordines S. P. N. Francisci spectantia. Collegit et edidit Fr. Ulrichus Hüntemann O.F.M. lector iubilatus. Nova Series. Tomus I. (1431–1455). Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), MCMXXIX, dok. 1071, p. 540; Panzić, "Franceskanët në shërbim të Shqipërisë", pp. 48-49.

¹⁶ At Ragusa's documentes we also find the name father *Antonio de Giovinazzo (Juvenacii)*. Cfr.: B. Rode, "Documenti Francescani di Ragusa", *Miscellanea Francescana: di storia, di lettere, di arti*, vol. XIV (Foligno: Feliciano Campitelli Editore 1912), no. 49.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 57.

¹⁸ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 16.

¹⁹ "*Prima pars est de eundo ad Maius Consilium pro donando sibi ducatos quingentos*", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, Vol. XI (1448-1451), fol. 272r-272v; Jorga, *Notes et extraits II*, p.443 not. 2; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 34.

²⁰ Instruction of the brilliant doctor, venerable master Gjon Gazulli, who went to the Pope Nicholas V to demand on behalf of the Ragusan Senate to be set free from the previewed annual tribute on the occasion of the jubilee 1450, because Ragusa had great merits in aiding

There were many diplomats engaged in the Scanderbeg's diplomatic missions in Europe. Here we can mention the Gazulli brothers (Gjon, Pal and Andrea Gazulli). There are many documents in the National Archive in Dubrovnik informing about them.²¹ Albania's leader, Gjergj Kastrioti, highly appreciating the role and the abilities of Gjon Gazulli (*Johannes Gazulus*) as savant and diplomat, charged him with a special mission in Rome. On February 1451, Kastrioti addressed the rector of Ragusa's church, the Albanian ambassador, Gjon Gazulli, with a special mission close to the Pope Nicholas V.²² The Ragusans exploited Gazulli's visit to Rome, for their own interests. Gazulli was instructed to ask the Pope *Nicholas V*, on behalf of the Ragusan Senate, the free from the previewed annual *tribute*, in the occasion of the jubilee year 1450, because the *Republic of Saint Blaise*, according to them had great merits in the support and aid given to Scanderbeg in the war against the Ottoman Empire, and was always menaced by the Turks.²³ The Albanian humanist, Gjon Gazulli, successfully fulfilled his mission. The *Pope Nicholas V*, found a specific compromise solution to please both sides. On 13 April 1451, he proclaimed a decree, on which he decided that the aids from the *indulgences*, collected in the territory of Ragusa be divided in half between Ragusa and Scanderbeg: a part would be given to Scanderbeg for war purposes, while the other part to be preserved for the commune and the citizens of Ragusa.²⁴ However, the plague had just erupted in Ragusa. Found in

and supporting Scanderbeg in the war against the Ottomans. Ragusa, 27 February 1451, HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XIV (1448-1449), fol. 63v-66r; József Gelcich, Lajos Thallóczy, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae: Ragusa és Magyarország összekötteréseinek oklevéltára*, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1887, no. 286; J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta i povelje - Acta et diplomata Ragusina I/1* (Zbornik za Istoriju, Jezik i Književnost Srpskog Naroda, Treće odeljenje; knj. III), Beograd: Mlada Srbija, 1934, pp. 522-527.

²¹ On Gazulli family, Cfr.: Š. Jurić, "Prilozi biografiji Ivana Gazulića", *Anali Historijskog instituta u Dubrovniku*, VIII-IX, Dubrovnik, 1962, pp. 447-479; J. Drançolli, *Gjin Gazulli astronom dhe diplomat i shek. XV*, Rilindja, Prishtinë 1984.

²² HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XIV (1448-1449), fol.63v-66r.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "...ad subuentionem et auxilium dilecti filii nobilis uiri Georgii Castrioto alias Scandebergh, domini Croye et Arbani, qui, sicut accepimus, perfidis Teucris uiriliter et animose resistere ac eos pro posse impugnare nori cessat, eorundem posteriorum litterarum serie deputauimus prefato Georgio, seu aci id per eum deputandis personis tradere et assignare tenerentur, prout in posterioribus litteris predictis plenius continetur.", HR-DADU, *Acta Sancta Mariae Maioris*, F.I. 1451. no. 31.

difficult situation, the government begged the Pope to take into consideration the situation and to postpone the selling of the *indulgences* brought by Gjon Gazulli. In the summer of 1451, the Pope was also informed by the bishop of Kotorr, *Bonino de Tollentis*, about the situation in the city and the selling of the *indulgences*.

Nonetheless in the second half of the 1451, was temporarily suspended the selling of *indulgences* (because of the plague, of the Ragusans conflict with the Herzog *Stjepan Vukčić Kosača*, and because of Gazulli's travel to meet Scanderbeg),²⁵ the payment was done. On 18 March 1452, authorized by Scanderbeg, to Albania's bishop, Andrea Suma, were granted 4.893 perpers from the *jubilee year* revenues,²⁶ while the other half, in bases of the Pope's *bull*, was granted to the Republic.

Scanderbeg didn't stop asking financial means from Ragusa, even though he was turned down, being satisfied only praising him for his merits in defending Christendom against the Turks.²⁷ During 1453, Scanderbeg received letters,²⁸ then were carried negotiations with his collaborators, also to *Vladislav Hercegović* was given a boat to be sent to Scanderbeg.²⁹ To Scanderbeg envoy, Pal Gazulli and another representative, were given 100 pound of silver, that were banked in Ragusa.³⁰

On 25 September 1453, the Ragusan Government granted to Pal Gazulli approximately 35 kilos of silver. In this occasion, Pal Gazulli was escorted by *Teodor Jafeti*.³¹ This shows how much the government

²⁵ The envoy of Ragusa demands to the Pope that because of the prince Stefan diseases and hostilities, to postpone for some time in the territory of Ragusa the collection of indulgencies, part which should be given to Scanderbeg. (HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XV (1449-1453), fol. 166r).

²⁶ "...dominus Andreas Suma, Dei et apostolice sedis gratia dignissimus totius Albanie episcopus procurator, et procurator nomine magnifici et illustri domini Georgii Castrioti... fuit confessus et contentus se dicto procuratorio nomine habuisse et recepisse et sibi dicto... inter ducatos et monetas et raubas ipperperos quatuor mille octingentes nonaginta tres ipsi domino Scandarbecho spectantes..." , HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, vol. XXXVI (1451-1452), fol. 88r.

²⁷ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XV (1449-1453), fol. 109r; Jorga, *Notes et extraits* II, p. 460; *Ibid.*, *Acta Con. Rog.*, vol. XIII (1452-1453), fol. 53v.

²⁸ HR-DADU, *Acta Con. Rog.*, vol. XIII (1452-1453), fol. 168v; 234v

²⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 170r.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 240.

³¹ "*Prima pars est de dando domino Paulo Gazulo et Theodoro Jafet, ambassiatoribus de Scanderbech, de argento domini despoti, quod est in depositum in comune nostrum*", *Ibid.*

believed in the Gazulli brothers. The same data we meet in the other old Ragusan historian, *Giovanni Marino Gondola*, according to whom this event dates in September 1453, without specifying the date of departure of the mentioned missionaries. Except that, the mentioned chronicler, informs Scanderbeg sent in Ragusa the Albania's bishop first, and then Pal Gazulli and *Teodor Jafeti*, whose mission had partial success.³² Based on a document of 8 February 1453, Pal Gazulli went in Ragusa as missionary of the prince *Vladislav Hercegović*. At this time, Ragusa was involved in the war with the Herzegovinian duke *Stjepan Vukčić Kosača* (1451-1454), while his son, *Vladislav*, was in alliance with Ragusa. From this data, comes out that Pal was a famous personality in the Ragusan and Bosnian diplomatic circles.³³

Despite the mentioned monetary amounts that Ragusa have granted time after time to Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg, the documentary sources found to this day, do not permit to calculate the general amount that Scanderbeg has taken from the *Republic of Saint Blaise*.

The Popes efforts and plans to turn Ragusa into a focal point of distributing the money for the crusade in the Balkans, and as a bases for the attacks against the Turkish invaders, were a permanent concern for the careful Ragusan merchants. Therefore, calculating its status comparing to that of the sultan, Ragusa hesitated to become the basis of open financial support for the anti-Ottoman war, but this thing was done by her with diplomacy, sometimes approving, at other times withdrawing and entirely turning down this policy. Again, carefully and with diplomacy, it allowed that within her walls, with Scanderbeg or his people, to realize plans or agreements, to have deposits or financial transactions in favor of the anti-Ottoman war.

The relations between Ragusa and Scanderbeg, also from the end of the '50s of the XV century, had mainly to do with the financial assets for the anti-Ottoman war in Albania. The aforementioned economic relations affected fields of great importance to Scanderbeg: money was

³² *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (ab origine urbis ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae (1451-1484), Digessit Speratus Nodilo* (Scriptores, 2; Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium, vol.25), Zagrabiae: In taberna libraria eiusdem societatis typog., 1893, p. 340.

³³ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XV, fol. 51r.; HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIII, fol. 148r; S. Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan Vukčić - Kosača i njegovo doba*, SAN, knj.48, Belgrade 1964, pp. 190-191.

missing along with a proper banking system because of the political circumstances in his country. From the other side, to buy the necessary armament, occurred considerably amount of money, and for this reason were useful the banking services. Exactly a part of the documents, were dedicated to this problematic. The affiliations of the big Florentine banks in Ragusa, mainly performed such transaction with the proper restraint – because was about arm trade in a city which officially was partial and paid tribute to the sultan. Scanderbeg kept close relations with the banks *Pazzi*, *Strozzi* and *Albizzi*, which had interest for the wood commerce of Albania.³⁴ *Gjergj Kastrioti*, also had bank services in Ragusa, where he possessed a deposit, that according to the documents was about 2400 ducats, in the same bank where also *Đurađ Branković* had his own deposits.³⁵

A document of 1463, where Shufada is mentioned as the first export point, informs us about Scanderbeg revenues and his deposits that were gained from the grain trade. This document mentions Scanderbeg's representative, *Teodor*, who took at his service in Ragusa a ship with veils and six sailors, to send a grain load from Shufada to the harbor of *Trani*, respectively *Barletta*.³⁶ As in the times of Gjon Kastrioti, in the mouth of Ishmi River was sold to the Ragusans timber, e.g., to the merchants *Radoje Milošević* and *Antun Radeljić* from Korcula (Croatia) that was under the administration of Venetians.³⁷ Considerable amounts of money that were gained from the trade, are proved by a grain purchase done by three members of *Gonduli* family from Ragusa on 1464 through two representatives: from this disposition, the amount of 1450 ducats was owned by Scanderbeg.³⁸ In addition to the Ragusans, in the small harbors of Scanderbeg also traded merchants from Northern Italy, as for example a certain *Baidesar de Rexina* from Milan, which bought grain, barley and

³⁴ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII, fol.133v, 150r; *Diversa cancellariae*, XLVI, fol.78r.

³⁵ "...*Raian Celnicho a domino Paulo de Gazulis nunciis illustris domini Georgi Castriotti diti Schenderbegh in depositum in comune 35 nostrum ducatos auri duo milia quadringentos...*", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XV, 214v.

³⁶ HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, vol. XLVII, fol. 22; Kasem Biçoku, "Rrugët nëpër vilajetin e Krujës në shek. XV dhe lokalizimi i Shufadasë", *Monumentet*, 1 (Tiranë, 1982), 41-62.

³⁷ HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, vol. XLVII, fol. 32r.

³⁸ HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, vol. XLVIII (1464-1465), fol. 34r.

millet.³⁹ Scanderbeg was selling cheese also to his allies in the poor highlands, as e.g., to prince *Vladislav* of Herzegovina or *Stefan Crnojević* from Zeta, who took from him 140 half a bushel through the Venetian harbor of Kotorr.⁴⁰

The revenues from the trade of grain and timber, customs were not enough to secure all the necessary money. He was forced in some occasions to ask for help from abroad, especially from Ragusa. However, the merchant Republic of Ragusa wouldn't dare to openly support the Albanian prince. Ragusa belonged to the Hungarian crown and as was previously said, paid tribute to the sultan. Ragusa's convoys travelled enormous territories of the Ottoman Empire; Ragusans high aiming was the security of the convoys with precious stocks. Though the city was protected by his powerful walls, where within were deposited their treasures and a number of the Balkan princes, again the representatives of the Senate, wouldn't test the fortification durability. Ragusa was situated between the West and the Ottoman Empire. She would not only please the noble leaders and lords of the neighboring countries, in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Albania, but lately it had to defend herself from the Venetian competition at sea. Scanderbeg demands for help in money and armaments has put in a very unpleasant situation the *Republic of Saint Blaise*.⁴¹ Ragusa wouldn't like to risk the profitable trade in Albania. They were happy that there was a ruler (Scanderbeg) who fought against the Ottomans, but they feared the Ottoman spies that could be in the city and the danger that was threatened to their merchants in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the stand of Ragusa changed continuously, according to the political developments in the Balkans: in 1446 and 1447,⁴² the Republic helped Scanderbeg by diplomatic mediation and weapons. But, when Scanderbeg asked in 1448 a loan for the attack in the *Second Battle of Kosova*, the gentlemen of the Small Council were afraid in front of a

³⁹ HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, XLVII, fol. 3v-4r.

⁴⁰ O. J. Schmitt (avec la collaboration de G. Saint-Guillain), "Actes inédits concernant Venise, ses possessions Albanaises et ses relations avec Skanderbeg entre 1464 et 1468", *Turcica* 31 (1999), p. 260.

⁴¹ Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, pp. 145-146.

⁴² "...donando libras quingentas pulueris bombarde... donando libras quatuorcentum...", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. X (1446-1448), fol. 102r; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 14. During these years, Scanderbeg was granted some powder gun units.

such challenge towards the sultan. However, they gave to Scanderbeg a symbolic amount of 200 golden ducats, we mentioned above. With 500 other ducats, Scanderbeg was assisted by Ragusa on 1450, on the occasion of the Ottoman attacks on Kruja, but this time, from the side of Ragusa, was discretely proceeded limiting only spelling praises. The government of Ragusa valued and glorified Scanderbeg merits in defending Kruja, that according to her constituted the defense of the Christian values from the Turkish invasion.⁴³

* * *

The monetary assets, Scanderbeg was also forced to secure through common international gatherings in the war against the Turks. About the Pope *Callixtus III* action for war against the Turks, on 5 May 1456, in Ragusa came as the Pope's *nunzio*, an archdeacon from Kotorr to ask for help.⁴⁴ The authorities of Ragusa declared that because of their exposure towards the Turkish attacks, they could do nothing, first of all because the Turks have occupied a good part of the Serb Despotate, reducing in this way a great source of revenues.⁴⁵

The apostolic preacher of the crusade in Dalmatia and especially in Ragusa, was *Mariano da Siena*. He was appointed from the Pope's representative, the cardinal *Francesco Condulmer*, who has received from the Pope specific assignments. Mariano, on October 1456 was in Kotorr, waiting the permission from the Republic of Ragusa, which he was granted on 29 October of the same year.⁴⁶

On March 1457, when *Marianum de Senis (Mariano da Siena)* started to preach the establishment of a crusade, there were enough volunteers from Ragusa, which volunteered to participate in the war and to pay the indulgencies amount of three ducats. Thus, Ragusa has found itself even in a more difficult situation than a year before. For not troubling the Pope, to Ragusa's inhabitants was allowed that for a specific timeline to make propaganda at crusade's favor. The reply was big enough, and now on March 1457 the cash collectors would achieve to collect until 4000 ducats only in Ragusa.⁴⁷

⁴³ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XV (1449-1453), fol.109r; Jorga, *Notes et extraits* II, p.460.

⁴⁴ HR-DADU, *Cons. Rog.*, vol. XV (1456-1458), fol. 1v.

⁴⁵ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XVI (1454-1460), fol. 148r.

⁴⁶ Rode, "Documenti Francescani di Ragusa", no. 79.

⁴⁷ HR-DADU, *Cons. Rog.*, vol. XV (1456-1458), 102v.

The Pope *Callixtus III* previewed the start of a great war against the Turks on March 1457. To achieve this aim, his ambassadors and crusade warriors spread all over Europe. However, meantime the Republic of Ragusa was convinced that the ground army in that time was important and for this, the revenues would be saved for it. In these conditions, on 16 March 1457, she send to the king of Hungary a special envoy: the Franciscan *Alessandro da Ragusa*, to ask that the money collected in Ragusa by *Mariano da Siena* were to be sent for the ground army.⁴⁸ Ragusa's merchants, were afraid that the presence of the crusade preachers in their city would cause the intervention of the Turkish authorities and therefore, tried that as soon as possible they should leave the city. Until the Pope has delivered an order to preach the crusade in Hungary, now on April 1457, Ragusa advised that these preachers should leave their country.⁴⁹ On 17 September 1457, through a *breve* addressed to the cardinal of Saint Angel's church, *Juan de Carvajal*, the Pope behest to him Gjergj Kastrioti, on whose war he hoped the most, by instructing the cardinal on tithe revenues collected by the papal collectors to be divided between the kings of Hungary and Bosnia and "*the noble son and not less beloved - Scanderbeg, lord of Albania.*"⁵⁰ A day after, in September 18, the Pope Callixtus III addressed two orders to the city of Ragusa. On one he instructed to be granted to the trade agent *Martin Clarini*, representative of the Florentine merchants bank "*Petri et Jacobi de Pazis et sociorum*" in Ragusa, 10.000 ducats from the revenues collected for the crusade, which should be return to the above-mentioned bank (from which they were loaned by), while the other part to be divided on three equal parts and from them, two to be given to the kings of Hungary and Bosnia, while the other part to Scanderbeg. The Ragusans proposed to their sovereign, the Hungarian emperor, to ask for this money. The Pope threatened the Ragusans that would exclude them from the church "*tanquam sacrilegos et bonorum esslesiasticorum occupatores*", if they did not immediately pay the specific amount.⁵¹ As the Pope's *nunzio*,

⁴⁸ Rode, "Documenti Francescani di Ragusa", no. 76.

⁴⁹ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XVI (1454-1460), fol. 122r, 119r.

⁵⁰ A. Theiner, *Vetera monumenta Hungariam sacram Illustrantia. Maximam partem mundum edita ex tabulariis Vaticanis*. Tomus II (1352-1526), Romae: topis Vaticanis 1860, p. 304.

⁵¹ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 155.

Navarri, arrived in Ragusa together with the Papal *breve*, the Senate of the Republic was informed that the Hungarian king wanted for the payment to be delayed, nonetheless the threat of excommunication, until he would decide what to do with the money. For this, they wanted the advice of two cardinals, *Siena* and *Piccolomini* (the future Pope), how to reply to Pope's reaction, when their sovereign, the king of Hungary won't release the money. These excuses of the Ragusans, the Pope *Callixtus III* considered vane "*vanas excusationes*" and on December he threatened again them with excommunication.⁵² On December 1457, the Pope changed his decision. He decided the whole amount to be deposited in the bank, while to Scanderbeg to be promised the aid for the following year.⁵³ However, fifteen days later, the Pope returned to his previous decision that the remained amount of 10.000 ducats to be divided into three equal parts: to the Hungarian king, to Bosnian king and to Gjergj Kastrioti.⁵⁴ The letters of the Pope *Callixtus III* show the Pope's desire to help Scanderbeg, and at the same time the impossibility to grant him the amount he needed. He also manifested this concern in relation with the Ragusans which as were previously mentioned, were threatened with excommunication. The Ragusans on 7 February handed over to *Navarro* the money and demanded that their delay should not be interpreted as disobedience towards the Pope, but as outcome of the king's forbiddance.⁵⁵

Anyway, these promised assets (Scanderbeg didn't achieved to take even one third of the amount), on 6 February 1458, the Pope informed his representative that Scanderbeg has received the aid as he has asked in the amount of 5.000 ducats of gold from the apostles means.⁵⁶

Finding themselves between two fires, between the Turks and the Venetians, the careful merchants of Ragusa, tried to not break the relations with none of the parts, and even to not harm their relations with Scanderbeg. During all this time, the citizens of Ragusa tried to not attract the Turks' suspicion on their activity. During the stay of Navarra in the city, Ragusa didn't gave him the boat to go to Scanderbeg. They turned down every request of the Pope's

⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 159.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, no.160.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no.161.

⁵⁵ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 166-167.

⁵⁶ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 168; Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, pp. 146-148.

ambassadors to participate at Pope's fleet, in the military operation against the Turks. On this, they presented a lot of reasons.⁵⁷ When on May 1458, they agreed to draw from the bank as gift 2.400 ducats deposited for Scanderbeg and the Senate of Ragusa asked that for this amount not to be given any kind of receipt from Ragusa's *notary*, fearing that such a document could fall at the Turks hands and this could serve as a pretext for revenge against its merchants.⁵⁸ However, this high level of vigilance didn't prevent the Republic from recommending to the Pope and to the archbishop of Ragusa, Scanderbeg, when the latter collaborators went in Rome. As a small but important service, was the welcome of the Kotorr's envoy, Stupko (Stupchus de Nandoralba), who was sent to Scanderbeg by the Hungarian king, and to whom the Ragusans gave a boat to sail through the Adriatic.⁵⁹

On 9 June 1460, the Senate of Ragusa replied to the ambassador Scanderbeg that the Republic would offer to the ruler of Albania the necessary sailing boats when he travelled to Puglia (far from the eyes of the Turkish spies), but on Scanderbeg's charges.⁶⁰

Scanderbeg's envoy, Pal Gazulli, stayed in Rome from the end of March 1461, where he was given the reply about his demands. The Ragusans were convinced that in relation with Scanderbeg should be paid particular attention, because the Pope considered him a warrior against "*infidels*". Therefore, since April 1461, the Senate wrote to Scanderbeg, through which, without hesitation, offered shelter in Ragusa to his family, if the Turks wouldn't leave him in peace "*si accideret eum vexari a Turcis*". Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg asked to be placed in the island of *Mrkan* in front of Ragusa, but the representatives of Ragusa decided that from the end of April, Scanderbeg's shelter to be found in another Ragusan island.⁶¹ We do not possess the papers proving that Scanderbeg and his family went to

⁵⁷ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, p. 152.

⁵⁸ "...non dando ipsis nunciis aliquam scripturam", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.* vol. XV (1456-1458), fol. 222v; *ibid.*, vol. XVI (1459-1461), fol. 26v.

⁵⁹ HR-DADU, *Lett. et Comm. di. Lev.*, vol. XVI (1454-1460), fol. 73; Gelcich - Thallóczy, *Diplom. Ragus.*, no. 365; Jurić, *Gazulića.*, no. 27.

⁶⁰ D HR-DADU, *Acta Cons.Rog.* XVI (1459-1461), fol. 146r.

⁶¹ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons.Rog.*, vol. XVI (1459-1461), fol. 241r; 243v; 251r.

take shelter at that time in Ragusa.⁶² Also, on August 1461, when Scanderbeg was preparing to travel with army in *Puglia*, to help the King *Ferrante*, the son of King Alfonso, to not lose the throne, Gjergj Kastrioti was solemnly welcomed in Ragusa. According to Pope's order, he was given there the money and the silver coins, deposited in the national coffer of Ragusa to organize the crusades, and except that it was decided that his troops to be supplied with hard toasted bread on their return from *Puglia*. Nevertheless, to him was not granted a *fast boat*, that he was looking for. On the first days of February 1462, after some months of staying in Italy, Scanderbeg returned and stayed again in Ragusa. He was begged to return there; he was offered money and grain for his troops still staying in Trani.⁶³ The honor suite should sail with him to sea until Budva. From there he wanted to pursuit the voyage by land. Because of the big storm at sea, Scanderbeg was forced to return and stay for some other days in Ragusa. The first days of the visit, Scanderbeg protested because of some boats, but the Ragusan government immediately sent a noble, who demanded him to withdraw the protest, rewarding him with 100 perpers. It was well noticed that the Ragusans, in the occasion of this visit "*were not frightened by the Turkish protests at all due to their welcome to Scanderbeg, because all his action this time had to do with the inner conflicts in Italy, which were seen with sympathy by the sultan.*"⁶⁴

Though alike the Republic of Ragusa, Scanderbeg had problems with the Venetians, in April 1463, Venice did not only suite to Scanderbeg, by allowing him to pass through her territory to meet his ally the Herzog *Stjepan Vukčić*, but in this direction he took measures also about Ragusa.⁶⁵ However, the Republic of Ragusa negatively replied to the envoys of the king of Bosnia and of Herzog *Stjepan*, who on March 1463 were on the way to meet Scanderbeg, thus they were forced to go back. Even though the Ragusans were ready to do small services, after the opinion of these merchants, at that time these services were great. Ragusa from her part, excused that was in conflict

⁶² Tadić, *Promet putnika*, p. 288.

⁶³ D HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII (1461-1463), fol. 50v; Thallóczy - Gelcich, *Diplom. Ragus.*, p. 754.

⁶⁴ Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, pp. 160-161.

⁶⁵ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 242; Hrabak, "Dubrovnikasit", p. 455.

with Turks because of Scanderbeg coming to Ragusa.⁶⁶ In the fall of that year, the Ragusans were identified in Rome with Scanderbeg's Albania as belonging to the suitable conditions for the initial military actions against the Turks. Because, as Ragusa and also Scanderbeg, could secure the harbors until the landing of the troops could become operative.⁶⁷ Just in June 1464, the *Republic of Saint Blaise* in Budimlja (municipality of Montenegro) was identified with Scanderbeg's Albania as facing to the Ottoman threat.⁶⁸ Being directly endangered from the wave of the Ottoman invasions, Ragusa and Scanderbeg, in those years, kept a very close bilateral relation. On October 1463 one of the nobles of Ragusa sent to Scanderbeg some ship constructors from Ragusa.⁶⁹ From the other side, from Ragusa were also secured masters of castle constructors. These constructions were undertaken by Scanderbeg at the eve of the great offensive of 1463. On December of the same year, his trusted man from Ragusa, *Pal Marini de Gondola assembled construction masters and some bricklayers for two months* in Rodon, certainly for building the fortifications. The Ragusans workings in construction of Rodon lasted some years, because on 9 February 1465 in the Cap of Rodon were send to work other bricklayers.⁷⁰ This castle, from which are still preserved some walls, has similarities with the castle and the towers of Ragusa.⁷¹

Although on February 1464, the merchants of Ragusa were not allowed to travel through Turkey, they were granted special permission to send fabric at Scanderbeg's country, on one condition: that they should not be spread on the Turkish territory.⁷² On 5 November 1466,

⁶⁶ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, pp. 363-366.

⁶⁷ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 257.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 271.

⁶⁹ On 15 October 1463, is contracted a Ragusan carpenter called Andrea Thomasi de Zuppana to build a boat in Albania on Scanderbeg's needs (HR-DADU, *Div.Cancellariae*, vol. LXXI, (1463-1464), fol. 91v.).

⁷⁰ HR-DADU, *Div.Cancellariae*, vol. LXXI, (1463-1464), fol. 117r; *Ibid.*, vol. LXXII (1464-1465), fol. 75v.

⁷¹ Schmitt, *Skënderbeu*, p. 183.

⁷² HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII (1463-1466), fo. 25v, 30v, 39r; Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, p. 253.

the Ragusans gave again hard toasted bread to Scanderbeg's soldiers.⁷³ At that time, was planned again the visit of Scanderbeg in Ragusa, respectively the shelter of his family in Ragusa's islands. On April 1464, Scanderbeg demanded to the Republic to shelter his family. The Republic replied positively, offering as shelter the island in *Mljet* (Adriatic islands of Dalmatia). Apparently, Scanderbeg has not exploited the offer even this time, because in the summer of the same year he made known that was going, while the government of Ragusa replied about this on 9 August.⁷⁴

In the summer of 1465, the Turks tried to divide the Christian allies, which at that time fought against them. For this purpose, the Turks offered peace to Venice. In this action was engaged *Jakov Bunić* (Jacabus de Bona) from Ragusa. This engagement, of course also included Scanderbeg, because the Turks were sending peaceful offers even through him. Venice didn't immediately react, but tried what point-of views had Budimlja towards this offer.⁷⁵ The Hungarian king *Mathias Corvinus*, refused these combinations. Watching that his junior Albanian ally was directly in danger, he sends in the south his delegate through Ragusa.⁷⁶ On 13 November 1466, the Senate of Ragusa helped to escort *Paladino Gondola* in Hungary, where he went to present Gjergj Kastrioti's request. However, at the same time, it postponed the reply that should be given to the Hungarian king envoy who was going to meet Scanderbeg,⁷⁷ and so were prolonged the negotiations and the preparations. The old friendship and the similar position requested by the Ragusan senators, draw Scanderbeg's attention for the trap that were preparing the Ottoman invaders. By trying to not be exposed to the Turkish danger, the Ragusans at those times, were frightened by the dynamism of the Hungarian king. It's not excluded the possibility that they might be also frightened from the Venetians intrigues.

⁷³ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 136v; Gelcich-Thallóczy, *Diplom. Ragus.*, p. 780.

⁷⁴ Tadić, *Promet putnika*, p. 290.

⁷⁵ Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 289; 296; 305; 309-310.

⁷⁶ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII (1463-1466), fol. 198v-199r; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, p. 372.

⁷⁷ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), 138r;150r; Thallóczy-Gelcich, *Diplom. Ragus.*, pp. 780-781.

Scanderbeg, from his part, the possibility to buy weapons saw in Ragusa, which since on 1447 has granted him a priceless quantity of gunpowder.⁷⁸ However, the Ragusan merchants, as in the case of the financial assets, paid attention to not be seen by the Turks. During the years of February and May 1466, in the moments when Scanderbeg was threatened to be defeated by the Turks and they were dangerously coming closer to the city, the Council of Ragusa allowed the sale of a considerable quantity of gunpowder. However, not only the gunpowder was requested from Ragusa, Scanderbeg was in need for qualified soldiers who knew how to use the artillery. On 1466, Scanderbeg incessantly demanded in Ragusa the permission to secure in there the artillery masters (bombardiers), but this request was turned down.⁷⁹

On 2 November 1466, Scanderbeg addressed again to the first and constant closest friend – Ragusa. However, the Senate of the Republic delegated a noble with the demand that he should not come to Ragusa because they feared the Turks (who by the time had conquered the eastern part of Herzegovina and were close to Ragusa). The Senate sent to Scanderbeg foods, and granted the permission to his boat to sail in Ragusa's harbor.⁸⁰ On 18 April 1465, on the eve of Scanderbeg's war against the Ottoman armies, the Senate of Ragusa with their initiative offered to his family members shelter in Ragusa, in the *Mljet* island.⁸¹ So, in November 1466, the situation worsened even for Ragusa. Therefore, it is understandable that they first of all were taking care of their security, because they were frightened that the sheltering of an invincible warrior like Scanderbeg would make the Turkish armies invade the *Republic of Saint Blaise*. It's not known what Scanderbeg did at those days in front of Ragusa, but it's known that he went close to this city, by 1 April 1467, and the government of Ragusa sent *Junius de Gradi, Jacobus de Gondola and Nicola de Bona*, three Ragusan nobles to welcome him.⁸² Some months later, on 15 December 1467, it

⁷⁸ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. X (1446-1448), fol. 102r; Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 14.

⁷⁹ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 13r.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 134r-134v; Radonić, *Skenderbeg.*, no. 338.

⁸¹ "...de offerendo illustri domino Schenderbegho receptaculum pro familia sua in insula nostra Melite, prout alias fuit", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII (1463-1466), fol. 150v. Radonić has mistakenly read the year, as 1466. It should be 18 April 1465 (Cfr.: Radonić, *Skenderbeg*, no. 314).

⁸² HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Min.*, vol. XVII (1466-1469), fol. 71r.

was chosen the delegation to welcome Gjon, his son,⁸³ but it is unknown whether he entered Ragusa.

As it is aforementioned said, Ragusa encouraged Scanderbeg to intervene in the Neapolitan's quarrels for the throne. On 9 June 1460, the representative of Scanderbeg presented the Small Council the request for support to pass through the Adriatic into *Puglia*.⁸⁴ Indeed, the problems aroused about the naval operation of Scanderbeg, to transport his 2000 warriors towards Puglia, a thing that should be done through Ragusa. There, Scanderbeg on 21 July 1461, bought in the presence of the city's chancellor *Ksenofon Filelfo* (Xenophon Filelfo), for forty ducats a fast boat for oarsmen. Because these were late, Scanderbeg rented a ship in Ragusa.⁸⁵ Only at the end of August, Scanderbeg and his troops arrived in Ragusa, to be escorted in Puglia. In Ragusa he was welcomed by cheering and with all the honors of a national and church hierarchical structure, belonging to a sovereign. This small state (Ragusa) with a great tradition about the close interests and relations, of financial aspects, could secure to him all what he needed the most. The Ragusan nobility opened the gates by free will to him, because they wanted the victory of King Ferrante and from the fear of the Turks, they had just asked grain from Albania. The gentlemen of the Council took care in 17 August 1461 of the Albanian leader being welcomed as he deserved.⁸⁶

This voyage protocol was also described by Barleti, where among others he writes: "*When Scanderbeg arrived in Ragusa, the whole city came out to acclaim him with a great joy. Escorted by them, he entered the city and was welcomed with honors and benevolence. The day after, once celebrated according to the official and religious celebrations custom, he crisscrossed the city, while the next day he visited the naval arsenals, the castle and the fortifications of the city...*".⁸⁷

To welcome the Albanian prince, a commission made up of the nobles *Paladino de Lukari, Paul de Pozza* and *Nikola de Palmota* was

⁸³ "Ser Marinus Ben. de Gondola, ser Andreas Fran. de Sorgo electi ad eundum obviam filio domini Schenderbeghi", *Ibid.*, fol. 109v.

⁸⁴ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.* XVI (1459-1461), fol. 146r.

⁸⁵ HR-DADU, *Div. Notariae*, vol. XLV, fol. 96v; *Ibid.*, vol. XLIV, fol. 137v.

⁸⁶ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII ((1461-1463), fol. 2r; 5r.

⁸⁷ Marin Barleti, *Historia e jetës dhe e veprave të Skënderbeut* (third edition), Prishtinë: Rilindja 1989, p. 394.

established, as it's said in the document, to honor and welcome the famous lord Scanderbeg, who will come to Ragusa. The house where Scanderbeg was going to stay was also specified. In Ragusa, Scanderbeg also met *Giacomo De Parpagniano*, a *Ferrante's* envoy who had sailed with a special ship by the order of Ferdinand to meet and encourage Scanderbeg to come. However, Parpagniano arrived also for another purpose, on which informs us the Ragusan chronicler, Resti. He was coming after the negotiations that were held in Naples by two Ragusan ambassadors, Bartolomeo Gozze and Nicola di Marino Gondola about the possibility of releasing from prison a person that had committed murder and was sentenced to death. While in another document it is said that both intervened in the Small Council to free the sentenced for murder *Nikola Risinović*. During the stay in Ragusa, Scanderbeg was granted "*money and silver*" from the fond collected for the crusade, and given 2000 hard toasted bread for the soldiers' necessities.⁸⁸

After the conclusion of the mission in Puglia, on January 1462, Scanderbeg decided to go back to Albania, leaving behind a good part of his military troops. His return at the end of January 1462, would be again through the city of *Saint Blaise*. The council of the *Saint Blaise* city was impressed by his deeds in Italy, therefore were made spectacular preparation compared to those of 1461. According to the document, the Council put at his disposal for returning his troops and horses a *balonerio* ship.⁸⁹ In this occasion, catches the eye the Ragusan detailed protocol scrupulosity. Was defined the itinerary of his journey in the territory of Ragusa, where Scanderbeg was to be allowed to freely pass from *Konavle* to *Cavtat*, while from Ragusa he would be escorted from the sub-count of Breni with the men of the region to *Cavtat* (village in the Dubrovnik) where would be welcomed by the country's representative, which would escort him with 100 men until he

⁸⁸ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Min*, vol XV (1459-1462), fol. 201v; HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII (1461-1463), fol. 6v-7r.; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, pp. 359-360.

⁸⁹ Balonerio, is a kind of merchant ship also used by the Italian merchants, and also in Ragusa. Except in the above-mentioned documents, this kind of ship is often mentioned during the XV century, in the Ragusan documents: HR-DADU, *Lamenta de Foris*, Vol. XXXVII, fol. 24; HR-DADU, *Diversa Notariae*, vol. LV, fol. 6v.-7; HR-DADU, *Diversa Notariae*, vol. LVII, fol. 70-70v; HR-DADU, *Cons. Minor.*, vol. XIV, fol. 44, HR-DADU, *Cons. Minor.*, vol. XV, fol. 234, etc.

reached out of the city's jurisdiction.⁹⁰ Also, at least three nobles were at his service and would stay with him in every place to pay his expenses until in *Luštica* or *Budva* (until the southern borders of Ragusa), being allowed to spend nearly 50 perpers per day to honor Scanderbeg during his stay. After a while, Scanderbeg arrived in Ragusa from where he tried to continue his journey to his homeland, but the bad weather made to him impossible to do so. The Ragusans advised him that having in mind that the weather was precarious and, in those conditions, he could not sail, to accept staying in Ragusa. For this, the Council of the city took over the securing of the food, in *Cavtat* would be put into the market the necessary supplies, and if Scanderbeg was not be ready to return in Ragusa, was decided to be escorted by the Ragusan nobles equipped with 50 perpers for expenses and hard toast breads as much as they considered it sufficient.⁹¹ Meanwhile, on 9 February 1462, the representatives of the Council discussed with Scanderbeg about the developments in the Balkans in front of the Turkish invasions, as they were informed from the Ragusan representative who had just returned from the Sublime Porte. Two days later, Scanderbeg, asked the Council to liberate the five persons that were captured by the fishermen in the Ragusan waters.⁹² During his stay in Ragusa, on 26 February 1462, Scanderbeg possibly met his rival Lekë Dukagjini, who was also in Ragusa. The documents do not inform when did Scanderbeg return home, but the registers of the Council of Ragusa show that in May 1462 he was interested in securing food for his troops returning home.⁹³

When Scanderbeg wanted to go to Naples, at the end of 1464, again he had to ask for a galley from Ragusa.⁹⁴ Also on 1465, when the

⁹⁰ The documents speak on preparations to welcome and escort Scanderbeg in Ragusa. Starting from 29 January until 11 February, are recorded 7 decisions of the Republic of Saint Blaise Senate dedicated to welcoming and escorting Scanderbeg in Albania.

⁹¹ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII (1461-1463), fol. 33r, 51v, 52r, 56r, 62v.

⁹² As part of the protocol was also previewed the charity act: Five persons that were captured by the Ragusan fishermen in Lagosta island and were in prison, would be released on Scanderbeg instruction. All this, has been a sign of the high prestige that a leader did exclusive actions that skipped the court verdicts. After the charity act, followed the act of welcome quality "conformation". On this was instructed the noble Jakob de Gondola, to beg Scanderbeg that the latter should deliver a document with his personal sign and seal, on which withdrew the charges made towards the Ragusan "ships".

⁹³ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII (1461-1463), fol. 33r, 51v, 52r, 56r, 62v, 91v.

⁹⁴ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII (1463-1466), fol.7v.

relations with Venice were worsened again, Scanderbeg took a national Ragusan ship.⁹⁵ Not only he, but also *Stefan Radojević*, his envoy, rented in Ragusa two Budva ships for a voyage towards *Šibenik* and *Split*. In the efforts to build his own fleet of ships, Scanderbeg on 1455 took at his service a Dalmatian ship repairman, called *Blasius Ostojich*,⁹⁶ while the official *Ninac*, on October 1463 was asking the permission in Ragusa to buy two boats and to take four masters for each boat to build the ships in Albania. The Council of Ragusa, frightened from the occupation of Bosnia by *Mehmet II* and with high hopes for the crusade, approved the demand of Scanderbeg's representative.⁹⁷ On 15 October 1463, Scanderbeg's representative, *Paladino de Gondola* took at his service the woodworker *Andrea Thomasi de Zuppana*, who is previously mentioned.⁹⁸

Kastrioti during all the time continued to keep contact with both Ragusa, which on 9 February 1465 sent him masters to conclude the building of Rodon castle and the king of Hungary, *Mathias Corvinus* who in the middle of the summer 1465, sent the friar Alexander as representative to Scanderbeg. In the document it is said that by royal order, *Alexander* should pass through Ragusa, and from his part (*Mathias Corvinus*) asked by the Republic to also send from her part an ambassador who would contact Scanderbeg. Ragusa, from its part supported this appointment, and on 12 August of the same year charged the noble *Paladino de Lukarin*, to escort the friar towards Albania in a Ragusan ship, while *Nicola de Bona* was sent as her representative to Scanderbeg.⁹⁹

Nonetheless it's not exactly known the content of his *expedition*, from the registers of the Small Council comes out that the *Republic of*

⁹⁵ Ibid., fol. 133v.

⁹⁶ HR-DADU, *Div. Cancellariae*, vol. LXV (1455-1456), fol. 133r.

⁹⁷ The Senate of Ragusa answers to *Ninac*, ambassador of Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg, offering him facilities to buy two boats and to take until four craftsmen for each boat. (HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVII (1461-1463), fol. 276r-276v).

⁹⁸ HR-DADU, *Div. Cancellariae*, vol. LXXI, (1463-1464), fol. 91v.

⁹⁹ HR-DADU, *Div. Cancellariae*, vol. LXXII (1464-1465), fol. 75v.; Radonić, *Skenderbeg.*, no. 29; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, p. 372; HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XVIII (1463-1466), fol. 198v-199r.

Saint Blaise accepted Scanderbeg demand to send on 13 November 1466 the Ragusan noble, *Paladino de Gondola* as Scanderbeg's envoy to *Mathias Corvinus*. The Council of the Republic, showing prudence in relation with the Turks, instructed him to not transmit anything on Ragusa's behalf. Also, knez *Stjepan Radojević*, another representative of Gjergj Kastrioti, allowed his journey towards *Šibenik* or *Split*, from where he would continue to *Mathias Corvinus*,¹⁰⁰ nonetheless at this time couldn't be expected too much from Hungary.

When in the fall of 1466 Scanderbeg decided to travel himself to Italy to ask for help in the war he was waging, again he travelled from Ragusa, when he was once welcomed with acclaims. But now the situation had changed. The representatives of the Council demanded to be selected three Ragusan nobles to meet Scanderbeg and to ask him to not go to Ragusa for some good reasons as the document informs us.¹⁰¹ In true, in a previous decision (November 2, 1466)¹⁰² Scanderbeg was granted the welcoming by an appointed a delegation, but at the same day, this decision was overthrown. Instead, Scanderbeg was supplied with food, allowing his boat to enter within the harbor chains.¹⁰³ Apparently, again Ragusa kept a *modus vivendi* stand by not risking her profitable trade in the Balkan and the position of her merchants under the Ottoman conquered cities to help Scanderbeg. Despite the known stand of Ragusa, she tried to stand by Kastrioti. On 1 April 1467 was appointed a delegation to meet Scanderbeg. Also, on 15 December, during Gjon's return (Scanderbeg's son) from Venice where he had travelled to seek for help, the Council of Ragusa had taken the decision

¹⁰⁰ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 136v, 138r; Thallóczy-Gelcich, *Diplom. Ragus.*, p. 780.

¹⁰¹ "...faciendi tres ex nobilibus nostris, qui vadant ad obviandum illustri domino Schenderbegh et eum rogent, quod non veniat Ragusium ob bonum respectum", HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 134r-134v; Radonić, *Skenderbeg.*, no. 338.

¹⁰² During the first week of November, Kastrioti's ship was at the entrance of Ragusa's harbor. On 2 November 1466, the members of the Small Council, the nobles, *Ser Nicola Marino de Gondola*, *Ser Aloysius de Georgio* and *Ser Helias Pe. De Bona*, were instructed from the Senate of Ragusa to take measures to welcome his Excellency, lord Scanderbeg, and thus to get informed that if it was appropriate for him to not land at all in Ragusa (HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Min.*, vol. XVII (1466-1469), fol. 40v).

¹⁰³ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 134v-134r.

to send two nobles to pay a visit to Scanderbeg's son, and to honor him with food supplies.¹⁰⁴

The last information obtained from the Ragusan documents about Scanderbeg dates in March 1st 1468, three months after his death. This is a second version which does not coincide with the first version, "the official version" of the Venice's Republic. The second version of our hero death, comes from *Mantua's* diplomat and ambassador in Ragusa, *Joannes Franciscus de Maffeis*. On Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg death. He informed his marquis in Ragusa that "*Scanderbeg died in the battle from an arrow*". This made that in Ragusa and everywhere else to be spread the news that Scanderbeg was allegedly killed by an arrow.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the Byzantine historian *George Sfrantzes* who was once a friend of the last Byzantine emperor, informs us that the hero died of "natural causes".

¹⁰⁴ HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Rog.*, vol. XIX (1466-1467), fol. 292r. The Senate of Ragusa appointed the delegation of the following composition: Marinus Ben de Gondola and Anndrea Sorgo, which had to meet with Gjon, Scanderbeg's son. (HR-DADU, *Acta Cons. Min.*, vol.XVII (1466-1469), fol. 109v.).

¹⁰⁵ Radonić, *Skenderbeg.*, no.391.