RULING AN ISLAND WITHOUT A NAVY. A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF VENETIAN AND OTTOMAN CRETE
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Published by: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25817752
Accessed: 27-12-2015 02:57 UTC
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The Ottomans wrested the island of Crete from the Venetians in the late 17th century, 100 years after they had supposedly "turned their backs on the sea". This article seeks to explain how, in a time of great maritime weakness, they nevertheless managed to hold onto this large island which Braudel counts as one of the "miniature continents" of the Mediterranean.

The challenge faced by the Ottomans emerges most clearly when viewed comparatively. During the last century (1570-1669) of their long tenure in Crete the Venetians were also in the difficult position of trying to maintain control over an island, despite insufficient naval resources. We are perhaps not accustomed to thinking of the Venetians as a power lacking in naval resources but by the 17th century this was indeed the case. Although Venetian and Ottoman problems concerning sea power were similar, they were not identical. In Crete, the Ottomans enjoyed certain key advantages that Venice had not been able to draw upon when she controlled the island. These advantages allowed the sultan to succeed where the Doge had failed.

Venetian Crete: The burden of defense

In her heyday in the 14th and 15th centuries, Venice's control of the seas meant that the defense of Crete was secured through the prowess of her navy, with little or no need to mobilize the population of the island. Questions of security, to the extent that they existed, had much more to do with quelling rebellion on the part of the local population so that Venice would be free to enjoy the advantages that the possession of Crete conferred upon her, in terms of both the eastern trade and the luxury wine produced on the island for export. By the 17th century this situation had shifted dramatically.


2 – For general histories of the island under Venetian rule see Maltezou, Chryssa, "Η Κρήτη στή διάρκεια τής περίοδου τής Βενετοκρατίας" [Crete during the period of Venetian rule], in: Panyiotakes, N.M. (ed.), Κρήτη: Ιστορία και Πολιτισμός [Crete:...
The collapse of the Venetian navy and merchant marine at the beginning of the 17th century coincided with — and was partly caused by — an upsurge of piracy in the Mediterranean. It is natural that scholarly attention has focused on the grave consequences this had for Venice herself, but it had even graver consequences for her future in Crete, her main colony.3 The disintegration of her naval and commercial power rendered the problem of provisioning the island even more acute, as the seas grew more dangerous, as Ottoman exports dried up and as the military threat from the sultan grew. A Venetian administrator writing early in the 17th century summed up the predicament succinctly:

"I believe, and I think others will concur, that to have fortresses and territories and coastlines in places thousands of miles away, in front of the open mouth of the enemy, without the ability to supply the population and the militia there with food, it is as if one doesn't, in fact, possess that place at all to say the least. Your Highness, your islands and fortresses in the east — and particularly the island of Crete — are in such a situation.4"

Venetian administrators could no longer be content with simply keeping the local population quiet. More and more they were forced to turn to the island’s peasants to participate in the Republic’s defense, both by serving as look-outs along the coastline, and as rowers in the galleys that Venice maintained. These duties were vigorously resisted by the Cretans. They also had to worry about adequate grain supply — particularly in case of war — and this brought them into conflict as well with local elites who were interested in, first, viticulture and, later on, olive oil.

The Venetians in Crete desperately wanted the peasantry to view them in a benevolent light. The endless discussion of the grain problem, for instance, was always presented as a mission of mercy to a countryside on the verge of starvation.

But this preoccupation with the peasantry did not stem from altruism. The point of view from Venice is given in a report discussing the possi-


bility of an Ottoman assault:

There is no doubt that the strongest defense will always be a strong navy... The defense of the inhabitants is just as important. They must always be treated well so that they will remain faithful and devoted. Because when they are oppressed and used too much in forced labour by the fief-holders and sometimes even by the representatives of the state, and subjected to extraordinary harshness, they are driven to despair. Then they abandon the Kingdom and go to the Turkish territories and, enraged as they are, they devote themselves to evil-doing. They incite the enemy and open the way towards attacks which perhaps he (the enemy) would not otherwise have thought of.  

Despite the plea for harmony, the antagonism between the state and the peasantry is alluded to in the speech. Although most of the blame for the exploitation of the peasantry is placed on local elites, the writer had to confess that sometimes even the state overdid it with forced labour. In fact, this was very much understating the case. Ever since the time of the last Ottoman-Venetian war (1570-71), the Venetians had put frightful demands on the island's population, in effect squeezing the peasantry between the demands of the state and obligations to local landlords. This dilemma resulted in peasant flight and the depopulation of the countryside which, of course, only exacerbated the problem of insufficient grain yields.

Although the Venetians initially relied on free labour to staff both their merchant marine and their navy, the increasing use of galleys meant that free labour would not suffice. The strain of recruitment was acutely

5 — "Non è dubbio, che la più vigorosa diffesa, sarà in ogni tempo, un conveniente nervo d'armata... niente inferiore stimo la diffesa de sudditi, che devono esser sempre accarezzati, ben trattai, mantenuti in fede, e devotione, perche oppressi, et angariati soverchieramente da Cav.Ri padroni de feud, alcune volte da rappresentanti stessi, con esecuzioni, e rigori extraordinari, si riducono poi a disperazione, abandonano il Regno, si portano in paese Turchesco, et invipiteri procurano tutti i mali, fomentano nemici, l'aprono, e facilitano la stradda a quei tentativi, a quali forse non pensano.", Spanakes, St., "Η έκθεση του Γενικού Προβλέπτη Κρήτης Ισέπο Κινταν του 1639" [The report of the Commissioner of Crete Isopo Civran 1639], in: Κρητικά Χρονικά, XXI (1969), p. 438.

6 — A 1602 report complained that the peasantry was being shielded from the state corvee by their masters, in exchange for which the peasants were expected to labour for their master's own account. Spanakes, St., Relatione dell'Ilmo. Sr. Benetto Moro 1602, in: Μνημεία τῆς Κρητικῆς Ἰστορίας [Monuments of Cretan History], IV, Irakleon, 1958, p. 101.

7 — They began recruiting oarsmen, galeotti, from Dalmatia as early as the 14th century. Even as the use of sailing ships for war increased elsewhere, galley warfare continued into the 17th century in the Mediterranean because any ship without oars was at the mercy of the unreliable winds of that sea. Much of the Cretan war consisted of Venetian galleys chasing Ottoman supply ships headed for Crete, trying to prevent them from provisioning their army. If they relied on sailing ships they ran the risk of watching the Ottoman fleet go by, unmolested, while the Venetian's ships
felt in Crete, a traditional centre for galley labour. In the 1570s, in the wake of the loss of Cyprus, there was an attempt to regularise the supply of rowers from the island but problems continued throughout the 17th century.

In a report dated 1630, the Capitan Generale Pietro Giustiniano spoke at length about the recruitment problem. Before the last war, he said (that is, 1570-71), finding rowers had been easy. But conditions during that war, and subsequent to it, had so horrified people that now it was impossible to get anyone to come of his own free will. Whole families would be destroyed as people frantically sold vineyards, fields and cattle in an attempt to find the money to pay substitutes. This, he observed, only made the system even more hated. The Venetians may have had 40,000 names entered in their records, but Giustiniano makes it clear just how difficult it was to find even the 400 men required for the ordinary galleys in peacetime.

One particularly harrowing account of a recruitment drive includes the information that in the village of Anapoli, a man hung himself rather than be taken away to the galleys.

The loss of naval superiority in the wider arena of the eastern Mediterranean meant that unfriendly ships — both pirate and Ottoman — could now approach the shores of the island with impunity. The extent of Venetian paranoia over this new development is made clear in a remark made by a Venetian administrator. The fortress of Kandiye, he said, was open from Dermata gate to the bulwark of St Andrea. This area, which faced out onto the sea, had to be fixed because — as things stood now —

remained idle due to lack of wind. The galleys demanded enormous numbers of men. The merchant galleys in use in the 15th century required 200 men each and the numbers required for warfare kept rising as larger states formed all round Venice. For the naval battles of the Ottoman-Venetian war for Crete see Anderson, R.C., Naval Wars in the Levant, Liverpool, 1952.

At the battle of Lepanto the Venetians commanded 110 galleys. Thirty of those were manned by Cretans. Lane, Frederick, Venice: A Maritime Republic, Baltimore, 1973, p. 369.

For instance in 1610 Venier reported that the city of Kandiye, usually a reliable source of labour, had not managed to outfit even two galleys with rowers. There were two reasons for this, he continued. One, the rolls had not been kept up to date and, two, recruitment started too late in the year, in May, when the peasants were already busy with the harvest. Recruitment should begin on the Day of the Virgin (February 2nd) because at that time of the year the peasants had very little to eat. Spanakes, St., “Η Εκθέση τοῦ Δούκα τῆς Κρήτης Ντόλφιν Βενέρ 1610” [The report of the Duke of Crete Dolfin Venier 1610], in: Κρητικά Χρονικά, IV (1950), p. 339.


The usual requirement was four galleys, 100 men each.

Spanakes, St., Relatione di Me Filippo Pasqualligo 1594, in: Μνημεία τῆς Κρητικῆς Ἰστορίας [Monuments of Cretan History], III, Irakleion, 1953, p. 36.
anyone can go in and out as they please and, most importantly, they could send out a signal.\textsuperscript{13}

The Cretans were also required to help defend the island's shores as both piracy and the perceived threat from the Ottomans grew. Service in these local militias, though much preferred to the service in the galleys, was a hated burden none-the-less. In 1629 about 14,000 people were enrolled, charged with patrolling the coasts. Like so much else about Venetian defense at this time, their quality left much to be desired. Commanding officers, who were from noble families, refused to train properly with these soldiers from humble backgrounds and chose to suffer punishment instead. Many of the ordinary soldiers neglected their posts.\textsuperscript{14}

The resulting loss of control over the coasts is clear from contemporary reports. In 1601 a pilgrim returning home from the Holy Lands was blown off course into a port on the eastern part of the island. He wrote “it appears that there was once a beautiful fortress here, but at present everything is ruined and deserted because of the corsairs who regularly put into the port for supplies. They regularly kill and enslave the population”.\textsuperscript{15}

A report of 1602 urged that a fortress be built on the southern coast of the island at Káli Limenes because pirate boats put in there so often. As it was, the galleys charged with touring the circumference of the island every so often were afraid to do so, out of a fear of being attacked along the southern shores.\textsuperscript{16}

The burden of provisioning

If Crete had become difficult to defend, she had also become difficult to feed. Like defense, this was a problem that the Venetians had not faced in earlier centuries. The island had actually once served as Venice's breadbasket, particularly in the 15th century when huge amounts of Cretan gains were sent to the Italian mainland to feed Venetian armies fighting in Lombardy. But that same century saw the beginnings of viticulture on the island and, by the 16th century, the export of the sweet luxury wine known as malvasia had come to dominate the island's commercial economy.

The wine trade was extremely profitable and the local population threw itself into the export economy with enthusiasm. But by the end of the 16th century Venetian administrators had become concerned about the military implications of such a heavy concentration on viticulture. Because so much land was given over to vineyards – vines were planted

\textsuperscript{14} – Spanakes, "Η ἐκθέσει τοῦ Γενικοῦ Προβλέπτη Κρήτης Ισερο Σιναν, cit., p. 436.
\textsuperscript{15} – Castela, Henry, Le sainct voyage de Hierusalem et mont Sinay faict en l'an du grand jubilé 1600, Bordeaux, 1603, p. 473.
\textsuperscript{16} – Spanakes, Relazione dell'Illmo. Sr. Benetto Moro, cit., p. 70.
in even the most fertile plains of Crete, plains that could have produced an abundant wheat crop – the island had developed the habit of importing grain from the surrounding Ottoman lands for three or four months out of every year. This could continue only as long as the Ottomans had grain to export and were willing to do so. In the 16th century both these provisions became uncertain. In 1555 the first Ottoman ban on the export of grain was imposed and their wheat policy became ever more draconian as the century wore on and the empire’s population grew.17 At the same time, and particularly after the loss of Cyprus, Venice became convinced that a war with the Ottomans and Crete was inevitable. When such a war came, they had to make sure that the island would be able to feed itself. Finally, even if the Ottomans were willing to continue to supply Crete with grain, the proliferation of pirates towards the end of the 16th century came close to isolating the island.

Moved by such concerns, the authorities took draconian measures. Towards the end of the 16th century they initiated the policy of ripping out vines in an attempt to force landowners, both large and small, to plant grain instead.18 But the attempt to restrict viticulture and encourage wheat cultivation in Crete enjoyed only limited success. It was vociferously resisted by the landowners, as the Venetians bitterly noted in their reports. On the occasion of one of these orders (1584), the landowners declared that they would make “no distinction between subjects of Venice or of the Turks.”19 The orders to rip out vineyards and plant wheat continued throughout the reports of the 17th century.20

The search for wheat continued as well. When Dolfin Venier arrived in Crete in the early 17th century and found no wheat in the storage bins, he himself travelled to the plain of Messara on the south side of the island in order to find grain. He did find some but the primitive state of transportation made the trip back an excruciating one: the “small animals” (probably donkeys) that he had to use to bring the grain back to Kandiye could only carry modest loads on their backs.21 The next year saw a dramatic improvement, however, because Venice herself sent grain and the

18 – Zagredo refers to the new policy in his report. “oce l’Ecc.mo. s.r Proc.r all’hora Prov.r Gn.al in quel Regno Foscarini di f.e.m.; una infinita di opere Eroiche, ma fra le principalissime, e necessarie, fece far un streptissimo Edito, che alcuno non potesse sotto pene gravissime piantar vigne in terreni atti a coltura, anzi ne fece radiccar buona quantita, obilgando li possessori alla coltivazioni di essi...”. Spanakes, “Η έκθεση τού Δούκα της Κρήτης Ιωάννη Σαγκρέντο”, cit., p. 522-523
21 – A staro each. A staro was a wooden measure, in the shape of a barrel, used for measuring grain. Spanakes, “Η έκθεση τού Δούκα της Κρήτης Ντολφίν Βενιέρ”, cit., p. 330.
bailo in Constantinople secured permission from the Ottoman government to import wheat into Crete. Thirty years later, on the eve of the Ottoman invasion, the Venetians were still sending their ships throughout the archipelago, looking for grain.\textsuperscript{22}

The Republic was largely unsuccessful in getting local elites to reorient the economy and to put military above economic concerns. It also faced a struggle in its attempts to force the wealthy of the island to contribute toward the ever increasing cost of maintaining Venetian rule in Crete. Official frustration with what was viewed as the ungratefulness of the local population is clear in a late 16th-century proposal for a new tax on wine. The writer said it was well known that the revenue received from Crete was not nearly enough to cover the cost of maintaining it. The republic, for instance, was forced to buy the galleys which it would need in time of war and these were very expensive.\textsuperscript{23} Yet while the state struggled to meet its commitments, he continued, the citizens of the island enjoyed the security provided by Venice. Therefore a new tax was certainly called for and a levy on wine was the most appropriate. Given the many antagonisms between the Metropole and the local elite, it is perhaps not too far fetched to believe that some prominent local families invited the Ottomans to invade Crete in the wake of the pirate attack of 1644, as contemporary sources assert.\textsuperscript{24}

The last Venetian rulers of Crete were caught in a vicious cycle. In their struggle to hold onto the island – which was the centrepiece of their empire in the Levant – they leaned ever more heavily on both the peasants and the nobility, trying to force them to shoulder what Venice saw as their fair share of the burden of defence. In the case of the peasantry, this meant a willingness to serve as rowers in the galleys and as look outs along the shores of the island. The elites were expected to give priority to military concerns when making decisions about which crops to plant, as well as to make contributions – both in money and in kind – towards the costs of maintaining Venetian rule on Crete. In general Venice expected

\textsuperscript{22} – Spanakes, “Η έκθεσι τοῦ Γενικοῦ Προβλέπτη Κρήτης Ισεπ Κιβάρα”, cit., p. 418.
\textsuperscript{23} – Spanakes, St., Relazione del Nobil Huomo Zuanne Mocenigo 1589, in: Μνημεία της Κρητικής Ιστορίας Μνημεία της Κρητικής Ιστορίας [Monuments of Cretan History], I, Irakleion, 1940, p. 240.
\textsuperscript{24} – Two anonymous Italian manuscripts from the time assert this. “che veramente il pensiero del Turco fosse solo contro Malta, ma che poi il combattimento con le disprazie degli Africani lo disponesse contro a Veneziani, e finalmente in tutto lo facesse risolvere il ricorso che fecero a lui delle prime famiglie di Candia che disgiusti dal governo asprissimo di Andrea Cornaro, non sapendo dove trovar giustizia, per esser in Venezia la famiglia Cornaro troppo potente, implorarono il braccio del Gran Signore, rappresentandogli la facilità dell’impresa et il desiderio che haveva quel Regno di soggettarsi a lui…” See Setton, Kenneth, Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century, Philadelphia, 1991, p. 119. For other references to this possibility see Bernardy, Amy, Venezia e il Turco nella seconda metà del secolo XVII, Firenze, 1902, p. 8.
the elite to forgo economic gains in the interests of keeping the island Venetian. But this pressure which Venice applied served only to weaken her position. Caught between a harsh feudal nobility and a demanding state, Cretan peasants fled to Ottoman territories. The depopulation of the countryside exacerbated the problem of provisioning the island. In the case of local elites, as local interest increasingly diverged from that of the metropole, they decisively chose the former. And in the end, dissatisfaction with Venetian rule may have led them to give an opening to the sultan’s troops. Although Venice’s policy was ultimately self-defeating, it would have been hard for her to behave differently. As the costs of war climbed, and her control of the seas slipped away, she had to rely more on the co-operation of the local population. This co-operation proved not to be forthcoming.

Ottoman Crete

The Ottomans in Crete came to be plagued by some of the same problems that had dominated the last century of Venetian rule on the island. Yet there were also certain key differences that made it easier for them to hold on to Crete.

The vulnerable coastline

Like the Venetians before them the Ottomans had great difficulty in preventing attacks along the coastline. These attacks certainly hurt agricultural yields and probably contributed to peasant flight, both because of the attacks themselves and because of the guard duties that the Ottomans demanded from the peasantry in response.

The Venetians had to worry about pirates and the Ottomans. The Ottomans, in their turn, had to worry about pirates and, until 1715, the Venetians. By the terms of the peace treaty of 1669, the Venetians maintained sovereignty over three rocky islands just off the northern coast of Crete.25 Venice was not at all reconciled to the loss of Crete and she hoped to use these islands as a base to launch a reconquest.26 This threat materialised in 1692 when she briefly, but unsuccessfully, laid siege to Chania. Throughout the period, she used locals to launch raids against the mainland from the three islands, particularly during the long war of 1684-99, and these raids were clearly very damaging, as archival records show.

In late 1694, a delegation from Istanbul was sent to Crete to ask why the sums collected from villages whose revenues belonged to the Imperial

25 – Souda, Spinalonga and Grambousa. The Ottomans gained Grambousa in 1691 when the Venetian garrison surrendered and the commander, Capitano Luca della Roca, defected to Istanbul. The other two were lost in 1715, during the course of the last Ottoman-Venetian war.

Purse had fallen so far short in the previous year. The answer was a litany of woes which were characteristic of Crete during the early years of Ottoman rule. The proper planting and harvesting of any field near the coastline had not been possible, village representatives explained in court, because of the presence of enemy ships in many of the harbours of Crete. In addition, many pirates and local rebels had conducted raids against Crete during this period.27 Finally, the Venetian siege of Chania, although brief, had meant the loss of most of the agricultural produce of that province.28

In 1107/1696 a firman to the Paşa of Crete noted that boats from Venetian-held Souda were constantly intercepting ships coming into Chania, Rethymnon and Kandiye, thereby preventing grain and other goods from reaching the island. A certain Mustafa Kapudan from Monemvasia had apparently offered to repair three old frigates lying in the harbour of Kandiye, in order to chase the Venetians, and the sultan ordered that these boats be turned over to him.29

Two different cadastral surveys of the eastern half of the island show that, in the first 40 years of Ottoman rule on the island, the amount of land under cultivation dropped, in some cases dramatically.30 Nor was the countryside generating the revenue that it had been capable of almost 40 years previous. Within this overall picture of decline, however, there were important regional differences. These disparities, moreover, followed the pattern of the late Venetian period.

27 – The Ottomans used the Arabic term ha’în (traitor) to refer to men who conducted raids on the island, then fled to one of the Venetian strongholds for refuge.

28 – Between July 17th and August 29th, Venetian naval commander Domenico Mocenigo laid siege to Chania, using the island of Souda as a base. He abandoned the attempt when Turkish prisoners of war informed him that the Ottoman Kapudan Paşa was headed for Chania with a large naval force. Setton, Venice, cit., p. 386.

29 – Turkish Archives of Irakelion (henceforth T.A.H.), XI, p. 41. All references are to the original Ottoman document except in the case of volume 6. This volume is in such a state of deterioration that it is no longer available to researchers. Therefore I have relied on the translations of select documents made by Nikolau Stavrinidou in his five volume series Μεταφράσεις Τουρκικών Ιστορικών Έγγραφων [Translations of Turkish Historical Documents], Irakleion, 1984-1987.

30 – The first cadastral survey is housed in the Başbakanlık Arşivi [Prime Minister’s Archive] in Istanbul. It is number 825 in the Tapu Tahir Defterleri series. Most likely another survey was commissioned for the western half of the island but this has either not survived or not yet been located. Under the Venetians the island had been divided into four “territorio” named after the four major cities on the northern coast. The Ottomans maintained this division. Moving from the east to the west they were the lîva-i İstîne, the lîva-i Kandiye, the lîva-i Resmo and the lîva-i Chania. The survey of the two eastern lîvas is not dated. However, there is an entry in the margins on page 819 dated 1804. Therefore, the register must have been drawn up before then. Two other cadastral surveys, both dated 1117, are located in the Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü in Ankara. One covers western Crete and the other, register 4, the two eastern lîvas of İstîneye and Kandiye. Only register 4 will be discussed here.
In the province of Kandiye tax revenue dropped by 27 per cent. The hardest hit areas, however, were in the southern part of the province. In the remote district of Pyrgiotisa, southwest of Kandiye, revenues dropped by 41 per cent. Areas lying close to the capital fared much better. Temenos district, which forms the immediate hinterland of Kandiye to the south, actually showed an increase in revenue and over 90 per cent of the land was in cultivation. The exception to this rule was the large district of Pediye directly east of Kandiye. There, abandoned land shot up from 7 per cent to 18 per cent of the total. Tax revenue dropped a dramatic 35 per cent, from 2,632,462 to 1,687,976 akçe. The explanation here must be that Pediye had a long coastline and was thus prey to pirate and other attacks, as well, as we shall see below. By the same token, Temenos’ relative prosperity must have derived, in part, from the fact that it was one of the few districts which was completely inland.

Conditions in the remote province of Iistine, far from the island’s capital city, were clearly much worse than in the more central province of Kandiye. Tax revenue declined by 43 per cent on average and in one district by more than 50 per cent.

The cadastral survey shows that, like the Venetians before them, the Ottomans established more or less effective control in the fertile areas lying near Kandiye and reaped the rewards in terms of tax revenue. Archival documents show large amounts of elite investment in the district of Temenos, just behind Kandiye. Very soon after conquering the island, however, they resigned themselves to only a limited presence in the more remote parts of the island.

The reasons for this are not hard to understand. Given Ottoman weakness at sea, it would have taken considerable military effort to guard the southern coasts from pirate attacks. The Venetians, for instance, normally maintained 25 soldiers and one cavalry regiment in the fortress of Siteia in the extreme eastern part of the island. When pirates attacked the area in the late 1630s, the Venetians felt obliged to send down another 200 men plus an additional cavalry regiment. Such a commitment was extremely costly, especially when one considers the inferior agricultural possibilities in the south and east. It was the very fact that the southern coast was unguarded, of course, that led Maltese pirates to land there in 1644, thereby setting off the long war for Crete.

Like the Venetians before them, the Ottomans organised the villagers into bands in an attempt to protect the coasts. Several documents from the late 1680s indicate the system they followed, as well as the kind of at-

31 – From 632,657 akçe to 656,095 akçe, a rise of 4 per cent. To the southwest of the city the district of Meleviz dropped a modest 5 per cent. All numbers in this section are based on a comparison of the earlier and later registers.

32 – The district of Rizou on the southern coast.

tacks the countryside was subject to. Provincial leaders from four coastal districts were called into court in Kandiye and told that henceforth they would be held personally responsible for any Muslims of their province that were taken hostage by the rebels, as well as any damage to Muslim property that was inflicted during the course of these raids. In the northern coastal districts of Meleviz and Resmo (to the west of the capital city) the villagers were obliged to serve as sentries at established lookout points, and to send up a signal whenever a ship was spotted. Villagers in Pediye, as well as in the southern districts of Rizou and Yerapetra, were organised into bands and charged with arresting any *ha'ins* that appeared in their areas. They were also ordered to report to the authorities any villager that they suspected of planning an escape to one of the Venetian islands. Finally, the provincial leaders were threatened with severe punishment if any aid or succour was extended to the rebels or to pirates. The Paşa of Kandiye suspected such an alliance in the case of the villagers from Meleviz and Resmo.

Despite these difficulties, several new conditions were created by the Ottoman annexation of the island. These new conditions were of critical importance in allowing them to hold onto Crete during the tumultuous decades at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries when they fought the Venetians twice.

*The end of the galleys*

For the island's rural areas, the beginning of Ottoman rule meant the end of the dreaded service in the galleys. Although the Ottomans continued to have acute labour shortages for their navy both during and after the war for Crete, they apparently never tapped the island's villagers for this service.34 The orders that were sent out from Istanbul to the Aegean, to Thessaloniki and to other coastal areas of the Greek world, ordering the recruitment of rowers (*kiirekçiler*), do not appear in the records of Kandiye. In subsequent discussions of the crews for the sultan's navy, Crete is conspicuous by her absence.35 The picture of the *Kapudan Paşa* on the Cycladic island of Naxos in 1711, breaking down the door on the monastery to find people for the sultan's navy, has no counterpart in Crete.36 Although the last Venetian rulers of Crete were deeply worried that, by conquering even a part of the island, the Ottomans would gain a large

34 – During the 1650's the government repeatedly resorted to pulling recent immigrants to Istanbul off the street and forcing them to serve in the galleys. Murphey, Rhoads, "The Ottoman resurgence in the seventeenth-century Mediterranean: the gamble and its results", in: Mediterranean Historical Review, VIII/2 (December 1993), p. 91.
35 – See Sphyroeras, V., *Ta Ελληνικά Πληρώματα του Τουρκικού Στόλου* [The Greek Crews of the Turkish Fleet], Athens, 1968, passim.
new supply of manpower for the galleys, the Ottomans, in fact, chose not to use the Cretans in this way. The reason for this is difficult to know. One Venetian general did break with the prevailing wisdom when he predicted, accurately as it turned out, that the Ottomans would not use the islanders as galley slaves. Giustiniano wrote:

I think the enemy will behave more prudently. In order to win the trust of the Kingdom’s population he will try not to frighten them and will ask only that they remain in the their village to attend to their fields and their vines for their own account. By enticing them in this way, and with this false pretence of liberty and munificence, the enemy will gain their devotion. 37

This motivation, while quite possible during the war years, does not explain why the Cretans were not tapped for galley service after the war was over. The sultan also did not recruit them as sailors, later on, when naval reforms in the empire replaced the galley with the sailing ship as the basis of the Ottoman navy. 38 The Aegean continued to be the main recruiting area. Quite unwittingly, Giustiniano’s remarks suggest what the real reason might have been. Unlike the rocky Cycladic islands, Crete had the potential to become a great agricultural resource. To that end, people had to be encouraged to stay at home and farm, rather than to head off to sea. 39 The tiny Venetian Republic had access to only very small amounts of manpower and thus she had to recruit amongst the Cretans. The Ottoman lands were vast by comparison, and the sultans could turn to other areas for their rowers and sailors and reserve Crete for agriculture. 40 This seems the most likely reason for the very different roles of Crete and the Aegean islands within the empire.

Provisioning

Whereas Crete was a far-flung outpost of the Venetian Republic’s overseas possessions, it was at the very centre of the Ottoman empire. This

38 – Sphyroeras, Ἐλληνικά Πληρώματα, cit., p. 37. In 1682 the Kapudan Paşa decided to make the sailing ship the galion the basis of the fleet. When a new tax was levied on the Greek islanders in 1710 in order to pay for the upgrading of the Arsenal in Istanbul, we see protests coming from places like Patmos, but not Crete. Sphyroeras, Ἐλληνικά Πληρώματα, cit., p. 39. There does not seem to be an agreement in the literature as to the effects of the naval reforms of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Stoianovich, basing himself on the French archival sources, points out that as late as 1730 the Kapudan Paşa was still using a galley with rowers for his sorties into the Aegean for head-tax, the tithe and – when war didn’t prevent it – the wheat from Egypt. Stoianovich, “L’Espace Marittime”, cit., p. 57.
39 – I thank Virginia Aksan for this insight.
40 – This is what Braudel calls the problem of city-states in an age of territorial empires.
clearly made provisioning the island much easier. As part of the empire, Crete now had access to supplies of grain that had been denied her when she was under Venetian control. Although Crete was actually a sometime grain exporter during the first decades of Ottoman rule, the records show that when grain shortages occurred, the islanders could count on Istanbul to send supplies. In May and June of 1083/1672 the Imperial Navy brought almost 20,000 kilos of grain to Kandýye, all of which was received by the Fortress Commander and stored in the public granaries. After 1715, when Crete once again had to import grain, regular shipments arrived from other parts of the empire. In 1715 the city of Foa in Anatólia sent 10,000 kilos of wheat. In 1722 alone the Moraea sent more than 22 shipments. For those who had to worry about feeding the island's population, this was a vast improvement over the days when requests were regularly sent to Venice, pleading with her to send grain, usually to no avail.

The French Connection

The international situation that the Ottomans faced from Crete was also quite different from that faced by the Venetians. By the end of the 16th century, Venice was faced with the daunting prospect of trying to hold onto a far away island even as her naval power went into sharp decline. This was particularly worrisome because the Ottoman threat loomed ever larger on the horizon. For the Ottomans in Crete, there was no comparable threat. When they defeated the Venetians, a Mediterranean rivalry with its routes in the late medieval period was finally extinguished. Furthermore, future challengers to Ottoman dominance in the eastern Mediterranean – the French, the English and, in a different way, the Greeks – were not yet ambitious. Although the Venetians continued to be a problem until 1715, in retrospect it is clear that the era of great galley clashes in the eastern Mediterranean – clashes which were such a drain on both the Ottoman and Venetian treasuries – came to an end in 1669.

More important than this, however, was a factor that can be called “the French Connection”. Although the relationship between France and the Ottoman empire had its ups and downs, the early period of Ottoman rule in Crete was dominated by the fact of French/Venetian rivalry in the eastern Mediterranean. The Venetian threat was not yet extinguished and the French were very anxious to help the Ottomans exert their control over the Aegean and beyond. Diplomatic reports of the time went so far as to implicate the French in the Venetian failure to retake Chaña in

1692.\textsuperscript{43} The Venetians, by contrast, were essentially friendless by the 17th century.\textsuperscript{44}

The Ottoman Imperial Navy was not absent from the Mediterranean after 1669. It would be more accurate to say that a division of labour with the French was established. The sultan's ships undertook tasks relating to imperial defense. Soon after the fall of Kandiye, weapons, wheat and wood were sent down from Istanbul. The Ottoman navy was particularly active during the war years (1683-89), when ships were regularly sent to Crete to pick up old cannons and other armaments. These valuable bits of iron were then taken back to Istanbul to be melted down at the Imperial Foundry.\textsuperscript{45} After the Peace of Karlowitz (1699) the navy rarely came to Crete.

For local shipping along the island's coasts and more routine matters of communication, however, the islanders relied on the French and the Ottomans were seemingly content to have them do so. As with the Imperial Navy, the French role was particularly evident during the war years. Shipments of wheat from Kandiye to the soldiers in Chania, which was particularly vulnerable to assault because of the Venetian presence on Souda, were regularly taken on French ships. The representative of the French consul in Kandiye appeared in the local court on numerous occasions during the 1680's and 1690's to guarantee these shipments against attack by corsairs or the enemy.\textsuperscript{46} Ottomans officials relied on French shipping as well for their own transportation. In 1686 the Paşa of Crete and his retinue sailed for home on a French ship which the consul had guaranteed against pirate attack.\textsuperscript{47} A few years later the new Paşa of Crete sent a shipment of butter plus some cash home to his family in Istanbul. Again, the safe arrival of the ship was guaranteed by the French.\textsuperscript{48} When the Venetian garrison on the island of Grambousa gave them up to the Ottomans in 1691, it was a French ship that took the soldiers to Istanbul.\textsuperscript{49}

The French role in Crete would change over time and would come to include competition with Ottoman authorities. By the middle of the 18th the French nation in Crete resented Istanbul's claims over the island's

\textsuperscript{43} Setton, \textit{Venice}, cit., p. 386. According to Thomas Coke, the French had helped the Turks defend Chanea, Setton, \textit{Venice}, cit., p. 389.

\textsuperscript{44} Tenenti, \textit{Piracy}, cit., passim.


\textsuperscript{46} See T.A.H., IV, p. 385, 390 and 474; T.A.H., VI, p. 152; T.A.H., VII, p. 81 and 86 for examples of this. The unwillingness of the Ottoman navy to go beyond Kandiye is strikingly illustrated by the fact that, in 1694, a shipment of weapons from Istanbul was turned over in Kandiye to a Greek from Mytilene for transport to Chania. T.A.H., VIII, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{47} T.A.H., VI, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{48} T.A.H., VII, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{49} T.A.H., VIII, p. 7.
olive oil which they were using in their fledgling soap industry. In 1742 the French consul in Chania observed that competition for the oil was much greater than it had been in the past. Just a few years later a subsequent consul complained that the Ottoman soap industry used 50 per cent of the olive oil crop in a good year and almost all when the harvest was bad. But in that crucial first half century when the Ottomans were establishing themselves on the island and the Venetian threat had not yet disappeared, both the French and the sultan had an interest in securing Ottoman rule on Crete. In France, the sultans found the friend that Venice had so sorely lacked.

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50 – Baladie, Ἑμπόριο καὶ Οἰκονομία, cit., p. 140, 141.