


<p>Political Circumstances in Durrës at the End of the 14th-Century and the Beginning of the 15th-Century</p>		<p>History</p> <p>Keywords: Albania, Durrës, Republic of Venice, Karl Topia.</p>
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>At the end of the 14th-Century Durrës was ruled by the noble family of Topiaj. It has already been proven that Durrës from 1368 when Karl Topia managed to include it in his possessions until 1392, when Gjergj Topia, the son of Karl Topia, made an agreement with the representatives of the Republic of Venice, this city with several small secession was under the ownership of the noble family of Topiaj. For the period of Venetian rule in Albania the source data are numerous, being enriched with sources, there are many scholars who have long been engaged in the study and treatment of many events and processes that characterized the period in question.</p>		

Introduction

The establishment and extension of Venetian rule in Albania, the confrontation with this rule, its opposition, the transition from Venetian to Ottoman rule and many issues related to the period of Venetian rule in Albania (1392-1479), have found wide treatment of both domestic and foreign researchers (Bogdani, 2018; Malltezi, 1988; Schmitt, 2007; Šufflay, 2009).

Based on the source data, in the framework of this paper we will stop and address a very specific problem regarding the establishment of Venetian rule in Albania, it is about the consolidation of this rule in Durrës. Always taking into account the policy applied by the Republic of Venice after the capture of this city, in the following we will address some events and processes that characterized the period 1392-1396, which simultaneously marks the phase of concentration and strengthening of rule Venetian in Durrës. In this regard, the most important sources are the numerous documents, namely, the decisions of the Senate of Venice, which were issued and sent to their governors stationed in Durrës, as well as in the responses that this Senate returned to the representatives of Durrës.

Important steps towards the extension and strengthening of their power in Durrës the Republic of Venice has made since the capture of the Castle of Durrës in April 1392. In this regard, on April 18, 1392, the Senate of Venice calling on the preservation and the maintenance of the Durrës Castle takes a decision that for the next two years the castle owner for the Durrës Castle is chosen. This position was entrusted to *Pal de Canali*, (Giuseppe 1967-1972, 451) in addition to the criteria stated therein for the selection of this castle and others to come after it, as well as the amount and method of payment, what attracts attention in this case is the decision according to which the castle owners had to support from two servants with their own salary and at their own expense who should not be Albanians or from Durrës. (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 481)

In the wake of these efforts, the Republic of Venice in October 1392 decided to send two providers to Durrës in order to take all necessary measures to ensure the rule of Venice in that city, (Malltezi, 1977/3, 150) also they had to take as much information as possible about the fortification of the castles of the city and the territory of that country, about the statutes, customs, offices, taxes, customs, income and expenses, as well as about the measures they had to take for the regulation and maintenance of that city (Ljubić, 1874, 302). The appointment of the Venetian governors in Durrës continued at the beginning of 1393. In January of that year, the Republic of Venice decided to appoint a Baile Kapedan and a chamberlain who would serve in Durrës, for a period of two years, as well as an admiral (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 491).

Furthermore, in this regard, the Republic of Venice took care to create favorable conditions for the persons it sent to Durrës in one of the above-mentioned positions, taking care to provide them with houses or flats where they could stay together with families, which had to be completely in order and appropriate (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 488). Less than a year after the establishment of Venetian rule in Durrës, the Republic of Venice faced numerous requests from Durrës residents who sought the settlement of some internal issues of Durrës which were related to the organization and functioning of this city. In the answers that Venice returned to the requests of the people of Durrës, it is noticed that they did not reject their (Durrës) requests, but generally tried to modify them by always making partial changes in favor of their policies and interests. Thus it did so on August 17, 1393, responding to some requests sent by the representatives of the city of Durrës which had to do with trade, city guard, pastures, vineyards, fields, saltworks, water mills, as well as some church issues (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 506).

An important place in the consolidation of the Venetian rule in Durrës was occupied by the preservation and establishment of good relations with all those nobles whose possessions extended around Durrës, trying by means of some privileges to keep them close with some words and not to have them as opponents. This is how they acted with Niketë Topi, whom they considered one of the most influential nobles in the district of Durrës. In order to maintain the best relations, in April 1393 in Venice it was decided that Niketë Topi be given permission to build a castle near Durrës. For this purpose, the Republic of Venice in the decision of April 15, 1393, after considering Niketë Topi as a noble with great influence in the district of Durrës, as well as very loyal to their possession, decides to be given permission to build and build a castle at all costs, on the grounds that the count himself in Durrës has asked them persistently building a castle (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 496).

In addition to this action, the Republic of Venice further in the decisions and instructions it sent to its governors in Durrës considered Niketë Topi as loyal to their possessions in those areas. To continue and preserve these reports, on September 28, 1394 in Venice it was decided to send to the *bajli* and the captain of the city of Durrës two pieces of cloth one yellow and one red which were worth 120 ducats, ordering them in cases that finds it reasonable to give those cloths to Niketë Topi and his father-in-law Komin, on the pretext that it is worth keeping in love and in the kindness of our municipality those two Albanian nobles who are loyal to our mastery in the areas

of Durrës (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 526). The following data have shown that after the death of Gjergj Topi the target of Venice were all his possessions including the Castle of Kruja, which was under the possession of his sister Helena, who was married to the Venetian Marko Barbadigo (Božić, 1983, 54). Initially, in November 1392 the Republic of Venice had requested from its providers in Durrës to take an interest in the Castle of Kruja, instructing them to secretly obtain the necessary information regarding its fate after the death of Gjergj Topi (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 488).

It is important to note that in the decisions issued by the Senate of the Republic of Venice to their representatives stationed in Durrës, the gifts given by the Republic to all those who supported it on the occasion of the capture of Durrës are also mentioned. Privileges and gifts of this nature have been made by the Republic of Venice since the beginning of the establishment of their rule in Durrës, for all those persons who since the time when Gjergj Topia was alive had defended the Venetian interests. In this regard, initially the Republic of Venice had decided to increase the pensions of (Božić, 1983, 54) some provisional persons, thus fulfilling the promises it had made to them (Malltezi, 1977/3, 143).

For this purpose, on April 15, 1393, a decision was made in Venice to give a commission in the amount of 40 ducats per year, to three persons who before Durrës came under the rule of Venice had received 30 ducats per year. Andrea Nesa, the brother of Bishop Dhimitër Nesa, also benefited on this occasion. The Republic of Venice, taking into account the contribution of Dhimitër Nesa regarding the transfer of Durrës under their ownership, had decided that Andrea Nesa would receive the provision of 40 ducats per year and would have the same conditions and treatment as the other provisionists (Tholloczy *et. al.*, 1913-1918, 496).

For his loyalty to the Republic, the latter on April 15, 1393, had decided to reward him with 40 ducats a year also Inklet Shqiptarin (*Inclethi Albanensis*), who since the time of Gjergj Topi had been the castle keeper of the upper castle of Durrës (Malltezi, 1977/3, 143) Also the Republic of Venice did not leave without rewarding other persons who had helped you in the case of the capture of Durrës. For this purpose, on April 18, 1393, the Republic of Venice had decided to send to Durrës fabrics to be distributed between Albanian barons and nobles as stated in the document “for their benefits in Durrës”, the value of which amounted to 355 ducats. For the same purpose, Bajl Kapedan of Durrës was also sent 4 balls of cloth each in the amount of 16 ducats, which he had to divide among the barons and other nobles as it would seem to him aptly, (Giuseppe 1967-1972, 494) as he would to see fit.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the literature referenced for this paper argues that the consolidation of Venetian rule in Durrës was characterized by this chronological development of events: first we have the appointment of the castle owner for the Castle of Durrës, the appointment of other Venetian officials and governors in Durrës, as well as the completion of the administration, during

which the Republic of Venice took care to appoint trusted persons, as we have the case with the decision issued by the Senate of Venice in April 1392. *Second*, dealing with the local population, respectively with their requests to the senior to respect the agreement with Karl Topi and the implementation of that agreement, which in most cases was one-sided also with the claims and efforts of the Republic of Venice where in addition to Durrës it intended to take other possessions of the Topi as; as well as dealing with a number of other issues such as: maintaining relations with neighbors, gifts and privileges for all those who support it, as well as a number of other issues which refer to the policies that the Republic of Venice has pursued since 1392 and until 1396, when the war for the separation of this city and other cities (Lezha, Shkodra and Drisht) from Venetian rule began.

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