

Antal Molnár

A Forgotten Bridgehead between Rome, Venice, and the Ottoman Empire: Cattaro and the Balkan Missions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

A key element in the history of the missions that departed from Rome as of the middle of the sixteenth century is the functioning of the mediating structures that ensured the maintenance of the relationship between Rome as the center of the Holy Roman Empire and the territories where the missionaries did their work. On the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea, Ragusa, which today is the city of Dubrovnik, was the most important bridgehead, but Cattaro, today Kotor, also played a significant role as a point of mediation between Rome and the Ottoman Empire. My intention in this essay is to present the many roles of Cattaro in the region, focusing in particular on its role in the maintenance of communication between Rome and missions to the Balkans. Cattaro never lost its Balkan orientation, even following the weakening of economic ties and the loss of its episcopal jurisdiction, which had extended over parishes in Serbia in the Middle Ages. Rather, in the sixteenth century it grew with the addition of a completely new element. From 1535 to 1786 Cattaro was the most important center of the postal service between Venice and Istanbul. As of 1578, the management of the Istanbul post became the responsibility of the Bolizza family. Thus the family came to establish a wide network of connections in the Balkans. I examine these connections and then offer an analysis of the plans concerning the settlement of the Jesuits in Cattaro. As was true in the case of Ragusa, the primary appeal of the city from the perspective of members of the Jesuit order was the promise of missions to the Balkans. In the last section of the essay I focus on the role Cattaro played in the organization of missions for a good half-century following the foundation of the *Propaganda Fide Congregation* in 1622. Four members of the Bolizza family worked in the Balkans as representatives of the Propaganda Congregation in the seventeenth century: Francesco, Vincenzo, Nicolo and Giovanni. I provide a detailed examination of the work of the first three, including the circumstances of their appointments, their efforts to unite the Orthodox Serbs with the Catholic Church and protect the Franciscan mission to Albania, their roles as mediators between Rome and the areas to which missionaries traveled, the services they rendered involving the coordination of missions, their influence on personal decisions and the appointments of pontiffs, and their political and military roles during the Venetian–Ottoman war.

Keywords: Cattaro, Venice, Ottoman Empire, Catholic missions, Balkan trade

A Desideratum for Research: Mediatorial Structures between Rome and the Missions

One of the important and yet, at least until now, only rarely studied elements of the histories of the missions that departed from Rome as of the middle of the sixteenth century, and in particular of the missions that, after 1622, were organized by the Propaganda Fide Congregation (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) is the mechanism of the mediating structures that ensured the maintenance of the relationship between Rome and the areas to which the missionaries traveled. The maintenance of ties to the missionaries was first and foremost the task of the nuncios, but given the territorial, organizational, and functional peculiarities of papal diplomacy they were ultimately unable to perform this duty satisfactorily. As a consequence of this, the missionary system became a multi-level structure. The connection between the two most distant points, Rome and the areas in which the missionaries were stationed, was ensured by a nunciature or a representative of some other level of the diplomatic system, as well as a network of agents.

The study of this complex institution is interesting not only in the case of missions to distant lands, but also in the European context and in particular in the context of the Balkans. Anything that was sent from Rome to one of the missionary centers in the inner areas of the Balkans—whether one is speaking of letters, money, devotional objects, books, or even missionaries themselves—had to travel through many different stations. In the case of Italy, these stations were the cities along the coast of the Adriatic Sea (Venice, Ancona, Loreto, and, towards the Albanian territories, Lecce). On the Tyrrhenian coast, Naples and Livorno were the important partner cities of the Propaganda Congregation.¹

The nuncios themselves comprised part of the mediators who worked in the Italian cities. After 1622, the most important pastoral duty of the nunciature was to provide assistance for the missions of the Propaganda Congregation. At the same time, the nuncios who performed traditional diplomatic and political tasks in general did not have sufficient experience with the workings of the missions, nor for that matter were they adequately committed to the task. They also lacked

1 To this day there is no general presentation of the institutional structure of mediation. Even the monumental historical work that was published on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Propaganda Fide Congregation devotes little attention to the topic: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum. (350 anni a servizio delle missioni 1622–1972)*, vols. I/1–III/2, ed. Josef Metzler (Rome–Freiburg–Vienna: Herder, 1971–1973).

the appropriate infrastructural and informational background in order to ensure effective oversight and organization of the spread of the faith.² For this reason, the papal emissaries (thus the nuncio of Venice or Naples) sought colleagues already in Italy who in practice saw to these tasks for them. In Ancona, initially the governor and later the members of the Sturani family, who had resettled from Ragusa, maintained ties with the missions in the Balkans, while in Venice Marco Ginammi, who for decades was the most important publisher of “Illyrian” books (in other words Croatian and Bosnian books), was the most important agent of the Propaganda Congregation.³

Ragusa was the most important bridgehead on the other side of the Adriatic Sea, but Cattaro and to a lesser extent Perasto (today Perast) were also significant points when it came to trade with the Ottoman Empire. Ragusa and Cattaro differed both from the perspective of the political situations of the two centers and their economic ties, and because of these differences each city participated differently in the organization of the missions. As a tributary of the Ottoman Empire, Ragusa was effectively an independent city-state with a relatively broad scope of action in foreign affairs. In contrast, after a brief period of independence, as of 1420 Cattaro was under Venetian rule, and as the capital of Venetian Albania (Albania Veneta), it became an important strategic base, situated near the Ottoman Empire and the coastal routes between the Levant and the northern Adriatic. In the case of Ragusa, commercial ties and in particular the network of colonies and mercantile settlements provided the necessary background. Cattaro was able to participate actively in the missionary work in the Balkans because of its essential role in the Venetian postal service. The geographical position and traditional political network of the two cities strongly influenced the direction and range of the mediatory roles of Ragusa and Cattaro in the Balkans. Ragusa primarily served as a mediatory with Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and to a smaller extent Albania, as well as parts of Hungary that

2 Giovanni Pizzorusso, “«Per servizio della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide»: i nunzi apostolici e le missioni tra centralità romana e chiesa universale (1622–1660),” *Cheiron* 15, no. 30 (1998): 201–27. For more on the bitter complaints of Viennese nuncio Mario Alberizzi regarding the difficulties of maintaining relations with the missionaries, see Archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l’Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o de “Propaganda Fide” (hereinafter APF), Scritture riferite nei Congressi (hereinafter SC) Ministri, vol. 1, fol. 143r–144r.

3 Antal Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie Ottomane 1572–1647*. Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae – Roma. Studia I (Rome–Budapest: Accademia d’Ungheria in Roma, 2007), 336–37.

were occupied by the Ottomans. Cattaro mainly provided support for the work of missionaries in Montenegro and Albania.⁴

Cattaro between Two Worlds

In the course of the history of the region, Cattaro and the surrounding area, including the bay of Cattaro (Bocche di Cattaro, Boka Kotorska), shared the fate of the other territories along the southeastern coast of the Adriatic. After almost 500 years (with some interruptions) of Byzantine rule, it recognized the authority of the Dioclea-Zeta rulers and then the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty (1186–1371).⁵ From the death of Stephen Dušan tsar of Serbia in 1355 to 1420, Cattaro existed essentially as an independent city-state. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the city sought the patronage of Venice (which was expanding the sphere of its influence into Dalmatia) several times, but the Venetian Republic only accepted the offer in 1420. Until the fall of the city state in 1797, it remained under Venetian authority, though it maintained complete autonomy in internal affairs.⁶ Venetian Albania (Albania Veneta) was created as

4 Antal Molnár, “Baluardi mediterranei del cattolicesimo sul confine d’Europa: Ragusa e Cattaro tra missioni romane, politica veneziana e realtà balcaniche,” in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna*. I libri di Viella 153, ed. Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome: Viella, 2013), 363–72.

5 The most recent overview of the history of the territory of what today is Montenegro: Antun Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro. Dalle origini ai nostri giorni* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2006). For considerable data on the Middle Ages: Giuseppe Gelcich, *Memorie storiche sulle Bocche di Cattaro* (Zara: G. Woditzka, 1880). For more on the history of Cattaro and Albania Veneta in the early Modern Era in a broad context: Josip Vrandečić and Miroslav Bertoša, *Dalmacija, Dubrovnik i Istra u ranome novom vijeku*. Hrvatska povijest u ranome novom vijeku 3 (Zagreb: Leykam international, 2007). The most thorough studies of the history of Cattaro in the late Middle Ages and the early Modern Era: Pavao Butorac, *Kotor za samovlade (1355–1420)* (Perast: Gospa od Škrpjela, 1999); Idem, *Boka Kotorska u 17. i 18. stoljeću. Politički pregled* (Perast: Gospa od Škrpjela, 2000). Unfortunately, I was unable to consult an older study of the history of Cattaro under Venetian rule: Antun St. Dabinović, *Kotor pod Mletačkom Republikom* (Zagreb: Union, 1934). Two recently published collections of essays on the cultural history of the bay of Cattaro are worthy of mention here: Miloš Milošević, *Pomorski trgovci, ratnici i meceni. Studije o Boki Kotorskoj XV–XIX. stoljeća* (Belgrade–Podgorica: CID–Equilibrium, 2003); Lovorka Čoralčić, *Iz prošlosti Boke* (Samobor: Meridijani, 2007).

6 On the administration of Dalmatia Veneta see the studies by Ivan Pederin, which are rich with data: Ivan Pederin, “Die venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens und ihre Organe (XV. und XVI. Jahrhundert),” *Studi Veneziani*, n. s. 12 (1986): 99–163; Idem, “Die venezianische Verwaltung, die Innen- und Aussenpolitik in Dalmatien (XVI. bis XVIII. Jh.),” *Studi Veneziani*, n. s. 15 (1988): 173–250; Idem, “Die wichtigen Ämter der venezianischen Verwaltung in Dalmatien und der Einfluss venezianischer Organe auf die Zustände in Dalmatien,” *Studi Veneziani*, n. s. 20 (1990): 303–55. Summarizing: Benjamin Arbel, “Colonie d’oltremare,” in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, vol. 5, *Il rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996), 947–85, 971–74.

an administrative unit in the second half of the fifteenth century. It extended from Cattaro to Alessio (Lješ, Lezhë) in Albania, but following the occupation of the cities lying on the shore of Albania and southern Montenegro by the Ottoman Empire, it essentially was limited to the territory around the bay of Cattaro.⁷ From a Venetian perspective, the Cattaro-bay essentially was the gate to the Levant and a tool with which to isolate Ragusa economically.⁸ In the course of the seventeenth century, Cattaro became increasingly significant from a military and commercial perspective, first and foremost in the course of the struggles with the pirates of Dulcigno and Castelnuovo and the Ottomans. This gave the city a great sense of self-importance. Its inhabitants were convinced (correctly) that their city ensured the position of Venice in the southern parts of the Adriatic.⁹

As of the Middle Ages, Cattaro was a bastion of Western Christianity in the Catholic-Orthodox and later Catholic–Muslim borderlands. It was therefore home to a rich system of sacral institutions. Given the city’s strong sense of Catholic identity, like Ragusa it also had a strong sense of commitment to the spread of the faith through the work of missionaries, which in the case of Cattaro found expression first and foremost in opposition to the Eastern Orthodox Church.¹⁰ Given the geographical position of the city and its economic and

7 An exemplary monograph on the history of Albania Veneta in the Middle Ages: Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien (1392–1479)*. Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 110 (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001). An overview of the Venetian presence and influence in Montenegro and Albania: Saggi di Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi, Jovan J. Martinović, Daniele Sferra, Caterina Schiavo, and Pëllumb Xhufi, *L’Albania Veneta. La Serenissima e le sue popolazioni nel cuore dei Balcani*, Patrimonio Veneto nel Mediterraneo 6 (Milan: Biblion, 2012). For more on the administration of the region of the southern Adriatic Sea, see the study by Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi, *Fonti per la storia dell’Albania veneta*, *ibid.*, 69–110, 70–76.

8 The most recent overview of Venice’s expansion into the Levant: Giuseppe Gullino, “Le frontiere navali,” in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, vol. 4, *Il rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996), 13–111. On the influence of the wars between Venice and the Ottoman Empire on the region see: Marko Jačov, “Le guerre Veneto-Turche del XVII secolo in Dalmazia,” *Atti e memorie della Società Dalmata di Storia Patria* 20 (1991): 9–145, and in particular 46–48, 89–93, 121–26.

9 In his ad limina report of 1592, bishop of Cattaro Girolamo Bucchia characterized his role in the borderlands in the following way: “[Catharus] ... antemurale ipsius Italiae quodammodo esse videtur.” Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereinafter ASV) Congregazione del Concilio, *Relationes Dioecesium*, vol. 208, fol. 2r.

10 A work that remains useful to this day and is rich with data on the history of the diocese of Cattaro in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era: Daniel Farlatus, *Illyricum Sacrum*, vol. 6, (Venice: Sebastianus Coleti, 1800), 421–518. An excellent short overview: Slavko Kovačić, “Kotorska biskupija – Biskupska sjedišta u Boki kotorskoj u daljoj prošlosti,” in *Zagovori svetom Tripunu. Blago kotorske biskupije povodom 1200. obljetnice prijena moći svetoga Tripuna u Kotor. Katalog izložbe*, ed. Radoslav Tomić (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi

strategic position (which grew stronger under Serb rule), as of the Middle Ages it had close ties to the rest of the Balkan Peninsula. Merchants from Cattaro monitored most of the trade with Serbia, and many patricians held important offices in the Serbian royal court. Merchants from Cattaro founded their own colonies in the more important Serbian mining and trading centers, and like the merchants of Ragusa, they developed a significant trade network in the Balkans and throughout the Mediterranean Sea.¹¹

When Serb rule came to an end, during the decades of anarchy in the southwestern Balkans the economic circumstances were nowhere near as favorable as they had been. Cattaro was largely driven out of trade in the Balkans, and the city turned to trade along and across the Adriatic Sea. However, this did not mean that the city broke its ties to the Montenegrin hinterland. Under Ottoman Occupation, Montenegro became part of the Sanjak of Scutari. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it won an increasing degree of independence within the framework of Ottoman rule.¹² The wealthy merchants from Cattaro maintained close economic ties to the Montenegrin tribes. Ships from Cattaro, Perasto, and Perzagno (today Prčanj) brought agricultural produce from Montenegro and Albanian and Greek territories to Venice and other ports on the Adriatic Sea, and caravans bearing Italian textiles and industrial products departed from the coastal cities to communities in the mountains. The trade of

dvori, 2009), 22–37. A monograph of exemplary thoroughness on the history of the bishopric in the late Middle Ages: Lenka Blehova Čelebić, *Hrišćanstvo u Boki 1200–1500. Katorski distrikt* (Podgorica: Pobjeda–Narodni muzej Crne Gore–Istorijski institut Crne Gore, 2006). With short interruptions, from 1172 to 1828 the bishop of the city was the suffragan of the archbishop of Bari in southern Italy. Francesco Sforza, *Bari e Kotor. Un singolare caso di rapporti tra le due sponde adriatiche* (Bari: Cassano, 1975); Giorgio Fedalto, “Sulla dipendenza del vescovado di Cattaro dall’arcivescovo di Bari nei secoli XI e XII,” *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 30 (1976): 73–80.

11 Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro*, 44–116 passim. A study rich with detail on Cattaro’s trade with Dalmatia and the Balkans in the Middle Ages: Jovan J. Martinović, “Trgovački odnosi Kotora sa susjednim gradovima u prvoj polovini XIV. v.,” *Godišnjak Pomorskog muzeja u Kotoru* 51 (2003): 5–185, 77–84.

12 Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro*, 116–49. Historiography in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century tended to emphasize Montenegro’s independence within the Ottoman Empire. However, following the publication of Branislav Đurđev’s doctoral dissertation, which is based on Ottoman sources, Yugoslav historians reconsidered these formerly accepted conclusions in the course of heated debates. Branislav Đurđev, *Turska vlast u Crnoj Gori u XVI. i XVII. vijeku. Prilog jednom neresenom pitanju iz naše istorije* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1953). On the historiography of the debates, see: Bogumil Hrabak, “Posleratna istoriografija o Crnoj Gori od kraja XV do kraja XVIII veka i udeo Istorijskih zapisa u njoj,” *Istorijski zapisi* 33 (1980–84): 5–29, 11–15. Đurđev has also studied and written on the tribal development of Montenegro under Ottoman rule: Branislav Đurđev, *Postanak i razvitak brdskih, crnogorskih i hercegovačkih plemena* (Titograd: Crnogorska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, 1984).

goods constituted a significant source of wealth both for the tribal leaders and the merchants of Cattaro. During the two major wars of the seventeenth century between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, these relationships had important political and military consequences.¹³

The fact that Cattaro belonged to the Serbian state and that merchants from Cattaro settled in the Balkans had a consequence that was interesting from the perspective of canon law. When the city was under Serbian rule (towards the end of the thirteenth century), the bishops of Cattaro acquired jurisdiction over the Catholic parishes in Serbia. They strove to maintain this jurisdiction later, when the city became independent and when it came under the rule of Venice, but with the occupation of much of the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire they lost it. The Catholic parishes continued to function with support from Ragusa and under the authority of the archbishop of Antivari, while the bishops of Cattaro found compensation for the loss of their positions in the Balkans in efforts to convert the local and the Montenegrin-Serb Orthodox communities.¹⁴

The Center of Postal Service between Venice and Istanbul

Cattaro did not lose its Balkan orientation, even following the weakening of economic ties and the loss of its episcopal jurisdiction. Rather, in the sixteenth century it grew with the addition of a completely new element. The city served as a natural point of departure for Venice towards the Balkans, and because of this, from 1535 to 1786 Cattaro became the center of Venice's postal service to Istanbul and the center of Venice's ties to its baylo in Istanbul.¹⁵ In 1578, the senate concluded a contract with Zuanne (Giovanni) Bolizza, a representative of the Bolizza family, one of the most important noble families of Cattaro, and his siblings. According to the agreement, the Bolizza family was obliged to maintain four boats each of which was to be manned by a crew of eight and also an unspecified number of couriers. The boats could not be used to ship goods or

13 Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro*, 125, 140, 159.

14 Two superb studies examine the history of the authority of the Cattaro bishops in the Balkans: Ivan Božić, "O jurisdikciji kotorske dijeceze u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji," in idem, *Nemirno pomorje XV veka* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1979), 15–27; Blehova Čelebić, *Hrišćanstvo u Boki*, 183–88.

15 For a thorough presentation of the postal service between Venice and Istanbul and the role of Cattaro, see: Luciano De Zanche, *Tra Costantinopoli e Venezia. Dispacci di Stato e lettere di mercanti dal Basso Medioevo alla caduta della Serenissima*. Quaderni di Storia Postale 25 (Prato: Istituto di Studi Storici Postali, 2000). For a short summary, see: Idem, "I vettori dei dispacci diplomatici veneziani da e per Costantinopoli," *Archivio per la Storia Postale* 1/2 (1999): 19–43, 25–38.

merchandise, only letters. They also had to pay three Montenegrin tribal leaders, who would accompany and protect the couriers in the course of the dangerous parts of a journey.¹⁶

In the fifteenth century, the Bolizza (or Bolica) family became one of the most important mercantile and seafaring dynasties of the bay of Cattaro. The family played an important role in the exchange of goods in the Balkans and on the Adriatic Sea. In addition, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries several members of the family gained prominence as ecclesiastical writers and scholars who had completed university studies. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Zuanne's son Francesco took over supervision of the postal service. His work met with the full approval of his Venetian commissioners. And of course he too did not fare poorly. According to a report made in 1627 by rector Pietro Morosini, Francesco set aside no small fortune by changing the money that was sent from Venice.¹⁷ He was involved in trade in the Balkans in several ways. In addition to his diplomatic post, the courier service run by him ensured continuous business correspondence, and as a representative of Venice he maintained close ties to people in the Ottoman Empire and in particular in neighboring Montenegro, ties of which he clearly made use in his business dealings.¹⁸ The fact that three members of the family, Francesco, Vincenzo, and Nicolo, became Knights of the Order of Saint Mark indicates the importance of the family and its close ties to powerful circles in Venice.¹⁹

The parameters of the postal service organized by the Bolizza family are relatively clearly documented. The stops in the trip from Cattaro to Istanbul are listed in a famous report of 1614 by Mariano Bolizza (in all likelihood he was also one of Zuanne's sons).²⁰ It is worth noting the details of this journey, which was of considerable importance from the perspective of Venice's communication

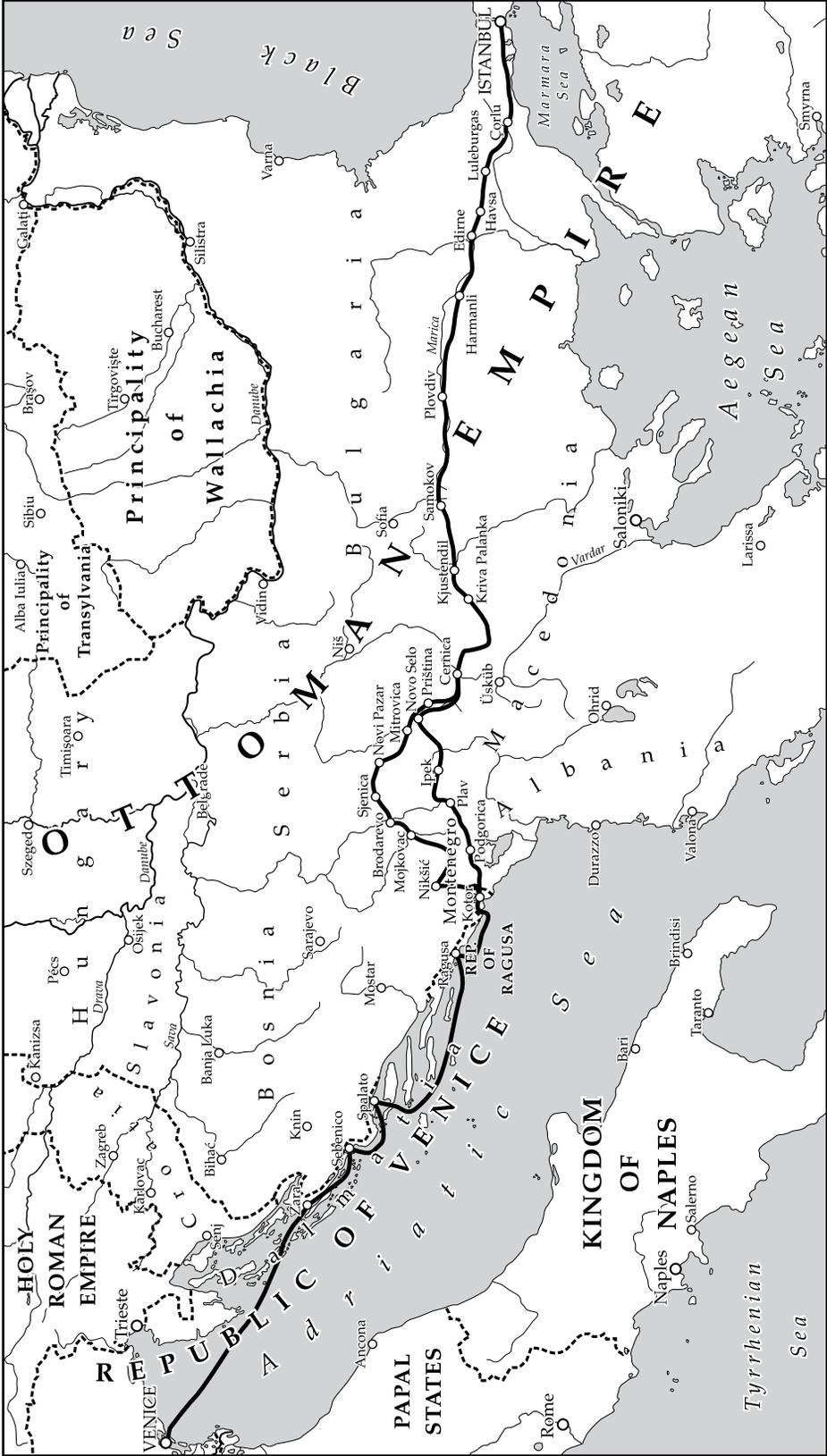
16 De Zanche, *Tra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, 53–54.

17 *Ibid.*, 56.

18 On the Bolizza family see the studies by Lovorka Čoralićnak cited in the footnote below.

19 An old and poor overview of the history of the order: Ricciotti Bratti, "I cavalieri di S. Marco," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 16 (1898): 321–43. On the knights of Cattaro see: Lovorka Čoralić, "Kotorski plemići iz roda Bolica – kavaljeri Svetoga Marka," *Povijesni prilozi* 31 (2006): 149–59; *Idem*, "Bokeljski patriciji u mletačkoj vojnoj službi – cavalieri di San Marco," *Acta Histriae* 16 (2008): 137–54.

20 Šime Ljubić, "Marijana Bolice Kotoranina Opis Sanžakata Skadarskoga od godine 1614," *Starine JAZU* 12 (1880): 164–205, 186–89. A more recent publication of the account, without mention of Ljubić's publication: Rossana Vitale d'Alberton, "La relazione del sangiacato di Scutari, un devoto tributo letterario alla Serenissima da parte di un fedele suddito Cattarino," *Studi Veneziani*, n. s.o 46 (2003): 313–40, 334–36. On the reconstruction of the route, see the supplementary map. It is often difficult and sometimes impossible to identify the place names used by Mariano Bolizza. On this, see the writings that address



The postal route between Venice and Istanbul in the early 17th century

with the Balkans, because the monograph by Stéphane Yerasimos, which examines the travelers and the conditions of travel within the Ottoman Empire and is regarded as authoritative among historians, is rich with detail regarding the routes to Ragusa and Vienna, but hardly mentions Cattaro as an important destination.²¹ Shipments departed from Cattaro to Istanbul twice a month. Following the arrival of the boats from Venice, a courier delivered letters to the Montenegrin villages next to Cattaro, from where mailmen who had been taken into service took them (usually by twos) to their final destinations. In Montenegro, escorts who had been entrusted with the task by the tribal leaders took the couriers to Plav. From Plav on, the route was no longer dangerous. In general it took roughly a month for a letter to reach its final destination, some 10–12 days on the sea and 18–22 on land.

The Perspectives for the Foundation of a Jesuit College in the Balkans

The possibility of establishing missions to the Balkans first came up when plans were made to settle Jesuits in Cattaro. Local and Italian churchmen began to consider the advantages of the city as a possible center for Catholic missions departing for the inner areas of the Ottoman Empire. In spite of the fact that the Jesuit order only succeeded in establishing a permanent mission in the Ottoman Empire in 1583, the Jesuits of the sixteenth century, who regarded the question of spreading the faith in broader, even global terms, always entertained visions of sending missions to the Ottoman Empire.²² In the sixteenth century, there was little real chance of launching missions to Ottoman lands from the Hungarian Kingdom. In contrast, given its pugnacious Catholicism and good relations with the Turks, the Republic of Ragusa, a kind of southern gate opening onto the Ottoman Empire, represented a much more promising base for missions to the Balkans.²³ Like Ragusa, Cattaro was appealing to the Jesuits as a possible

the account from the perspective of the history of the postal service: Velimir Sokol, "Jedan suvremeni izvještaj o Crnogorcima u kurirskoj službi Venecije u 17. vijeku," *PTT Arhiv* 9 (1963): 5–37; De Zanche, *Tra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, 22–23.

21 Stéphane Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs dans l'Empire Ottoman (XIV^e–XVI^e siècles)*. *Bibliographie, itinéraires et inventaire des lieux habités*, Conseil Suprême D'Atatürk pour Culture, Langue et Histoire, Publications de la Société Turque d'Histoire, Serie VII – No. 117. (Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société Turque d'Histoire, 1991), 38.

22 Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*, 134–39.

23 Miroslav Vanino, *Isusovci i brnatski narod*, vol. 1, *Rad u XVI. stoljeću*. *Zagrebački kolegij* (Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut DI, 1969), 14–31.

point of departure for missions. Under the leadership of Tommaso Raggio, the first three members of the order arrived in Cattaro in 1574 at the summons of bishop Paolo Bisanti. They worked in the city until 1578, to the great satisfaction of the churchgoers and the prelate.²⁴

In several letters, P. Raggio, the leader of the mission, reported to his superiors on the work that was being done in Cattaro and the possibilities of establishing a monastery. The long-term goal was clear: taking advantage of Cattaro's relations to other communities in the Balkans, to organize missions to spread the faith that would depart from the city for Balkan territories under Ottoman rule. A few months after having arrived in Cattaro, Raggio proposed founding a college of twelve people, and he emphasized the favorable welcome and the support he had been given by the bishop and the rector. At the same time, in his view the question of real importance lay in the possibility of approaching Muslims, for on the basis of his personal experience, the "Turks" of Castelnuovo (today Herceg Novi) and its surroundings belonged to the same nation as the people of Cattaro, and they had been much more amicable with them than was typical, so Raggio thought that it might be possible to win their confidence.²⁵ A more intensive orientation in the Balkans came two years later, when Raggio, having learned of the efforts of the vladika of Cetinje (the head of the Church in Montenegro until 1852) to enter in communion with the Pope of Rome, sought to travel with Teodoro Calompsi, the recently appointed bishop of Scutari, to Ottoman lands (to Scutari, Alessio, and Skopje) to meet with the vladika and the patriarch of Īpek (today Peć) and discover what for him must have seemed a kind of promised land, in other words the Balkan peninsula. Cattaro's commitment to the Jesuits did not wane, and so Raggio again proposed the foundation of a college, in support of which he cited three (in his view decisive) arguments. First and foremost, the lively interest of the people of Cattaro in questions of religion and education gave good reason to hope that there would be numerous devoted followers in the residence who would be well-suited for missions to Serbia. Second, the city was the last bastion of the Venetian territories in the east, so it was the best-suited for maintaining relations with Istanbul and all of Asia Minor. Finally, news of such developments in Cattaro would prompt the people of Ragusa to take similar steps and found a similar college, since, given the rivalry between the two cities, Ragusa could hardly stand by and watch as

24 Ibid., 32–40.

25 Tommaso Raggio SJ–Everhard Mercurian SJ, Cattaro, December 7, 1574, *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* (Rome, hereinafter ARSI) Italia (hereinafter Ital.), vol. 145, fol. 306r–307r.

Cattaro, a poorer city, overtook them.²⁶ Raggio wrote to his superiors of his plan for an itinerary through Skopje many times. He wrote a letter to the patriarch of İpek, Gerasim, who was a member of the Sokolović clan and thus a relative of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. He sought to persuade Gerasim to enter a union with the Catholic Church. And by using his ties to the Turks of Cattaro, he sought to obtain a passport that would guarantee him complete freedom of movement.²⁷

In 1578, the Jesuits left the city. The notion of founding a college was raised again roughly fifty years later by bishop Girolamo Bucchia, who governed the diocese for twenty-two years. In a letter addressed to Claudio Acquaviva, the new General, the prelate essentially repeated Raggio's line of reasoning: Cattaro was distant from the other colleges of the Order, but at the same time its connections with Venice were excellent because of the role it played in the operation of the postal service, thus it could also be seen as quite nearby. In addition to the work that could be done in the city, the Jesuits would also be offered the possibility of converting the Orthodox Christians as far as Istanbul.²⁸

From the perspective of this inquiry, the proposal that was put together by the bishop in May 1600 was the most interesting. In it, he requested the assistance, in the foundation of a Jesuit residence in Cattaro, of the short-lived Saint Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (1599–1602), which was under the direction of Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro.²⁹ The memorandum clearly mirrors the exciting interconnection of the anti-Ottoman military plans that characterised the papacy of Clement VIII (1592–1605) with the missions. The bishop again emphasized the strategic position of Cattaro from the perspective of traffic in the Balkans. A Jesuit residence in Cattaro could play a key role from the perspective of missions to the Balkans. It could function as an informational center of the Holy See while at the same time, because of the common language and the routes that led to other areas of the Balkans, the Jesuits would be able to work effectively in all of the parts of the peninsula occupied by the Ottomans. According to the Bishop, the Ottoman Empire was

26 Raggio–Mercurian, Cattaro, February 15, 1576, ARSI Ital., vol. 150, fol. 175r–176v.

27 Ibid., February 27, May 1, ARSI Ital., vol. 150, fol. 216r–217r, vol. 151, fol. 64rv. Raggio had not yet traveled to the Balkans. In 1584 he journeyed to the inner regions of the peninsular in the company of Aleksandar Komulović, the apostolic visitor. Vanino, *Isusovci*, vol. 1, 38; Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*, 119–20.

28 Girolamo Bucchia–Claudio Acquaviva SJ, Cattaro, April 23, 1583 ARSI Epistulae Externorum, vol. 14, fol. 86rv.

29 ASV Archivum Arcis, Armaria I–XVIII, nr. 1728, fol. 1r–2v. On the functioning of the Sacred College of Cardinals, which was a predecessor to the Propaganda Fide Congregation see: Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*, 123–24.

in a state of general political and military decline. The leaders oppressed both Muslims and Christians alike, the administration of justice was inefficient and ineffective, and thus in the event of an attack by Christian armies the Turks would join them. Because of the postal service, Cattaro was in daily contact with the Ottoman capital, and according to reports coming out of Istanbul, with a well-coordinated assault Christian armies, in unison with the Janissaries, could even capture the capital, or at least so the Bishop wrote. From this perspective, as a base for missionaries Cattaro would have tremendous significance, since following the recapture of conquered territories the priests waiting in ready on the border could immediately begin their efforts to systematically reconvert the Muslim and Orthodox population. According to Bucchia, who clearly feared possible competition from Protestants, the common people would accept whichever faith they heard first.

The Congregation entrusted Cardinal Bellarmino with the task of discussing plans concerning Cattaro with the General of the Jesuit Order. However, after this there is no further mention of the issue in the sources in Rome.³⁰ On February 10, 1601, the Venetian senate forbade the rector in Cattaro to do anything in connection with the settling of Jesuits without an explicit decree from the senate, and it requested a thorough report on any steps that had already been taken and on the supporters of the Jesuits. The explanation for this caution on the part of Venice lies in its aversion to the Jesuit order, but more importantly in its fear of a possible link between the appearance of the Jesuit priests and the anti-Turk movements.³¹ Given the great cataclysms of the seventeenth century and the squalor and uncertainty that came in their wake, the notion of settling Jesuits in Cattaro was dropped entirely, but the experiences of the intensive gathering of information proved useful in the efforts of missionaries in the eighteenth century.

30 APF Miscellanea Diverse, vol. 21, fol. 70r.

31 Jovan N. Tomić, *Grada za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu protiv Turaka krajem XVI i početkom XVII veka*, vol. 1, (*god. 1595–1606 – Mletački Državni Arhiv*), Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda II, Spomenici na tuđim jezicima VI (Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1933), 320.

The Bolizza Family in the Service of the Propaganda Fide Congregation

The Mandate

Following the foundation of the Propaganda Fide Congregation, the institutionalization of the missions gained new momentum, and so the role of the gateways to the Ottoman Empire also became increasingly important. Ragusa was the most important of these gateways, but Cattaro was also an important link to Montenegro and northern Albania, with which the city traditionally maintained strong ties. In Cattaro, on the basis of the experience of previous decades, Francesco Bolizza, the director of the Istanbul postal service, seemed the most suitable person for this task.

In the course of the seventeenth century, four members of the Bolizza family worked as delegates of the Propaganda Congregation to the Balkans, precisely those four individuals who had managed the Venetian postal service in Cattaro and who had been made knights by Venice: Francesco, Vincenzo, Nicolo and Giovanni. In this essay, I examine the work and careers of the agents of the missions only up until the era of the wars of reconquest. I do not examine the work of Giovanni Bolizza, who was active during the Morean war (1684–99). There are no precise data concerning when they began their service. In a note written in 1644, Francesco Ingoli, the secretary of the Congregation, praised the work of Francesco Bolizza on behalf of the missions and claimed that he had established contact with the supreme authority of the missions in Rome some seventeen years earlier.³² At the same time, his name comes up in the records of the Propaganda Congregation (which survived almost in their entirety) in the course of 1636 and 1637 in connection with a possible union of the Paštrovići population, a coastal tribe in Montenegro, with the Pope of Rome.³³ In the registry of the Congregation the first letter addressed to Bolizza was dated July 25, 1637. In the letter the cardinals thank him for the assistance he provided for the Franciscan mission to Albania and the help he gave to Francesco Leonardi (de Leonardis), the archdeacon of Traù (today Trogir), who

32 “Merita questa gratia il detto signor cavallier havendo servito la Sacra Congregazione 17 anni in circa per responsale per l’Illyrico sovvenendo del suo e diffendendo dette missioni, e per l’authorità che ha colli principali Turchi, ha liberato 3 missionari d’Albania tenuti 3 mesi in catena da Turchi con molti patimenti.” APF Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali (hereinafter SOCG), vol. 42, fol. 115v.

33 Marko Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije za propagandu vere u Rimu o Srbima*, vol. 11, (1622–1644). Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda. II odeljenje, vol. 26 (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1986), 253, 256, 310–11, 314, 316, 326–27.

was working to promote union.³⁴ This suggests that over the course of almost a decade he occasionally provided support for the work of the missionaries in the Balkans. Following the foundation of the reformed Franciscan mission in northern Albania and the work of Francesco Leonardi in the Paštrovići district, this mandate became official. From then on, he served as the person responsible for the Congregation in the Balkans (*responsale della Congregazione per l'Illyrico*). He had an extremely complex array of duties, which primarily involved maintaining relations, protecting the missions, and to some degree also overseeing them.³⁵

In 1653, Francesco died in Cattaro.³⁶ His brother Vincenzo took his place in the coordination of the missions and the organization of the postal service. He is the only one whose official document of appointment survived. On August 24, 1654, he was appointed to serve in his brother's place as the Balkan liaison of the Congregation and the protector of the Albanian missions (*corresponsale della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide e procuratore delle missioni di Albania*). He was granted all of the privileges and exemptions usually enjoyed by the officials of the Congregation.³⁷ Vincenzo continued in his brother's footsteps. He regularly reported on the work of the missions and he forwarded shipments and defended the missionaries during the difficult years of the Cretan War.³⁸ He died on August 24, 1662, after having served for eight years.³⁹

His nephew Nicolo, the son of Antonio Bolizza, presented himself to the Congregation immediately following his uncle's death. He took over the tasks pertaining to the missions. He was helped in this by the fact that, like his uncle, he was named by Venice to serve as the overseer of the people living in the borderlands of the Ottoman Empire (*soprintendente alle genti di questa giurisdizione fuori della città*). He saw to unfinished affairs, forwarding the monies and shipments that had remained in his uncle's care and making proposals regarding priests for the missions.⁴⁰ No decision was taken, however, regarding the official appointment of a new agent, so after one year he addressed an official request

34 APF Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione (hereinafter Lettere), vol. 17, fol. 81v.

35 He himself often recalled his services, for instance in 1649: APF SOCG, vol. 265, fol. 28rv.

36 Čoralić, "Kotorski plemići," 155.

37 APF Fondo di Vienna (hereinafter FV), vol. 4, fol. 215r.

38 Marko Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia (1645–1669)*, vols. 1–2. Studi e Testi 352–53 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1992), vol. 1, 494, 585, 610, 617.

39 APF SOCG, vol. 302, fol. 315r.

40 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 2, 305–10; APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 166r, 168r. Earlier Nicolo had already been in contact with the Balkan bishops. In 1652, he acted in the issue involving provisions for the bishop of Durazzo. APF SOCG, vol. 266, fol. 101r.

to the Congregation through the Franciscan monk fra Marco di Lucca, that like his predecessors, he too be named Balkan commissary.⁴¹ But this never actually came to pass. The Franciscans and the Venetian nuncios supported him, the latter arguing that if Venice was satisfied with his oversight of the postal service then the Congregation could also entrust him with the task of providing assistance for the missions.⁴² However, Andrija Zmajević, the abbot of Perasto, whose views on Balkan affairs carried considerable weight in Rome, had a very poor opinion of him. He regarded him as a man of questionable morals who sought only to further his own interests and put politics ahead of religious questions, yet he felt Nicolo had to be treated with care, since, given the prestige he commanded, he could do a great deal to harm the missions if he were to turn against them. Zmajević therefore suggested that he should be used and thanked for his service, but never given an official appointment.⁴³ So the Congregation allowed him to serve but never appointed him to any position, and thus ensured that he was not granted the usual privileges, honoring his service only with occasional thanks and some gifts of money.⁴⁴

Church Union and the Coordination of the Franciscan Mission

Francesco Bolizza created the foundation of the family's long-term mandate from Rome by accepting two important issues related to the missions: the movement for union in the southern territories of the Balkans and the provision of protection and assistance for the Albanian reformed Franciscan mission.⁴⁵ The movement for Church union in the southwestern territories of the Balkans has been thoroughly dealt with by Croatian and Serbian historians,⁴⁶ so I will

41 APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 214r, 216r, 242r. I could not find the official document of Francesco Bolizza's appointment. Indeed in light of details discussed here, he probably never received any such document, but rather was continuously made a representative of the Congregation.

42 APF Acta Sacrae Congregationis (hereinafter Acta), vol. 34, fol. 126r–127r.

43 APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 200rv; APF Acta, vol. 33, fol. 199rv. (December 16, 1664).

44 Ibid., vol. 34, fol. 126r–127r. (June 16, 1665).

45 On the basis of the documents cited below, Radonić's classic monograph also frequently makes mention of Francesco's Bolizza's activities: Jovan Radonić, *Rimska kurija i južnoslovenske zemlje od XVI do XIX veka*. Posebna izdanja SAN 155. Odeljenje društvenih nauka, Nova serija 3 (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1950) passim (*ad indices*).

46 Janko Šimrak, "Sveta Stolica i Franjevci prema pravoslavnoj crkvi u primorskim krajevima," *Nova revija vjere i nauki* 9 (1930): 22–38, 81–92, 407–21; Carolus Nežić, *De pravoslavni Jugoslavii saec. XVII. ad catholicam fidem reversis necnon eorum conceptu Romanae Ecclesiae* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1940) 23–36; Vjekoslav Dabović, *De relationibus catholicis inter et schismaticos in Ecclesia Catharensi saec. XVII*. Dissertatio ad

limit myself here to mention of only of a few of the most important details. The Serbian population of the communities that were under rule of Venice and the authority of the archbishop of Antivari and the bishop of Cattaro were continuously joining the Catholic Church. The Paštrovići district (in other words the swath of land under Venetian rule stretching from Budva to Spič) was located in the borderlands of the spheres of interest of several centers of the Eastern Orthodox Church (Istanbul, İpek, and Venice, as the seat of the Orthodox archbishop of Philadelphia). Rome's ambitions regarding expansion and union soon reached the peripheral area, the status of which, from the perspective of its ecclesiastical jurisdiction, was uncertain. Following the foundation of the Propaganda Congregation, these strivings gathered strength. As the actual proprietor of the area, however, Venice regarded the question of the Church union as marginal. Rome had the favor of the local officials at most, who were more or less eager in their support. The expert assessments of Fulgenzio Micanzio, the Servite monk who was also a theological counsellor for Venice, offer clear evidence of this. Micanzio, who was a colleague and successor of Paolo Sarpi and also a faithful adherent to Sarpi's anti-Rome mentality, opposed the Church union, which in his view was theologically unfounded and politically dangerous. As an heir to Sarpi's anti-curial views, Micanzio harshly criticized any endeavors by the Holy See in this direction.⁴⁷

In 1636, Vincenzo Bucchia and missionary Serafin Mizerčić managed to unite the Orthodox villages of Paštrovići to Rome with the assistance, first and foremost, of Antonio Molin, the provveditore generale of Cattaro, and Francesco Bolizza. In the same year, the Congregation sent Francesco Leonardi, the archdeacon of Traù, to Paštrovići as a missionary to work in the recently united villages and strengthen their unity.⁴⁸ Francesco Bolizza provided assistance to Leonardi from the outset, drawing primarily on the system of relationships in the Balkans and cooperation with the Ottoman authorities.⁴⁹

lauream consequendam in Facultate Theologica, Pontificium Athenaeum Urbanum de Propaganda Fide, Rome, 1947, manuscript, Biblioteca della Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Dissertationes 54 C 42, 51–72, 184–204; Radonić, *Rimska kurija*, 112–51, 396–401.

47 Olga Diklić, “«Quando in affari spirituali si interpongono interessi temporali.» La conversione degli ortodossi di Pastrovicchi nei consulti di Fulgenzio Micanzio,” *Studi Veneziani*, n. s. 55 (2008): 15–81. Bolizza himself complained to the antiunionism of Venice: Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*, 596–97.

48 For an overview of the history of the region: Lovorka Čoralić, “Iz prošlosti Paštrovića,” *Historijski zbornik* 49 (1996): 137–59. On Leonardi's personality and work see: Idem, “Prilog životopisu barskoga nadbiskupa Franje Leonardisa (1644.–1645.),” *Croatica christiana periodica* 55 (2005): 79–95.

49 Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*, 253, 256, 314, 316, 326–27, 331.

Leonardi's ambitions went well beyond the conversion of the village population, which amounted to little more than a few thousand people. He envisioned a union that would include first Montenegro and then all of Serbia. In his plans, he found a faithful supporter in Francesco Bolizza.⁵⁰ In January 1638, the knight of Cattaro paid a visit as an emissary to the pasha of Bosnia. In the course of his return trip, he met with Mardarije, the vladika of Cetinje, whom he encouraged to enter in communion with the Catholic Church. Bolizza's and Leonardi's schemes gave rise to the idea of Montenegrin Church union and the founding of a Montenegrin Franciscan mission.⁵¹ One year later, they invited Mardarije to Cattaro. They managed to convince him of the necessity of union. They hoped, by gaining his confidence and support, to influence Pajsije Janjevac, the patriarch of Āpek (and thus all of Serbia) to unify with the Catholic Church. In 1639, Mardarije departed for Rome in order to convert to Catholicism, but because of the growing suspicions of the Ottomans, Bolizza persuaded him to abandon his travels, and so in 1640 instead of making the journey to Rome himself, he sent two Serbian monks, one of whom, Vizarijon, was to become his successor, to the Eternal City under the guidance of Leonardi.⁵² Eventually Mardarije made his profession of faith in the Mahine (Majine) monastery (which was in Venetian territory), to which he retreated after having endured several months in Turkish captivity. In July, 1641, Bolizza and Leonardi traveled to Cetinje in order to settle the details of the trip to Āpek with Mardarije and his assistant, Vizarijon. After Leonardi made several unsuccessful attempts, in 1642 he managed to gain an audience with the patriarch (under the auspices of Bolizza and in the company of two monks), whom for months he attempted to convince of the need for union, though not surprisingly his efforts were in vain.⁵³

Alongside the efforts to promote the Church union, the other primary front of the missions in the southwestern parts of the Balkans was the mission of reformed Franciscans in Albania. Francesco Bolizza played a key role in the

50 Bolizza wrote many letters in which he reported to the Congregation on the state of the union. Most of these have been published by Jačov in the aforementioned publications of sources. See also: APF SOCG, vol. 42, fol. 108r, vol. 172, fol. 33rv.

51 Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*, 340–41, 343, 347–52.

52 *Ibid.*, 380–82, 412–13.

53 Nežić, *De pravoslaviv Jugoslaviv*, 10–14; Radonić, *Rimska kurija*, 128–51.

organization and defense of this mission as well.⁵⁴ In 1632, Giorgio Bianchi, the bishop of Sappa, met with Bonaventura Palazzolo, a reformed Franciscan missionary, in Rome. Earlier Palazzolo had worked in the Lucerne valley. Bianchi convinced him to continue his missionary work in Albania. At Bianchi's request, in 1634 the Congregation founded the Albanian reformed Franciscan mission. The first missionaries arrived in Ragusa in early October. In December they continued to Albania. One year later, the Congregation named Palazzolo the prefect of the mission. By the end of the decade they had established two houses of worship on the territory of northern Albania.⁵⁵ The creation of the legal and financial foundations of the mission were clearly the work of Francesco Bolizza. Taking advantage of his good relations with the Ottoman authorities, he managed to obtain a letter from the pasha of Bosnia guaranteeing the inviolability of the missionaries.⁵⁶ He corresponded a great deal with the Congregation in order to obtain appropriate funding for the Franciscans. When necessary, he took them food, clothing, and other supplies at his own expense.⁵⁷ The letters of the Ottoman military leaders of Scutari to Francesco Bolizza reveal that he regularly used his political and mercantile ties to intercede with the Ottoman officers in Albania in order to ensure the safety of the Franciscans.⁵⁸ These letters also make clear that he was in close and regular contact with the captains, the sanjak-beys, the aghas, and the janissaries of Scutari, not only because of his role in the postal service but also because he was a mediating figure in the trade between the Ottoman officers and Venetian merchants.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, the mission was one of the most dangerous in the parts of the Balkan Peninsula that were under Ottoman rule. Several Franciscans were

54 For the most recent overview of the history of the Albanian missions see: Angelantonio Spagnoletti, "Il mare amaro. Uomini e istituzioni della Chiesa tra Puglia e Albania (XV–XVII secc.)," in *Papato e politica internazionale*, 373–403.

55 For a presentation of the history of the mission see: H.[enri] Matrod, "Les Franciscains en Albanie au XVII^e siècle," *Études Franciscaines* 36 (1924): 5–28; Fernando Granata, "L'Albania e le missioni italiane nella prima metà del secolo XVII in base a documenti inediti," *Rivista d'Albania* 3 (1942): 226–48; Basilius Pandžić, *Historia Missionum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, vol. 4, *Regiones Proximi Orientis et Paeninsulae Balcanicae* (Rome: Secretariatatus Missionum O.F.M., 1974), 98–101.

56 APF SOCG, vol. 263, fol. 82r–84r. (Francesco Ingoli's summary of the history of the mission.)

57 Ibid., vol. 60, fol. 468r, 469r, 483rv, 484r, 485r.

58 For instance, in 1641 in the interests of fra Cherubino da Trevi, who was part of the Këlmëndi mission: APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 171r. He wrote regularly not only to the Ottoman authorities, but also to the leaders of the Këlmëndi and Kuči tribes, asking them to defend the Franciscans from the Turks. APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 206rv.

59 Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*, 310–11, 474–75, 535–36; APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 205r, 206r.

martyred. In 1644, two highwaymen killed two friars, and over the course of the next few years the storms of the Cretan War swept away the achievements of the mission. Because of the anti-Turkish machinations of the Albanian Catholics and in particular the bishops, in February 1648 two missionaries and their assistant Giorgio Jubani (a secular priest) were impaled on the stake. With the exception of one friar, the others escaped to Cattaro with the help of Bolizza. Their residences of worship were destroyed by the Turks.⁶⁰ They soon returned, however, and they not only rebuilt their former settlements, they also founded new residences.⁶¹ In 1675, there were eleven missionaries working at four different sites in Albania. In Cattaro they had their own hospitium, which provided lodging for traveling missionaries and a place of rest for the sick. The superior of the hospitium helped ensure the smooth operation of the missions.⁶² Following Francesco's death, his two successors provided continuous support for the work of the Albanian Franciscans.⁶³ Nicolo wrote a recommendatory letter in the interests of helping the Franciscans to the Ottoman commander of Alessio, Sinan Bey, who, in response to Nicolo's prompting, provided them with protection and made it possible to renovate the missionary settlement of Pedena and found a settlement in Pulati.⁶⁴ In 1663, he freed the missionary Francesco da Pedaccoli from Turkish captivity using his own money.⁶⁵ Of the many services Francesco Bolizza rendered for the Propaganda Congregation, it was clearly the provision of assistance for the Albanian Franciscan mission that was valued most. As of 1637, every year Rome sent him a letter of thanks in which the cardinals expressed their gratitude for his support of this important cause.⁶⁶

60 Basilius Pandžić, "De Donato Jelić, O.F.M. Missionario Apostolico," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 56 (1963): 369–89, 373–74; Jačov, *Le guerre Veneto-Turche*, 69–71. Bolizza recalled the executions of the Franciscans and the temporary liquidation of the mission: APF SOCG, vol. 126, fol. 50r, vol. 265, fol. 28rv.

61 On the basis of the report sent by Bolizza to Rome, in 1651 prefect Giacinto da Sospello sent six friars back to Albania and two to Luštica, while two remained in Cattaro. APF SOCG, vol. 265, fol. 305rv.

62 Bolizza also reported on the operation of the hospitium in 1649: APF SOCG, vol. 299, fol. 47r.

63 APF SOCG, vol. 302, fol. 170r, 218r, 254rv, 256r.

64 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia*, vol. 2, 564–65.

65 APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 206r; APF Lettere, vol. 39, fol. 136r.

66 APF Lettere, vol. 17, fol. 81v, 103v, vol. 18, fol. 18rv, vol. 19, fol. 135rv, vol. 20, fol. 39v, 127rv, vol. 21, fol. 22r. The same in the case of Vincenzo Bolizza: APF Lettere, vol. 39, fol. 136r.

The Transmission of Correspondence and Shipments

One of the most important functions of the agent of the missions was to ensure that the various consignments were forwarded to the center in Rome and the territories where missionaries were active, which in the case of Cattaro meant Montenegro and Albania. The forwarding of letters between Rome and places in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula was a recurring topic of the agents' correspondence (clearly this task fell on their shoulders because of the work they did with the organization of the postal service).⁶⁷ By studying circles who sent and received these letters in the Balkans, we can gain some sense of the territorial range of the influence of the agents of the Cattaro missions. Missionaries who were active around the city and along the southern seashore (in the areas around Grbalj, Luštica, Paštrovići, Budva and Antivari) turned as a matter of fact to the Bolizza family for assistance,⁶⁸ but sometimes even letters from or to distant parts of Dalmatia, such as Traù, went through Cattaro.⁶⁹ Most often the letters were sent to the reformed Franciscans in Albania and the Albanian bishops. Almost all of their correspondence went through Cattaro.⁷⁰ The Bolizza family also handled correspondence between the Orthodox monks of Montenegro, Catholic missionaries, and Rome.⁷¹

Letters to destinations in the inner parts of the Balkan Peninsula were sent on in part with couriers or occasional messengers who took postal deliveries to Istanbul and in part with the missionaries themselves.⁷² The Venetian nuncio had relatively little influence over the organization of the Balkan missions,⁷³ but given Cattaro's strategic position, he played an important role as a link to the former territories of *Albania Veneta*.⁷⁴ He had a say in the selection of the bishops who served in the missions and the organization of the apostolic visitations, and he provided missionaries who were passing through with lodging. He also gathered

67 The agents mentioned the postal service in almost all of their letters, so in what follows I refer to the precise sites in the sources only as examples.

68 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 26–27; APF SOCG, vol. 126, fol. 44r, 46r, vol. 164, fol. 204r.

69 APF SOCG, vol. 172, fol. 26r.

70 *Ibid.*, vol. 60, fol. 470r, 471r, vol. 126, fol. 48r, vol. 164, fol. 161r–221v. *passim*, vol. 265, fol. 209r, vol. 266, fol. 76r; APF Lettere, vol. 39, fol. 60v, 61v–62v, 136r.

71 Nežić, *De pravoslavij Jugoslavij*, 71, 92.

72 APF SC Albania, vol. 2, fol. 53r.

73 Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*, 333.

74 The contact person of the nuncio in the Balkans was always the Cattaro agent. APF SOCG, vol. 303, fol. 72r, 168r, 170r.

information regarding the territories where the missionaries were active and had letters, provisions, and devotional objects forwarded to the Balkans.⁷⁵ The other route was between Ragusa and Ancona. The trip to Venice involved a significant detour, so the Cattaro agents often explicitly requested that mail from Rome be sent by the shorter and therefore frequently more secure route from Ancona.⁷⁶

In addition to letters, the agents often sent money to the missionaries and bishops. Giovanni Domenico Verusio, the procurator of the Balkan missionaries, accepted the provisions that were sent by the Propaganda Congregation and sent a receipt to Cattaro via Venice or Ancona and Ragusa. The Cattaro agents paid the missionaries directly on the basis of bills of exchange using the monies that had been entrusted to them by the Congregation or they forwarded the sums to the places where the missionaries were active. They then sent the receipts confirming payment back to Rome.⁷⁷ In 1659, Vincenzo Bolizza sent the Propaganda Congregation the statements of accounts concerning the payments that had been made to the Albanian Franciscans between 1650 and 1658.⁷⁸ The statements indicate the nature of the payments. Most of the receipts concern the general supplies that were provided for the missionaries, but monies were sent to the missions for many other purposes as well, including payment of ransoms for people who had been taken captive and wages for the captains who accompanied the missionaries on their travels, the people who carried their baggage, and their armed escorts. One could also mention the costs of travel on the open seas and the purchase of Turkish clothes for the missionaries.⁷⁹

Information, Proposals, and Recommendations Concerning the Missions

In addition to the roles they played in the delivery of both goods and people, the most important task of the agents was to provide information regarding the missions. In general they did this continuously, but at times they also responded to concrete requests of the Congregation. In almost all of their letters, the members of the Bolizza family included reports on the work of the missions, including

75 See the examples between 1659 and 1663, APF SOCG, vol. 303, fol. 23r, 25r, 29r, 32r, 34r, 36rv, 40r, 44r, 54rv, 58r, 60r, 66rv, 72r, 74r, 83r, 87r, 95r, 99r–100v, 105r, 114r, 168r, 170r, 172r, 213r, 237r, 240r.

76 APF SOCG, vol. 352, fol. 104r; APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 206rv.

77 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 53–54, 62, 68; APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 168r; APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 42r, 166r, 168r.

78 APF SOCG, vol. 299, fol. 15r. In 1654, he sent Francesco's account book to Rome immediately after Francesco's death. The mission had 210 *reale* at the time. M. Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 475.

79 APF SOCG, vol. 299, fol. 16v–18r, 19r.

details regarding the arrival of missionaries, their travels, their achievements, and their failures. They also mentioned the dangers that threatened the missions and, in some cases, the liquidation of a mission. Clearly no one in the area had more knowledge of the Albanian and Montenegrin missions than their “father,” Francesco Bolizza. Francesco not only sent information to Rome regarding individual cases, in 1649 he submitted a comprehensive report in which he described the undertakings that were under the supervision of the city of Cattaro.⁸⁰ In this report he clearly outlines his vision concerning the possibilities for spreading the faith in the southern parts of the Balkans. He regarded the work of the reformed Franciscans in Albania as the most valuable enterprise, and he was saddened that the mission had been temporarily liquidated. He also considered the efforts that had been made in the interests of Church union important, but he clearly recognized the limitations: the priests who had been sent by the Congregation worked to great effect in the city and the surrounding Venetian territories, but given the threats of conflict and war they were unable to make headway into the Ottoman Empire. He regarded the idea of appointing the priests of Cattaro missionaries as similarly nonsensical, since they were obliged, as recipients of prebendal and parochial remuneration, to reside in the city and therefore could not go on missions. And indeed they did not go on missions, but rather merely regarded commissions given by the Propaganda Congregation as supplementary pay. On the basis of his first-hand knowledge of the area, Francesco Bolizza described the areas where the missionaries were active, and he included a sketch of the area that he himself had done and also a map of the missions in the southern Balkans that had been made by a cartographer from Ragusa.⁸¹

The protection and administration of the missions, the continuous need to address tasks pertaining to life within the missions and questions of subordination and discipline, and the importance of providing information for the supreme authorities of the missions and in some cases cooperating in the enforcement of decisions were all factors that significantly increased the importance of the roles of the agents in the life of the missions. Many times the question of the extension of the mandate of a missionary depended on them, as did the appointment or transfer of a bishop. Because of the prestige

80 For a comprehensive report on the Albanian missions see: Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 266–70.

81 APF SOCG, vol. 265, fol. 192rv. Regrettably, I found neither the drawing nor the map made in Ragusa in the archives of the Propaganda Congregation. In addition to the letter cited, see: APF SOCG, vol. 265, fol. 69r, 70r, 150r.

he commanded in the eyes of important figures of power in the Balkans (the heads of tribes and Ottoman leaders), Francesco Bolizza in a sense became the leader and coordinator of the missions for which Cattaro was the center. He strove to ease the rivalry between local figures of the Church in Albania and the Italian Franciscans, and he attempted to mollify the strife between the Albanian bishops.⁸² He saw the unlimited rise in the number of bishops and missionaries as one of the causes of discord, and he believed that a smaller number of priests would be able to work more effectively and with less conflict.⁸³ The career of a missionary in the southern part of the Balkans depended to a great extent on his relationship with the Bolizza family, and the recommendations of the agents were always regarded with favor in Rome.⁸⁴

The supreme authority of the missions often sought Francesco Bolizza's advice when it was time to choose someone to serve as bishop in the region. His greatest triumph in this regard was the appointment of his close colleague Francesco Leonardi. Thanks in large part to his influence, in 1644 the Propaganda Congregation transferred Giorgio Bianchi, the archbishop of Antivari, to the bishopric of Sappa and appointed Leonardi in his place.⁸⁵ After Leonardi's death, Francesco recommended fra Gregorio Romano, who was working in Albania, for the post, first and foremost because of his familiarity with the local conditions.⁸⁶ This time, however, he did not prevail. The pope appointed Giuseppe Maria Buonaldi, a Dalmatian Dominican, instead. Buonaldi proved a poor choice, however, in part because he did not speak the local language nor was he familiar with local customs. Francesco Bolizza repeatedly informed the Congregation of the details of Buonaldi's failures. A foreigner to the area, he was hated by his followers and eventually had to leave the diocese. He died in Budva in 1652.⁸⁷ Francesco Bolizza recommended other people who enjoyed his favor for various positions in the Church hierarchy. For instance, he suggested Andrea

82 APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 161rv, 217r. In 1677, Nicolo Bolizza resolved the dispute between Giovanni Pasquali and Dominik Bubić regarding the settling of accounts: Marko Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani tra le due guerre: Candia (1645–1669), Vienna e Morea (1683–1699)*. Studi e Testi 386 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1998), 410.

83 APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 187r–188r, vol. 172, fol. 19r.

84 Ibid., vol. 164, fol. 182r; Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 2, 213.

85 Nežić, *De pravoslavni Jugoslavii*, 13–14; Čoralić, “Prilog životopisu barskoga nadbiskupa,” 84; APF SOCG, vol. 42, fol. 96r, 109rv.

86 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 36–37; APF SOCG, vol. 172, fol. 9rv. He also recommended him for the episcopal seats of Sappa and Scutari: APF SOCG, vol. 176, fol. 369rv, vol. 172, fol. 11rv, 16r.

87 APF SOCG, vol. 265, fol. 106rv, 211r, vol. 266, fol. 136r.

Bogdani and Giorgio Vladagni as candidates for the Ochrida archbishopric,⁸⁸ Giorgio Uscovich for the bishopric of Sappa,⁸⁹ and Giovanni Battuta for the position as vicar of Budva.⁹⁰

Francesco's successors, Vincenzo and Nicolo, played considerably smaller roles in the formation of the Church hierarchy in the Balkans and the organization of the missions. Following in his brother's footsteps, Nicolo fought primarily against attempts to make missionaries out of the canons of Cattaro. In the wake of the Cretan War, Giovanni Antonio Sborovacio, the bishop of Cattaro, sent two of his canons, Luca Bolizza and Giovanni Pasquali, to work as missionaries among the Serbs who were flooding into the territory of the diocese.⁹¹ According to Nicolo, however, the canons were interested only in the allowance provided to missionaries, and only in their imaginations did they journey to territories where there was need of missionaries.⁹² In October 1662, he recommended Miho Bratošević, a priest from Ragusa who had excellent command of the local language, as a candidate to serve as a missionary among the Orthodox of Luštica and Kartoli. He asked that the Congregation provide an annual income of 25 scudo.⁹³ According to Andrija Zmajević, however, Nicolo supported Bratošević only because it was in his own interests, for Bratošević dwelt in Nicolo's home and helped him write letters in Serbian, and Nicolo hoped simply to use the funds given by the Congregation in order to provide wages for his own personal translator.⁹⁴

Advantages for the Agents

Finally, one might well raise the question, of what use was all this to the agents? Why did they accept these tasks, which required a great deal of work and put considerable responsibilities on their shoulders? Clearly this position, like the service of a cardinal or of the Holy Office, gave one influence in a network of connections.⁹⁵ The political and social prestige of the position alone made

88 Ibid., vol. 265, fol. 69r, 124r.

89 Ibid., vol. 176, fol. 374r, 388r.

90 Ibid., vol. 172, fol. 10rv.

91 Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 608–09.

92 APF FV, vol. 4, fol. 164rv.

93 Ibid., fol. 181r–183v, 206v; Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 2, 305, 307–09.

94 Ibid., fol. 200r.

95 On the network of familiares of the local inquisition courts see: Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 180–93.

it worthwhile to serve as a representative of the Propaganda Congregation in the Balkans, for it added Rome to the Venetian and Balkan network, and this drastically increased the influence and importance of the Bolizza family. It is no coincidence that all three of the Bolizza brothers clung tenaciously to the position, and they strove to ensure the favor of the men they had to thank for it, primarily cardinal-prefect Antonio Barberini, by rendering faithful service and offering gifts, first and foremost fine caviar (*bottarga*) from the Scutari lake.⁹⁶ In return, Barberini gave them medals and pictures.⁹⁷

Francesco Bolizza strove to take advantage of his privileged position not only in the interests of the missions, but also in his own personal interests. In 1647, he requested exemption from the prohibition of marriage among relatives for the children of patricians of Cattaro, including his own daughter. On the basis of a city decree, a member of the nobility could only marry another member of the nobility, but of the forty families that had been in the city at the time of the passage of the law in 1412, only twelve remained.⁹⁸ Bolizza sought to win admittance to the Collegio Urbano for his illegitimate child, but as the boy had not reached the required age, he had to send him to a boarding school, but the Congregation paid the costs as an expression of gratitude for Bolizza's service.⁹⁹ He also turned to the Congregation on several occasions for church indulgences. In 1638, he was granted the grace of a privileged altar, though at the same time the cardinals suggested that he rethink the plans for the construction of a church in the Cattaro garden. They felt he should found a seminary in the palace instead for 24 Dalmatian pupils, thereby solving serious problems that were arising because of the lack of a theological institute in Dalmatia. Had he done this, the pope would have granted the seminary and its church every necessary privilege.¹⁰⁰

Because of their dual mandates, by the middle of the seventeenth century the members of the Bolizza family had become the most important political figures in Cattaro. During the Cretan War they played roles that were of decisive importance from military and diplomatic perspectives, and the leaders of the Montenegrin, Hercegovinian, and northern Albanian tribes considered Francesco

96 APF SOCG, vol. 164, fol. 198r, vol. 172, fol. 21rv, vol. 265, fol. 271r.

97 Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*, 442.

98 APF SOCG, vol. 176, fol. 375r, 376rv.

99 Ibid., vol. 42, fol. 106r, 110r, 115v. The later documents of the case, APF SOCG, vol. 172, fol. 2r; Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche*, vol. 1, 270.

100 APF Lettere, vol. 17, fol. 103v, vol. 18, fol. 18rv.

and Vincenzo Bolizza their most important negotiating partners on the side of Venice (with the exception of the Cattaro rector).¹⁰¹ As early as the late 1630s, Francesco Bolizza had established contact with the leaders of the Montenegrin and Albanian tribes, which were rising up against the Ottoman authorities because of extraordinary taxes. These leaders offered to help Venice in the event of an attack launched by Christian forces against the Ottoman empire.¹⁰² As of the early seventeenth century, the military leader of the Montenegrin tribes was the vladika. During the prelacy of Ruvim II. Boljević (1593–1636), the monastery of Cetinje became the center of the struggle against the Turks in Montenegro. His successor, Mardarije, continued in his footsteps, as he was a strong supporter of Church union.¹⁰³ Following the outbreak of the Cretan War, Francesco Bolizza was the number-one mediator between Venice and the Balkan tribal leaders. The initial fervor of anti-Ottoman sentiment among the tribes soon began to flag after they gained first-hand experience of Venice's defensive strategy and modest military presence, so they did not risk openly turning against the Ottomans. An excellent example of this is the undertaking in 1649 that targeted the taking of Podgorica. The some 300 Venetian troops who marched against the city under the leadership of the Ochrida archbishop, the bishop of Sappa, and Vincenzo Bolizza, were joined only by a small group of people from the Kuçi tribe, and the undertaking accordingly failed. It became clear that Venice was not able to achieve any lasting military victories in Montenegrin territories. The leaders of the tribes continuously urged Francesco Bolizza to induce Venice to play a more active military role, in vain.¹⁰⁴ Influenced by their disappointments, in the 1650s the Montenegrin tribes temporarily drew closer to the Ottomans.¹⁰⁵ But instances of minor tensions notwithstanding, Francesco and Vincenzo Bolizza maintained the trust of the tribal leaders and in particular the leaders of the Kuçi and the Klimenti (Këlmëndi) tribes, who regularly informed them about Ottoman troop movements and continuously complained about the increasing

101 The sources regarding their political and diplomatic work are held in the Venetian State Archives, primarily among the reports of the Dalmatian provveditore generale and the Cattaro rectors. A bound collection of Francesco Bolizza's letters is held in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (Cod. It. VII. 922 = 8847). The systematic study of these documents will enable historians to shed light on the role of the Bolizza family in Venice's politics and policies with respect to the Ottoman Empire.

102 Gligor Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje u mletačko-turskim ratovima XVI–XVIII. vijeka*. Istorijski institut u Beograd. Posebna izdanja 14 (Belgrade: Istorijski institut u Beograd, 1970), 193–94.

103 Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro*, 134–36.

104 Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje*, 212–13, 219.

105 Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro*, 140.

tax burdens and the destruction wreaked by the Ottomans. The tribal leaders also repeatedly assured them of their faithfulness to Venice, and sometimes they even prevented incursions by Turkish troops into Venetian territories.¹⁰⁶

The Bolizza brothers were in constant contact with the two most prominent Ottoman leaders of the region, Çengizade (Čengić) Ali, sanjak-bey of Hercegovina, and Jusufbegović, sanjak-bey of Scutari. Both were Bosnian aristocrats typical of the Venetian–Ottoman borderlands who kept their own dynastic interests in mind and maintained good relations with Venice, executing the orders of the Porte with measured enthusiasm and generally more concerned about their profits from trade with Venice than the glories of military conquest.¹⁰⁷ These relations were sometimes important sources of a wealth of information. Vincenzo Bolizza was almost a “spy-master” for Venice in the southern territories of the Balkans.¹⁰⁸ For instance, in 1657 he acquired knowledge of the plans for a Turkish attack against Cattaro months before the actual assault.¹⁰⁹ Following the attacks against the coastal regions and primarily the siege of Cattaro in 1657, the Venetian authorities expelled the Montenegrin tradesmen (and in particular the tradesmen from Podgorica) from the cities under their rule, first and foremost from Cattaro. Again Bolizza interceded on their behalf. Following the fiasco in Cattaro, the Montenegrin tribes no longer joined forces with the Ottomans. Instead, largely as a consequence of Vincenzo Bolizza’s mediation, in 1600 they entered a formal alliance with Venice.¹¹⁰ In the last years of the war, the biggest problems were caused by the ravages of marauding pirates, Hajduks, and Uskoks. Vincenzo and Nicolo Bolizza labored tirelessly to try to mitigate their impact on the lives of the people of Cattaro.¹¹¹

Conclusion

This overview demonstrates quite clearly that alongside Ragusa, Cattaro was the most important bridgehead on the east coast of the Adriatic, looking towards the Ottoman Empire. This had important economic and political consequences,

106 Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje*, 216, 221–23, 230, 231, 238, 239, 246–50, 254.

107 Domagoj Madunić, “Frontier Elites of the Ottoman Empire during the War for Crete (1645–1669): the Case of Ali-Pasha Čengić,” in *Europe and the Ottoman World: Exchanges and Conflicts (sixteenth to seventeenth centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013), 47–82.

108 This is an apt term used by Madunić: *ibid.*, 57.

109 Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje*, 243, 244.

110 *Ibid.*, 229, 257.

111 *Ibid.*, 277, 281.

but it was also important from the perspective of the Church. In the Middle Ages, Cattaro developed important ties with the communities in the interior of the peninsula. In the early Modern Era, its strategic importance grew primarily because of the role it played in the organization of the postal service. For the missions that departed from Rome for the southern territories of the Balkans, as of the end of the sixteenth century Cattaro, which was under Venetian rule, was the primary base, as is clearly illustrated by the attempt (in the end unsuccessful) to settle Jesuits and the mandates of the Bolizza family, which oversaw the functioning of the postal service.

The basic tasks of the members of the Bolizza family who served as commissaries of the missions remained essentially the same over the course of decades, as did their geographical range. However, their significance changed dramatically, depending on shifts in the emphasis on the practice of spreading the faith and the prevailing political and military situation. Clearly Francesco was the most influential and striking figure, in part simply because of his personality and in part because of the enormity of the tasks that awaited him and the economic trend caused by the Cretan War. Vincenzo was given a role in the organization of relations in the Balkans, even while his brother was still alive, and in his work as an agent in the second period of the war he followed closely in his brother's footsteps, although in all likelihood he was not as resolved a personality. Nicolò, in contrast, was only given a role towards the end of the war, when the family no longer enjoyed quite the same wealth of connections as it once had. The critical accusations made by abbot Zmajević can perhaps be explained not only as perceptions of actual moral failings but as part of an effort to force laymen out of the organization of missions. The turning point came after the outbreak of the Morean War: Nicolò's brother and successor, Giovanni di Antonio Bolizza, again was given an important military and political role, first and foremost in the organization of anti-Turkish movements. As a consequence of this, the Propaganda Congregation came to value his services more highly.¹¹²

112 Giovanni Bolizza was particularly helpful in enabling Vizarion, the vladika of Cetinje, and Arzenije Crnojević, the patriarch of Āpek, develop closer ties to Venice. Until his death in 1706, he served the Propaganda Congregation. Like Francesco, he too earned the gratitude of the supreme authority of the missions with his support for the Franciscan mission in Albania. Radonić, *Rimska kurija*, 395, 397–400, 424, 474, 504–07, 516.

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