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## INTRODUCTION

Bartolomeo Minio's letters are preserved in the Biblioteca Correr in Venice as BCMV Codici Cicogna Ms 2653, *Dispacci a senato e ad altri di Sier Bortolomeo Minio*. The manuscript is a paper booklet of four signatures of varying thickness, 21.3 cm x 31 cm, containing 69 folios and a cover,<sup>1</sup> the numbers indicated in the upper right-hand corner on the *recto* of each folio. The signatures are not consistent as to watermarks. The manuscript has wide left margins and hanging paragraphs, with usually 25-26 lines to a page, though occasionally as many as 39. Four somewhat similar hands were involved in copying. One copyist was careful to begin pages with new paragraphs, while one copyist squeezed as much on a page as possible, and one used no capital letters at all. An occasional word in the manuscript has been crossed out, indicated here by \*\*\*\*. There is some minimal glossing as to content (“de novo,” “de la fabrica,” “per le famiglie de Thodoro Bua”), indicated in this volume on both transcription and translation by italics at the beginning of the relevant paragraphs.

There are ninety *dispacci* on sixty-nine two-sided folios: the total number can be disputed depending on whether LXI, LXX, and LXXV are seen as standing alone or as postscripts, *soprascritti*, to other letters. Sixty are directed formally to the *Serenissimus Princeps*, the Doge, although he was not permitted to open them himself. They were opened by secretaries and read to the Signoria over which he presided. Twenty-four letters, mostly about immediate matters of defense from pirates, are addressed to the Captain General. The

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<sup>1</sup>The title on the first page of the manuscript was written in 1843 by librarian Emmanuele Cicogna who includes a note with brief biographical information for Minio. The manuscript was part of the Giandominico Tiepolo collection, brought to light by Rawdon Brown (who for four years owned Ca' Dario, the house belonging to diplomat Giovanni Dario – see Letter XXII). On the reverse of the first page is a comment by historian Carl Hermann F. J. Hopf (who left marks on the manuscript by passages of particular Ottoman interest): “Dispacci d’un grande interesse per la relazioni dei Turchi coi ultimi possedimenti Veneti nella Morea, che ben meriterebbero la stampa, anche come una collezione completissima (ed antichissima) di dispacci d’un rettore veneziano. Venezia adi 11 luglio 1854. Carlo D.re Hopf.”

three mentioned just above, although probably written to the Doge, have no certain addressee; the three remaining are addressed to the Avogadori in Venice (to whom financial accounting was due), and to Batista Gritti, *bailo*, and Antonio Vitturi, *orator*, both in Constantinople.

The *dispacci* were previously published by Konstantine N. Sathas, in Volume VI of: Μνημεία Ἑλληνικῆς Ἱστορίας: *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge* (Paris, 1880-1890). It has been an article of faith that Sathas is unreliable, and to what degree he is, this transcription will indicate. Sathas – or his student copyists – did not recognize the importance of the marginal glosses, omitting them and most of the conventional phrases at the end of letters, such as “Nec alia” and “cuius gratiae.” Sathas also irregularly modernized the nearly nonexistent punctuation and much of the spelling, and capitalized proper names. Most discrepancies are of a trivial nature – *dela* changed to *de la* or *luocho* to *luogo*, or, in one case, unfamiliarity with a Greek name led to Lascari being transcribed as Lastari. A number of times, a word that makes sense in the context has been substituted for a word in particularly illegible handwriting – “habuto” for “abducto,” or “renegato” for “denegato.” In a few cases, such as his reading of “renonciando” for “renoverrando” in Letter XLI, the mis-transcription gives the opposite of the meaning intended. The most egregious error occurs in Letter XXII where an abbreviation for “captain” (Cap.o) has been transcribed as “Contarini,” thus leading three or four generations of Greek scholars to misidentify a tower.

Given the general serviceability of the Sathas version, an explanation is due for why there should be another edition. The Sathas edition occupies ninety-seven pages of Volume VI of a set of nine volumes: it cannot be acquired separately. Agreeing with Professor Hopf (see n. 1) that “ben meriterebbero la stampa,” we believe this manuscript should appear as a discrete edition, with an English translation for those whose Latin or fifteenth-century Italian is insecure. We have included an extensive introduction, footnotes, additional documents, and glosses for technical or text-specific terms, to make this not only a transcription and

translation, but an in-depth account of Venetian administration in the *stato da mar*. As Professor Hopf noted, this collection is the "collezione completissima (ed antichissima) di dispacci d'un rettore veneziano."<sup>2</sup> Other accounts of the *stato da mar* tend to focus on Crete and look at other provinces through the Cretan lens, or to assume that all provinces were administered uniformly under a theoretical structure.<sup>3</sup> This presentation assumes that whatever the theoretical structure of an administration, actual structures were often *ad hoc* and it was necessary for each provincial administrator to function in response to local conditions and unique situations, always keeping in sight the broader view of Venetian purpose and values.

The marginal glosses omitted by Sathas allow the identification of the writer of the glosses as Bartolomeo Minio. The glosses, all in the same hand, are in one of the four hands that transcribed the manuscript. In two instances, the gloss refers to *el mio cancellier* and in another instance, this *cancellier* – whom Minio discusses frequently but never names – is identified as *mio Eustachio*. Another of the hands can be identified as that of Bartolomeo's son Marco.<sup>4</sup> All four hands bear a certain resemblance: one can envision Bartolomeo and his three sons making a family copy, except that the handwriting of his son Francesco looks nothing like any of these. Thus, these letters cannot be Minio's copies made at the time of sending. Further, too many letters are recorded out of correct date order,<sup>5</sup> and a number refer

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<sup>2</sup> This collection is equalled only by another collection, this of sixty letters written from Crete by the same Bartolomeo Minio, BCMV Codici Cicogna Ms. 2681 These *dispacci* written by Minio twenty years after his letters from Nauplion can be followed to a certain extent through Sanudo's volumes II and III which summarize a third of them, and include letters not in the collection.

<sup>3</sup>For example: Georgopoulou (2001) 5-7, passim.

<sup>4</sup>Compare with the handwriting on Marco Minio's letters in ASV Capi, Consiglio Dieci: Lettere Rettori b. 283/19 & 20.

<sup>5</sup>Particularly those on folios 41r-43v which have dates of 8 October, 1 October, 8 October, 27 September, 3 October, 5 October; those of folios 44v-46v of 21 October, 13 November 8 November; those of folios 53v-57v of 4 April, 18 March, 23 March 24 April; and those of folio 63 of 11 September, 25 October, 11 September.

to other letters Minio has written to the Signoria – or the Captain General or the *orator* in Constantinople – not included in this manuscript.

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Bartolomeo Minio q. Marco was elected *provveditor* and *capitano* of *Napoli di Romania* in February 1478/79<sup>6</sup> to replace the previous *rettor* of Nauplion, Christoforo de Priuli, who died before the end of his term. Leonardo Diedo, *capitano* of Coron, was transferred to Nauplion until Minio arrived.<sup>7</sup> As Minio's first letter reports, he got as far as Modon in September, but did not arrive in Nauplion until 8 November as Venetian shipping was either suspended or on war alert because of the Ottoman attack on the Ionian Islands.

Bartolomeo was about 40 when he began the Nauplion assignment, the usual age for a *provveditor* in the *stato da mar*. The *dispacci* suggest that he had a tendency to migraines and an aching neck. Perhaps marked by the early loss of his mother, he appears in his letters as a lonely man, writing of himself as “essendo solo rector,” rarely mentioning officials other than those who came by galley for rare, brief stays, never mentioning the name of the assistant on whom he relied the most, the *cancellier* for whom he fought a long and tiring battle with Venetian bureaucracy.<sup>8</sup> In the final *dispaccio* of 25 March 1483, he mentions “nui suo rectori” and “nui suo provveditori” but these refer to *rettori* of other *città*. Five years later, there were at least thirteen officials appointed to Nauplion in addition to the *provveditor*, and Minio may have had several of these with him: this cannot be deduced from the *dispacci* and cannot be assumed, given the many variations from the standard noted at Nauplion. His wife's brother, “mio cognado Piero Trevisan,” commanded a light galley and came to Nauplion several times on assignment. Minio looked forward to Trevisan's visits, and in the *dispacci* emphasized their relationship – *mio cognado* – insisting on it in what he

<sup>6</sup> The Venetian year began with March 1. Where dates are in January or February, both years will be given.

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix I. Although directed to leave within eight days or pay a fine of 1000 ducats, he apparently did not leave until late summer. There seem to be no documents that account for the delay.

<sup>8</sup>Until he glossed the *dispacci* with “mio Eustachio.”

perceived as the blank face of Venetian bureaucracy. As official papers, the *dispacci* give no suggestion as to what non-official correspondence he might have had. He clearly felt isolated “in questa terra in luogo remoto,” and perceived his work unrecognized, his letters unanswered, and his desperate need for money, food and supplies ignored. He did not consider that the unanswered letters were an indication that he was actually doing the right thing, and that there was nothing more to say.<sup>9</sup> Grateful to those whose faces he could see, he treasured a few friendships and wrote warmly of the *contestabele* Antonio Marinato and Ahmed Bey, an Ottoman *flamburar* with whom he had developed a deep sympathy. This strong loyalty to those present, and a keen sense of injustice, made him ferociously loyal to a difficult group of Albanian and Greek *stratioti* for whom he fought a long, ultimately successful, battle with Venetian bureaucracy. He does not seem to have had particular friends among local Venetians: there is no clue as to whether this is a matter of chance or policy, but normal relationships would not have been a subject for official *dispacci*. It is possible that there was a model for the social isolation of *rettori*, as there was for the Doge. Still, there was an unyielding side to his character, which he portrays in his reports of his negotiations with the Turks. Early on he developed a mutual antagonism with *misier* Iosepho Lion, Nauplion’s *camerlengo*, who had sided with a small group of soldiers who had “fatto una risa” against him. An oblique remark in Sanudo during his term of office in Crete

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<sup>9</sup>There is, in fact, evidence that Minio’s perception of unanswered letters was fairly accurate. The ASV Senato Secreta registers 28-29 for the years 1479-1483 have no mentions of them and none of the letters Minio records receiving from the Signoria or letters sent specifically to the *Regimen Neapolis*, although several letters from the *provveditor* of Nauplion – *stato da mar* officials are always cited by title, almost never by name – are mentioned. There are rare mentions of letters to the *Regimen Mothoni* and *Regimen Coroni*, and one jointly to the régimes of some twelve *città*. Register 29, f. 91v records a letter to the *bailo* in Constantinople which says, "Nui havemo commandato te sia dato l'exempio de le lettere de rectori de Napoli che dechiarano insulto facto per el flamburari de quella provincia contra el luogo." ASV Senato Mar R. 11, which covers the full period Minio was in Nauplion, records at least three specific actions which it says are responses to the *rettor* of Nauplion: ff 68r, 125v, 137v. To judge from R. 11, the Senato paid more attention to Minio than to other *rettori* but what is recorded is inconsistent.

suggests that his peers could find him difficult and the citizens of Cremona made a complaint about his intransigence that was investigated by the Dieci.<sup>10</sup> But his rigidity had another side:

. . . I promise Your Lordship that if [the traitor Thodoro Bua] had fallen into my hands, I would have had no regard for him, but would have had him hanged immediately . . . I hold here in prison two poor *stratioti* who were in the Brazzo with Thodoro Bua and seeing that he, who was the principal author of this trouble, stays safe and without punishment, nevertheless I have scruples about punishing these poor simple men, who have been led like animals by this Thodoro Bua.<sup>11</sup>

Certain phrases appear frequently in the *dispacci* which suggest something of his personality, or his fatigue. Constantly in need of money, of grain for the troops, of workmen, of materiel, he writes over and over that nothing can be done: “non se pol far senza . . . senza il qual non se pol lavorar.” His despair and frustration are palpable, his pessimism disturbing when placed against the real significance of what he accomplished in Nauplion, yet his record was quoted long after his death, by Venetians and Naupliots, and Ottomans in the Morea and Constantinople praised his ethical standards. When making a report, as was his duty, convinced the Signoria would either ignore his existence or make his life more difficult, he would write: “Vostra Eccellenza quella sapientissima dispona come gli piace” (“Your Excellence will most wisely dispose as you please”).

With very few exceptions, all *dispacci* are concerned with impending crises, ongoing crises, or crises just averted. Still, it is evident that there were substantial blocks of time – up to three months – in which there are no surviving letters and no apparent crises at all. Given the high rate of survival of these *dispacci*,<sup>12</sup> it appears that Minio did not

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<sup>10</sup>Sanudo (1969) IV, 434-5 for 10 November 1502: "sier Marco Barbo, vento ducha di Candia . . . Volero dir dil capetaneo, ma si ritene, dicendo, a loco e tempo dicia"; V, 192 for 14 July 1505.

<sup>11</sup>Letter LVII.

<sup>12</sup>Most letters refer to the previous *dispaccio* and give a summary of its contents, which allows a fair idea of which letters are missing.

ordinarily report to the Signoria when affairs were proceeding normally or well. Once he said as much: “De la cosse de questa Morea non ho scripto a Vostra Celsitudine pero ché per la pace le cosse passavano quiete et pacifiche” (“I have not written to Your Highness about matters in the Morea, because with the peace, things were going quietly and peacefully”). It is impossible to know whether some of these seemingly crisis-free blocks of time occurred because no ships by which a letter might be sent stopped at Nauplion, or if letters are missing. That the months of October, December and February are the months with the largest total numbers of letters suggests that, whatever the frequency of ships, there was year-round sailing.

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The Minio family had several branches: their records begin with a Paolo Minio who moved to Rialto in 904.<sup>13</sup> Minios were listed in the Great Council in the 1290s, and counted in the *estimo* of 1379.<sup>14</sup> The Minio name appears with average frequency on lists of *rettori* of *stato da mar città*.

Bartolomeo, named for his mother's father, was born to Marco Minio q. Francesco and Cristina Storlado q. Bartolomeo in about 1428, the youngest of five sons. His mother died when he was two, and his father remarried in 1431. In 1455, Bartolomeo married Elena Trevisan, daughter of Silvestro q. Nicolò, from a family whose men commanded galleys.<sup>15</sup> Elena's brother, Piero, made a number of visits to Nauplion during Bartolomeo's tenure

<sup>13</sup> ASV Misc. Codici, s.I: storia veneta, m. 17-23: Marco Barbaro, Arbori di patritii veneti, V.22.143. Spretti, Vol. IV, 600, gives a date of 790.

<sup>14</sup> Chojnacki (1973), 57, 72, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Silvestro Trevisan was one of the Venetian patricians who aided the defense of Constantinople in 1453. Jones (1969) 26, 73, 75. ASV Stato Mar R. 4, f. 118, for his election as one of the *patroni* of the *muda* to Tana of August 1451, which was in Constantinople when the siege began. Also, Thiret (1071) III, #2885.

there.<sup>16</sup> Bartolomeo's family lived in the San Tomà parish of the San Polo *sestiere* of Venice<sup>17</sup>: he was elected *consiliere* for San Polo in 1511 and his son Marco took its census in 1509.<sup>18</sup>

Bartolomeo and Elena had three sons who reached adulthood. Marco was born about 1460, and Alvise a year later; given the large number of siblings recorded for both parents, the five-year gap between marriage and Marco, and the twenty-two-year gap between Alvise in 1461 and Francesco in 1483, suggest other children who did not survive, or

<sup>16</sup>Minio's affection for Piero Trevisan has already been mentioned. Their children continued this closeness and Minio's youngest son, Francesco, left half of his very large estate to Piero's two surviving grandsons, Bertucio and Marino. ASV Not. Test. Atti Marsilio b. 1208/335 and Atti Marsilio b. 1218/XI/75.

<sup>17</sup>*Arbori* I.22.143, V.22.143, VII.23.113. *San Tomà*. A house near S. Tomà, Calle Campaniel #2898, has over the door a damaged shield on which one can identify a Minio *stemma*. At the time of writing, at least three houses are accessible from this entrance, including the pretty Ca' da Madoneta on the Rio da Frescada, and there has been so much removal and rebuilding of walls that the nature of the original house is probably unrecoverable. The shield is that shown for the family in BCMV Codici Cicogna 3529, *Origine dele case patrizie de Stefano Magno*, f. 173. Magno was a younger contemporary of Bartolomeo; his chronicle frequently quotes Bartolomeo's *dispacci*. Francesco, Bartolomeo's youngest son and the last survivor of a whole branch of the Minio family, several times mentions his "casa grande" at S. Tomà and his concern for "l'anema da cha Minio" in his testament (n.15 above).

<sup>18</sup>ASV Senato Mar R. 16, f. 110v.

daughters who were apparently unrecorded.<sup>19</sup> Early in his career in the *terra da mar*, in 1462, father of two babies, Bartolomeo was sent as a *consiliere* to the *rettor* of Corfu.<sup>20</sup>

Minio spent forty-two months and more in Nauplion after his arrival in November 1479. The last *dispaccio* is dated 25 March 1483. The previous autumn, the Senato had voted to elect a successor, nine months after Minio should have been able to go home, but there is no mention in their records or in the *dispacci* that one was elected.<sup>21</sup> The tone of this letter is so different from most of the preceding – almost cheerful – that he may well have been anticipating the arrival of his replacement.

Letters LXXIX and LXXX report the complications of a draft of Nauplion *stratioti* for the Venetian siege at Ferrara. After returning to Italy, Minio was elected in late October

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<sup>19</sup> It is nearly impossible to track daughters unless their names can be identified from marriage records. Records for sons rely on the *balla d'oro*, for which Marco was presented in November 1478, Alvise in December 1479 when Bartolomeo was in Nauplion, and Francesco in October 1501 when Bartolomeo was in Crete. Marco was elected as, among other positions, *orator* to Spain, Portugal, the Papacy, Suleiman II (1521), and Doge of Crete (1522-1524). He wrote a number of lively *dispacci* and features prominently in a discussion of Venetian diplomats to Constantinople by Lucette Valensi – *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte*. A. Denner, trans. (Ithaca, NY, 1993). There are few traces of Alvise. Francesco, in 1531, at the age of 48, after years of transporting pilgrims to Jerusalem and outstanding service as *provveditor* in Capo d'Istria, married Lucrezia Marcello q. Pietro. Pietro's career paralleled that of Bartolomeo: captain in Crete, and twice *podestà* of Padua. Lucrezia died without children. Francesco willed her full dowry of 1500 ducats to her brother Antonio. Francesco's wills (n.17) give evidence that he had, through trade and transport, accumulated a substantial estate: among other holdings and investments, he mentions large houses at S. Tomà and S. Marcuola, a palazzo at S. Agustin, a large house with a garden and two other small houses on Murano – a degree of wealth that Bartolomeo and Marco can only have dreamed of. The Minio men aged well: despite several near-fatal illnesses and violence (malaria, pneumonia, epidemic, battle, pirate attack) Bartolomeo died in 1518, aged about 90; Marco died in 1541, at 81; Alvise in 1546, at 85; and Francesco in 1561, at 78.

<sup>20</sup> ASV Senato Mar R. 7, f. 80v for 27 August 1462.

<sup>21</sup> ASV Senato Mar R. 11, f. 152 records a vote of 27 September 1482 to elect a successor. Sanudo (1989) II, 298 says this was 18 October. Hopf (1873) 384, lists Minio's successor as “Pietro Vitturi q. Rinieri (el. nel aprile),” but many appointments are not noted in the Senato Mar registers.

1483 as *provveditor* for the *stratioti* at Lago Scuro, the main Venetian camp,<sup>22</sup> "il qual havia praticcha con stratioti per esser stato Rector et Proveditor a Napoli di Romania." Disease was rampant in the army – it killed his predecessor – its effects intensified by a shortage of food and an encampment in marshlands. Minio was then elected *provisor generalis* but nearly succumbed to disease himself, as the Senato Terra recorded, "egrotat graviter," and could not take the position.<sup>23</sup>

The next summer, 1484, Minio was elected *capitaneo* of the galleys to Flanders, responsible for the protection of the four galleys of that year's *muda*.<sup>24</sup> In the Bay of Biscay, the *muda* was attacked by pirates (one of whom was Christopher Columbus) who took the 200,000 ducats-worth of good to sell in England, and left Minio and his officers on the coast of Portugal in their smallclothes.<sup>25</sup>

The rest of Minio's career can be tracked in Sanudo's *Diarii* and occasional archival documents. As mentioned earlier, he was captain on Cyprus in 1499, and then captain and *consiliere* on Crete between 1500 and 1502, where many of his problems were the same as those he reported from Nauplion and he reported them in almost identical language.<sup>26</sup> He was also a *consiliere* for water issues in the *terraferma* in 1497, nominee for Captain General in 1500, a *consiliere* and *capo* of the Dieci in 1503, member of the Signoria and *consiliere* in 1506.<sup>27</sup> He was *podestà* for a difficult term at Cremona in 1504-05, and at Padua in 1506-07,

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<sup>22</sup>Lagoscuero is a town on the Po, just north of Ferrara, where Venetian troops were concentrated. The land is low-lying and swampy; present use is heavily dependent on drainage canals, and the high dikes that line the Po.

<sup>23</sup> Sanudo (1989) II, 407, 420-421, 439, 441. ASV Senato Terra, R. 9, f. 40, 11 November 1483, for Minio's election; f. 85 for 21 June 1484, for Minio's illness and replacement by Nicolò Contarini.

<sup>24</sup> Part of Minio's commission is printed in translation in Rawlinson (1926) 148-149.

<sup>25</sup> Sanudo (1989) II, 404-405.

<sup>26</sup> BCMV Codici Cicogna 2681: Dal 1500 fino 1502 registro dei dispacci di Bartolomeo Minio. Sanudo (1969) II and III, passim.

<sup>27</sup> Those attending council meetings are listed in the margins of the Register. On the seventeen times when Bartolomeo Minio was recorded present at meetings, his name is first on the list as the oldest *consiliere*.

and 1510.<sup>28</sup> In 1509, at the age of 80, he was sent to Julius II in the matter of the papal interdict placed on Venice for the capture of Ravenna and Faenza.<sup>29</sup> He had periods of illness: on 25 April of 1512 he missed vespers, “because Sier Bartolomeo Minio, the very old counsellor, was sick” – he was then eighty-four. A week later he sent a message to the Collegio that he could not take the position of *vice-doge* because he was sick.<sup>30</sup> He was sick again the next summer and missed two major ceremonial events, the kind painted by Giovanni Bellini and Carpaccio, in May and June 1513.<sup>31</sup> When Venice, desperate for the defense of Padua, asked the patricians for gifts of money and men, Bartolomeo said that Marco would be responsible for his contribution: Marco gave 10 ducats and financed 5 men, considerably less than most contributions listed.<sup>32</sup> Bartolomeo served again as *podestà* of Padua in 1514. In October 1515 he was *consiliere* at a meeting of the Dieci that went until

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<sup>28</sup> Sanudo (1969) V.511, 536; VI.18, 192, 233, 252, 269; VII. 533. BMCV Cod. Cigogna

2942, III, 18, Processo acquavii foss. BMCV Cod. Cigogna 2681, Dispacci di Bartolomeo Minio di Candia, 1500-1502. BMCV Cod. Cigogna 3160, XIII, Commissione.

<sup>29</sup> Guiseppe dalla Santa, “Il vero testo dell’appellazione de Venezia,” *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 19 (1900) 350, 355ff.

<sup>30</sup>Sanudo XIV, 157, 195:“perchè Sier Bortolo Minio consier più vechio era amalato”; “fa dir amalato per non far l’oficio di vicedoxe.” The *vicedoge* was the oldest *consiliere* who presided if the doge could not attend a meeting.

<sup>31</sup>Sanudo (1969) XVI, 257.

<sup>32</sup>Sanudo (1969) XVII, 297, 300. This San Tomà branch of the Minio family clearly was not affluent until Bartolomeo's son Francesco made his fortune. It is perhaps useful to mention that government service was an unpaid obligation on patricians. Salaries paid to officials in the *stato mar* actually paid for staff, rather than personal, expenses. The facts that Bartolomeo and his son Francesco were the only members of their families for whom marriages are recorded, and Francesco nearly fifty at the time of his, strongly support a view of families with constricted finances.

the eleventh hour.<sup>33</sup> After 1515, Sanudo no longer records his participation in public life.<sup>34</sup> He died aged about ninety, in August or September 1518, and was buried at S. Francesco della Vigna.<sup>35</sup>

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Some information about Nauplion and the operation of the Venetian system in the *stato da mar* will be useful background to the *dispacci*.<sup>36</sup>

#### NAUPLION

In 1388 Venice obtained Nauplion by purchase from a young widow, Maria d'Enghein, who had inherited the Argolid from her father.<sup>37</sup> Maria's late husband was Pietro Corner, son of the richest man in Venice, and the Signoria had a particular interest in anything related to the Corners.<sup>38</sup> Venice was familiar with Nauplion, having possessed trading rights and property in Nauplion at least since 1082 and the chrysobull of Alexios I, possibly as early as 992 and the treaty with Basil II.

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<sup>33</sup>Sanudo (1969) XXI,196.

<sup>34</sup>A letter from Doge Leonardo Loredan of 4 May 1517 addressed on the outside to "Marco Minio, Oratori nostro in Urbe," but on the inside to "Bartholomeo Minio oratori nostro," asks him to speak with the Pope about an issue of an inheritance from a Knight of Rhodes. BMCV Codici Cicogna 3462/2 "Lettera dogale."

<sup>35</sup>Sanudo reports Marco *di* Bartolomeo in August 1518, and Marco *q.* Bartolomeo on 29 September. Sanudo (1969) XXV passim and XXVI.72. In his testament, Francesco Minio requests to be buried with the "Observant Friars (at S. Francesco della Vigne) where my people are buried." ASV Not. Test. Atti Marsilio b. 1208/335.

<sup>36</sup>For more information on Nauplion than can be given here, see my publications in the bibliography. Wright (1998) Ch. 1, has extensive detail on topography and buildings. Also Semnēs Karouzou, *To Nauplio* (Athens, 1979). Guiseppe Gerola, "Le fortificazioni di Napoli di Romania," *Annuario dell'la regia scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in oriente* 22-24 (1930-31) 346-410. Wulf Schaefer, "Neue Untersuchungen über die Baugeschichte Nauplias im Mittelalter," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 76 (1961) 179 and map #4.

<sup>37</sup>There seems to be no evidence as to whether Maria ever did or did not live in Nauplion.

<sup>38</sup>For a meticulous account of the complexities Venice underwent in securing possession of Nauplion, see Cessi (1915) 147-173.

Nauplion is a small boat-shaped peninsula<sup>39</sup> in the Gulf of Argos consisting for the most part, in Minio's time, of a steep, rocky hill attached to the mainland at the eastern end by a broad swath of marsh, sheltering a shallow, marshy port to the north. A narrow road ran between the marsh and the high rock mountain of Palamidi, and ended at the fortified city gate.<sup>40</sup> A short earthen wall between Palamidi and the marsh served as an advance defence. The old city was crowded within the walls on the hill called Akro-Nauplion, in the three fortified areas which today have the same names by which Minio knew them: the oldest and farthest west, the Castle of the Greeks; the smaller central administrative area, the Castle of the Franks with its thirteenth-century frescos<sup>41</sup>; and Toro at the attenuated eastern end. There was little flat land for the lower city: in Minio's first letters, as had his predecessor before him, he asked for a master builder so they could build out the city on the marsh as was done in Venice.<sup>42</sup>

Minio's Nauplion inside hastily-built wartime walls was a shabby town of mostly wooden houses and thatched roofs,<sup>43</sup> but perhaps no *città* of the post-war *stato da mar* was very attractive. About the same time, Canon Casola spent a few days in Methone. He wrote:

I did not see either houses or palaces worthy of description: for its size it has many houses and they are close together . . . . The majority of their houses, whether they are large or small – at least from the middle upwards – are built of timbers . . . this house was of wood, and very old, of the

<sup>39</sup>The name derives from ναῦς = ship; the origin of *plion* is unsure.

<sup>40</sup>Although Palamidi looms over the city and is visible from many miles away, there seems to be no mention of it in Venetian records until the Ottoman attack of 1500, unless it is the hill Minio mentions in Letter LV when the bandits "came near the *terra*, about a mile, and stood on a hill showing themselves publicly." However, Palamidi was right at the advance defence wall, perhaps 100 meters away from the town at most, not a mile.

<sup>41</sup> These frescos are still visible.

<sup>42</sup> Letter I: "E questa tal fabrica non se pol far \*\*\*\* senza uno protomaistro murer, però che bisogna far la fundamenta con palli in acqua & in questa terra non se trova algun maistro che sapia far tal fundamenta. Però l'è necessario che la Vostra Serenità proveda de mandar uno protomaistro murer."

<sup>43</sup> Letter XXI. All wood for construction had to be imported: it was of standardized sizes. Wright (2000b) passim.

dryest kind of timbers and with party walls to similar houses in a congested narrow street.<sup>44</sup>

Outside the walls was a crowded suburb of shacks roofed with reeds. A generation later, houses in Nauplion belonging to soldiers were reported in collapse: it had been so long since they had received any pay.<sup>45</sup> Before the war, there were houses and gardens outside the walls, along the *strada santa Veneranda*, toward Argos: with the first battles of the Venetian-Ottoman war being fought across that land, it is unlikely that any survived the war, or had been rebuilt when Minio arrived.<sup>46</sup>

### *PROVVEDITOR*

The role of a *provveditor e capitano* was to maintain law and order within the city, peace and quiet without. More specifically, he was responsible for the administration of the city and its surrounding land – high and low justice in accordance with local tradition, collecting taxes, inspecting the loading of ships; and the management of defense – whether men, walls, or diplomacy. Governors of Nauplion before the war, and after Minio, were usually called *podestà* or *rettor*, normal terms for a governor of a *città*; during the war and immediately after, they were called *provveditor*.<sup>47</sup> Minio arrived in Nauplion at the end of one war, on the brink of another, and the city was impoverished, tense, and crowded with underpaid and underfed soldiers. He was to oversee the transition from a war-time culture to one of normality.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Wright (2000b) 171.

<sup>45</sup> Sathas IV, 193.

<sup>46</sup> Wright (2000b) 173.

<sup>47</sup> Thiriet (1959) 184. His list of territories and titles reflects neither the flexibility of titles nor their use in specific situations. In the 1520s and 30s, the term *bailo* was being used. ASV Archivio di Capi Cons. X, Lettere di Rettori, b. 294, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> In addition, the *rettor* or *provedditor* of Nauplion was responsible for the island of Aegina and the smaller islands belonging to it.

These elected appointments were normally for two years.<sup>49</sup> Minio stayed in Nauplion at least 41 months – from November 1479 through March 1483 – although he several times reminded the Signoria of how long he had been there. The Senato had voted in the fall of 1482 to select a successor but it was at least six more months before one arrived. As with the delay in Minio's departure for Greece there is no explanation of this extension or of his extended term of office.<sup>50</sup> Possibly an appointment in Nauplion was something no one wanted to accept. Possibly the Senato was preoccupied with the Ferrara war. But it is more likely that the Senato was impressed with Minio's handling of the successful settlement of the boundary conflict and his management of several explosive situations, and did not want to risk the rupture of experience and information until the situation in Nauplion was calm. Certainly, the delay had this result and, as the last letters suggest, there was real – if ultimately brief – calm in the Morea for the first time since the war began.

Commissions to *rettori* and *provveditori* were quite similar in content but always contained instructions for the precise circumstances of a particular territory.<sup>51</sup> When Perazzo Malipiero went as the first *provveditor* of Nauplion in February 1388/89, almost the whole two-page commission involved the specific steps he was to follow in negotiations to secure Venetian possession of the Argolid,<sup>52</sup> with alternative instructions depending on various circumstances that might arise, and directing him to make use of the resources of other Venetian territories and officials as needed. But the commission concluded: “If the despot

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<sup>49</sup> “In quo quidem regimine stare debeas per duos annos,” Sathas I, 284.

<sup>50</sup>Minio's predecessor, Cristoforo de Prioli, was in Nauplion for at 3 years, and quite possibly would have been there much longer, had he not died in office. See Appendix 1.

<sup>51</sup>By Minio's time, the commission came in the form of a vellum handbook, about 6" x 9" or larger, returned at the end of the assignment when the total amount of money the official was owed or owed was calculated on the back. Each commission ended with "Iurasti honorem et proficuum domini Venetiarum, eundo, stando, et redeundo." The initial page of a commission was composed with space left for illumination at the recipient's expense.

<sup>52</sup>At the death of Pietro Corner, nominal ruler of Nauplion and Argos, in 1388, Despot Theodoros Palaiologos of Mistra seized control of Argos with the support of his son-in-law, Nerio II Acciaiuoli of Corinth. See n. 37, also Luttrell (1966) 34-55.

does not want to concede the place, do what seems right to you.”<sup>53</sup> One can see encrustations from a hundred years of bureaucratic experience, but in 1485 Francesco Bragadin was told – after stringent warnings of investigations and jail time: “In reality, if for some important reason you feel you cannot obey our instructions, you can without penalty write back how, because of that reason, you will not be able to fulfill our mandate.”<sup>54</sup>

In November 1470, Vettore Pasqualigo was given a very different, limited commission to fortify Nauplion. It was wartime and everything took second place to survival. The commission specified that Pasqualigo would have 6000 ducats for the work in two installments; that the Captain General would bring eight galleys for the winter so he would have the crews for labor; that he should stop by Modon to collect *stratioti* for Nauplion; that he should give Belfort 200 ducats for his company; that he should report significant information (this twice); and that he should keep the swords in the armory unless there was a condition of siege and the Senato voted their use.<sup>55</sup>

These are summaries of the main points in individual commissions, as noted in Senato records: the actual commission handed to Francesco Bragadin, who went to Methonē in 1485 as *provveditor* and *castellan*, runs an exhausting twenty-five pages and is meticulous in the extreme.<sup>56</sup> Many of his instructions clarify the reasons behind many of Minio’s comments in the *dispacci*, often with the same phrasing: it is clear that Minio had a very similar commission and wrote his letters to respond to specific points mentioned in it. Together, the Minio *dispacci* and the Bragadin commission offer an unparalleled view of

<sup>53</sup> “Si despotus loca concedere noluerit facies quod bonum esse tibi uidebitur,” Chrysostomides (1995) #47.

<sup>54</sup> ASV Commissioni Provveditori, b 3/52: Commissione à Francesco Bragadin.

<sup>55</sup> ASV Stato Mar R. 9, f. 101; also Ploumidēs (1971) 263-264. Commissions for Vittorio Mauroceno in 1389, Saraceno Dandolo in 1394, and Filippo da Molino in 1401 are found in Chrysostomides (1995) #55, #156, #230.

<sup>56</sup> ASV Commissioni Provveditori, b 3/52: Commissione à Francesco Bragadin. The commission is in the form of a vellum handbook in beautiful script, the cover inscribed “Commissio Magnifici et generosi domini Francisci [Braga]deno Honorabilis Castellani et provisoris Mothoni.”

*stato da mar* administration. After directing Bragadin to remain for two years, and commit no fraud, the commission instructs him on his subordinates – which were to be paid by Venice and which were to be paid from his budget – and how to maintain records: “You must write, or have written, in a notebook (*quaterno*), all events, income, outgo, and expenses,” and the notebooks were to be kept in a chest locked with two keys. He had a *cancellier* to keep accounts and make payments, but was himself responsible for finances, end-of-term accounts, and quarterly accounts, and his dealings were carefully prescribed, from the very specific to the very general. A *provveditor* spent a great deal of his time in record-keeping, which was to include not just finances but a written account of every decision and every act relating to Venetian rule. At the end of his term, he was to give duplicate records of all events and expenditures to the Senate and to his successor, and anything he wrote could be used as evidence against him.

The records were used in precisely that way. Inspectors, *sindici*, were appointed to visit the cities of the *stato da mar* every ten years and go over records with a fine-tooth comb. *Sindici* were authorized to hear complaints from the locals, collect evidence, and administer justice. The year before Minio was elected, one of his Nauplion predecessors, Marco Salamon, was put on trial for embezzlement.<sup>57</sup> Salamon was charged with trading with the enemy – the *subassi* of Athens – during the war, with money designated for fortifications, and defrauding Michalio Tzaulo in the process; selling his horses to Petro Smorsi for more than the permitted amount; demanding kickbacks from the *stratioti*; and losing money on goods belonging to Marie Buriano in a business deal in Albania.<sup>58</sup> An earlier predecessor, Pietro

<sup>57</sup>Marco Salamon, *rettor* of Nauplion, 1468-1471, Hopf (1873) 384. Marco Salamon, q. Michiel q. Nicolò, d. 1489. *Arbori* VI.30.528, incorrectly places him in Nauplion in 1475.

<sup>58</sup>ASV Senato Mar R. 11, f 171 et seq. The various entries concerning the charges against Salamon, and the negotiations over penalties, are extremely informative. He was sentenced to six months in prison (which he had already served by the time the case was settled), and ordered to make full restitution of all money. Fragments of information can be teased from his entry in the *Arbori* which suggest that Salamon was somewhat over the usual age to be *rettor* of such a minor city, and had three adult sons. Given the thoroughness of the *sindici*, he must have realized the risk he was taking.

Diedo, had been accused of adultery and fornication in during his time in Nauplion; the Senato reported that the overwhelming evidence against him required 6 months in prison and a fine of 500 *lire*.<sup>59</sup>

A brief annotation on the back of the last page of Bragadin's commission abruptly makes clear the budget issue and suggests why Salamon risked disgrace by his financial dealings. Juxtaposed with later information on the Minio family, it suggests a major reason for the financial anxiety evident in the *dispacci*: it was inevitable that a *provveditor* would have to draw on family resources.<sup>60</sup> The annotation begins, "chastelan et provedador a Modon a de salario a l'ano." Bragadin's budget was to be 800 ducats a year.<sup>61</sup> The annotation continues:

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<sup>59</sup> Thiriet (1971) III, #1843, #1858. The same year the *syndici* punished Salamon, they handled the case of Antonio Coppo, former *rettor* of Lemnos, who was charged with – in most cases "sine scriptura" and "sine processu" – imprisoning a noble in a cistern for 40 days, strangling the *protopapas* Macarios in a cistern, suspending Giorgio Cavlioti by his hands, cutting off the nose of Eudachie Soranine, accepting gifts and bribes, torturing Manci Caludi and suspending him by his testicles, improperly permitting a night wedding celebration at which a Turkish raid captured 300 people, raping several women, firing officials and pocketing their pay, accepting bribes to tolerate piracy, and a number of other offences. He was banned for life from Venice, from Venetian territories, from Venetian waters, from Venetian ships "armatis et exarmatis" and, if found in violation of the ban, was to be taken "in medio duarum columnarum ubi sibi amputetur caput." ASV Senato Mar R. 10, ff. 170r-v. This is an extreme case: a number of other cases determined in the same session cover a wide range of offices and offences. The system appears to have provided remarkably well for the opportunity for Greeks who could not afford to go to Venice to make a complaint to the Signoria for redress of grievances. It appears, from examining dates, that the *syndici* most often heard cases about officials no longer in the territory, and that complainants were not left to face the person they had accused after the *syndici* had gone.

<sup>60</sup> Suing another Minio family for a long-overdue dowry, Leonardo Malipiero wrote in his deposition: "I want to come to a real understanding with you and him as I have to produce a hundred thousand words to get one. I have already loaded the boat to go to my *regimento* at Rovigno . . . I am a poor man and want satisfaction." BCMV Mss. PD C. 2543 Minio/10.

<sup>61</sup> Although the word used in the commission is *salario*, the money was not a personal income but an administrative budget. This helps to account for permissions given to *rettori* to invest surpluses at the end of term, for ex., Sathas I, 287; III #585; #716 ; #726; #839; #923; #994.

	duc 800	
Xbatto 1/ 4	duc 200	
	duc 600	
	Xbatto 40%	duc 240
Resta netto	duc 360	

The reduction by one-fourth was because Bragadin died nine months into his assignment. He was liable for 40% of his budget in taxes.<sup>62</sup> Thus after the reduced salary and the subtraction of taxes, there was a total of 360 ducats with which to pay the *socius*, the seven servants, the groom, and the veteran – all of whose income would presumably be reduced by one-fourth as well, not to mention that they were now all out of a job – and to buy one horse at 80 and the other five horses at 60 ducats each.

The *provveditor* of Nauplion – Minio – had a budget of 1000 ducats a year: with a 40% tax, he had 600 ducats to work with.<sup>63</sup> Nauplion generally produced enough income to pay the salaries of the officials assigned there: the 40% was sent to Venice.<sup>64</sup> For all the constant concern in the *dispacci* about money, Minio never quite mentions his own: the closest he comes is to say that if taxes on the harvest are not collected, administrative salaries would have to be sent out from Venice, and this suggests he had no other source of funds.

Each governor was instructed to take with him a certain number of servants and horses, their ages and costs specified, to be paid out of his salary, or budget. An early

<sup>62</sup> The 1485 *capitula* confirmed the taxes on government officials at *30 et 40 percento*, and *el quarto* on the *provveditor's* salary, but the taxes were to be sent back to Venice instead of being kept for local expenses. Sathas IV, 192. The government assumed that taxes would not always be paid in full. Queller, 169. Bragadin was given instructions on how to pay back taxes. When Minio was on assignment in Candia, he aroused great antagonism by trying to collect taxes from Venetian officials who apparently had gone years without paying them. BCMV Cod.Cicogna: Ms 2681, f. 13. Thiriet (1959) 194-196, has a brief discussion of taxes.

<sup>63</sup> Ploumidēs (1959) #13 for the salary in 1470; #39 for 1493. Minio mentions his *fameglia*, household, but does not say anything about them. The salary in 1394 was set at 700 ducats. Thiriet (1959)194.

<sup>64</sup> A petition of 1445 indicates that taxes collected in the territory of Nauplion were used for government salaries. Sathas IV, 187.

*podestà* was to take an aide, a notary, four servants, two grooms, and four horses to Nauplion.<sup>65</sup> Bragadin's staff was to include: a *socius* or aide who was to be a Venetian between the ages of 25 and 60, paid 20 *soldi* (10 ducats) a year and two "decente" gowns; seven servants; a groom (who could not be a *villano*, which would remove someone from the tax base as well as deprive a Venetian of a job); a veteran (who could not be someone already given free housing); and six horses, all of them at least three years old and one of them a palfrey worth 80 ducats.<sup>66</sup> If missing horses and servants were not replaced within twelve or eight days, respectively, the governor had to repay the money allotted for them, prorated. Given the expenses for and restrictions on a governor, it would be surprising if anyone made a noticeable profit from his assignment.<sup>67</sup>

By law, or tradition, or needs at home in Venice, administrators did not ordinarily take their wives and families with them, although Bragadin was given permission to.<sup>68</sup> His

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<sup>65</sup> Thiriet (1958-61) I, #761. Horses could be sold – at specified prices – at the end of the term. In 1394, the *podestà* at Argos was to have one notary, two Venetian aides, five servants, two grooms, six horses, and two castellans. Nauplion would have one castellan. Early in its possession of Argos and Nauplion, Venice held the Frankish view of Argos as the superior site; over 80 years, the two cities shared a number of officials. Luttrell (1966) passim. Argos was taken by the Ottomans in 1463, a year before the formal declaration of war.

<sup>66</sup> *Commissione*, see n. 52. Bragadin was given lengthy, detailed instructions about the care, feeding, replacement, and sale of horses. This detailed control of staff was one aspect of the attempt at a controlled economy where employment served as a part of the social services, and not only for the patriciate, and horse-breeding interests could vote. While officials were prohibited from taking another office in the said province for two years after the current term ended, in part, to prevent their developing private political parties, such regulation served as a means for sharing increasingly-constricted state wealth.

<sup>67</sup> Queller (1986) 54, suggests that governors in the *stato mar* needed to spend little because of low prices; while on 116, clearly unaware of circumstances such as those described in Letter XXIII, he writes that for governors "ceremonial demands in terms of retinue, horses. . . were extra expenses."

<sup>68</sup> Probably a routine offer, as Bragadin seems to have been a widower and he had a married daughter. Interestingly, in his will, Bragadin provided for Coi (his mistress? no wife is mentioned) to go to Venice if she wished, and have rent-free the mezzanine of his house at SS. Apostoli, plus his house at S. Martino, plus an annual allowance of cash and grain –

commission includes many controls on sons and daughters over the age of sixteen. Families could cause great disruption, as reported in a petition from Nauplion of 1445 about the violence of the "fioli grandi" who rode down workers in the countryside, tormented people they found out after dark, and overturned stalls in the fish market.<sup>69</sup>

#### ADMINISTRATION

The *provveditor* or *rettor* was supposed to govern with the advice and consent of two *consilieri*, counsellors, a position to which younger patricians were appointed in preparation for a later position as governor. Minio was a *consiliere* at Corfu in the 1460s, as was his father Marco at Modon in 1411. There is no evidence for a person in such a position in Nauplion until 1525,<sup>70</sup> and Minio never mentions such a position in his letters, though a number of those he wrote from Crete – acting as *doge* until the appointee arrived – are signed "Bartolomeus Minio et consigliari," with others later signed, "Marco Barbo duca Bartholomeo Minio capitano et consiliarii insule Crete."<sup>71</sup> In fact, a request for instructions makes it clear that Minio had no counsellors whom he could leave in charge when he had to leave the boundaries of Nauplion.<sup>72</sup> Striking evidence from a generation earlier suggests that, in Nauplion, if not in other *città*, local citizens might on occasion function as *consilieri*: an account by an anonymous Greek of the 1450s relates his trial by the *rettor* along with Fra Nicolò and Marino Catello who fill precisely the role prescribed for *consilieri* in the Bragadin commission.<sup>73</sup> While the Senato does mention "lettere de rectori de Napoli": this

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whether she decided to marry or remain single –or she might have money for rent if she preferred to live elsewhere.

<sup>69</sup> Sathas IV, 189-190. This becomes an even more interesting issue, as the petition says these are sons from "case nuove."

<sup>70</sup> Nicolò Justiniani mentioned his *consilieri* in August 1525, and in 1531 Vittore Diedo, who had two sets of two *consilieri*, expressed great appreciation for them. Sathas VI, 246, 254.

<sup>71</sup> This follows the model of the Doge of Venice whose letters had to be signed by his *consilieri*.

<sup>72</sup> "As I have said above, I was hesitant to go out in person and abandon the custody of this *terra* and the castles, being the sole *rettor* . . ." Letter X.

<sup>73</sup> Fra Nicolò and Marino Catello are not called *consilieri* in the narrative. Choras (1998) 359, lines 55-58. The Catello family is well-documented at Nauplion as having an active role in government, but though citizens of Nauplion, they were not Venetian patricians..

could be a conventional phrase.<sup>74</sup> Officials listed for Nauplion in 1485 were *provededor*, *camerlengi*, *cancellieri*, *scontro de la camera*, *interprete*, *castellan*, *medego*, *capellan*, *armiraglio*, *duo piaceri*, *veteran*, *castellan de conseio*, *provisionadi* for the *Magnifico Proveditor*, and the *patron de greppo* – most of these positions were to be held by Naupliots.<sup>75</sup> Minio had a patrician *camerlengo*, his *cancellier* was a Venetian citizen formerly resident in Negroponte: of the other positions, only an interpreter is mentioned, and he was in Nauplion for a month.

Similarly, it is conventional to write that each city of the *stato da mar* had a council of Venetian citizens who consulted with the governor, and that a governor could not take military action without the support of the council.<sup>76</sup> Records suggest that the Nauplion council was generally an ad hoc arrangement. A Nauplion council is mentioned in the reversal of 1446, and in the commission of 1471, while a *relatio* of 1525 said there was no council and it would be useful to have one.<sup>77</sup> Presumably a council met to formulate the petitions to the Signoria of 1445, 1451, 1452, and 1485. Minio says nothing about a council as such, until he mentions the *università*:

The *università* has asked me to write Your Signoria on their behalf to ask that you please send here the hull of a medium-sized galley with its rigging. They offer to arm it in case of need, without cost to you.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup>ASV Senato Secreta R. 29, f. 91v.

<sup>75</sup>These offices are: the governor, town treasurer, archivist, accountant, interpreter, castellan, doctor, chaplain, port authority, 2 officers of the peace, veteran, council guard, (6) mounted guards for the governor, and the man responsible for the Nauplion boat. These positions offered certain opportunities, as in ASV Stato Mar R. 9, f. 51v. where the Senato declared that Nauplion's *camerarius* was *not* entitled to a tenth of the loot acquired by the *stratioti* and was to return what he had taken.

<sup>76</sup>Lane (1973) 99, "Each [governor] had his council which he . . . was bound to consult." *Enciclopedia italiana* (1937) XV, 76. Thiriet (1959) 204-208, says that "la colonie" had a Council of Twelve, taken from the local Venetian patricians, but those he mentions are at Constantinople, Candia, Corfu and Negroponte.

<sup>77</sup>Sathas VI, 245.

<sup>78</sup>Letter LXXXI. At different times before the war, Nauplion had a galley in service. Chrysostomides (1995) #318. Sathas II, 429. Thiriet (1961) III, #2882.

Perhaps it was the council with whom Minio consulted, when he says he discussed the matter of the territorial boundaries with the citizens. They met in the *loggia* in the lower town – or they did the time when a group of mercenaries-turned-bandits rode up on a near-by hill to taunt Minio's efforts to arrest them.

#### POPULATION

Minio reported a population of 20,000,<sup>79</sup> in which he included the residents of Akro-Nauplion, the lower city and the suburbs, and those in the countryside from around the bay down to the southern coast of the Argolid peninsula to Thermissi and Castri.<sup>80</sup> The distribution of this population was distorted by the 300 or so Italian mercenaries and 1,500 Albanians, some *stratioti*, some not. Evidence from 1481 or so, by a contemporary Flemish traveller, seems to support Minio's numbers: "Christians hold it [Nauplion], numbered at 5-6,000 armed men. Of these, 2000 are *stradiotti*."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> In comparison, Argos, with much more territory, had a total of 400 families, probably fewer than 2000 people. A Turkish raid in 1397 had taken 14,000 people into slavery. The Venetian administration encouraged immigration, mostly Albanian, to take over vacant properties, but the area never completely recovered. Argos was taken by the Turks in 1463, just before the war began and seems to have lost population then. Thiriet (1971) III, #2865.

<sup>80</sup> Letter XXII: "sono aneme de XX mila in suso." This was in September 1480. In April 1482, Letter LXXVII, he said that his population "che al mio giudicio passa da 25 mila cussi per citadini et terrieri como etiam per Stratioti et altri Albanese." In 1525, Nicolò Justiniani gave a population of 8249, with 2761 in Nauplion and the suburbs. Two years later, in 1527, Bernardino Contarini reported the population as 12,000 – a substantial increase over two years. Vittorio Diedo's 1530 report had 9431 in the suburbs and countryside and 3868 in the *castelli*, for a total of 13,299 *anime*. By 1530, land area had decreased, and the population had increased from Ottoman encroachment and the influx of refugees from Modon and Coron. Minus the military, these population figures compare with the count of 4000 Christian households in a patriarchal census of 1575. The Venetian count in 1700 gives 3,047 households for Nauplion and Thermissi, for a population of 11,076. Panagiōtopoulos (1987) 120, 148. A report from the Ottoman attack of 1500 says that 25,000 *anime* and 8,000 men-at-arms were sheltered inside the city walls: about this I am sceptical. Sanudo (1969) II, 1054. Minio's estimates can be considered fairly accurate: *città* revenues and tax auctions were dependent on them.

<sup>81</sup> Simopoulos (1970) 333. Minio never mentions non-Venetian Europeans in Nauplion.

Most, though not all, Greeks were *villani*, a status not essentially different from what they would have had under Byzantine rule. The condition of *villani* varied in detail from territory to territory, but between the *angariae* and the various taxes imposed by the Signoria, while still producing for the landholder and feeding their families, *villani* were under enormous pressure and had been for some time, although there were fewer taxes imposed in Nauplion than in other Venetian territories<sup>82</sup> Still, Minio comments several times with concern on the poverty of the local Greeks. Canon Casola's frankly uncomplimentary remark about those he saw in Modon in 1494 may well describe these survivors of so much war and so many exactions:

Those that I saw, besides that they are Greeks – for they also belong to the Morea – are thin and ugly to look at.<sup>83</sup>

## GREEKS

There are few, if any, outright statements about relations between Greeks and Venetians in Nauplion, but sparse records from a generation earlier and two years later suggest strong tensions. In 1445, a group of Nauplion Greeks with forged credentials went to Venice with what appeared to be a resolution of the Nauplion council requesting that Greeks be allowed to hold a number of positions formerly reserved for patricians. The Senato agreed to the request. That the Senato even considered such a resolution implies that they believed Greek-Venetian relations in Nauplion to be good, or at least that they did not consider the request eccentric or a problem.<sup>84</sup> The following year, learning the resolution to be a forgery, the Senato reversed its decision. The 1445 petition that spoke of the "fioli grandi," says the

<sup>82</sup>Letter LV. The heavy Albanian presence in the Argolid may have contributed to the erosion of villeinage there. Jameson (1994) 124. Some feudal *angariae* had been dropped to encourage Albanian settlement to replace the taxpayers taken away in an Ottoman attack. Chrysostomides (1995) #207 for 27 July 1397. The wax *angaria* was removed from Nauplion in 1445 because of hardship. Sathas IV, 190.

<sup>83</sup>Casola (1907) 192.

<sup>84</sup>Senato Mar R. 2, f. 146 for 27 May 1446. An indication of discomfort between Greeks and Venetians at Nauplion is the dogal letter mentioned below when the Roman Catholic bishop caused the problem.

townspeople were "in bocha de lovi"<sup>85</sup> and that the *justicieri* were hand-in-glove with the delinquents. The petitioners asked permission to form a night watch, in which they would serve without pay, as there were no *signori di notte*.<sup>86</sup> Petitions in 1451 and 1452 give a picture of endemic corruption among administrators, of finances disappearing that should have been used for local defense, of constant unjust exactions and requirements for personal service beyond those confirmed by custom.<sup>87</sup>

In the 1450s, the anonymous Greek already mentioned recorded his experiences of wrongful imprisonment in Argos and Nauplion, and a judicial hearing before the *rettor* of Nauplion in which his testimony was falsified by the *rettor* and *consilieri*.<sup>88</sup> The petition of 1485 asks for relief from the requisitioning of houses for the Italian soldiers and the problem of men being dragooned to serve as guards at the main gate.<sup>89</sup> Minio's letters give evidence for a good deal of cooperation between Venetians and Greeks, and makes clear his personal concern for "these poor people." Again, the overwhelming impression is that there was a great deal of flexibility within any particular *città*, and a blind eye within the Venetian system to the extent to which the affairs of a particular *città* passed calmly and without complaints from local Greeks or Venetians.

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<sup>85</sup> "In the wolf's mouth."

<sup>86</sup>Sathas IV, 189-190. This becomes an even more interesting issue as the petition says these are sons from "case nuove."

<sup>87</sup> ASV Senato Mar R. 4, ff. 77-78, 120v-22v. Venice made a point of ruling the *stato da mar* – as far as possible – "by custom": petitions usually gained modest relief by citing violation of custom.

<sup>88</sup>Chōras (1998) 359.

<sup>89</sup>Sathas IV, 193. See Letter IV for the beginning of the guard issue. The gap in petitions indicates the period after the taking of Constantinople when local leaders in the Morea revolted against the Despots, then the Ottomans took possession of the Morea in several campaigns up to 1460, and then the Venetian-Ottoman war ran from 1463-1478/9. Minio's administration showed a strong tendency to a re-establishment of order and justice – allowing a period of four years until the corruption of his successor opened another period of local disturbance.

Still, it is a pity that Minio does name any Nauplion Greek other than Kakoyannis.<sup>90</sup> He must have become acquainted with the Malaksos family of priests and teachers whose best-known member, Nikolaos, was educated in Constantinople, became a well-known writer of letters and hymns, and eventually *protopapas* of Nauplion. His grandfather, Stavraki Malaksos, was apparently *protopapas* and teacher during Minio's time.<sup>91</sup>

#### CITIZENS

Few townspeople are visible in the *dispacci*, or in any other documents, but they had substantial roles in relationships with the Ottomans. Sier Ieronimo Lion, a leading citizen of Nauplion, accompanied Minio on his first venture outside the territorial boundary to meet with the *flamburar* of the Morea.<sup>92</sup> As a grand gesture to an empty Nauplion treasury, and to save Minio from embarrassment, Lion bought three silver cups for Minio to present to another *flamburar*.<sup>93</sup> Ieronimo may have been a relative of Misier Joseph Lion, Nauplion's *camerlengo*,<sup>94</sup> a Venetian patrician who, the previous summer, had written a complaint about Minio to the Captain General on behalf of a group of *fanti* who had rebelled, “fatto una risa,” against him.<sup>95</sup>

These men, other than the *fanti*, were all *cittadini* of the *comunità* of Nauplion which had non-Venetian and Greek citizens as well, but citizenship varied as to privilege and

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<sup>90</sup> Letter LXXXIX. Lamprynides, 86-87, gives some information about Nauplion writers for the next century, though not for this period.

<sup>91</sup> Petrēs, *passim*.

<sup>92</sup> Letter V.

<sup>93</sup> Letter XXXII.

<sup>94</sup> The position of *camerlengo* had been traditionally given to a Nauplion citizen, but an act of 1442 provided for election by the Great Council of a noble to that position: this was part of a process in which new jobs were created for hard-pressed Venetian patricians, as discussed in Queller (1986) 43. The commission to Francesco Bragadin gives several examples of jobs specified for patricians, and rates of pay. Sathas I, 283-307.

<sup>95</sup> Letters VI and XXXIII. Minio's own usage in his letters distinguishes between Venetian patricians, who may be citizens of Nauplion, by the title (then becoming old-fashioned) of *misier*, while he calls non-patrician citizens of Venice and Nauplion *sier*.

duration. Citizenship might be awarded for outstanding military or economic services--as to Ianulli Calavro and his sons, or for prestige purposes—for seven or twenty-five years or for life. Citizens of the *comunità* are identified in Signorial documents as *fideles*, e.g.: “fidelissimos nostros Bocholi et Busichii capita stratiorum nostrorum,” “our most loyal Bocholi and Busichi, *capi* of our *stratioti*.”<sup>96</sup>

## WOMEN

If there are few townspeople visible, there are even fewer women. Minio mentions women three times in 90 *dispacci* – a man who brings him a message is married to a woman in Nauplion; his *cancellier* lost a wife and two daughters at the capture of Negroponte, and has three daughters in Nauplion who need dowries; the Albanians' wives aid and abet their misbehaviour.<sup>97</sup> None of these have names. Of named women, there are perhaps four in the whole century. A few years earlier, Marie Buriano was defrauded by the *rettor* in a business investment.<sup>98</sup> In 1406, Maria, wife of the late Johannes de Cavaza, owned her own house and vineyard, and exported linen and wool. Her sister-in-law was Magdalena de Finctis.<sup>99</sup> Anna Malaksou's husband was *protopapas* and her grandson was a famous writer.<sup>100</sup>

Like the *cancellier's* wife and daughters there are other unnamed, women. A *villane* was left 100 ducats jointly with her young man, his *villano*, so they could marry.<sup>101</sup> A *castellan* reported the peculations of the *bailo* with *contestabile* Piero da Vicenza – whose wife was the *bailo's* *schiaiva*.<sup>102</sup> Further, the *bailo* himself had married a *grecha*, against the

<sup>96</sup>Ashtor (1975-76) 146, 153-156, says that “fidelis” was “pari a quello di un cittadino (non veneziano) di una colonia veneziana, lo status detto ‘burgensis.’”

<sup>97</sup>Letters XLI and XXVII. He does mention “families” in XXXVI, which include the bandits' wives.

<sup>98</sup>ASV Senato Mar R. 11, f 121.

<sup>99</sup>Wright (2000b) 174.

<sup>100</sup>Petrēs, 349.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>ASV Archivio Capi X, Lettere di rettori, b 294. Letter of Stephano Michiel, April 1531. unfoliated.

rules of his position.<sup>103</sup> There must have been numerous Venetian officials with complicated personal lives: Francesco Bragadin supported a *bastardela* someone left in Methone. An indirect mention of women, and a suggestion of how difficult life in Nauplion had become, is seen in a petition of 1516 in which Naupliots ask the Senato's permission to take certain monies to help families so impoverished that they are abandoning infants ("li poveri et infelici puti de la pietà") in the hopes of their being fed.<sup>104</sup>

## RELIGION

Although Minio mentions borrowing money from the procurator of the Bishop of Nauplion, there was no Roman Catholic bishop on location.<sup>105</sup> The Signoria had once issued a ruling requiring clergy to live in the see to which they had been appointed, though there is no evidence that this had any effect.<sup>106</sup> In a report on conditions in the *stato da mar* in 1500, a syndic wrote:

Bishops will not stay there, and there has been no christening for three years. There are only the Greek bishops, and agents of the bishops, and none of ours. This is also so in the Morea, especially at Nauplion where no bishop lives, etc.<sup>107</sup>

Nauplion had two different Roman Catholic bishops *in absentia* during Minio's term, neither of whom he mentions, and neither of whom actually lived in the see.<sup>108</sup> The bishops held the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Even worse, the *bailo* had one of his sons on the *ballestrieri* payroll, and his Greek nephew on another. *Stato da mar* officials were not to marry in their territory during their assignment, or for one year after. ASV Commissioni Provveditori, b 3/52: Commissione à Francesco Bragadin.

<sup>104</sup> Sathas IV, 215.

<sup>105</sup> This suggests a long-term absence of patrician or wealthy Venetian women in Nauplion whose infants might require a Roman Catholic christening.

<sup>106</sup> Thiriet (1959b) II, #1984, for 1425.

<sup>107</sup> *Syndic*: government inspector. Sanudo III, 819: "Item, li vescovi non stanno lì, no si pol far cresma za anni tre; sono *solum* episcopi greci et vicharij di vescovi, e non sufraganei; et cussi *etiam* è in la Morea, *maxime* a Napoli, no vi è il vescovo etc."

<sup>108</sup> These were Gulielmus Militis (an abbot from Chioggia, d.1482), and his successor,

largest fief, that of Thermissi with the salt pans, and rejoiced in a large income from the salt trade – 6,000 ducats a year, six times the governor's budget and nearly half the income of the *terra*. Their castle, a "fortezza inexpugnabile," had a small military guard at Nauplion's expense.<sup>109</sup> Episcopal interests in Nauplion were protected by procurators, one of whom, Ianulli Calavro, lent Minio money to buy grain in an early crisis.<sup>110</sup> Under Niccolò Acciaiuoli's 1394 will, the bishop was to administer the hospital for the poor for which he left an endowment, but Minio does not mention this, nor does he mention the convent of Greek nuns, for which Acciaiuoli also left money, who were apparently to carry out nursing duties.<sup>111</sup>

As for the "episcopi greci": Minio wrote that an unnamed Orthodox bishop (was he Protopapas Stavradi Malaksos?)<sup>112</sup> recommended "piu antiqui et intelligenti" residents whose testimony Minio needed along with that of "nostri preti," which suggests that there were Latin priests in Nauplion, probably Franciscans.<sup>113</sup> Franciscans maintained a presence in all the *stato da mar* territories and caused some degree of concern because of what the Signoria considered their excessive enthusiasm for spiritual matters.<sup>114</sup> Orthodox clergy were appointed by the *rettor*, after consultation with influential Greeks.<sup>115</sup> An important Orthodox

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Agustino de Matzmarico, O.S.B. Eubel (1914) II, 94. Fedalto (1976) II, 45-46.

<sup>109</sup>Letter III.

<sup>110</sup>Letter X. Presumably, the Signoria repaid Calavro's loan, if slowly.

<sup>111</sup>Chrysostomides (1995) 314, from the Acciaiuoli will.

<sup>112</sup>Petrēs, 249. Venetians understood *protopapas* ("first priest") as the equivalent of *vescovo*. Schreiner (1975) I, #47 reports the appointment of Papa Kyr Demetrios Pigasi as bishop in 1460: it was a long-lived family, so he might have been the one Minio mentions.

<sup>113</sup>Letter XXIII. It is not clear which cities had resident Orthodox bishops at which time. Thiriet (1959) 289-291, 404-405, has a brief general discussion of Greek clergy in the *stato da mar*. In 1500, admittedly in the extreme circumstance of a siege, Orthodox and Latin priests at Nauplion concelebrated mass. Sanudo (1969) III, 937.

<sup>114</sup>The Foscari letter of 7 April 1438 (n.106) refers to *fraticelli*. Chōras (1975) 255. Ploumides (1971) #38 for 1491 and #39 for 1493 mentions four Franciscans of *Santa Maria vallis viridis*, a Franciscan community from Venice, and tells the *provveditor* of Nauplion to make use of their services in order to save the expense of a priest.

<sup>115</sup>Schreiner (1979) I, #31, #34, #47.

monastery, the Agia Moni, stood on a hillside east of the town. In 1438, Sigismondo Nani, a Roman Catholic bishop who did live in Nauplion and wanted the Moni as part of his fief, caused a difficult incident: Doge Francesco Foscari wrote a letter guaranteeing its possession to the Orthodox.<sup>116</sup>

## FIEFS

When Venice acquired Nauplion in 1388, all land came under Venetian control and was thereafter administered in a variety of ways: rents, time-limited grants, or fiefs.<sup>117</sup> Fiefs were a continuation of the Byzantine *pronoia* system of landholding, a device by which large areas of land away from the city could be administered and kept in production. The military responsibility of fief holders, *feudatarii*, is unclear, although what is clear is that there was to be no autonomous action. Minio had to send down soldiers to defend fiefs under threat, although in the early sixteenth century we see increasing independence among Greek and Italian fiefholders who led private troops and often ignored the administration. Fiefs included villages, and had walls or towers into which villagers – the *villani* or *terrieri* of the *dispacci* – might come for safety.<sup>118</sup> With the exception of the mills at Kiveri,<sup>119</sup> all the fiefs

<sup>116</sup> Chōras (1975) 253-255 and Pl. 17 for a transcription and photograph of the document. He salvaged Latin feelings by reaffirming the right of clergy to be tried in clerical courts, The church of the Agia Moni dates from 1149. It is now a convent of Zōodochos Pēgē. A similar action was taken in Negroponte in 1282. Thiriet (1959) 289. The right of clerical courts was earlier confirmed for the Bishop of Argos and Nauplion in 1396. Chrysostomides (1995) #182.

<sup>117</sup> Venice followed the feudal code of the *Assizes of Romania* and instructed *rettori* to settle disputes over fiefs in accord with the “statuti de la Morea.” As late as 1452, Venice was still trying to clarify various local feudal traditions. Thiriet (1961) III, #2851 for 27 May 1451, #2888 for 13 May 1452, #2902 for 9 November 1452.

<sup>118</sup> Letter III. Under the Palaiologoi, the Greek equivalent of villeins were known as *paroikoi*. Laiou (1977) 35, 52-53. In the Greek settlement pattern, peasants have always gathered in villages for community and defense, and walk out to farm. The lands held by individuals in any one village are split into small tracts over the territory, so that the advantages and disadvantages of land conditions are shared.

<sup>119</sup> Letter LXXVII. Kiveri, called *Civier* in the *dispacci*, is the present Myloi across the bay: present Kiveri is a short distance to the south of Myloi.

mentioned were south of Nauplion in the primary area for growing grain and grazing. Sier Francesco Alberto held a fief down at Castri. The bishop of Nauplion had a fief at Thermissi. During Minio's term, a Greek related to the imperial family, Theodoro Palaiologos, was assigned a fief at Castri as *provision* for his services as *capo*, a fief that he and his descendants ruled with little regard for Venetian constraints.<sup>120</sup> As reward for his services at the time of the Ottoman assault in 1500, Janulli Kalavro was given a fief to be held by his sons and their male heirs in perpetuity.<sup>121</sup>

There were constant encroachments on fiefs from Ottoman subjects from the mountains – Arachnaion, Agionori, over toward Epidauros, or from Ktenias – who occasionally brought their flocks down to graze, “per modo che uno Gentilhomio non puol star.”<sup>122</sup> Transhumance had long been a contentious issue. A generation before, the *rettori* of Nauplion had unsuccessfully tried to collect grazing fees, *lo herbadigo*, from the Despot's people.<sup>123</sup> In addition to land grabs and illegal grazing, pirate raids constantly threatened merchant stores and boats. Damian Agrimi, *patron* of a boat in port at Castri, lost a load of cheese and other merchandise to pirates who took Zorzi da Londa's boat in the same raid.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to the fief-holders, other land was assigned to *stratioti* in lieu of salary. The primary reason for the great concern over the territories of Thermissi, Castri, Iria and Kandia – a theme that occurs repeatedly in the *dispacci* – is because these areas contained pasturage for the horses because of which the *stratioti* were hired, as well as land for growing grain staples, and thus were essential both for defense and for revenues.

<sup>120</sup>Sathas VI, 244-254, 246-247; 254. They seemed to have an alliance with the descendants of Francesco Alberto. Sanudo III, 431.

<sup>121</sup>Sathas IV, 194.

<sup>122</sup>Sathas VI, 247.

<sup>123</sup>Thiriet (1961) III, #2866.

<sup>124</sup>Letter LXXXV. A *patron* was part-investor in merchandise who took the sailing risk. Damian Agrimi ("wild goat") and Zorzi da Londa may have been *provisionati* with land grants. Jameson et al., 126, says incorrectly that there is no mention of cheese export under the Venetians. For an informative description, see Casola (1907) 203; about cheese export from Crete, Jacoby (1999).

## TRADE

Minio gives little attention to Nauplion's role in the Venetian merchant enterprise though, it appears from his letters that considerable trade was conducted – mostly in the Morea, mostly in small amounts – by Nauplion Greeks, fief-holders, and *stratioti*. Sier Rinaldo Mezola traded at Thebes, a week's journey by land each way: Thebes was a major producer of silk, and silk was one of Nauplion's exports. Other Naupliots, Venetians and Greeks alike, traded at Ragusa, Albania, Constantinople, Negroponte and Chios.<sup>125</sup> Since the chrysobull of 1082 and probably long before, Nauplion had been a collection point and port of export for goods from all across the Morea and the mainland, including cotton, raw silk, currants, flax, resin, carob pods, and dyes such as kermes and valona.<sup>126</sup> Locally, the territory produced wax, cotton, salt, cheese, grain, honey, wine and raisins. As will be seen in Minio's letters, grain was sometimes exported from Nauplion in the face of famine, when it could not be afforded locally. Salt production (mostly from Thermissi, though small amounts came from Drepanon to the south, and the edge of the bay near town) was a major source of income for Nauplion's *camera*, producing about 12,000 hyperpers, or 2400 ducats a year; most of it was sold in the Morea.<sup>127</sup> Vines for export wine were grown extensively around Nauplion, to the detriment of basic food crops: these would have been the main plantings along the *strada santa*

<sup>125</sup>Krekić (1961) #s 548, 712, 825, 1335, 1425. Members of the Catello family (see below) exported Nauplion cheese to Ragusa. Rinaldo Mezola's family must have moved to Nauplion when Athens passed into Ottoman hands in 1464. A "Renaldo Mezola," probably his grandfather, was ambassador to Venice for the Duke of Athens in 1425. Sathas I, 178-9. Marco Salamon was improperly involved with, among other things, trade to Albania. ASV Senato Mar, R. 11, f. 172; f. 173 mentions a Greek captain from Nauplion.

<sup>126</sup>Jameson (1994) 125, says that the kermes-oak dye exported from Nauplion did not come from there. Kermes oak grows now in a few deep, well-watered valleys near the Agia Moni and Moni Karakalas: dye may have been collected locally in small amounts.

<sup>127</sup>Nauplion exported 900 kilograms of salt in 1456. A petition from Nauplion in 1451 called Thermissi "le più notabilie saline che sia in tuto Levante" and "un pozo d'oro." ASV Senato Mar R. 1, f. 78. Hocquet (1979) I, 79, 163.

*Veneranda* toward Argos.<sup>128</sup> Wine and oil were also acquired elsewhere and brought to Nauplion for export.<sup>129</sup> From Nauplion, goods were usually shipped to Modon on small boats – a journey always vulnerable to pirates – for loading on boats returning to Venice from the Levant: a number of Minio's letters to the Captain General detail such pirate attacks.<sup>130</sup>

### STRATIOTI

The *stratioti* who occupy so much space in the *dispacchi* were Albanian and Greek bands, organized primarily in family groups, hired as needed to fight Venetian and then European wars. The Venetians continued the Byzantine system by which they were granted land for their support, supplemented by loot. Sanudo gives the contemporary Venetian view of *stratioti*, and one that makes explicit just what Minio had to deal with:

These *stratioti* are Turks, Greeks, and Albanians living in the Morea, men of great spirit, ready to put themselves in every danger. They ride their horses with great swiftness, cutting down and laying everything to waste. They are by nature rapacious and much given to looting and to the deaths of men, against whom they use great cruelty. They carry shield, sword and lance with a pennant at the tip of the lance, and an iron mattock at their side. Few wear a cuirass, and then only their coats of bombazine sewn in their fashion. Their horses are large, good workers, and fast on the hoof, and always carry the head high. They eat grain and straw. These people are much experienced in war and their city wall is the sword and the lance.

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<sup>128</sup>The coast road leading to the Nauplion gate. The will of Johannes Caveza cited above refers to his vines. ASV Not. Test. b. 24/2. Wright (2000) 176. “[V]ineyards need considerable care and labor in particular seasons, but virtually no capital. A piece of land can be made productive easily, with as little as a spade. Even a poor man can afford to have a small plot of vineyard.” Laiou (1977) 175.

<sup>129</sup>Sathas VI, 245; III, #854. Wood: Letter LXII. Oil, wine: Letter XLVII. See also Jameson (1994) 125.

<sup>130</sup>The chronicle of Stefano Magno (1472-1499) in Sathas VI, 236: “uno grippo da Napoli de Romania con marchandanti, danari et sede a Modon, per montar in sopra le galie venivano da Baruto per condur a Venetia, quello per una fusta de Turchi fu preso et batudo a fondo; questo se have adi 15 Marzo 1480.”

They mostly live in houses<sup>131</sup> in the country and have no fear of the Turks. Their *capi* demanded one ducat per head for the dead, according to custom.<sup>132</sup>

After Minio returned to Venice, he was sent to the Ferrara war as *provveditor* over the *stratioti* – many of them taken from Nauplion – because of his successful experience in dealing with them through several crises and personal acquaintance with many. Reports of *stratioti* in France during the 100-years war suggest possibilities that some returned home with foreign wives, adding more elements of complication to the mix of classes and nationalities in Nauplion.<sup>133</sup>

#### WAR AND PEACE

Between 1463 and 1478, Venice and the Ottomans had fought a destructive and expensive war across the Morea, the Balkans and the islands. The war was formally concluded in January 1478/79 with a treaty which, among other things, essentially returned boundaries in the Morea to what they had been at the outbreak of war. The question of just where these

<sup>131</sup>The houses were impermanent shelters made of mud and brushwood or reeds, usually referred to in Venetian documents as *calive*, from Gk *καλύβα* – hut, or *remussiati*, "ramos, ramesalli" – twigs. Thiriet, *Régestes* III, #2463. Sathas VI, 249; VIII, 353. Sanuto III, 996. See the area on the Camoccio map called *case di Albanesi*. Such houses can still be seen in the marshes near Ravenna.

<sup>132</sup>Sanudo (2001) II, 420, 419, on either side of the statement that Minio "havia praticà con stratioti," Sanudo writes: "Questi stratioti sonno gente Turchi, Greci et Albanesi, habitano sopra la Morea, homeni de grandi animo, preparadi a pondersi in ogni pericolo; vanno corendo con i lhoro cavali molto velocemente, scorsizando e vastando tutto; sonno di natura rapaci et molto apti a la preda et a la morte d'i homeni, contra i qual usano gran crudeltà; portano scudo, spada e lanza con una bandiruola in zima di la lanza, et una mazocha di ferro al lai. Pochi portano panciera, ma solamente quelle sue casache di bombaso a lhoro modo cusite. Li cavalli sonno grandi, apti a la fatica et veloci nel corer, e sempre portano la testa alta, manzano biava et paia. Questi sonno molto exercitati nel guerizar . . . e le lhoro cità murate è la spada e la lanza. Et habitano assa' di lhoro in case a la campagna, et non temeno Turchi. . . Questi capi . . . dimandono . . . deli morti ducati uno per testa, iusta il suo consueto."

Alessandra Sambo, archivist at the Archivio di Stato has published a guide to the materials on *stratioti* in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia: "Fonti per la storia militare della Repubblica di Venezia," *Cheiron: materiali e strumenti di aggiornamento storigrafico* 12 (1995) 187-204.

<sup>133</sup>Lamprynides (1950) 84.

boundaries were at dispute, as Mehmed had ordered a cadaster in the early 1460s and, by accident and by deliberate misinformation, some Venetian properties were listed under Ottoman control.<sup>134</sup> Further, during the uncertainties after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and then the war, a number of landholders put their castles and properties into Venetian hands. It was necessary to sort out these disagreements, and to have a clear mutual understanding of territorial boundaries. While it has long been known that the Ottomans settled such issues by means of boundary commissions, it is only in the *dispacci* that the actual proceedings of these commissions are seen.<sup>135</sup> Minio reports a series of such negotiations and gives a clear and unique view of diplomatic relations and lines of authority, particularly in Letters XXII and LXXVII.

Additionally, Minio's letters are uniquely valuable in that they indicate the remarkable freedom with which a *provveditor* was allowed to respond to circumstances, even to the extent of corresponding with the Sultan without going through formal diplomatic channels, and show Minio working with the *flamburar*, the Ottoman governor of the Morea, to settle the Kladas revolt and deal with banditry.<sup>136</sup>

#### RESISTANCE, REBELLION AND RUIN

In October 1480, Korkondeilos Kladas, a noted *capo* of *stratioti* and prominent Moreote, led a band of Greek and Albanian *stratioti* and supporters out of Coron on a moonlit night to attack Ottoman landholders in the Mani – in total violation of the peace treaty. Then in December, Thodoro Bua led a similar band out of Nauplion, attacking Ottomans at Argos and joining Kladas in the south.<sup>137</sup> Local Venetian and Ottoman authorities cooperated to

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<sup>134</sup> For example, despite an earlier treaty with the Venetians, the Despot Demetrios laid claim to the Argolid peninsula with Thermissi and Castri, all of which were included when his territories were surrendered to Mehmed in 1460.

<sup>135</sup> For the boundary negotiations, see Wright (2004) 197-212.

<sup>136</sup> The Sultan also wrote Minio directly, as he did for the boundary commission. See Appendix II.

<sup>137</sup> In both cases, the precipitating event was public humiliation. The anger of Achilles is a

quell the revolt, which soon spun off large groups of bandits. By April 1481, Kladas had fled to Italy and the remaining rebels were suing for peace. Despite declarations on the part of both Venetians and Turks that the rebels were “wanted dead or alive,” the *flamburar* of the Morea, first, and then Minio were conscious that the vast number of Kladas-Bua supporters across the Morea, not to mention their wide-spread and complex family connections, made formal retribution extremely problematic. The *dispacci* relate striking ingenuity on the part of the *flamburar* who took the initiative in working out a settlement through Moslem relatives of the rebels and who persuaded Minio to take the risk of committing Venice to an agreement with his plan.<sup>138</sup>

The rebel Kladioti ceased to be a problem in the *dispacci*, but the bandit Kladioti remained at large, supported by Moreote Greeks, Albanians and Turks who shared their profits and gave them refuge. If the Venetians managed to block the bandits’ access to Venetian territory, they roamed at large in the Morea “con deturbation de la pace.” Ottoman attempts at control brought more Ottoman military into the Morea and made Venetian hold more tenuous.<sup>139</sup>

It was fear of these bandits, and reasonable concern for what they might do if in their large numbers they decided to take over individual fortresses, that prompted Beyazid to direct Ahmed Bey to destroy several castles, including the large castle on the hill at Argos. Minio argued that destruction of the fortifications would give the bandits a signal that there was nothing in Ottoman territory to oppose them. Apparently Minio’s view was passed on to Beyazid, and even accepted, as in the last *dispaccio* he reported that the new *flamburar*, Suleiman Bey, had received “another order that he should not destroy Argos (“un altro

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perpetual recurring fact of Greek history.

<sup>138</sup> Among other things, the *dispacci* show the *flamburar* and Minio working with the rebels’ families through tribal traditions which survive today in Mani and Albania.

<sup>139</sup> Thiriet (1961) #2962 reflects concern in 1454 about bandits (the term described those who were “banned” for one reason or another) banding together in the mountains and raiding outlying homesteads. Here a general amnesty was offered in exchange for service as oarsmen or soldiers.

comandamento che non dovesse far ruinar Argos”), but look into the problem of the bandits again. Suleiman and Minio worked out an agreement to identify and deal with the bandits. Because it was so difficult distinguishing “i boni da i cattivi,” every Greek or Albanian subject of the Signoria traveling in the Morea would carry a passport signed by the *provveditor* (“lettera aperta”) for identification. Further provisions were made to transport bandits and their families to an island, but Suleiman speculated that as the Signoria took away more and more *stratioti* for the wars in Cyprus and Friuli and Ferrara, through the length of time they would be away and the normal processes of attrition, “il paese possa viver in pace et tranquillità”.<sup>140</sup>

This was not so. Just over a year later, Giovanni Dario, sick, aggravated, and without money, was at Beyazid’s court at Adrianople.<sup>141</sup> He reported a letter from the *flamburar* of the Morea complaining:

about the many excesses perpetrated in the Morea by many *stratioti* and other subjects of Your Excellency, both from Nauplion and from your other *terre* in the Morea. He sent me a list in which 56 incidents are annotated in order, including the insult and rebellion made by Kladas and other *stratioti* from Nauplion in the Manē.<sup>142</sup>

The fact that the letter brought up past events suggests that the Ottomans had seen, and continued to expect, a cessation of hostilities after the Kladioti were pardoned. They were at their wits’ end about how to handle the problem, and wanted to make the solution a Venetian responsibility, even while conceding that the Signoria was not to blame. The *flamburar* asked for 4,000 ducats compensation in damages, not a large amount at all when it had been

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<sup>140</sup>Letter XC.

<sup>141</sup>Dario (1996) #29a: “oltre de zio leta mia et le condicion del corpo valitudinario rechiede mior luogo de questo: per che me trovasse uno di miei accidenti usati menandria senza alchuna remission: no li siando qui ne medego ne medesine ne alchum remedio si corporal como spiritual. et che muor in questi luogi mor como un can.”

<sup>142</sup>Dario (1996) #21a: “de molte excessi perpetradi in la morea da molti *stratioti* et altri subditi de la Ex. V.ra: si da Napoli: como da le altre terre v.re de la morea et mandame un libretto . . . in li qualli sono tuti anotadi per ordinem .56. excessi et fra li altri etiam linsulto et rebellion fata per el clada et achuni *stratioti* de Napoli in el brazo de Maine.”

earlier claimed that one Kladioti effort had gained 60,000. The *paşas* said that Petro Busichi, so recently complimented and rewarded by Venice for his actions at Ferrara, was now *capo* of the brigands and had become rich in the business, protected by the *rettor* and Naupliots who took their own profits.<sup>143</sup> Dario had a slave from Beyazid and a *cadi* on his back (“a le spalle”) demanding an immediate response, and he temporized with remarks about the constant plague of piracy by Ottoman subjects. The letter continues:

The former *flamburar* of the Morea had asked and prevailed on His Magnificence Miser Bertuchio [*sic*] Minio who was *provveditor* of Nauplion, to pardon them and take them back into favor.<sup>144</sup>

The Ottomans wanted a return to the standards Minio had set for discipline and diplomacy: Minio had categorically refused to tolerate any sale of loot within the *terra* or to permit bandits to take refuge there: here his successor, Pietro Vitturi, was himself known to be profiting from banditry.<sup>145</sup> Two days later, Dario had a conference with Daut Paşa, the vizier, and several Ottoman officials, about the problem in the Morea, “the peace-loving land completely devastated by these contemptible people.”

They know well that Your Signoria has no blame for this. But your *rettori* and citizens divide the spoils, and have in their houses the robes, the

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<sup>143</sup>At the time of the Ferrara draft, Petro Busichi had led the opposition to Minio. He was pardoned of crimes and murders by the Senato in October 1482 so he could take *stratioti* to Ferrara. Five hundred and forty-men enrolled in his company, which suggests the influence he could wield. In 1473, when originally made a *provisionato* and given a house, land, and 50 ducats a year for his service during the war, he led twenty-five. He went to Venice in 1474 with a petition. The account of this identifies him as “Piero Busichio el qual fuzido del pavion del Bassa, al qual l'era carissimo” and who had saved the Captain General from ambush: “hasse porta virilmente.” Sathas VII, #XXV for 13 September 1474. In ASV Senato Mar R. 11, f 172r for 7 July 1482, he is referred to as “nostro D. Petro Busichi Equiti.”

<sup>144</sup>Dario (1996) #21a: “El flamborar passado de la morea . . . ha pregado et constretto la M.cia de misser bertuchio minio che fu provedador a Napoli che li perdonasse: et che li tollesse in gracia.”

<sup>145</sup>Letter LXXI. Bragadin’s commission, written six months later, specified that he could not receive or buy from, or sell to, or make agreement with corsairs from land or sea.

turbans, the swords, and other possessions of our assassinated Turks . . . all these *stratioti* were bound together by blood and alliances, and if you kill one of them, the rest would band together and come against you in a mass and commit a thousand evils, and then return to their strongholds in the mountains.<sup>146</sup>

Thus Dario described one of the main themes of the next three hundred and fifty years of Greek and Turkish relationships, and southern European history: the outlaws of “the mountain” against the authorities of the towns.<sup>147</sup> Juxtaposing what he writes with Minio’s earlier report about the bandits selling stolen goods, it is apparent that the mountain outlaws could not have persisted without the markets provided by the towns, and the assistance of their relatives living in those towns, the same phenomenon on a smaller scale as the piracy mentioned earlier. Two weeks later, on 16 October, Dario put a very human face on the violence: the pašas had brought Ciri Paša to talk to him: *stratioti* from Nauplion had beaten him and robbed him of 100 ducats, robes, silk, and other goods, leaving him unable ever to walk.<sup>148</sup>

The Signoria wrote immediately to Beyazid, and Dario, that a galley had been sent to Nauplion to remove Pietro Vitturi, who would be returned to Venice, imprisoned, and punished further.<sup>149</sup> A new *provveditor* wrote Dario that matters had been settled. A *schiaivo* was sent to investigate, and the *pašas* and *flamburar* of the Morea were satisfied with his report. Still, violence continued: the main instigator was Greek, a Mavromati who attacked Ottomans and Venetians alike. Dario encouraged the Ottomans to go after and punish any bandits on their land, but – and he was well-aware of the possibilities for trouble here – it would be an act of extreme violence (“un brutissimo atto”) for Venetians to go onto Ottoman territory to do so.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup>Dario (1996) #27a.

<sup>147</sup>Minio’s *dispacci* provide a detailed portrait of the social circumstances leading to banditry and the process by which it arises.

<sup>148</sup>Dario (1996) #29a. *Rettor*: Pietro Vitturi q. Rinieri, elected in April 1483. Dario says in his letter of 2 November 1484 that he has heard from the new *provveditor* of Nauplion.

<sup>149</sup>ASV Senato Secreti R. 32, f. 103v-104.

<sup>150</sup>Dario (1996) #30a for 2 November 1484; # 36a for 2 February 1484/85. Calo, as editor of

This sequence of Nauplion banditry is related to emphasize, as does Minio's agreement with the *flamburar*, that Ottoman and Venetian officials made their agreements and defined their boundaries at a level that often had little to do with the interests and boundaries of the governed. The rapidity with which Nauplion citizens and Piero Vitturi acquiesced in violations and participated in the spoils of the bandits also illustrates the real significance an individual *provveditor* could make in the culture of a *città* and yet how fragile were the results that any *provveditor* could hope to achieve.

#### REPUTATION

Minio's actions as *provveditor* were complimented again and again in his absence. Mention has already been made of Giovanni Dario quoting the Ottoman court as asking for a return to the standards Minio had set. A petition from the citizens of Nauplion in 1506 reminds the Senato of the security Minio had been able to secure for the city from the *flamburar* of the Morea.<sup>151</sup> In Letters XXIX and XXX Minio writes about having to use forced labor:

I have had to commandeer all the *grippi* of the *terra*, and with them all the *cittadini*, *popolari*, *stratioti* and *soldati*, and myself in person with them, to transport brushwood with all the pack animals of the *terra* and on the horses of the *stratioti* to burn limestone for lime. This *angaria* is a serious matter for this poor *terra*, and I certainly have compassion for them, but necessity made me do it.

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Dario's *dispacci*, identifies the new *provveditor* as Vitturi, but Vitturi had been in Nauplion for more than a year and Dario had used his name in other letters. In fact, the immediate cessation of trouble from the Nauplion *stratioti* argues for there being another *provveditor*. According to Hopf, Vitturi's successor was Luigi (Alvise) Loredan q. Paolo. However, the problems continued. The Venetian-Ottoman Treaty of 1517 provides for each side to be able to punish offenders from the other side. Theunissen (1998) #17. At the same time, an act from the Senato of 1517 deals with the murder of bandit Pasqual Gholemi, and a 101-year safe-conduct for another bandit, Paulo Caratola. Sathas VIII, 119 and ASV Senato Mar R. 19, f. 1.

<sup>151</sup> Sathas IV, 197.

The Greeks did not forget Minio's compassion, or pragmatism. A history published in 1631 muddles together various episodes between 1473 and 1525, but it contains the provocative lines:

At that time, the governor of the place, that is, the Venetian, with all the people of Nauplion, did all the building, and built the walls around, just as they appear today . . . and the governor of the place, the Venetian, gave benefits and many gifts to the Christians who came from outside and built in Nauplion, and gave this gift.<sup>152</sup>

That Minio alone of all Venetian *rettori* of Nauplion was remembered by the Greeks, that the Senato a generation later would refer to his work in Nauplion as the standard, that even the Ottomans cited his work to Giovanni Dario as a model, demonstrate that Minio, for all his frustration and aching and fatigue, was in his time recognized by senators and subjects alike as one who gave benefits and gifts, *εὐεργεσίας καὶ χαρίσματα*, to Nauplion.

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<sup>152</sup>(Pseudo-)Dorotheos of Monemvasia, in Βιβλίον Ἱστορικόν, in Hopf (1873) 239:  
Τότε ὁ Ἄφεντής τοῦ τόπου, ἤγουν ὁ Βενετζιάνος μετὸν λαὸν ὅλον τοῦ Ἀναπλίου, ἔκαμε πᾶσαν οἰκονομίαν, καὶ ἔκτισαν τριγύρου τὰ τεῖχη, καθὼς φαίνονται ἕως τὴν σήμερον . . . καὶ ὁ Ἄφεντής τοῦ τόπου ὁ Βενετζιάνος ἔδωκεν εὐεργεσίας καὶ χαρίσματα πολλὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ὅπου ἤρχονταν ἀπὸ ἕξω καὶ ἑκατοικοῦσαν μέσα εἰς τὸ Ἀνάπλι καὶ ἔδωκε καὶ ταύτην τὴν χάριν.