

THE IMPLICATION OF VENICE IN THE CRUCIAL EVENT AS A FACTOR OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: The globalization is an ancient concept than is perceived by collective mentality today. Usually it is considered appropriate that a neologism or, at least, as a process affecting the socio-economic life of the XXI century. But we believe that any hegemonic approach can be framed within the concept of globalization. Thus, any leader who tried to become absolute through the delivery of an empire has imprinted a dose of globalization in the world we know today. As a paradigm, the spread of Christianity was facilitated by imperialist intervention: Alexander with his State led by India the Greek language and the the Romans had elevated a complex logistics system consisting in roads, bridges and aqueducts. This is only a step of the world but the humanity of today is the product of other components. Eventually, the globalization requires a phenomenon of the transformation of the world into a unit. This would be the noema or the meaning of our planet's inhabitants. So, the comprehension of the globalization is favored by the historical spectrum and we shall join an element of this puzzle. He refers to the role of globalization of the Middle Ages conducted by Italian maritime Republics, in general, and Venice, in particular. By his naval and pecuniary vocation manifested through large commercial shipments that took her to the ends of the known earth of his time and, especially, through his direct involvement in the Fourth Crusade, Venice managed to modify and unify mentalities, Venice managed to globalizate the world after the twelfth century.

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Especially with the coming of the new Millennium, has been reinterpreted the relevance of the Crusades, which have been repositioned on top of a medieval phenomenon. The decisive element consists in the fact that these military-religious expeditions occasioned the direct touch of the most important Medieval civilizations, western, greek and islamic. Apart from „the

military conflicts, which have become essential for interpreting the phenomenon Crusader, crucial was the mutual conditioning of these cultures”¹.

The Crusades brought on sea and on land in the East all Western size and spirit. The two different Worlds met fully in their similarities and distinctions. The culmination of this work was the transformation of the Mediterranean Sea into a *Italian lake* by the municipalities of the Roman peninsula. The Crusades have suggested a new approach to geo-politics which will endure until the late fifteenth century and the new *modus vivendi* between East and West will be a vital issue for the Byzantine Empire and, implicitly, to the entire world of that period. This meeting of this distinct civilizations is a clear form of globalization. And between different worlds, Venice was an element of homogeneity. Unification received by the intercession of the Venetians was done by two pillars: the transport activities of Western armies and intense involvement in the trade.

The Venetian documents issued especially after the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, had been given a careful attention to the Crusades, in the context of the relationship between their country and the Byzantine Empire, by attempting to be justifying for the actions of the Venetian fleet. But probably this epochal achievement is a form of forced globalization. We are trying to know the humans next to us until we realize that it would be appropriate to submitted. But already we anticipate.

As a paradigm of resistance to globalization, we expose the reserved behavior of the Byzantine monarch, Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118), against the Crusaders. The crusaders are Latin barbarians, and the Venetians are not excluded, as they are named in the pages of Anna Comnen: <<This is the nature of this Barbarians: mouth wide open in front of money and gifts but when they must do the thing for which is paid they do not want to hear>>². But we are in front of an interesting interpretation. Which is the better globalization? The old one made through the Byzantine Empire, which leveled many civilizations and implemented a common thinking and a common belief, in the form or the Ortodox-Christian faith. Or the new form of globalization which was proposing a new mentality, a new approach king of faith, the Catholic

¹ Thomas MADDEN, James L. NOUS, Vincent RYAN (ed.), *Crusades- medieval worlds in conflict*, Burlington, 2010, p. 1.

² Ana COMNENA, *Alexiada*, vol. II, (trad. de Mariana Marinescu și comentarii de Nicolae-Șerban Tanașoca), Biblioteca pentru toți, Editura Minerva, București, 1977, p. 165.

one. That is way it is normal for Alexios I to avoid any interference of the western world in its internal affairs although he was realistic about the fact that the Muslim danger, that threatened not only the Holy Land but the entire byzantine space Byzantine, was real and imminent.

Venice, as a globalizing tool during the Crusades, ordered an interesting route. Up to the Fourth Crusade, during the Italian lagoon had a decisive role, Venice was not heavily involved. Insufficient Venetian springs on this theme, testify this assumption. Apparently, Venice did not foresaw the advantages procured by the crusade approach. The Venice initial shyness can be explained by the fact that the release of the Holy Places was thoughted as an expedition of various ground troops.³

On the other hand, the others maritime state, the competitors of Venetian, Genoa and Pisa had involved promptly in the Crusade. Then the Venetians, by their commercial voyages, often visited the Levant and had sufficient knowledge about the Holy Land and they were entrusted by the authentic relations between Arabs and the Christians from Jerusalem. Another hypothesis exposes the idea that Italian leaders did not wanted to damage the friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire,⁴ especially because had entered in effect the generous endorsements of the Alexios I *chryسوبul* from 1082. In addition, the spontaneous adherence to the crusader creed aroused suspicions to the Republic. In the argumentation should be added that the Venetian fleet was not able to assimilate an effort so intense as that required for a crusading expedition to the Levant.⁵

The skyline of the Venetian chronicles exhibit three dominant issues on the First Crusade: acquisition of holy relics, military conflict with Pisa and the economic benefits gained from the Kingdom of Jerusalem. However, modern historians have identified strong evidence to contest the involvement of the Venetians in the First Crusader and talks about only 30 ships led by Vitalie Michiel doge son, Giovanni. The Venetians Documents even recognize the request of the Byzantine Emperor to change the mind of Venice his mind like Venice about the crusaders actions in the Orient. The request came too late because the islanders citizens would not want to attract the divine wrath and the opprobrium of all Christianity.

³ Steven RUNCIMAN, L'intervento di Venezia dalla Prima alla Terza Crociata'', in: *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, I, *Dalle origini al secolo di Marco Polo*, Vittore Branca (ed.), Sansoni Editore, Firenze, 1979, p. 233.

⁴ Giorgio RAVEGNANI, *Bisanzio e...*, p. 76.

⁵ John H. PRYOR, „A View From a Masthead: The First Crusade From the Sea'', in: *Crusades*, Benjamin Z. Kedar, Jonathan S. C. Riley-Smith, Jonathan Philips (eds.), Vol. 7, Ashagate, London, 2008, p. 91.

The Venetians that were involved in the First Crusade difficultly and only a year does not indicate a superficial interventions. The Venetian people received enthusiastic the Cross and have send the most relevant representatives to defend it. The one who wore the marcian flag and the military ruler of Venice was himself the son of the doge and the spiritual leader was the bishop of Olivolo, Enrico Contarini. The leaders of the lagoon guided over 200 vessels, perhaps even 207, prepared for war, and if the view of the venetian chronicles are true, the engagement of Venice during the firsts Crusades was the most substantial between the Western States.⁶

Strikingly, the story about the Venetian Crusades comes from unexpected testimony, the hagiographical sources. Apparently, for the Italians was more important description in which is brought to Venice relics of St. Nicholas and his namesake uncle than presenting crusaders facts. The method by which they acquired the supposed relics of Saint Nicole was not very Christian because they made use of weapons, but the Venetians wanted to keep up appearances and provided material damage to the bishop of Myra, after being forced to confess the location of the relics. The Italian sources, to avoid any doubt, held a edifying inscription: „Hic quiescit Magnus Nicolaus terra, marique mirabilis et gloriosus”.⁷ But the Venetians were beating on doors long opened because, most likely, the bishop remains had already been stolen from Mira by the Normans since 1087 and taken to Bari.⁸ One can assume that the Venetians had founded the relics of St. Nicholas only if the Normans carried in Bari only a part of the relics.⁹ But we believe that the theory is just an attempt to compromise.

Another memorable act of the Venetian Crusade was the intersection with the fleet of Pisa on the shores of Rhodes. The meeting had a special meaning because, as we have insisted, a serious argument for Venice to attend the Crusade was the fact that his maritime-Italian Republics competitors, Pisa and Genoa, were deeply involved. Between the two fleets even broke out a spontaneously conflict, of army type. It was one of the first moments of tension between the armed forces of the two Republics, which will be symptomatic history of the two

⁶ Ralph-Johannes LILIE, *Handel und Politik zwischen dem byzantinischen Reich und den italienischen Kommunen Venedig, Pisa und Genua in der Epoche der Komnenen und der Angeloi 1084-1204*, Amsterdam, 1984, p. 340.

⁷ Andrea MORESINI, *L'impresa et espeditioni di Terra Santa et l'aquisto fatto dell'Imperio di Constantinopoli dalla Serenissima*, Venezia, 1627, p.18.

⁸ LUPUS Protospatrius Barenis, *Rerum in Regno Neapolitano Gestarum Breve Chronicon ab anoo 860 vsque ad 1102*, D. Pertz (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, Script. Tom. V, p. 62.

⁹ Carlo ERRERA, „I Crociati veneziani in Terra Santa (dal Concilio di Clermont alla morte di Ordelafo Falier”, in: *Archivio veneto*, SN, Anno 19, Tomo 38, Parte 2, p. 257.

countries. Such conflicts were repeated, unfortunately, until the seventeenth century. The Venetian fleet through its quantity and quality had a fulminant victory. But this did not stop the Venetians to behave like gracious winners: „the byzantine officials of Rhodos wanted to send the prisoners to Constantinople for the execution but the Venetians have refused”.¹⁰ This gracious attitude does not excuse the state of war between two Christian States left from the middle of Europe to save the Holy Places.

The Venetian boats arrived quite late in the eastern theater of war. In the year 1099, the city of Jerusalem had been conquered by Christians rescuers whom came with the idea to establish a Christian kingdom here. Similar regattas will be built by Latin sovereigns who will impose their religion, customs and feudal organization. They are emblematic for the idea of globalization and for its form of manifestation in the Middle Ages. In June 1100, the Venetians had landed in Jaffa and supported the efforts of the new king of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon (1099-1100), to conquer his the last citadel, Acra. It had abandoned thanks to the premature extinction of the first king of Jerusalem. Next the Crusaders armed forces, supported by the Venetians, had conquered the city of Haifa.¹¹ The support of the Venetian army was generously rewarded by the King of Jerusalem but the subsequent events made to be impossible the materialization of these demands: Godfrey's death and the election of Baldwin of Edessa led the Italians only with the conquest of Haifa. After they received their share of booty, the Venetians returned home.

The First Crusades were useful for the Venetian State in medium-term advantages. Only in 1104, the King Baldwin II of Jerusalem had enjoyed Venetian maritime service fleet, which was decisive for winning the city of Sidon. In exchange he received the permission to build a merchant establishment. This is the first oriental colony of Venice, which will inaugurate a fortunate precedent for the subjects of the doges: every city which will benefit from the maritime service of the Venetian will facilitate to support a shopping center, the exemption from customs duties and to build a place of worship dedicated to Venice. Often, Venice will receive a percentage, even a third, from each city that will be supported by the Venetian fleet.¹² In fact,

¹⁰ John H. PRYOR, „A View From a Masthead: The First Crusade From the Sea”, in: *Crusades*, Benjamin Z. Kedar, Jonathan S. C. Riley-Smith, Jonathan Philips (eds.), Vol. 7, Ashgate, London, 2008, p. 99.

¹¹ Steven RUNCIMAN, L'intervento di Venezia dalla Prima alla Terza Crociata”, in: *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, I, *Dalle origini al secolo di Marco Polo*, Vittore Branca (ed.), Sansoni Editore, Firenze, 1979, p. 235.

¹² Alethea WIEL, *Venetia*, G.P.Putman's Sons, New York, 1894, p. 87.

from such processes the Crusades stimulated, for Venice and for other European countries a kind of economic globalization, at least. This economic globalization will have its political and social ramifications and will influence the Eastern World in a distinct way.

Therefore, the involvement of Venice in the Crusade phenomenon acted in three directions: the acquisition of holy relics, military conflict and economic interests. They are symptomatic of any globalizing effort. The religion, the military conflict and the economic dimension are the most relevant coordinates of any globalizing movements. Any successful Empire promoted and supported a stable belief. In our case in about Christianity.

The byzantine emperors, from the fourth century until the fall of Constantinople, in May 1453, protected with all the ardor of Orthodox Christianity. For instance, the biography of Alexios I Komnen is full of moment in which the emperor acts like the most important bishop of the Eastern Church. The Venetians took the Christianity from the byzantine branch and had wanted to assume the glory of the Eastern Church. The most coveted mark Christian was represented by the holy relics. The Crusades offered to the Venetians the opportunity to acquire an impressive patrimony of sacred relics.

On the other hand, the military conflicts in the Middle Ages were natural activities. Rarely the globalization manifested pacifist. We saw how the Venetians started their Crusade adventure with a fight we their fellow Christians and Italians, the citizens of Pisa. The war, is a temptation that few unifying and globalizing powers are abstaining. We would be glad if the conflicts would remain in the history, like negative lessons but they are more actual than anytime.

In our days, like in the Venice of the Crusade period, the most decisive war is given in an economic sphere. Or, things can be seen from different perspective: the economic interests had determined, and still determines, the appearance of the most military conflicts. The Crusades in general, they were stigmatized due to its shape of War. But this war was the effect of the material interests and not of the religious differences, as had been said by many scholars. In the beginning of our intervention we have mentioned the Crusades like military-religious expeditions, but which is the most prevalent element is still very hard to determine and to establish.

The steps taken to Venice in the context of the first Crusade are looming for the globalizing approach. And we conclude by specifying that the globalization manifested through the Venetian fleet at the beginning of the eleventh century, like any globalizing intervention,

favored the emergence of tensions. Once this voltage is present it can evolve into conflict. The Medieval people could not stay away from wars and conflicts. But we hope for the day in which the humanity will be wise and will manage to achieve his globalizing projects without any fight and will succeed to be make his plans into action in a natural and peacefull way. But it seems that there is long way to go.

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