

## **The Ottoman Siege and Conquest of Shkodra in the 15th Century According to the Journal Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro)<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examines the appendix on the Ottoman siege of Shkodra in 1474, which was published in two issues of the weekly newspaper Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro) in December 1896. The appendix is a translation of an article written by the Italian sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich, which was published in the magazine Rivista Militare Italiana at the end of 1896. The historical theme was inspired by the marriage between the heir to the Italian throne and the daughter of the Montenegrin ruler, which resulted in a political alliance between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Montenegro. Under these circumstances, it was important to remind the citizens of the united Venetian and Montenegrin armies that defended Shkodra against Ottoman attacks in the 15th century. The two countries' insistence on forming an alliance can be explained by the need to prove continuity and draw parallels between historical and contemporary events. It is for this reason that this article has been written, which must be examined to determine the extent to which it provides accurate historical information about a significant event of the 15th century.

*Keywords:* Shkodra, Montenegrin press, Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro), history

## **The Ottoman Siege and Conquest of Shkodra in the 15th Century According to the Journal Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro)**

### **Introduction**

*Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro)* was the first journalistic newspaper of the Principality, i.e., the Kingdom of Montenegro, which was published once a

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week in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.<sup>4</sup> It is a continuation of the newspaper *Crnogorac*, which had been published in Cetinje since 1871 and changed its name after spreading anti-Austrian propaganda and encouraging the Serbian people to rebel against the Ottoman Empire (Jovović, 2015: 53).<sup>5</sup> The first issue of *Glas Crnogorca* was published on April 21, 1873 in the State Printing House in Cetinje, and the last issue was published in Rome in 1922.<sup>6</sup> In the many years of its existence, 2374 issues were produced, and the newspaper was not printed only during the war years.<sup>7</sup>

The publication was the official organ of the Montenegrin government and reflected the will of the prince, then King Nikola Petrović Njegoš (Popov et al., 1983: 238). The first page contained the *Official part*, in which laws, decrees, government proclamations and other official documents were published.<sup>8</sup> Due to the variety of topics covered, it is considered an important historical source today. The current political situation of the country and the Balkans was adequately portrayed in it. *Glas Crnogorca* dealt with literature, culture, history, education and other related topics. Until 1879, it was known as *Nedeljni list za politiku i književnost* (*Weekly newspaper of politics and literature*), then *List za politiku i književnost* (*Newspaper of politics and literature*) until the end of 1915 (Jovović, 2015: 54). From 1917 to 1922, it had the equivalent name in French, *La voix du Monténégrin*, with the subtitle *Official Organ of the Kingdom of Montenegro* (*Journal officiel du Royaume de Monténégro*).<sup>9</sup>

*Glas Crnogorca* also offered readers exciting literary content such as poems and stories. Translations of texts from the international press were also published. In 1896, the periodical *Rivista Militare Italiana* published a work by Eugenio Barbarich entitled *Siege of Shkodra* (Jovović, 2015: 157). *Rivista Militare Italiana*, an Italian magazine, was founded in Turin in 1856 (Popović, 2020: 53). It is considered the oldest journal in Italy and is published periodically. It is still published, under the new name *Rivista Militare*, and today is the official newsletter of the Italian Ministry of Defense. As a military magazine, it deals with the current state of the army.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In 1910, on the 50th anniversary of the reign of Prince Nikola Petrović Njegoš, Montenegro was proclaimed a kingdom with a king as ruler (Popov & all, 1983: 242–243).

<sup>5</sup> The publication was not only marketed in Montenegro, but throughout the Balkans and thus posed a threat to the power of the Ottoman Empire and the Austro–Hungarian monarchy.

<sup>6</sup> See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

<sup>7</sup> During the war against the Turks (November 1877–January 1879) and the First World War (December 1915–January 1917), *Glas Crnogorca* was not published for some time. From January 22, 1917 to June 18, 1922, the Montenegrin government began publishing it in exile, first in Ney near Paris and later in Rome (Jovović, 2015: 53).

<sup>8</sup> See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

<sup>9</sup> See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

<sup>10</sup> See: *Rivista Militare*, <https://www.esercito.difesa.it/comunicazione/editoria/Rivista-Militare/>

In the 19th century, the journal *Rivista Militare Italiana* reported on national and international events. The Italians' interest in Montenegro was reflected in their efforts to familiarize readers with its culture, historical events and potential for scientific research. The travelogs of Italian travelers to Montenegro were widely published (Popović, 2020: 51). At the end of the 19th century, the Italian press showed great interest in Montenegro after the engagement of the Italian Crown Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, son of King Umberto I, to the Montenegrin Princess Jelena Petrović, daughter of Prince Nikola Petrović. The wedding was an important event in both countries and symbolized the establishment of an alliance between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Montenegro. On the occasion of the wedding, which took place on October 24, 1896 in Rome, various newspaper articles, books and other works were published to arouse the sympathy of the Italian public opinion towards Montenegro (Popović, 2020: 51).

After the wedding of the prince and princess, the Italian sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich visited Cetinje to find out about the Montenegrin army's organization. Barbarich came from a noble family and had an illustrious military career behind him. He was a writer interested in political and military issues in Europe in the present and in the past, as well as in the geography of foreign countries. He wrote and published numerous works on military history and travel literature.<sup>11</sup>

Barbarich's visit to Montenegro at the end of 1896 led to articles published in journals after his return to Italy (Popović, 2020: 51–61). He began by describing the Montenegrin military organization and the customs that prevailed there in order to give Italian readers a better understanding of the Montenegrins. Barbarich published a historical–military article in the *Rivista Militare Italiana* about the centuries–old cooperation between the Republic of Venice and the Montenegrins on the occasion of the wedding of Vittorio Emanuele and Jelena (Popović, 2020: 53–57). The entire issue of the *Rivista Militare Italiana* of November 1, 1896, is dedicated to this event. It begins with a greeting to the newlyweds and wishes for a long and happy life together (Cisotti, 1896: 1923).

A special edition of the *Rivista Militare Italiana* is dedicated to Montenegro to strengthen relations between the two ruling families and to inform the Italian public about the future queen's country of origin. It contains appendices with historical, geographical, military, cultural, and statistical data on Montenegro, as well as historical events on the Apennine Peninsula in which the Savoys played a key role. The section on the centuries-long alliance between the Venetians and the Montenegrins, covering their joint participation in wars, is very important. Eugenio Barbarich compiled this work on the basis of actual documents, chronicles and publications of his contemporaries who wrote about the history of Montenegro (Cisotti, 1896: 1979–2025). It consists of three chapters: *The Siege of Shkodra (L'assedio di Scutari)*, *The Crnojevićs in Venice (I Zernovich a Venezia)* and *The Last Chapter of the Dalmatian Wars (L'ultimo capitolo delle guerre Dalmatiche)*.

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Pagine/default.aspx, visited on 1. 2. 2024.

<sup>11</sup> See: Begotti, P. C. *Barbarich Eugenio (1868–1931)*. Dizionario biografico dei friulani, <http://www.dizionariobiograficodeifriulani.it/barbarich-eugenio-1863-1931/>, visited on 30. 1. 2024.

The first chapter describes the joint effort of Venetians and Montenegrins in the defense of Shkodra from Ottoman sieges in 1474 and 1478. The second chapter describes Đurađ Crnojević's stay in the Venetian Republic and his attempts to re-establish his supremacy in Montenegro through an alliance with the Venetians. The third chapter deals with the wars of the new century, the fall of the Venetian Republic, and the loyalty of the Montenegrins (Cisotti, 1896: 1979–2025; Popović, 2020:58).

The insistence on an alliance between two nations throughout history due to marriage between members of ruling families is part of political propaganda. Therefore, the data in the texts published at the end of the 19th century are largely the product of the aspirations of that time and cannot be fully trusted. It is therefore necessary to carry out an analysis and determine whether the authors used reliable historical sources. The topic of this paper is precisely the analysis of a part of the text written by Barbarich concerning the Ottoman siege and conquest of Shkodra in the 15th century.

### **A brief history of Shkodra until the Ottoman conquest 1479**

The city, which lies on a hill near the east coast of Lake Shkodra, was founded in ancient times and its history can be traced back to the present day. Throughout history, the town has been known by various names: Scodra, Scutarum, Scutari, Iscenderie, Shkodër, Скъдъръ, Росафъ, Rosafa, Ruzaphata (Jireček, 1914: 156; Antonović, 2010: 254). In the 4th century BC, the Illyrians founded Shkodra, one of their most important cities. The Romans invaded and conquered the Illyrian Empire, including Shkodra, in the second century BC (Antonović, 2010: 255). In late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the city served as the administrative and ecclesiastical center of the province of Prevalitana in the Eastern Roman Empire following the administrative reform of Emperor Diocletian in the third century AD. In the early Middle Ages, Shkodra was part of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) and came under Serbian suzerainty in the 11th century (Bešić & all, 1967: 241–243, 256; Antonović, 2010: 255).<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of the 12th century, Byzantine sovereignty was restored, but the city again came under Serbian rule after the victorious campaigns of the great prefect Stefan Nemanja against Byzantium. During the Serbian administration, Shkodra became an important regional center. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Shkodra was an important city on the Adriatic coast in Zeta of the state of Nemanjić. It was probably the administrative center of Zeta (formerly Duklja). Zeta was ruled by Queen Jelena Anžuska (Helen of Anjou), and the young kings Stefan Dečanski and Stefan Dušan (Ćirković & all, 1970a, 60–61, 71; Srejskić & all, 1981: 439, 462, 464, 509).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Shkodra became part of the Principality of Duklja in the 11th century after Prince Stefan Vojislav's successful uprising against Byzantium. Stefan Vojislav and his descendants ruled over Serbian lands including Duklja, Travunia, Zahumlje, Raška and Bosnia. For more on Duklja in the 11th century, see Bešić & all, 1967: 385–399; Srejskić & all, 1981: 180–196.

<sup>13</sup> Queen Jelena ruled over part of the country in the last quarter of the 13th and early 14th centuries, including the regions of Zeta, Trebinje, Plav and Gornji Ibar. Stefan Dečanski, a young king with a palace near Shkodra, succeeded her as ruler of Zeta. He led an unsuccessful uprising against his

Shkodra belonged to the Nemanjić state until 1359. After the death of Emperor Dušan, the Balšić brothers gradually gained control of Zeta and fought against other local Serbian nobility.<sup>14</sup> Since then, their sudden rise can be traced in the area between Lake Shkodra and the Adriatic Sea. Balšić ruled the city until 1393, when Đurađ II Stracimirović Balšić, together with Drivast and Sveti Srđ (St. Sergius), handed it over to the Turkish Duke Šahin to free himself from captivity. Eventually, he was able to retake it in September or October 1395, but he gave it up to Venice the following year (Jireček, 1914: 156–158; Ćirković & all, 1970a: 59–63; Božić, 1979: 220; Antonović, 2003: 227–228).

During Venetian rule, the area around Shkodra was the scene of frequent military conflicts between the Venetians, the local regional rulers and the Ottoman Turks. This underlines the strategic importance of this place. Shkodra was besieged twice in 1474 and 1478 as the Ottoman army advanced unstoppably and posed the greatest threat to the city. Although the sieges were unsuccessful, the city was handed over to the Turks in 1479 with the signing of the Ottoman – Venetian peace treaty. The Ottoman authority made the city the center of the newly founded Sanjak of Shkodra (Božić, 1979: 218–227; Antonović, 2003: 50–56).

### **The Ottoman conquest of Shkodra in the 15th century according to the journal *Glas Crnogorca* (*Voice of Montenegro*)**

The article by sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich from the *Rivista Militare Italiana*, *The Siege of Shkodra*, was translated and published in *Glas Crnogorca*. It can be found in the *Listak Glasa Crnogorca* section, together with a reference to the magazine from which the material was taken and the author's signature. It was printed in December 1896 in issues No 50 and 52. Barbarich's text has the characteristics of a historical analysis and describes the Turkish siege of Shkodra from 1474. The author relied, as stated, on the *Venetian annals* (*Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*) published by the historian Domenico Malipiero between 1457 and 1500 (Malipiero, 1843; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896a: 2). He did not cite any other sources.

### **Text published in issue No 50, December 7, 1896**

The narrative begins with an account of the events that took place around Shkodra in the spring of 1474. On their way to conquer the Balkans, the Ottoman army clashed with the Republic of Venice, which ruled the coasts and islands of the

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father, King Milutin, in 1314. In 1331, the young King Stefan Dušan successfully rebelled against his father, King Stefan Dečanski, near his palaces on the Drimac River (Ćirković & all, 1970a: 60–61, 71; Antonović, 2003: 54).

<sup>14</sup> In 1358, a battle took place in the vicinity of Shkodra between Emperor Uroš and Simeon (Siniša) Paleologus, brother of Emperor Dušan, who asserted claims to imperial power. The brothers Balšić were most likely involved in the conflict, but there is no evidence in the sources. Although Emperor Uroš won the war, the brothers Balšić gained control over Shkodra (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 4–7; Srejskić & all, 1981: 569–570).

Adriatic. The Ottoman siege of Shkodra lasted four months (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 301–307). The author gives statistics from the *Venetian annals* about the attack and defense of the city. According to Malipiero (1843: 92–93), the Turkish military commander, “the Beglerbeg of Greece”, advanced on the walls of Shkodra with 10,000 Turks and attempted to take the city without further ado” (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). At this time Shkodra was under the sovereignty of the Republic of Venice. Antonio Loredan, captain of Shkodra and governor of Venetian Albania (Albaniae Venenta), exercised power in the name of the Doge of Venice.

Barbarich emphasizes the friendship between the people of Venice and the Balšić and Crnojević families who ruled Zeta (Montenegro) in the 14th and 15th centuries. According to the reports of Venetian rectors in Dalmatia, the Balšićs and Crnojevićs were trusted allies of the Venetian Republic. The Venetian Senate referred to Stefan Crnojević as “Magnifico Voivode della Zeta” and praised him for his alliance with the Castriots and his fight against the Turks. Montenegrins and Venetians worked together to protect Shkodra (Cisotti, 1896: 1981–1982; Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2; Jovović, 2015: 157).

Stefan Crnojević was succeeded by his son Ivan, who married the Venetian landlady Katerina Orio and thus strengthened relations with the Republic of Venice. This obliged Ivan Crnojević to provide assistance to the Venetian army and Antonio Loredan in the defense of Shkodra. More than 2,000 soldiers, town dwellers and Montenegrin cavalry and infantry defended the town, armed with 30 cannons (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). As the Beglerbeg of Greece (the Beglerbeg of Rumelia) did not succeed in taking Shkodra, Kadim Suleiman Pasha of Jedren came to his aid with 8,000 Janissaries and men from the Sanjaks of Macedonia and Serbia, a total of around 12,000 soldiers. The Turkish army camped in front of the walls of Shkodra towards the end of May 1474.

As the Ottoman force was large, the Venetian Senate decided to send a warship to support Shkodra. The number of ships grew over time. Instead of huge galleys, which could not pass Bojana, lighter ships such as fusta and barges were sent (Božić, 1979: 225).

Venetian ships sailed into the mouth of Bojana to support Shkodra, whose commander was Triadan Griti. Other Venetians who defended the city were Stefan Malipiero, Lodoviko Bembo, Leonardo Boldu and Petar Mocenigo. Four admirals made a plan based on the help of “Ivan Crnojević, lord of the nearby land on Lake Shkodra, and a man of great influence and power ... who will come as a friend and ally (amigo e confederato) of the republic to help Shkodra across the Lake („Ivana Crnojevića, gospodara bliske zemlje na Skadarskom jezeru, i čovjeka od velikog upliva i vlasti ... koji će doći kao prijatelj i saveznik (amigo e confederato) republike da pomože Skadru preko Jezera“)

 (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). Ivan Crnojević’s (prince della Montagna Negra) devotion to the Venetians is particularly evident in the statement that he assembled 8,000 fighters before Leonardo Boldu, provisor in Albania, asked him for help in Žabljak (Cisotti, 1896: 1985; Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2).

This concludes the first part of the report of the Turkish siege of Shkodra. Barbarich used excerpts from the *Venetian annals* to show the partnership between

Stefan and Ivan Crnojević and the Venetian commanders. This corresponds to the intended goal: to emphasize the centuries-long friendship. In the Venetian annals, however, Ivan Crnojević's loyalty and friendship to the Venetians are not discussed in detail. Malipiero (1843: 94) describes Ivan as the ruler of Žabljak, a town near Shkodra, and as a man with enormous power among his people, which enables him to gather a large number of fighters, making him a good ally. He is described as an ally in war, but not with the zeal that Barbarich describes. The author may have relied on additional sources or traditions when writing the article, or he may have been influenced by the political events surrounding the marriage of the Savoya and Petrović families.

### **Text published in issue No 52, December 21, 1896**

The issue No 52 of *Glas Crnogorca* published a continuation of the article on the siege of Shkodra. The article begins with information about Venetian ships that arrived in Sveti Srđ (St. Sergius) on Bojana River on June 1, 1474. They lit a fire to inform the besieged people in Shkodra about the arrival of help. During the siege, the Turks surrounded Shkodra from all sides, blocking the wooden bridge over the Bojana River. Suleiman Pasha ordered Sanjakbeg of Serbia Aliaga to protect the bridge. Loredan was waiting for the navy in Sveti Srđ and Ivan Crnojević for immediate help, as the city was suffering from water and food shortages. Ivan offered Providur Bold 8,000 infantrymen in Žabljak. Barbarich notes that only "the entire Montenegrin army" supported Christianity, while Pope Sixtus IV, the Hungarian monarch Matthias Corvinus and the Polish king hesitated (Cisotti, 1896: 1987; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896b: 2).

By throwing stones and wood into the water near the mouth of the Bojana River, the Turks attempted to block Venetian ships from reaching the besieged Shkodra. This turned into a battle that ended with the retreat of the Venetian ships to Sveti Srdj (Božić, 1979: 225–226). With their retreat, the only help that remained was that of the Zeta prince "who had settled on the hill of St. Mark with 8,000 infantrymen and had gathered 18 fustas and smaller ships on the lake... and the Turks no longer approached the shores" („koji se utvrdi na brdu sv. Marka, sa osam hiljada pješaka, a na jezeru je bio okupio 18 fusta i manjijeh lađa... i Turci se nijesu više približavali na obale“) (Malipiero, 1843: 95–96; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896b: 2). Crnojević's troops attempted to attack Shkodra from St. Mark's Hill, but were stopped by 12,000 Turkish horsemen protecting the entrance to the city. On the other hand, Boldu, who was leading a small fleet on Lake Shkodra, had just reached Bojana River when he encountered a water obstacle. The Venetian fustas (narrow, light and smaller ships) had to turn back along the Bojana River. Crnojević's army retreated and split into smaller units, which occasionally attacked the Turkish camp in Shkodra (Cisotti, 1896: 1989).

Despite unsuccessful attempts to break the siege, the Venetian and Montenegrin armies remained resolute, as did the people of besieged Shkodra. The Turks were suffering from a malaria epidemic at the time, so their attacks on the city were unsuccessful. Ivan Crnojević and his men launched an attack either from the hill of St. Mark or from Drivast.

Malipiero was left alone with the fleet near the mouth of Bojana when a fever epidemic broke out. The six-hour attack was ordered by the Ottoman commander Suleiman Pasha at dawn on July 28. However, due to the risk of being at the center of a joint attack by the Montenegrins and Venetians, Suleiman Pasha halted the offensive and lifted the siege of Shkodra. The Ottoman army retreated and was chased by the Montenegrins from all sides. Around 3,000 Turks died that day and just as many on the retreat to Jedren. After a 100-day siege, Shkodra was liberated thanks to the dignity of Loredan and the heroism of Ivan Crnojević (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 2–3).

Barbarich praises Ivan Crnojević and his men for their support and bravery during the Turkish attack on Shkodra and the subsequent retreat. On this occasion, he refers to the *Venetian annals*. However, this section in annals does not mention that the help of the Montenegrins was decisive for the defeat of the Turks (Malipiero, 1843: 96–98). The Turkish retreat occurred as a result of a months-long siege that did not yield results and due to the unsuccessful breakthrough into the city during the last attack. Ivan Crnojević's fighters, the Venetian army attacking from the navy, the civilians and the military staff in besieged Shkodra all contributed to their defeat. Moreover, the Ottoman army retreated about a week later, on August 8, 1474, and not immediately as claimed in the appendix (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 307).

After the successful defense of Shkodra and the retreat of the Turks, the Venetian Senate rewarded Ivan Crnojević and presented him with a flag with the inscription: "For the safety of Kotor and help for Shkodra". He was also appointed commander of the division that was to patrol Lake Shkodra and the area east of Danj to prevent further Turkish attacks. The victory was short-lived. After the conquest of Kroja, the Ottoman army returned to Shkodra in June 1478. This time, Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (1453–1481) led the campaign. The Ottoman army was led by the Anatolian Beglerbeg Mustafa and the Rumelian Beglerbeg Suleiman (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 314). The Turks used a different strategy, as they had learned from their experiences during the first siege of the city. First, they prevented the attack of Ivan Crnojević, who retreated to Žabljak and could not help the besieged Shkodra. Even though Shkodra was never captured by the Turks, it was handed over to them in December 1478 on the condition that its citizens and defenders were protected (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 3).<sup>15</sup>

In March 1479, the Prince and the Provisor of Shkodra surrendered the city to Turkish proxies (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 316). After the surrender of the town, Ivan Crnojević fled to the highlands to escape the Turkish attacks. He built a fortress on the Crnojević River, which he named Obod, and a monastery in Cetinje. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Montenegro (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 3).

Less attention was paid to the second siege of Shkodra, perhaps due to its surrender. However, this event does not represent an alliance between Venetians and Montenegrins. The second Ottoman siege of Shkodra sheds light on how things really were. Ivan Crnojević was not mentioned in the peace treaty between the Venetians and

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<sup>15</sup> The Venetian Senate decided to abandon the city, as it was of the opinion that resistance was futile. The Republic of Venice signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire on January 25, 1479 (Božić, 1979: 227).



Mehmed II when they surrendered Shkodra. The Venetian army withdrew, leaving the Montenegrins defenseless against the Turks. The Turks conquered Žabljak and forced Crnojević to recognize Turkish sovereignty (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 316–317). As a result, the Venetians merely exploited the Montenegrins' belligerence for their own purposes, which should have been concealed at the time of the commemoration of the great centuries-long alliance at the end of the 19th century.

## Conclusion

The weekly *Glas Crnogorca* was one of the most important journalistic publications in Montenegro in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It contributes to historical studies through its broad content and coverage of political, social and cultural events, but its content should be interpreted with caution. In addition to current events, historical content was also published to remind readers of the great military successes of the past. One such story is a chronicle of the Turkish siege of Shkodra in 1474. The political context in which this piece was published is interesting. It is a significant political event for the small Principality of Montenegro.

The marriage of Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, the son of King Umberto I of Italy, and Jelena Petrović, the daughter of Prince Nikola Petrović of Montenegro, indicated a political alliance between the Principality of Montenegro and the Kingdom of Italy. On the occasion of the wedding, which took place on October 24, 1896, numerous texts were published depicting the harmony between the two countries in the past. Moreover, the decision to conclude this marriage before the vast majority of the people had to be rationally justified in order to arouse the sympathy of the public in both countries. Under these circumstances, the Italian infantry sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich wrote a military historical work entitled *The Siege of Shkodra*, which was published in the journal *Rivista Militare Italiana* at the end of 1896. About a month after the translation of this text, *Glas Crnogorca* published the translation.

It seems that the author presents information about an event connected with both the Principality of Montenegro and the Kingdom of Italy by examining historical sources. However, it is worth reflecting on how much political and cultural continuity there is between the Republic of Venice, which emerged in the Middle Ages and existed until 1797 and whose main region was Venice, and the Kingdom of Italy, which was founded in 1861 from a number of smaller states on the Apennine Peninsula with islands in the sea. The theme was chosen to emphasize a centuries-old connection through an experience shared by both sides, which corresponds to the intended result. A comparative examination of the appendix with historical data revealed that the text consists mainly of elements that are crucial for the depiction of Crnojević's coalition with the Venetian government. It should be noted that the Crnojevićs were not always allies of the Republic of Venice, but rather opposed it depending on historical circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Since the history of relations between the Crnojević family and the Republic of Venice is quite

Ivan Crnojević and his warriors were instrumental in the onslaught against the Turkish army during the first and second sieges of Shkodra. The alliance persisted for as long as it was required by the Venetian Republic, which needed them as an army. These are impersonal political circumstances about the grand coalition and friendship that were declared in the *Glas Crnogorca*. Following Shkodra's capitulation to the Turks, Ivan Crnojević found himself without support from his erstwhile allies. In other words, he was there for the Venetians in situations of need, fought alongside them as an ally, won praise and awards for the victorious defense of Shkodra in 1474, and was left behind when an enormous Turkish force attacked the tiny community and no one else was available to help. That is what is noticeable from this appendix. The majority of the article is devoted to the united struggle and triumph; the setback is barely touched upon and its implications for Montenegro are not discussed. As a result, the literature partially manipulates historical facts and exhibits traits of political propaganda. As a result, it reflects the political context of the time it was written and released.

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complicated and requires more space, we will limit ourselves to this assertion. See Ćirković & all, 1970b: 277–333 for more details.

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## Osmanska opsada i osvajanje Skadra u 15. veku prema listu *Glas Crnogorca*

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### Apstrakt

U radu se analizira prilog o turskoj opsadi Skadra iz 1474. godine, objavljenom u dva broja nedeljnog lista *Glas Crnogorca*, koji je štampan decembra 1896. godine. Prilog je zapravo prevod teksta koji je napisao italijanski pešadijski poručnik Euđenio Barbarić i objavio u časopisu *Rivista Militare Italiana* krajem 1896. godine. Istorijska tema je inspirisana sklapanjem braka između italijanskog prestolonaslednika i ćerke crnogorskog vladara, što je podrazumevalo i politički savez između Kraljevine Italije i Knjaževine Crne Gore. Pošto su u 15. veku zajedničkim snagama Crnogorci i Mlečani branili Skadar od turskih napada, u datim okolnostima je bilo potrebno podsetiti javno mnjenje na ove događaje. Insistiranje na savezništvu između dva naroda može se objasniti potrebom da se izvrši korelacija između prošlih i aktuelnih događaja i prikaže kontinuitet. Tako je nastao ovaj prilog, koji je potrebno analizirati i utvrditi u kolikoj meri donosi tačne istorijske podatke o jednom važnom događaju iz 15. veka.

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