Proposal for the 3rd MMHN Conference

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Venice, Genoa and the fights over The Island of Tenedos since in late fourteenth century and early fifteenth

In 1377 a War took place between Venice and Genoa over the island of Tenedos that lies at the NE Aegean at the entrance to the Straits of the Dardanelles. In 1379 the war was shifted by Genoa and its allies in the Adriatic to Chioggia, the southern port Town of Venice, while their allies on the Terra ferma besieged Venice at its rear. Venice won the maritime siege at Chioggia due to the defeat of its enemies by environmental circumstances, but the actual maritime wars did not end with any clear and cut victory to either side. Venice, however, lost the ‘diplomatic’ war since it had to give up the island of Tenedos, which by skillfull manipulative tactics the Serenissima managed to hold until the occupation of the island by the Ottomans in the late 15th century.

Most of these facts are well knows. Nevertheless, there are different of opinions between byzantologists, scholars dealing with Genoa and scholars on Venice History regarding the reasons for Venice’s occupation of the island, who was the right side in this affair – either Venice or Genoa, and why Venice did not yield the island as it was compelled to by the Pact of Torino (1381) that ended this war. R. Cessi and F. Thiriet, both famous historians on Venice history claim that Venice refused to cede back the island due to the Ottoman power.

While reviewing the documents in the Venetian archives, this paper introduces a new approach focusing on maritime aspects, quite neglected by scholars, on the one hand, and on the other, points to the integral connection between Venice’s policy to the island of Tenedos and its geopolitical and commercial position and activities in the Black Sea, Adriatic Sea and in the Ionian. The paper will show that in many respects, holding the Island was an issue of survival for Venice’s international commercial activities.
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Main interests are on Venice and its maritime history; Byzantine maritime heritage and marine environmental history;

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