

MEDITERRANEAN VENEZIA: a crossroad of musical cultures in a stormy sea

A STORMY SEA

Between the middle of the fifteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Republic of Venice faced seven conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, called Venetian-Turkish wars, for the control and domination of the eastern Mediterranean. This was essentially to defend the overseas territory of the Serenissima (the so-called Stato da Mar) against the Turkish expansion. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the end of the Byzantine Empire, showed the world the power and determination of the Ottomans in extending their rule and taking possession of the trade routes of the East. The clash with the Venetians, already present and rooted in the Levant for at least one century, became inevitable and lasted until 1718 when, with the Treaty of Passarowitz, an end was put to four centuries of conflict and Turkish power in Europe. Of the seven conflicts that bloodied the Mediterranean from 1463 onward, that of Candia, the main city of the island of Crete, now called Heraklion, was certainly one of the most dramatic ...

THE LONGEST SIEGE IN HISTORY

The reason for the war was provided to the Turks by Maltese corsairs. Ignoring the warnings of the previous Venetian government to avoid any possibility of friction and disagreement with the Sublime Porte, when, on Sept. 28, 1644, six Maltese galleys attacked, near Rhodes, a rich convoy coming from Constantinople and directed to Alexandria, with a cargo of goods and pilgrims among whom were the grand Eunuch of the Palace, a sister and a son of the Sultan. The corsairs, on the way back, stopped at Limeones and at Schiro, south of Heraklion and then at Kythira and Cephalonia, all Venetian ports, where they sold part of the booty and freed some Christian slaves who were previously prisoners of the Turks. When the news of this act of piracy came to the capital, the French ambassador and the Venetian Bailo (ambassador) were convened to court to account for alleged collusion with the Maltese. Both ambassadors protested the innocence of their respective countries, so the Sultan stated that he would order a punitive expedition against Malta to be set up.

Preparations by the Turks were impressive, directed by the Sultan himself, and on April 30, 1645 the Turkish fleet approached the Straits, declaring Malta as their destination in order to deceive the Venetians. On June 23, 1645 378 ships carrying 51,000 men of the landing Corps arrived to the coast of Candia and gave start to a landing to the west of Chania, in Madonna di Gogna, between the monastery of Calogeri and the city of Chania. It thus began a tough war, which would end only after 24 years, on 26 September 1669 with the surrender of the fortress of Candia and with resulting in a death toll of about 30,000 between on the side of the Venetians and their allies who had come from all over Europe - among them the French -, as well as more than 108,000 Turks.

IF YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW A POPULATION YOU NEED TO HEAR ITS MUSIC

Plato

The historical fact of the War of Candia gives us a starting point for a series of reflections from which this project originates. The first is the realization that the Venetian music also circulated in the overseas territories, and that from a practical standpoint it could be influenced by the cultures and the musical styles of those peoples who, living under the Venetian government, shared customs and traditions in an environment of reciprocity.

All this serves as a focus around which to build an imaginary musical fresco, an ideal reconciliation of cultures and arts, where prominent figures of Western music such as Francesco Cavalli (1602- 1676) and Biagio Marini (1594-1673) take their place alongside

anonymous figures of Greek and Ottoman culture from whom we only have the melodies, in some cases transmitted orally or that come down to us through transcripts such as those of the Moldovan Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723).