

her churches, her convents and monasteries, and all her precious sacred relics would fall into the hands of the Infidel, without any advantage accruing to Christendom thereby. The astute Ragnina hinted that the Venetians were merely urging the Pope to take measures against Ragusa out of jealousy. These arguments had the desired effect, the Pope relenting towards the Republic and exempting it from joining the League, to the great satisfaction both of the Government and the citizens. There is no doubt that their position was always a very risky one, and it required all their diplomatic tact to save them from ruin. They were literally between the devil and the deep sea, but they always managed to steer a clear course between the many dangers which beset them.

But although they were on good terms with the Sultan, there was also danger to be apprehended from the turbulent Pashas and Sandjakbegs of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Many of these men were the descendants of the lawless native princelings who had gone over to Islam, and still maintained their old ambition to win their way to the seaboard. The whole country of Dalmatia was now threatened. Clissa, Poljica, and even Montenegro had to pay tribute to the Turks after 1515. In 1522 Knin, the chief Croat fortress in the country, surrendered to the Pasha of Bosnia, and Scardona was also occupied. Sinj, Vrlika, Nučak, and Clissa fell in 1536, and the castles of Vrana and Nadin in 1538. The Turkish fortress of Castelnuovo was captured by the Venetians and Spaniards in that year, but in 1539 it was attacked by the pirate Haireddin Barbarossa and recaptured, the Spanish garrison being put to the sword.