

About the Gavardo Family: Female Cunning and Self-Interested Provocation of Rebellion

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Description

The noble Gavardo family found themselves in an interesting episode of the struggle for power between the Venetians and the Habsburgs in the 16th century, according to Valvasor, a late-17th-century historian. Namely, in one of the battles of the War of the League of Cambrai, the Venetian Republic captured an important military leader of their opponents, the Croatian nobleman Krištof Frankopan.

Valvasor records the story of Mrs. Gavardo, who cunningly helped her husband escape from a Venetian prison. When he and Count Krištof Frankopan were taken to a prison in Venice by the Venetians, she disguised herself as a humble servant and sneaked up to him, outwitted the guards, and enabled him to escape. She and her husband then secretly left the city. Her cunning and courage so impressed her contemporaries that they described her as a woman of exceptional determination, and her story quickly spread as an example of noble audacity and ingenuity.

In gratitude to Gavardo, Krištof Frankopan sold some villages in the Podgrad Domain near Ilirska Bistrica, which he had received as payment for military service and which lay just beyond the Habsburg-Venetian border. However, he sold property that was not his, but the Emperor's. Since Krištof Frankopan died as a rebel against the Emperor, all his possessions, including Podgrad, came under the administration of the royal court.

The imperial officials were apparently also disturbed by the Gavardos. Valvasor claims that the brothers Damiano and Giulio Gavardo, together with their relatives and loyal supporters, openly opposed imperial orders, often relying on the support of the Venetians. They allegedly collected and withheld taxes (which should have been collected only for the ruler) without permission and extorted and forcibly collected higher taxes from the peasants than were stipulated.

Although they were never sold Podgrad Castle, Valvasor claims a good hundred years later that they gathered armed followers around the castle, stockpiled weapons and gunpowder, and turned the castle into a veritable warehouse of military equipment. They placed guards at the entrances to the castle, preventing access by representatives of the authorities, and the brothers' behaviour gave the impression that they were ruling completely independently.

As a result, complaints rained down on the royal court and authorized officials. Emperor Ferdinand I was forced to take action after repeated warnings, and his proxy Johann Baptista Pacheobardi initiated legal proceedings in which members of

the Gavardo family were accused of being rebellious, disobedient, and violent. In 1550, imperial troops surrounded Podgrad. After the siege, they captured Dario and Giulio, along with their wives and children, and took them in chains to Ljubljana. On 10 April 1551, the castle was demolished to its foundations so that it could never again serve as a centre of rebellion. This ended the presence of the Gavardo family in Podgrad near Ilirska Bistrica.

Address

Koper

Kidričeva ulica 22b - 6000

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