

THE GOVERNORS OF VENETIAN ITHACA

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The historiography of Venetian Greece has paid little attention to the colonial experience of Ithaca. While historians are served by extensive published documentary evidence for the administrations of the larger possessions in the region, the uncatalogued Venetian records at the state archive of Ithaca remain unstudied. The recent reopening of this archive has finally made it possible to survey its large Venetian collection and to provide an account of the role of the governors of Ithaca under Venetian rule. The seat of the governor was filled by Cephalonian nobles rather than by Venetian appointees in the manner of the larger Ionian islands. Here for the first time is presented a comprehensive list of Ithacan governors compiled from the Ithacan documents, together with further aid from research in the archives of Cephalonia and Venice. The account of the Ithacan governorship offered here aims to promote interest in the Ithacan archive of the Venetian administration and serve as a guide for future research into this neglected corner of the empire.

INTRODUCTION

After years of closure and inaccessibility, the branch of the Greek state archives on Ithaca reopened in December 2021. This has allowed access to its rich collection of administrative records from the period of Venetian rule over the island (1500–1797), which have never been subjected to serious study. Only a small selection of records had been made available in the publication of the incomplete manuscripts of the Ithacan historian and archivist Athanasios Lekatsas (1998, 11–73) from the early twentieth century. These at least indicated their breadth. Alongside the obvious impediment of the archive’s intermittent accessibility over the last decades, the neglect of the island’s Venetian records in the historiography of the region must also owe to the fact these records remain mostly ‘unprocessed’ and are not served by a catalogue, which means the task of studying them is inseparable from engaging with problems of classification. The foundation of this article is therefore an attempt to decipher the contents of this unprocessed ‘archive of the Venetian administration’ in its current state with a view to providing a basis for future work on Venetian Ithaca.¹ The first part of this article presents an outline of the role of the governor of Ithaca within the context of the Venetian colonial administration of the Ionian islands, based on a broad survey of the extensive archival evidence. This discussion is complemented by a list of names of governors who served in the office during the three centuries of its existence, with an account of how the list was assembled from records held at the state archives in Ithaca, Cephalonia, and Venice. This first investigation serves to introduce the forgotten Ithacan experience of Venetian rule, allowing insight into the different ways in which colonial power was exercised through different administrative formations. In particular, the Ithacan governorship represents an example of delegated power being exercised by local elites rather than by direct appointees from the colonial centre. This study reveals some of the strategies of delegated rule,

¹ ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, Αρχείο βενετικής διοίκησης (hereafter ΑΒΔ). On the archive, see Nikias [forthcoming](#). The following other archival abbreviations are used throughout: Archivio di Stato di Venezia = ASV; Νοταριακό Αρχείο = ΝΑ; Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Κεντρική Υπηρεσία = ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ; ΓΑΚ–Αρχεία Ν. Κεφαλληνίας = ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ. The following abbreviations are used in cites of manuscripts: Ms. = manuscript; f./ff. = folio/folios; cc.nn. = carte non numerate; f./ff.nn. = folio/folii non numerati; r. = registro; b. = busta. See [n. 9](#) for abbreviations of governors’ inventories.

in particular the ways in which the higher Venetian officials persistently attempted to reform and regulate the powers of the office in response to perceived abuses by the serving governors. This serves to enrich our understanding of the complexity of Venetian administrative practice by focussing our attention onto a corner of the Venetian maritime empire to which the historiography has long been blind.

THE ROLE OF ITHACAN GOVERNORS

The Venetian conquest of Ithaca in 1500 found the island ‘uninhabited’ and did not inherit an existing local administration. The island was resettled after a 1504 decree of the Senate granted tax concessions to new settlers.² Whatever the size of Ithacan society under the Neapolitan rulers who preceded the Venetians (through a short Ottoman interlude), the island fell under the jurisdiction of the larger neighbouring islands (see Nikias 2022a). While the island would again be subordinated to Cephalonia under the Venetians by the mid-sixteenth century, a more direct administration was imposed by Venice in the first years after the island’s capture and resettlement, as explained by a fragment of 1583: ‘in the past ... a governor [*Capitano*] was sent from Venice, who lived there, alongside whom two men deputised as counsellors, and ... they governed and gave judgment according to the necessities and needs of the place’.³

The deputies with whom the early Venetian governors shared jurisdiction were local Ithacan electees: ‘two men of the aforesaid island of Ithaca, who are colleagues of the governor [and] who are elected from time to time to govern and give judgment together’.⁴ The transition from this direct Venetian rule involving Ithacan deputies to the delegation of the jurisdiction to the Cephalonians begins around the middle of the sixteenth century. The first apparently Cephalonian appointee to the Ithacan governorship was Costa Pugliese, who had been appointed as governor and died before March 1563.⁵ On his death, the Cephalonian council was conceded the right to elect governors on a yearly basis from the members of the local nobility, as one of a small number of desirable elected offices in the administration below the *provveditor* (the elected Venetian patrician who held the highest position in the colonial hierarchy of Cephalonia).⁶

The grant of the governorship to Costa Pugliese on a personal basis – perhaps in exchange for military service – was followed by two further such appointments made after 1563, despite the Senate conceding a right over the Ithacan posting to the Cephalonian council. Two further

² On the period either side of the Venetian conquest see Nikias 2022a. The decree is in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASV), Senato Mar, Deliberazioni, r. 16, f. 35r/47r, with a copy in a compilation of laws from Cephalonia, held in the Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους, Κεντρική Υπηρεσία (hereafter ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ), Ms. 229, f. 3v; editions of both are in Sathas 1867, ρλ; 1883, 157; Miliarakis 1890, 191. Other copies exist, including at the Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. It. VII, 1534 (=7839), f. 34v; ASV, Compilazione delle leggi, prima serie, b. 124, Cefalonia (documenti), ff. 17v–18r.

³ ‘altre volte ... si mandava da Venezia un Capitano che vi abitava, appresso del quale si deputavano doi omeni come consiglieri, et tutti ... governavano, et giudicavano secondo le occorrenze, et bisogno del luoco.’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 14v (Ordini Gritti e Garzoni, 1583). Cf. ‘prima solleva andar un cittadino di questa città’: *relazione* of *provveditor* Angelo Basadonna, 6 April 1590: Tsiknakis 2008, 123. See nn. 4, 41.

⁴ ‘doi Omeni di detta Isola del Teachì, che siano Colega [sic] del Capitano che di tempo in tempo si elegerà per governare, et giudicare insieme’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 14v.

⁵ The date of appointment is uncertain, and there is perhaps evidence of an even earlier date of death: see note in Supplementary Material.

⁶ The 1563 request is made by, among others, the Cephalonians Alvise Fasol and Cristoforo Crassan. ASV, Senato Mar, Deliberazioni, r. 36, f. 35v/56v = Sathas 1883, 202. Two copies from the Cephalonian *cancellaria* are held now at Athens, both with omissions but of different parts: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, ff. 3r–4r; ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, ff. 10r–11r. The request for the Ithacan governorship appears only in Ms. 20, ff. 3v–4r. Other copies in ASV, Compilazione delle leggi, prima serie, b. 124, Cefalonia (documenti), f. 65r; ASV, Archivi propri dei rettori, *provveditori* e altri pubblici rappresentanti, b. 2 (‘Ordini di Cefalonia’), cc.nn., ‘Ambasceria delli ... signori ... Alvise Fasol e Christoforo Crassan ... 1563’.

Pugliesi were made governor outside the electoral process for durations longer than a year. A petition made direct to Venice in early 1574 by a Pasqualin Puiese (i.e. Pugliese) refers to the service of his father Nicolò, whose 10-year term as governor of Ithaca was cut short by his death in a naval battle against the Ottomans.⁷ Nicolò must have been appointed by 1567, just a few years after the purported establishment of elections for the role. Pasqualin requested to be installed to serve out the four years remaining in his father's term, plus a further two (on the basis that this would allow him to earn enough money to marry off his two young sisters).⁸ The secretarial annotation does not make clear the duration of the term granted. In either case, Pasqualin's service must have ended in 1578 or 1580. A familial connection to the earlier Costa Pugliese seems likely, but is not mentioned by the petition.

No closer reconstruction of the early governorship is allowed by the records of the administration held at the Ithacan archive, with inventories compiled by the seventeenth-century administrators themselves showing that the preceding century left behind no documentary legacy.⁹ Nevertheless, the small amount of surviving sixteenth-century evidence from Venice shows a progression between the more direct control of a new colonial posting in the sixteenth century and its eventual delegation to Cephalonia by the end of the century. The installation of the first three Cephalonian governors for long terms represents an interventional strategy of control over the island in this first century of Venetian rule. While the Senate conceded the governorship to the Cephalonian council in 1563, and this right is cited again in the 1574 *relazione* of Vincenzo da Molin (Tsiknakis 2008, 60), it was some time before elections became regular, given the interruption of the direct appointments of the two later Pugliesi. Regular annual elections could not have taken place before the last two decades of the century. The earliest surviving Cephalonian council records from 1593 provide the name of electee Nicolò Travlò in 1593 (Moschonas 1979, 277). The names of two earlier electees from the 1580s attested only by the nineteenth-century literature are not confirmed by the primary sources, yet these might have been among the earliest Cephalonians elected following the stunted implementation of the concession of 1563.¹⁰ This slow willingness to cede direct control of the posting corresponds to a period when the Venetian administrators expressed doubts over the Cephalonian nobility as a suitable ruling class. Membership of the notoriously disorderly Cephalonian council – the political organ of an inflated local nobility – was formally closed and regulated after 1593 in response to frustration with its disobedience. This was an attempt to restrict membership to suitable types, with a view to rendering the local nobility a loyal and functional political class following the model of the Venetian patriciate (see Moschonas 1979; Vlasi 2001; 2005; 2018; 2019; 2021). Whether or not this was ever fully successful, it was only following such reforms that the Venetian eagerness to make direct interventions appears to wane. The council exerted its right over the Ithacan governorship with regularity after the 1620s, as shown by consecutive yearly appointments (see list in the [Appendix](#) and Supplementary Material). Nevertheless, the possibility of direct Venetian intervention remained on the minds of aspiring Cephalonian noble appointees who wished to sidestep electoral procedure. Several later petitions

⁷ ASV, Collegio, Suppliche di fuori, b. 327 (21 Gennaio 1573) (date *m.v.* = 21 Jan. 1574). The document refers to the voluntary service of Nicolò in the galley of Francesco Bon, and his death at the hands of the Turks. Bon is a known commander in the battle of Lepanto (1571): see Diedo 1863, 41. For a more detailed interpretation of the document see the entries for Nicolò and Pasqualin Puiese in the Supplementary Material.

⁸ 'Et altri Anni dui oltre li quatro così parendoli per il maritar [d]elle dette due povere mie sorelle': ASV, Collegio, Suppliche di fuori, b. 327 (21 Gennaio 1573).

⁹ See several *inventarii di scritte pubbliche* in ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Alessandro Diorzi (1654–6), ff. 672r–673r (hereafter *Inv.* 1654); b. Giovanni Battista Metaxà (1668–71), ff. 47r–48r (hereafter *Inv.* 1668); b. Stamati Lusi (1679–80), ff. 509r–512v (hereafter *Inv.* 1679); b. Thomaso Dalladecima (1682–3), ff. 261r–263v (hereafter *Inv.* 1682); b. Domenico Corafan (1695–6), ff. 248r–253r (hereafter *Inv.* 1695); b. Gerolamo Dalladecima (1721–2), ff. 89r–93v (hereafter *Inv.* 1721). Compare Pardos 2008, 14. See the discussion in Nikias forthcoming.

¹⁰ These are Zaccaria Montessanto (1585) and Gabriel Comi (1588): Pignatorre and Pignatorre 1889, 324. Montessanto is found in the 1593 council records rendering the dating plausible: Moschonas 1979, 300. A Gabriel Comi is also found in archival references to have served in 1626–7 (a descendant?): see list in the [Appendix](#) and Supplementary Material.

made to Venice between 1738 and 1777 contain requests for direct appointment to the desirable Ithacan posting, in every case the applicant's wish being granted.¹¹

The elections of Ithacan governors are recorded in some of the surviving minutes of the Cephalonian council together with elections to other administrative positions. Elections were held in the presence of the *provveditor* of Cephalonian and the proceedings supervised by the three Cephalonian *sindici*.¹² The results of the vote count in some of the recorded examples demonstrate the nature of the contest among nobles for the appointment. The electee Giorgio Metaxà in 1650 won 870 votes against 286, clearer support than the other two candidates, who divided the assembly almost equally.¹³ The election of Alessandro di Orzi in 1654 reveals a tighter contest won with 169 votes against 103.¹⁴ His defeated competitors included two former governors both trying their luck for another term.¹⁵ The governorship was an attractive promotion for nobles who had served in other positions in the Cephalonian administration, as we see with governors di Orzi and Florio Crassan, both listed as *sindici*, or both Domenico and Francesco Cologna, who had separately been elected as *censori*.¹⁶ Other names which appear first as deputies to the governor in the Ithacan records are encountered later as governors themselves, the experience perhaps lending insight into a strategy for election or at least a taste for colonial government.¹⁷ These few examples of a common pattern place the Ithacan governorship squarely within a competitive market for elected offices usually occupied by a small, active elite of a large Cephalonian nobility. Two further basic restrictions on candidacy for the governorship were a minimum age requirement of 30,¹⁸ and a moratorium on re-election for 10 years.¹⁹ Violation of the moratorium is particularly evident from repeated names in the list (see [Appendix](#) and [Supplementary Material](#); Vlassi 2021, 169–70). There is little diversity among family names, which represent but a small fraction of their class. Just a handful of the more prominent families shared dozens of appointments among them, particularly the Metaxà, Anino and Crassan. The repeat success of relatives in the competitive market for appointments – often sons and grandsons, as revealed by the genealogical literature surveyed in the extended list (see [Supplementary Material](#)) – shows how the major noble families could seize control over the electoral process with control over the votes of a polarised faction (see Vlassi 2004; 2021). It was perhaps irregularities or tensions arising out of these contested races which led the Cephalonian council in 1654 to reassert its authority over the role. Candidates would be required to deposit

¹¹ ASV, Collegio, Suppliche di fuori, b. 485 (30 Giulio 1738 = Stellio Coraffà), b. 491 (25 Agosto 1744 = Giacomo Metaxà), b. 500 (14 Agosto 1753 = Pietro Crassan), b. 504 (22 Aprile 1757 = Marin Anino), b. 510 (25 Settembre 1764 = Nicolò Trecca), b. 522 (11 Giugno 1777 = Zorzi Metaxà). In most cases the absence of corresponding records at the Ithacan archive renders it questionable whether the successful supplicants ever actually took office: see list in the [Appendix](#) and [Supplementary Material](#).

¹² ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, f. 39r. See, e.g., ΓΑΚ–Αρχαία Ν. Κεφαλληνίας (hereafter ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ), ΑΒΔ, Πρακτικά Συμβουλίου Κοινότητος (hereafter Libri Consigli), Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), ff. 63v–64r (election of Giorgio Metaxà), 147v (election of Alessandro Diorzi). On council procedure see, with bibliography, Vlassi 2021.

¹³ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), f. 64r. The electoral procedure of the later council of 150 is explained in Vlassi 2021.

¹⁴ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), f. 148r.

¹⁵ Florio Crassan (1643) and Giorgio Peccator (1653–4): ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), f. 148r.

¹⁶ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), ff. 107r, 110v, 117v, 131r, 132r, 137r. Diorzi stood unsuccessfully for another position (*procurator al fontico*) in 1654: see f. 140v.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Giacomo Metaxà as *cancellier* in 1670, and as governor in 1688–90: ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Giovanni Battista Metaxà (1668–71), f. 85r and passim; cf. Nicolò Andronà as *canceller* in 1672, and as governor in 1667: b. Giovanni Battista Metaxà (1668–73), f. 724v.

¹⁸ A first age requirement of 25 was set in 1664 by the council itself: see Vlassi 2021, 176 n. 36. A decree of 1676 effectively raised this to 30: see ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, ff. 33v–34r.

¹⁹ The restriction was imposed among other regulations, discussed throughout this article, by Gerolamo Corner in 1683: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81v; cf. ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, ff. 55r, 61r; Vlassi 2021, 170 n. 29. The restriction is cited in one complaint made by the Ithacan *sindico* Spyros Karavias to the *provveditor general* in 1760, against the appointment by the governor Spiridion Veja of Spiridon Crassan as his deputy, the latter having served two years earlier as governor: ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, fragments of Nicolò Loverdo in box labelled 1742–81, f. [441r].

120 reali with the *sindici* before they would be eligible.²⁰ The penalty – ‘to be immediately removed from this office, and forbidden to perform any act’ – reflects the authorities’ dismay at pretenders to the governorship who, despite the sanction of election, did not satisfy the necessary formalities for appointment.²¹ Such disorderly behaviour was synonymous with the divisive and unruly Cephalonian council, often rendered dysfunctional by rivalries between noble factions, despite constant regulatory intervention by the Venetian authorities.

A residual power for appointment outside of the electoral process is shown by some examples where the higher authorities intervened. In one example, the governor Giorgio Peccator was appointed in late 1653 ‘per modis provisionis’ by the *provveditor general da mar*.²² While the context is not explained, the example shows that the higher colonial officials still held the power to sidestep the Cephalonian council when required.²³ This power seems to have been exercised by the *provveditor general da mar* rather than his Cephalonian subordinate. In another case, a governor is replaced provisionally by his own brother, apparently for a mere few weeks to fill the gap between the expiry of the former’s term and the election of the new governor.²⁴ Such short-term appointments outside the electoral cycle appear to have been common, perhaps reflecting a misalignment between the imperative of administrative continuity and the (dys)function of the council.²⁵ The Cephalonian records reveal a near constant stream of interventions by the higher Venetian authorities at times when the powers it had delegated appeared to be being abused. In 1677 the *provveditor general* Andrea Corner made several orders to address ‘many inconveniences which arise each day, and which tend always to become greater to the grave detriment of the proper function of the [Cephalonian] council’.²⁶ Among these was an interdiction against the sale of the Ithacan governorship without the approval of the Senate.²⁷ Observance of the rule appeared to be at risk in late 1698 when the three *sindici* proposed a requirement for prospective candidates for the governorship to pay a large sum into the treasury to qualify for election.²⁸ The opinion of the *provveditor general* Bartolo Contarini was solicited on whether this violated the Corner interdiction.²⁹ The avowed justification for the inflated charge on candidates was to raise funds ‘to provide for any need which may arise which might burden the office’ of the governor of Ithaca.³⁰ The curious appearance of the names of all three same *sindici* in the list of serving governors suggests that the self-interest in securing access to the position – perhaps by pushing it beyond the reach of poorer competitors – may also have been a motive.³¹ Such episodes show that the Venetians closely followed the attempts by some councillors to establish a market for the posting, but in this case Contarini decided the particular scheme did not contravene Corner’s interdiction.³² Still, the detailed record of his intervention among the

²⁰ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), ff. 147r–148r.

²¹ ‘d’esser immediatamente presto di essa [carica], et interdetto ogni atto’: ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), ff. 147v–148r.

²² ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), ff. 134v–135r, 147r.

²³ By comparison, see, e.g., in the same minutes book the provisional replacement of a *sindico* who had fallen sick: ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), f. 58v.

²⁴ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), ff. 64r–v (replacement of Gerolamo Coraffan by his brother Anzolo in September 1698).

²⁵ See, for example ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), ff. 134v–135r (appointment of Giorgio Peccator, 1653); also Vlassi 2021, 170.

²⁶ ‘molti inconvenienti che alla giornata insorgono, e che si vano sempre facendo maggiori a grave pregiudizio del buon uso del Consiglio di questa Fedelissima Città’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, f. 38v.

²⁷ ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, ff. 39r–v.

²⁸ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), ff. 59r–63v.

²⁹ ‘[la] Terminatione Corner che inibisce la vendita della Carica per via d’incanto verso il più offerente’: ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), f. 59r.

³⁰ ‘per reparare ad ogni ... necessita che emerger potrebbe sia agravata la carica di Governator e Capitano al Thiachi’: ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), ff. 60v–61v.

³¹ The men were Alessandro Monferrato (served 1696–7), Attanasio Focà (served 1694–5) and Andrea Tipaldo (served 1731–2); ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), f. 61v.

³² Contarini’s decision is to remit the proposal for the consideration and vote of the council: ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 4 = Βιβλίο 7/Χ (1696–1707), f. 59v.

council papers shows that higher officials frequently had to supervise disputes over the governorship.

The electee was titled *governator e capitano del Theachi*. The Ithacan jurisdiction was split between certain functions delegated to the governor and the residual powers held by the Venetian *provveditor* of Cephalonia. A large proportion of the volumes of governors' records is filled by legal proceedings which show the authority of the governor in small civil disputes and criminal matters.³³ Jurisdiction in more serious cases was deferred to the higher authority of the Venetian *provveditor* of Cephalonia.³⁴ In exercise of the higher authority of the Cephalonian administration over Ithaca, representatives of the *provveditor* made yearly visits to Ithaca, from at least 1581.³⁵ The visiting party was led by a *consiglier* (a Venetian, not Cephalonian) – whose acts bear the title *consiglier et vice gerente in visita del Teachi* – together with other functionaries including notaries to execute relevant acts during the visit.³⁶ Already by 1590 a critical report by the *provveditor* Basadonna remarks that the visit's duration of one month does not allow the *consiglieri* to cover all the criminal matters which arose (Tsiknakis 2008, 123–4). Despite several restatements of the object of the visit – to provide Ithacan subjects with a more practical access to justice – they also presented a convenient opportunity for the visiting functionaries to pursue their own interests.³⁷ Basadonna's report cites the most recent visit, when 'a particular quantity of forest was granted to some incapable person from Cephalonia', before the same unnamed person was elected to the Ithacan governorship, 'and with a beginning of such a disgusting nature, commenced his rule'.³⁸ The revulsed *provveditor* doubted whether any public benefit was derived from the annual visit, which instead 'serves to increase the income of the counsellors more than relieving the needs of [the Ithacan] subjects'.³⁹ It seems Basadonna is referring to the very corruption of the Venetian *consiglieri* themselves, but reference to the improper concession of land suggests this engaged the Cephalonians too. The visit long continued to be exploited for personal gain, as shown by the comments of the Venetian *provveditor general* Gerolamo Corner, whose 1683 orders reiterate that the visit is 'intended only for the benefit of those poor inhabitants'.⁴⁰ Still, the establishment of the visits was asserted as an important reform which put a distant jurisdiction under closer supervision. An Ithacan plea in 1583 'to reinstate [the] former, and commendable rule' by which two Ithacan electees shared power with the governor was rejected, with the Venetian inspectors restating the sufficiency of the established annual Cephalonian visits.⁴¹ A check on power through the annual visit was clearly preferable to ceding further jurisdiction, with corruption being either the lesser or more manageable evil.

³³ See, also, citations to decisions of the governor in notarial acts: Zapanti 2002, 49, 263.

³⁴ See the *relazione* of Basadonna (1590) in Tsiknakis 2008, 123, and generally 122–4. ('Ha autorità di giudicar in civil fin lire 10, et di far l'execuzioni d'ogni sorte comesseli, di che ne cava honesto utile, che li è limitato per capitoli. Nelle altre cause civil et criminal, che lui non s'impedisce, è divoluto il giudicio al regimento di Ceffalonia'.) The governor also had a limited role in deciding some small criminal matters: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, f. 61r. Also ASV, 'Ordini di Cefalonia' (see n. 6), cc.nn. (order of the *provveditor general* Antonio Priuli, 19 Jan. 1676, on shared legal jurisdiction between the governors and visiting ministers).

³⁵ Sathas 1883, 211; Tsiknakis 2008, 123. Its inception may date earlier, given it is referred to as an established procedure already by 1583: 'delegar alcun Giudice, et quello mandar al Teachi, come è stato fatto per il passato': ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 12r.

³⁶ See the report of *consiglier* Antonio Boldù following the visit of 1658 in ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, ff. 61r–62r. See citations in ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Φ. Ι (Indice per alfabetto di tutte le costituzioni, ovvero Statuti Municipali dell'Isola di Cefalonia), ff. 110v–111r, 181v, 191r, 192r. On the presence of notaries, see: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 64r.

³⁷ 'Le Visite medeme esser state instituite per comodo e solievo de sudditti': ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 50r. Cf. 'essendo esse Visite destinate al sollievo solamente di que' poveri abitanti': f. 81r.

³⁸ 'in quest'ultima passata visita sia sta fatta concession di certa quantità de boschi a persona incapace che sta et è di Ceffalonia. Anci, elletto da novo per lor capitano et che con principio di disgusto di questa natura, incomincia il suo governo.': Tsiknakis 2008, 124.

³⁹ 'serve per acrescimento d'utile più tosto alla consegnaria che per indennità del bisogno di quei suditti': Tsiknakis 2008, 123.

⁴⁰ 'destinate al sollievo solamente di que' poveri abitanti': ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81r.

⁴¹ The inspectors report that the Cephalonians, having been granted the governorship, had refused to elect two Ithacan deputies as had been done under the earlier Venetian appointees: '[la] Comunità ... hà ommessa l'elezione,

The governor was supported by the service of advisors and functionaries who made up the *cancellaria*, following the model of the larger colonial *reggimenti* on a smaller scale (see Arbel 2013, 146–51). Here we can distinguish between those sent from Cephalonia and office-holders elected from the local population. The governor was served by another Cephalonian noble elected by the council to the post of clerk or scribe (*scrivano*).⁴² The highest role under the governor was, however, held by his deputy, the *cancellier*, who in many cases executes documents in lieu of his superior and signs as *vice governor*. This position was appointed by the governors themselves.⁴³ The signatures of the deputies often bear the same family names as their superiors, showing that the governors-elect did not miss the opportunity to keep things within the family.⁴⁴ The residual powers which were not delegated to the governor were exercised during the annual visit by the Venetian *consiglier*, as described above.⁴⁵ This included running elections for local positions in the Ithacan administration, perhaps too great a risk if left in Cephalonian hands. The elected Ithacan office-holders were spread across the three administrative divisions of the island (*ville*): Vathi, Anoi and Oxoì (Βαθύ, Ἀνωγή, Ἐξωγή).⁴⁶ The offices elected were the *sindici*, *giustizieri*, *provveditori alla sanità*, *deputati alle strade*, *deputati all'estime*, *contestabili* and *cartofori*. These follow the organisation of local functionaries in the administrations of the other islands, though they remain understudied.⁴⁷ A further study of the Ithacans who filled these roles would contribute much to the social history of the island, given these were the highest positions to which the Ithacans could aspire to serve under an administration filled with Cephalonian nobles under the supervision of Venetians. The governor travelled regularly around the island to engage with these local office-holders – executing acts *in visita della villa Oxoì* or *Anoi*, apparently emulating the model of the annual visit of the Cephalonian *consiglier*.⁴⁸ The main seat of administration, however, was associated with the southern town at Vathi, where the governor occupied a ‘publico palazzo’ (αφεντικό σπίτι in Greek), housing both an office and residence for the governor.⁴⁹

et gionta delli suddetti doi Collega, di modo che privi noi di questi doi Custodi, restammo in arbitrio di un solo, il quale di sua testa fa, et disfa quello gli piace’ [referring to the governor]. The Ithacans appealed to the Venetians: ‘però si degneranno rinovare questo antico, et lodevole ordine che si debba far elezione di tempo in tempo di doi Omeni ... del Teachì, che siano Colega del Capitano ... per governare, et giudicare insieme come facevano prima. Si risponde che basta la provvisione fatta che ogni anno veda un Clarissimo Consigliere alla Visita di detta Isola’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 14v (Ordini Gritti e Garzoni, 1583). The role of the two Ithacan deputies is muddled through the secondary literature, which talks of the revival of shared rule following the Ithacan protestations, while the decision of Gritti and Garzoni clearly shows they buried such chances. See most recently Arbel 2013, 150. The error seems to owe to a confused adaption by Lunzi of a vague passage in Karavias Grivas 1849, 69–72; Lunzi 1858, 349–50. See nn. 3, 4. Nevertheless, see below for discussion of lower-level local officeholders.

⁴² See, e.g., ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli, Φ. 3 = Βιβλίο 5 (1646–54), f. 105r.

⁴³ See, in a regulation of 1658: ‘non possano li Spettabili Governatori, e Capitani che saranno pre tempore come sopra condur seco persona con titolo di Cancellier, se prima l’Illustrissimo Reggimento non riceverà le debite informazioni dalli Spettabili Signori Sindici della Comunità intorno la nascita, costume, fede, et che sopra la persona che sarà scelta per Cancellier, o con altro titolo non vi sia alcun infamia ...’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 61v (Ordini Boldù).

⁴⁴ See, e.g., the deputies Francesco Diorzi (ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Alessandro Diorzi [1654–6], f. 441v), Giacomo Metaxa (b. Giovanni Battista Metaxa [1668–71], f. 85r), Giovanni Domenico Cologna (b. Francesco Cologna [1673–5], ff. 259v–260r), Giorgio and Cristodulo Anino (b. Anastasio Anino [1680–1], ff. 283r, 577r).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., some of the earliest identifiable *consiglieri*: Piero Balbi (ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Alessandro Diorzi [1654–6], f. 664r), Marin Donà (b. Giovanni Battista Metaxa [1668–71], f. 87r), Francesco Pasqualigo (b. Giovanni Battista Metaxa [1668–73], f. 231r).

⁴⁶ The earliest electoral records are: ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Alessandro Diorzi (1654–6), ff. 664r–665r; b. Giovanni Battista Metaxà (1668–71), ff. 74v–75v; b. Giovanni Battista Metaxà (1668–73), ff. 139r–140v; also see unprocessed fragments of Giovanni Battista Metaxà, in box labelled 1640–1677, ff. 693r–694r; b. Stamati Lusi (1679–80), ff. 520v–522r; b. Thomaso Dalladecima (1682–3), ff. 278r–280v; b. Angelo Corafan (1692–3), ff.nn.; b. Domenico Corafan (1695–6), ff. 269v–272r.

⁴⁷ Some discussion of these offices on Corfu and Zante in Karapidakis 1992, 183–206; Kolyvà 2014; 2018.

⁴⁸ E.g., during one governor’s visit to Oxoì, it was found that the elected *cartofori* had left for the mainland, requiring him to elect replacements: ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Domenico Corafan (1695–6), f. 272r.

⁴⁹ See ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Gerolamo Dalladecima (1721–2), f. 89r; also b. Giovanni Battista Metaxa (1668–73), f. 230r; Zapanti 2002, 48.

As perhaps already suggested by the coincidence of family names among elected governors and their appointed deputies, the corruption of the Ithacan governorship was as old as the office itself. The concession of a right over the posting to the Cephalonian council in 1563 was conditional on the promise ‘to exercise office properly’.⁵⁰ The pledge would soon be worth little, with the naked pursuit of self-interest by the Cephalonians already apparent to the inspectors Gritti and Garzoni in 1583, and to Basadonna in 1590, as discussed above. By 1656, Cephalonian elections for the prized Ithacan posting were singled out for their particular impropriety among other roles elected by the council (Vlassi 2018, 165). A series of orders made in 1683 by the *provveditor general da mar* Gerolamo Corner give an insight into how governors and their functionaries contrived to reap personal reward from the privileged position of public office.⁵¹ Corner imposed several restrictions on the exercise of power by both visiting delegates and functionaries serving the governor. One order seeking to bar the public office-holders from involvement in currant sales suggests interference in the local export economy was a promising enterprise; another order, which prohibits the execution of public documents for profit, is apparently aimed at the fraudulent presentation by litigants of documents sold to them with the authorisation of the governor’s office.⁵² Maladministration was not the mere folly of a few vain governors, but rather a designed system for exploitation which further engaged their subordinates. The Ithacan plea of 1583 which made the case for increased local representation sought to relieve the islanders of the oppression of the Cephalonian functionaries: ‘so that we will not be worn out, tormented, and devoured by the officials who are deputies to our government, who wish everything for their own benefit against the mind of Your Serenity’.⁵³ As we have seen, the Corner decision one century later imposed several regulations aimed again at countering the abuses of the Cephalonian deputies.⁵⁴ Yet even the local Ithacan representatives in elected roles could be corrupted by their Cephalonian superiors, as intimated by a provision which expressly forbade the local officers’ employment for any function in the service of the governors or *cancellieri* beyond their public mandate.⁵⁵ The higher Venetian officials were clearly aware of governors misallocating their resources – in this case, their personnel – for personal gain.

This wide survey of the archival record has reconstructed the formal constitution of an office of colonial government conceded to a local elite, yet organised in the manner of the larger *reggimenti*. The position of Ithacan governor gave a rare opportunity for the Cephalonian nobility to rise to a rather high position among colonial administrative postings usually filled by Venetians. Among the other possessions in the Ionian islands, just the governors of Ithaca and the Paxi offered to local elites the chance of ruling over a territorial jurisdiction with such considerable powers. The intensely competitive market for election, together with thwarted attempts to create a market for the sale of the posting, speak of the desirability of the position for Cephalonian nobles. Despite the Ithacan governor’s subordination to the *provveditor*, his power was unique among the other elected roles open for Cephalonian nobles, which had limited functions. While the *provveditor general* Agostin Sagredo in 1753 describes several of ‘the loftiest postings which the council may grant’, he draws attention specifically to the governor:

the role of Governor and Captain of the island of Ithaca . . . is one of the most profound dignities which this council confers each year to one of its citizens, and . . . confers to this distinguished figure not only a Public Representation, but the right to give judgment in civil and criminal matters within the prescribed limits.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ ‘di far buon’ uffizio’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 14v.

⁵¹ ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, ff. 81r–82r.

⁵² See provisions 4 and 5: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81r. On corruption in the currant trade also see the concluding remarks on f. 82r.

⁵³ ‘acciò non siamo stentati, straziati, et devorati dalli Officiali deputati al Governo nostro, che sperano tutto a beneficio loro contro la mente di Sua Serenità’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 14v.

⁵⁴ ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81v.

⁵⁵ ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81v.

⁵⁶ ‘li posti più sublimi, che possono esser dispensati dal Consiglio’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 20, f. 60r. ‘la Carica di Governatore, e Capitano dell’ Isola del Teachì . . . è una della dignità più conspicue che dispensi annualmente

That Sagredo was again addressing his orders to improper electoral processes reminds us that the mere dignity of power properly exercised was not the only appeal of the office. The role also provided various opportunities for appointees to enrich themselves. While one *provveditor* saw it perfectly acceptable for governors to ‘make an honest profit’ from the execution of official acts, things must have gotten out of hand by 1683 when Gerolamo Corner forbade the execution of public documents for profit, as we saw above.⁵⁷ Evidence for trade with the local population is found in a will of 1640 which records the governor as an outstanding debtor to the testator for currants he had bought from him.⁵⁸ Here again the provision of the 1683 Corner orders against involvement in local trade, mentioned above, suggests that some transactions may have involved improper dealing on the part of the governor or purported to give official sanction to an illicit economy (see Fusaro 1996; Livitsanis 2021).

The authority of Ithacan governors assumed a personal character. The intersection between the governors’ personal vanity and the baggage of familial prestige is shown by three visual examples. The use of a personal armorial seal among official documents reveals the moment of union between official and personal authority, a fantasy entertained nowhere less subtly than in the placement of a governor’s own coat of arms beside the Lion of St Mark: see Figs 1 and 2. The pretension of the Cephalonian electees is illustrated by the rare portrait of Marin Pignator (1719), the only known image of an Ithacan governor: see Fig. 3. No clearer than here is the vanity of a class once derided by a Venetian as peasants dressed up as nobles (Vlassi 2005). The Latin dedication denotes the sitter as *Ithacae gubernator*, choosing the island’s ancient name rather than the usual form found in Venetian documents following the demotic corruption of the modern Greek form (Θιάκι > *Teachi*). Use of the ancient name always represented a conscious preference to associate the modern island with the ancient kingdom of Odysseus. The accounts of Venetian colonial functionaries with Ithaca made frequent association between the modern island and the epic.⁵⁹ If Homeric pretensions were strong enough to allow one late *provveditor* of Cephalonia to describe his own role as ‘governing the kingdom of Odysseus’, his Ithacan subordinates must too have indulged in the fantasy.⁶⁰ The role of governor was held out as a prize by the Cephalonian nobles. The names of ancestors who had served as Ithacan governors were preserved in the memory of the nobility long into the nineteenth century, representing a rich source for the nineteenth-century literature (see Pignatorre and Pignatorre 1887, 1–2; Metaxas 1893; Tsitselis 1904). Despite the formal electoral process offering candidacy to all members of the council, the identification of several father–son pairs in the list of governors demonstrates the influence of factional politics driven by the more powerful families. In one example, a tie to the role is maintained over seven decades: three members of the Anastasato branch of the Anino family served between 1680 and 1755, tracing the line between father, son, and grandson.⁶¹ Many such examples allowed the major families to boast of a record of service in the role. The nine requests made to Venice for direct appointment often contain hubristic justifications

quel Consiglio verso uno de suoi Cittadini, et . . . abbraccia oltre al splendore figura una Pubblica Rappresentanza il diritto pure di giudicar in Civile et in Criminale nelle misure prescritte’: f. 61r. See copy in ΓΑΚ–ANK, ABA, Libri Consigli, Φ. 7 = Βιβλίο 14 (1749–54), f. 239v. The Sagredo reforms are discussed in Vlassi 2021.

⁵⁷ See n. 34. Cf. ‘proibiscono tutti i Scritti, che sono per far frutto’: ΓΑΚ–ΚΥ, Ms. 229, f. 81r.

⁵⁸ ‘χροστάτη μου ο καπιτάνιος Γλιγόρις τρία ίμψι ριάλια το φετηνό φρούτο ίγου τι σταφιδα μου τιν έχο του καπιτάνιου Φλόρια και λογαριασμό δεν εκάμαμε’: Zapanti 2002, 140 = ΓΑΚ 10άκης, ΝΑ, Φ. 3 (Georgios Vlassopoulos), f. 68v (17 January 1640). The governors appear to be Gregorio Travlò (served 1637) and perhaps Florio Crassan (known service 1643–4, but possibly also served earlier).

⁵⁹ E.g. in the *relazione* of Jacopo Soranzo from 1581, ‘Tiacchi anticamente Itaca, patria di Ulisse’: Alberi 1844, 217. From 1590, ‘Isola famosa d’Ulisse, chiamata Itaca, che hora, corrotto il vocabolo, è nominata Teachi’: Tsiknakis 2008, 104. From 1622: ‘l’isola di Jeachi, detta alter volte Itaca, già patria d’Ulisse’: Lunzi 1858, 348. From the early seventeenth century (?), ‘Theachi isola app[re]sso la Ceffalonia Itaca antiquitus’, ‘sotto il gouerno di questa Isola quella famosa del Grand Ulisse chiamata Theaca’: Crevato-Selvaggi et al. 2013, 88, 45 (respectively).

⁶⁰ Vlassi 2018. See, also, ‘Fù creduta Patria d’Ulisse; onde certe vestigie di presente apparenti vengono venerate da Cefaleni’ in Coronelli 1686, f. 56v.

⁶¹ *Father* Anastasio Anino (served 1680–1), *son* Andrea Anino (served 1700–1, 1709–10, 1740–2) and *grandson* Spiridion (1754–5): see Sturdza 1983, 213–14.



Fig. 1. The arms of Gerolamo Dalladecima (governor, 1714–15, 1721–2, 1728–30) beneath the symbol of Venice (Biblioteca del Museo Correr, Ms. Classe III 52, c. 1v).

given by aspiring governors who sought the deferral of elections in their favour.⁶² One petitioner Marin Anino bemoans the misfortune that he would be ineligible in the upcoming election for being just a few months short of the minimum age of 30, and requests that he be appointed directly, citing ‘the supply of such illustrious documents which testify to his family’s constant loyalty and submission’.⁶³

⁶² Seven relevant petitions are found in the ASV (including that of Pasqualin Puiese) – see nn. 7 and 11. The 1738 petition of Stello Corrafà (Corafan) further cites two earlier direct appeals of Demetrio Caruso and Zuanne Cambici.

⁶³ ‘La scorta di talli luminosi documenti che palesano la costante fedeltà e rassegnazione di sua famiglia’: ASV, Collegio, Suppliche di fuori, b. 504, 22 Aprile 1757. Background to this episode is discussed in Vlassi 2021, 174–5. See notes in Supplementary Material.



Fig. 2. Armorial seal of Marin Pignator (governor, 1718–19) beside the symbol of Venice (ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, ΑΒΔ, b. Marin Pignator (1718–9, II), f.nn.).



Fig. 3. Portrait of Marin Pignator. Oil on canvas, unknown artist (1719) (Focas-Cosmetatos Foundation, Cephalonia).

An appreciation of this sense of entitlement held by the grander noble families over the Ithacan governorship – and the profitable opportunities which it presented – serves to moderate the contrast between the Ithacan form of government and the larger Ionian islands which were ruled instead by

appointees sent from the colonial centre at Venice proper. While the Ithacan case approximates self-rule more closely than these other Venetian possessions, it is an important example of the employment of particular technologies of government – delegation and subordination – to integrate regional elites into the colonial apparatus. The vanity of the governors can be identified as an aesthetic manifestation of their self-alignment with the ideology of empire, which fulfilled the need for the Cephalonian nobles to legitimate their right to exercise a considerable temporal and territorial jurisdiction over their fellow subjects. Despite the relative assimilation of the origins of the governors and the governed, the archival record surveyed here describes how the governorship nevertheless presented various opportunities for exploitation. In this way too, the exercise of the office mirrors the patterns of corrupt practice found throughout Venetian power structures, in spite of its delegation to the local level. Further research in the rich Ithacan archive will reveal more precisely the strategies which enabled such widespread corruption and the extent to which it involved the participation of the Ithacans themselves, in particular through the elite stratum of officeholders elected from the towns on the island.

THE COMPILATION OF A LIST OF GOVERNORS

Across the breadth of surviving evidence which has been surveyed in this article are found the names of many Ithacan governors who served between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Their names are presented here in a list of known governors of Ithaca (see [Appendix](#)) with citations supplied in a more detailed list found in the Supplementary Material. The list offers the fullest catalogue of Ithacan governors to date, reconstructed not merely from the surviving governors' records in the Ithacan state archive, but also from references found in documents held at Cephalonia and Venice. No list of governors is found in the major nineteenth-century historiography, with no reference to Ithaca in Carl Hopf's extensive '*Catalogues des gouverneurs Vénitiens*' (Hopf 1873, 371–413).⁶⁴ The only attempt to compile the names of governors was by the Cephalonian father and son Marino and Nicolò Pignatorre in 1889 (Pignatorre and Pignatorre 1889, 234–5). Their list of names was compiled with some access to the Cephalonian archive, but further relied on the private records of noble families whose ancestors had served in the role (see Pignatorre and Pignatorre 1887, 1–2). The collation of the list presented here has allowed the identification of several errors in the list of the duo Pignatorre, which demonstrated the urgency of compiling the list anew from the primary sources. This was aided by a list of the bound volumes of the governors' records in the Ithacan state archive (*volumi* or *buste*), which was published by the archivist and historian Stamatoula Zapanti (2010, 942–43). However Zapanti's list did not attempt to assemble the names and dates of all known serving governors across other sources. Rather, her list described the state of the Venetian records as they were left by an unfinished attempt to classify them, work done by a team of researchers from the National Hellenic Institute for Research (Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών) before 2002. Since this incomplete task has never since been resumed, the Venetian records remain unclassified and uncatalogued (see Nikias [forthcoming](#)). Beyond the volumes listed by Zapanti is a large quantity of governors' records denoted as 'fragments'.⁶⁵ Among these slimmer bundles and loose leaves are found the signatures of many more governors than are represented by those whose larger bound volumes survived. While such unbound fragments are conventionally denoted as *filze* in Venetian archival practice to contrast them from the volumes, there is no logic to maintaining the separation here. Many of the sets of documents which constitute the volumes were evidently compiled from the collation of material which, while now fragmented, must once have been bound together (as

⁶⁴ Hopf was concerned with the appointed Venetian patricians who ruled through the *reggimenti*, and compiled the lists from the records now found in the series ASV, Segretario alle voce, Registri universi o misti. See discussion at Hopf 1873, xxxix–xlii.

⁶⁵ On the Ithacan archive see Nikias [forthcoming](#).

revealed by continuous leaf numbering). The resumption of this incomplete process of assimilating the records would much reduce the quantity of those currently cast aside as mere fragments, since much of these are slim bound booklets or series of homogeneous records. The status quo represents the evidently limited time of those who had made attempts to organise the series, unable to search all the unassigned documents to identify the many signatures of governors, which are often well hidden. The pressure of time is also visible in certain errors, which it was possible to correct in the list presented here. This includes the identification of one volume with the governor Thomaso Dalladecima (1682–3), which had before been misattributed to his *cancellier* Zuanne Andrioni, and the separate attribution of a set of two volumes which were until now assigned to two governors jointly.⁶⁶ The discovery by the present archivist of a further volume among the series which had eluded even the catalogue by Zapanti presented a further example of the difficulties of classification. Where this volume of governor Zuanne Loverdo (1779) ought to be ordered required close inspection of the contents of the records themselves. The identification among the adjacent records of Spiridion Focà (1779–80) of a letter from the *provveditor* on the latter's election in late 1779 confirmed him as the successor of Loverdo, allowing the appropriate ordering of the two governors. The 'fragments' allowed even further discoveries for the list, particularly the attribution of a small series of legal records from 1639–41 to the governors Thomaso Montessanto and Florian Dalladecima, representing the earliest attributable governors' records in the archive.⁶⁷ These examples serve to show how a survey of this unclassified series as a whole, not merely restricted to the assigned volumes, has allowed me to provide the fullest compilation of governors' names possible faced with the current condition of the Ithacan state archives.

The list of governors presented here is most sparse in the first century of Venetian rule, from 1503 until the 1620s. Since regular records begin only after the 1670s, the list has further included governors whose names may only be rescued from citations in other primary sources beyond the governors' records themselves. A handful of early seventeenth-century governors have been identified among the early notarial registers.⁶⁸ No doubt many more such notarial references await discovery in the extensive Ithacan notarial archive (see Nikias [2022b](#); [forthcoming](#)). The list has also been supplied with many names from several significant inventories of official records (*inventarii*) found in the *libri straordinarii* of certain governors, some with extensive detail about the condition and extent of records, with their dating of several names being particularly useful.⁶⁹ These inventories have confirmed many names appearing only in secondary sources because the governors' documents themselves have since been lost. A very small number of names were attested by archival sources but unable to be dated precisely and have therefore resisted inclusion in the list.⁷⁰ While we must hope that further work among the earliest notarial and governors' records might encounter even earlier names, the inventories show that even the late-seventeenth-century governors would have inherited little written record of the island's administration from the first century of Venetian rule (Nikias [forthcoming](#)).

⁶⁶ The volume of Thomaso Dalladecima (1682–3) was misattributed to Zuanne Andrioni in archival notes and in Zapanti [2010](#), 943. The other case concerned two volumes assigned jointly to Demetrio Pignator and Anastasio Anino (both denoted 1734–5): Zapanti [2010](#), 942. They are now able to be separated between two volumes: Pignator (one vol. 1733–4) and Anino (one vol. 1735). Another error was the misattribution of a third volume (dated 1752–3) to Zuanne Metaxà, when it had been taken over by his successor Marin Metaxà, to whom it has been assigned in the list in the Supplementary Material.

⁶⁷ The oldest records held by later governors themselves appear to be those of Draco Crassan (1625): see list in Supplementary Material with cites to *inventarii*. No fragments earlier than the late 1630s were able to be identified among the present collection. More detail in Nikias [forthcoming](#).

⁶⁸ Particularly the registers of Nikolaos Paizis and Georgios Vlassopoulos: ΓΑΚ Ιθάκης, Νοταριακό Αρχείο (hereafter NA), Φ. 1 (Nikolaos Paizis) and Φ. 3 (Georgios Vlassopoulos). The latter has been published: Zapanti [2002](#).

⁶⁹ See [n. 9](#) and Nikias [forthcoming](#).

⁷⁰ Sometime before 1640, 'Linardos Florias': Zapanti [2002](#), 139–40. Before 1644, 'Toumazios': Zapanti [2002](#), 236. Before 1654, a Canulo or Gavriolo(?) Metaxà: *Inv. 1654*, f. 672v. Another difficult governor, though eventually possible to include in the list, was Theodoro Lascari Megaduca (served 1627): see notes in Supplementary Material.

Further names have been identified among documents held at Cephalonia and Venice. The minutes of electoral proceedings of the Cephalonian council have provided some important information, yet most of these records are contemporary to surviving governors' records from Ithaca.⁷¹ Thus the Cephalonian documents have not been able to fill the many gaps before the 1620s. No known sources attest the names of the earliest appointees sent directly from Venice in the first half of the sixteenth century. A survey of relevant documents held at the State Archive of Venice was unable to recover their names.⁷² A small but significant amount of information on later governors was supplied by the surviving petitions for appointment made directly to Venice.⁷³ The successful applicants have been listed, but it is uncertain whether they ever actually assumed office given the lack of further records and the coincidence of dates with existing records assigned to other governors.

The Supplementary Material to this article contains a more detailed version of the list which supplies citations and notes for each governor. While the list is reconstructed from the records of governors themselves and citations in other primary documents, key biographical information is supplied from the major nineteenth-century literature. Beyond the Pignatorri, important sources have been the work of the Cephalonian local historian Ilias Tsitselis (1904) and the genealogist of the Ionian nobility Eugène Rizo Rangabè (1926).⁷⁴ These authors had access to the records and oral traditions of the noble Cephalonian families in the critical century after the fall of Venetian rule when the memory of fallen families was still maintained with stubborn pretension. Several names only attested by the secondary sources have been omitted. Nevertheless, the general reliability of such sources, excepting the noted errors, has been largely confirmed by the location of corresponding primary citations in many cases.

It should be noted that the many inconsistencies in dating throughout the list owe to the fact that many references can merely indicate a precise moment when the governor is known to have been in office through a dated signature. The apparent impossibility of dates owing to overlap in several instances is likely due to the assignment of whole bound volumes of records to a single governor, while their organisation into booklets following the division of the various administrative functions (*libro delle sentenze*, *registro di lettere pubbliche*, etc.) means they often contain documents or acts executed under their predecessors. It is important then to note that the time span of a bound volume does not necessarily match the actual dates of service of the assigned governor (in particular the commencement dates). Without a fuller electoral record from the Cephalonian council, or a close study of the entire contents of the almost 100 presently assigned volumes, some overlap is impossible to avoid. Pending such further work, I have thus preferred to date the governors after the records themselves, rather than to attempt hastily a reconstruction of the dates of service. Future work shall no doubt correct the inconsistencies and uncover new details. All dates are reproduced faithfully from the documents *stile vecchio* and with the *more veneto* (*m.v.*, reflecting the start of the Venetian year in March) noted where appropriate in the notes in the Supplementary Material. Here I present my findings as a descriptive introduction to the archival record for Venetian Ithaca, without pretence to a comprehensive study of their content or a perfect catalogue to the unclassified records at the Ithacan state archive. This guide, I hope, will assist in the proper classification of those records and promote future engagement with them as sources for the history of the region.

⁷¹ ΓΑΚ–ΑΝΚ, ΑΒΔ, Libri Consigli. The earliest records have been published in Moschonas 1979.

⁷² A survey of the indexes to the Senate proceedings (*rubriche*) was unable to recover any reference to the role: ASV, Senato Mar, Rubriche, r. 2 (1478–1550). The limitation of the *rubriche* means a more thorough study of the deliberations (in the *registri*) is required. See de Vivo 2010. The catalogues of elected Venetian patricians in the series *Segretario alle voce* are also silent on the early Venetian appointees to Ithaca: ASV, Segretario alle voce, Registri universi o misti. I surveyed all of regg. 7 through 12.

⁷³ The documents consulted were petitions (*suppliche*) from the empire: ASV, Collegio, Suppliche, Suppliche di fuori.

⁷⁴ Also Masarachi 1843; Metaxas 1893; Sturdza 1983. An extensive survey of the Ionian bibliography, with critical apparatus, is in Arvanitakis 2020. On the work of the Pignatorri see p. 732.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

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APPENDIX: LIST OF GOVERNORS OF VENETIAN ITHACA

See Supplementary Material for fuller list with citations and notes.

1504–(?)	[<i>Appointees from Venice</i>]	1653	Giov. Battista Metaxà	1688–90	Giacomo Metaxà
1536–63(?)	Costa Pugliese	1653–4	Giorgio Peccator	1690–1	Nicolò Pignator
1567–73(?)	Nicolò Puiese	1654–6	Alessandro di Orzi	1692	Costantin Tipaldo
1574–8(?)	[Pasqualin Puiese]	1655	Anastasio Crassan	1692–3	Angelo Corafan
1593	Nicolò Travlò	1656	Giov. Battista Metaxà	1693–4	Gerolamo Cimara
1625	Draco Crassan			1694–5	Attanasio Focà
1626	Lunardo Focà	1657	Zuanne Melissinò	1695–6	Domenico Corafan
1626–7	Gabriel Comi	1658–9	Zuan Domenico	1696–7	Demetrio Focà
1627	Theo. Lascari Megaduca		Cologna		Alessandro Monferrato
1628	Gabriel Peccator	1659	Giov. Battista Metaxà	1698	Gerolamo Corafan
1628	Dionisio Crassan	1663	Theodoro Veja	1698–9	Nicolò Policalà
1632–3(?)	Piero Cicianian	1663–4	Francesco Cologna	1699–1700	Stamati Lusi
1634	Nicolò Rossolimo	1665–7	Thomaso	1700–1	Andrea Anino
1634–5(?)	Domenico Foscardi	1667	Dalladecima	1701–2	Angelo Metaxà
1635	Lascari Metaxà	1667	Nicolò Andronà	1703–4	Demetrio Volterra
1635–6(?)	Zorzi Corafan	1667–8	Francesco Cologna	1704–5	Marchio Cologna
1637	Gregorio Travlò	1668–73	Giov. Battista Metaxà	1705–6	Giov. Paolo Monferrato
1639–40	Thomaso Montessanto	1673–8	Francesco Cologna	1706–7	Zanetto Focà
1640–1(?)	Florian Dalladecima	1678–9	Nicolò Policalà	1707–8	Alessandro Caruso
1642	Lunardo Cochino	1679–80	Stamati Lusi	1708–9	Giorgio Assani
1643–4	Florio Crassan	1680–1	Anastasio Anino	1709–10	Andrea Anino
1646	Lorenzo Antippa	1681–2	Gerolamo Cimara	1710–11	Alessandro Monferrato
1646	Vincenzo Cimara	1682–3	Thomaso Dalladecima		Giovanni Metaxà
1646–7	Alvise Fasiol	1684	Anastasio Metaxà	1711–12	Domenico Corafan
1649	Theodoro Cladan	1684–5	Domenico Corafan	1712–13	Marin Anino
1650–1	Giorgio Metaxà	1685–6	Francesco Cologna	1714	Gerolamo
1653	Mattio Perlinghin	1687–8	Demetrio Focà	1714–15	Dalladecima
		1688	Vangelin Anino	1716	Marchio Cologna
				1716–18	Giorgio Anino

1718–19	Marin Pignator	1750–2	Marco Tivaldo	1773–4	Silvestro Valier
1719–20	Giorgio Assani	1751–3	Zuanne Metaxà	1775	Spiridion Cazzaiti
1720–1	Andrea Anino	1753	Marin Metaxà	1776–7	Vittor Dalladecima
1721–2	Gerolamo	1753(?)	[Pietro Crassan]	1777–8	Anastasio Caruso
	Dalladecima	1753–4	Vincenzo Cimara	1777(?)	[Zorzi Metaxà]
1722–4	Giorgio Corafan	1754–5	Spiridion Anino	1779	Zuanne Loverdo
1724–5	Andrea Metaxà	1756–7	Pietro Crassan	1779–80	Spiridion Focà
1725–6	Nicolò Cladan	1757–8	Marin Focà	1781	Anastasio Anino
1726–7	Gradenigo Loverdo	1757(?)	[Marin Anino]	1782	Spiridion Loverdo
1727–8	Zuanne Crassan	1758–9	Giov. Spiridion	1783	Luigi Dalladecima
1728–30	Gerolamo		Crassan	1784	Zuanne Anino
	Dalladecima	1759	Zuanne Policalà	1784–5	Zorzi Loverdo
1730–1	Zuanne Sdrin	1759–60	Nicolò Loverdo	1786	Eustachio Metaxà
1731–2	Andrea Tivaldo	1761–2	Giovanni Cambici	1786–7	Teodoro Assani
1733	Demetrio Caruso	1761–3	Zuanne Tivaldo	1788	Anastasio Tivaldo
1733–4	Demetrio Pignator	1763–4	Valliano Metaxà	1789	Pietro Schiadan
1735–6	Anastasio Anino	1764(?)	[Nicolò Trecca]	1790	Cristodulo Anino
1737–9	Stellio Corafan	1764	Zuanne Surian	1791	Euffemio Loverdo
1739–40	Giovanni Cambici		Sciropulo	1792	Anastasio Pilica
1740–2	Andrea Anino	1765–6	Zuanne Avrami	1793	Ottavio Valier
1742–4	Marin Anino	1767	Giorgio Cazzaiti	1794	Giov. Francesco
1744(?)	[Giacomo Metaxà]	1767–9	Liberal Tivaldo		Zulatti
1744–7	Marin Metaxà	1770	Anastasio	1794–5	Marin Metaxà
1747–8	Zuanne Metaxà		Melissinò	1796	Giorgio Anino
1748–9	Demetrio Caruso	1770–1	Gerasimo Anino	1796–7	Gerasimo Policalà
1749–50	Giov. Battista	1772	Marin Tivaldo		
	Metaxà	1772–3	Pietro Schiadan		

Note: square brackets [] denote names of those who successfully appealed for appointment to Venice, but their actual service cannot be corroborated by other primary sources.

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Οι διοικητές της βενετοκρατούμενης Ιθάκης

Η ιστοριογραφία της βενετοκρατούμενης Ελλάδας έχει ασχοληθεί πολύ λίγο με την αποικιακή εμπειρία της Ιθάκης. Ενώ οι ιστορικοί έχουν στη διάθεσή τους πλούσια δημοσιευμένα τεκμήρια για τη διοίκηση των μεγαλύτερων κτήσεων του χώρου, τα ακαταλόγιστα βενετικά έγγραφα στα

Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους στην Ιθάκη παραμένουν ανεξερεύνητα. Η πρόσφατη επαναλειτουργία του αρχείου επέτρεψε επιτέλους την επισκόπηση αυτής της μεγάλης συλλογής βενετικών εγγράφων και την παρουσίαση μίας περιγραφής του ρόλου των διοικητών της βενετοκρατούμενης Ιθάκης. Η θέση του διοικητή καταλαμβάνονταν από Κεφαλλονίτες ευγενείς και όχι από διορισμένους Βενετούς κατά τον τρόπο που ίσχυε στα μεγαλύτερα Επτάνησα. Εδώ παρουσιάζεται για πρώτη φορά ένας εκτενής κατάλογος των διοικητών της Ιθάκης που έχει συνταχθεί από έγγραφα από την Ιθάκη, μαζί με τη βοήθεια περαιτέρω έρευνας στα αρχεία της Κεφαλονιάς και της Βενετίας. Η περιγραφή της διοίκησης της Ιθάκης που παρέχεται εδώ έχει ως στόχο να προωθήσει το ενδιαφέρον για το αρχείο της βενετικής διοίκησης της Ιθάκης και να λειτουργήσει ως οδηγός για τις μελλοντικές έρευνες σε αυτή την παραμελημένη γωνιά της αυτοκρατορίας.