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THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE DUBROVNIK REPUBLIC

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In this article the author has given a complete review of the DUBROVNIK REPUBLIC from the beginning, since its days of creation, through different stages of its existence and territorial expansion, until it ceased to exist, in the early 19th century. Especially valuable is the author's geographical and political review of the city-state's interrelation with Venice, Turkey, the Habsburg Monarchy, and other factors in this part of Europe.

Političko-geografski prikaz Dubrovačke republike

U članku autor daje cjelovit prikaz razvoja Dubrovačke republike, od njezina nastanka, preko pojedinih faza teritorijalnoga širenja, do ukinuća početkom 19. stoljeća. Pogotovu su vrijedni političko-geografski prikazi odnosa prema Veneciji, Turskoj, Habsburškoj monarhiji i drugim čimbenicima u ovom dijelu Europe.

Introduction

Political geography is concerned with the spatial interaction of geographical and political occurrences. Its scope covers a wide field including the geographical coincidence of boundaries, territorial claims, the social cohesion of the population, the role of resources within and beyond state limits, and the pursuit of trade. Historical research in political geography has largely tended to follow two complementary methods. First, one may define the historical atlas approach, consisting of attempts to reconstruct political regions as they endured at specific points time.^{1/} Secondly, there has been a search for common processes in the emergency and development of political regions, and for frameworks for their analysis.^{2/}

This paper will examine the political geography of a small city-state, in an attempt to combine the above two methods within the sphere of commercial prosperity. Every state carries on trade, although in some instances of limited scope. Trade can be a source of strength, or weakness through extreme dependence upon certain merchandise and markets. Commerce can also be a policy agent, which can be measured according to its significance for a state's potential power. Here these concepts will be examined in the context of the Dubrovnik Republic (Ragusa), a small city-state on the east Adriatic coast which managed to retain its independence over several centuries due to skilful manipulation of politi-

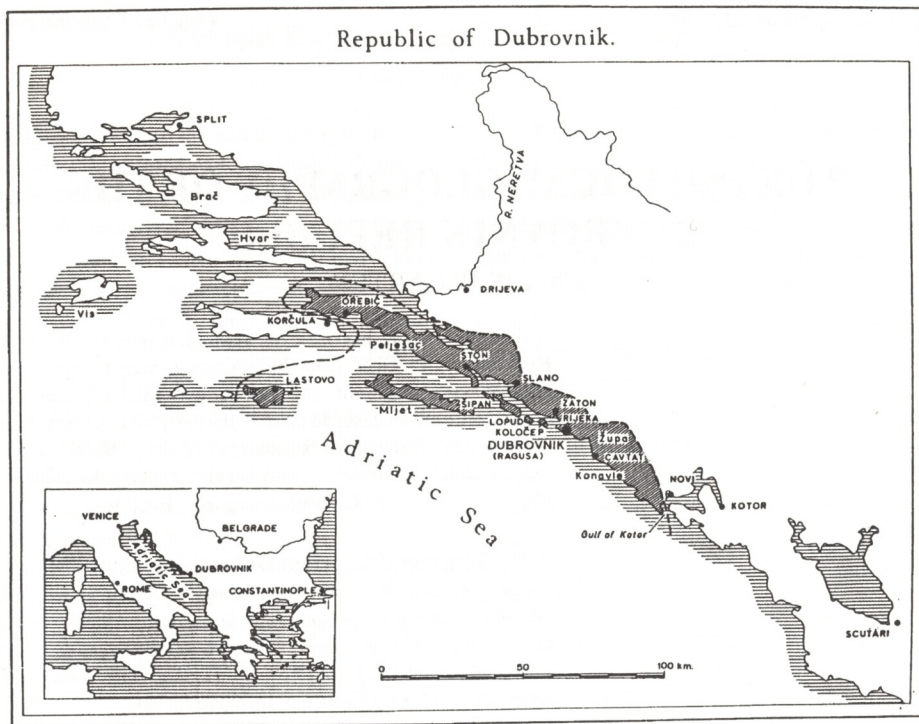


Fig. 1. Republic of Dubrovnik
Sl. 1. Karta Dubrovačke republike

cal factors within its own spatial sphere of influence. (Fig.1).

Early Development of the Dubrovnik Republic.

The exact year of Dubrovnik's foundation is uncertain, but it was probably between the years 639 and 656 A.D. The former of these years marked the partial destruction of the neighbouring Epidaurus (present-day Cavtat) by the Avars, and the latter with the total ruin of this city by the Croats. Survivors of the fleeing inhabitants colonised a rocky islet 11 km to the north-west of Epidaurus

and founded a new settlement called Ragusa, which was later to become Dubrovnik.^{3/}

Dubrovnik's early development owed much to three main characteristics. First, was its geographical position; it was situated on the margins of East and West. It was a meeting point for Latin and Slav, of the Eastern and Western Churches, of Christian and Mohammedan. One of the chief commercial highways from the coast to the interior had its terminus at Dubrovnik, where the Slavs from the interior found their nearest market and a place where civilization and culture flourished. Secondly, Dubrovnik's natural position on a rocky island separated from the coast by

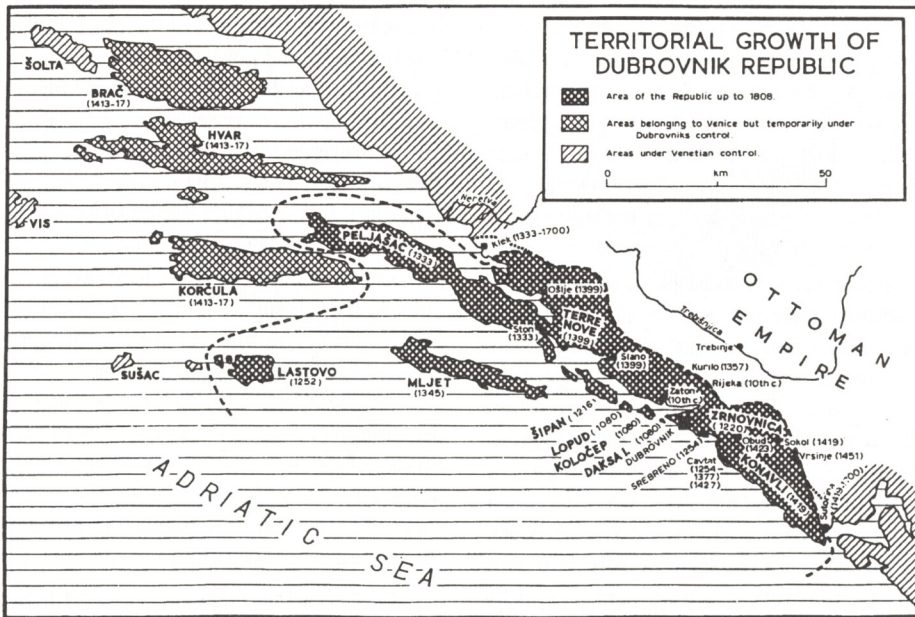


Fig. 1b. Territorial growth of Dubrovnik Republic
 Sl. 1b. Teritorijalno širenje Dubrovačke republike

a marshy channel provided a strategic defensive site, against potential attack. Thirdly, and consequent upon that, was it provided a haven of refuge, during the troubled times following the fall of the Roman Empire and barbarian invasions. As a result of these three advantageous factors, Dubrovnik by the ninth century was still small but growing in size under the protection of Byzantine authority.

From the ninth to thirteenth century the main interest of Dubrovnik was as much involved with the repeated attempts of the Slavic inland states and Venice to intervene in the affairs of the east Adriatic coast, favoured by nature to independence and piracy, as it was by the dying shadow of Byzantine rule. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Dubrovnik became a Venetian dependency (1204) and was to remain so for a further century and

a half until 1358. This period was to prove decisive for Dubrovnik's commercial interests creating a brake on her flourishing overseas trade. The city was now handicapped by a Venetian policy directed towards commercial monopoly of the Mediterranean Basin and particularly the Adriatic Sea. Venetian domination of the Adriatic saw application of the "mare clausum" theory whereby Dubrovnik became part of a recognized private political domain under the domination of the "Lion of St. Mark".

Political Relations of the Dubrovnik Republic during the Later Middle Ages (1358-1500).

The year 1358 was an important landmark in the political life of Dubrovnik. (Fig.2). The victory of Hungary and Croatia

over the Venetians in that year meant Dubrovnik was ruled by a more land than sea oriented power. The Hungarian king (Ludvik) did not possess a strong fleet and allowed his more southern cities like Dubrovnik greater freedom, never exercising his treaty rights over them. This meant to all intents and purposes that Dubrovnik enjoyed the status of an independent state.

There was a marked political difference in attitude between Venice and Hungary. Whilst the former was a great maritime power and commercial rival of Dubrovnik especially over selling salt, Hungary was purely a military state, with few aspirations for distant dominions or mercantile competition. Its main reason for possessing Dubrovnik was to secure a wider outlet to the sea than the Croatian coast, but had no seaborne trade to interfere with that of Dubrovnik. Hungary's security of its own borders led to a desire for allegiance of the Bosnian Bans, but there was no aim to control those Slav lands immediately behind Dubrovnik. The city now attempted to consolidate its independence under Hungarian sovereignty, its citizens realizing that as a small state they "obviously cannot use their size or depth as an aid in defence. Surrounded by neighbours many times larger they have to rely on other forceful means to preserve and project themselves".^{4/}

Given this situation it is now pertinent to enquire how the political geography of Dubrovnik was affected by its political relations with other major players on the scene in the Later Middle Ages.

a) Relations with the Slavonic Rulers.

The conditions of the Slavonic states behind Dalmatia were at this time extremely disturbed. During the brilliant reign of Stephen Dušan (1330-1355), the Serbian people were at the height of their greatness and power.

Macedonia, Albania and other parts of the Greek Empire, and a part of Bosnia, as well as Serbia proper, acknowledged the rule of the Serbian Tsar, and even Bulgaria paid him tribute. The prominent position of Serbia under his rule revealed that Dušan was not only a great warrior, but a capable legislator, who drew up the "Zakonik" or code of laws.^{5/} On his death in 1355, the whole fabric of his Empire split up into a number of separate principalities. He was succeeded by his son Uroš IV (1355-1367), who was not strong enough to carry on his father's work, and the magnates and governors began to show signs of insubordination. Not only was he plagued by internal dissent, but was also attacked by foreign neighbours. On his death in 1367, Vukašin succeeded to the throne, which only hastened the disruption of the Empire.

Of the various states into which the Serbian Empire split up the first to be formed was the Zedda (Zeta or Zenta) ruled by the Balša family. It consisted of the region around Lake Skadar and is another name for the ancient Doclea. At once the family aspired to become independent of Serbian authority and to expand their own territories. The family's first move was an alliance with Dubrovnik in which the family became honorary citizens. Between 1362-1370 they conquered Skadar and removed all allegiance to Dušan's successors. South of Zedda lay Albania proper, an area after 1364 which became independent of Serbia.

In the immediate hinterland of Dubrovnik was the land of Hum (Humina). Ruled by Prince Vojislav Vojinović, his territory extended from the River Morava via Sjenica and Gačko to Kotor and Dubrovnik and included the coast between these latter two cities. He was Dubrovnik's bitterest enemy and never ceased from molesting its citizens; on his death in 1363 his successor Nicholas, centred

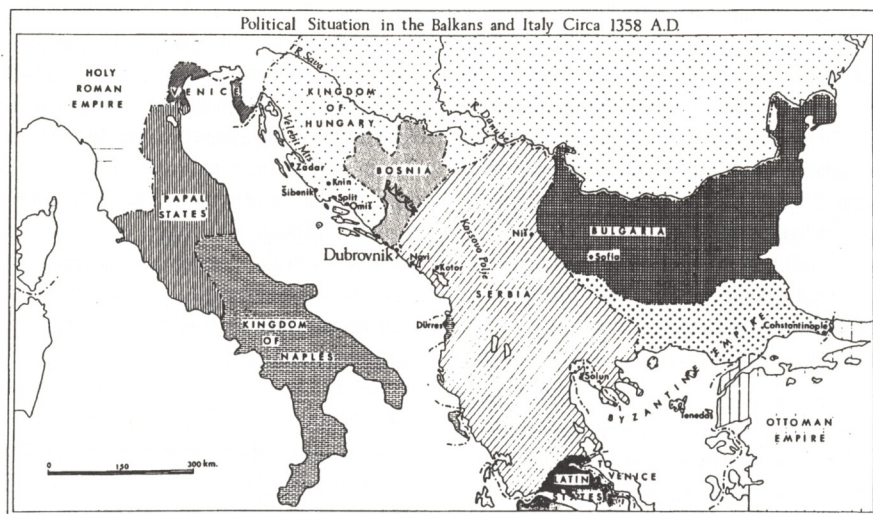


Fig. 2. Political Situation in the Balkans and Italy circa 1358 A.D.

Sl. 2. Politička situacija na Balkanskom poluotoku i Italiji oko 1358. godine

his headquarters on the important commercial town of Rudnik.

Bosnia reached the peak of its medieval power during the reign of Stephen Tvrtko (1353-1391). Taking advantage of the disorganized Serbian state, he obtained large tracts of Serbian territory as reward for helping them against the new menace of the Ottoman Turks. On two separate occasions however, he was forced to resort to the help of King Ludovik of Hungary; in the first instance he helped Tvrtko restore order after an uprising of the Bosnian barons, and strengthening of the Bogomil religious sect which threatened armed intervention by Pope Innocent VI in 1360. The second related to another internal rebellion and expulsion of Tvrtko from Bosnia in 1365. Timely intervention by the Hungarian king in 1366 reestablished Tvrtko's position as ruler of Bosnia and in the same year he visited Dubrovnik and contracted a treaty of perpetual alliance with the republic.⁶⁷

Tvrtko now set about consolidating his disturbed state during a peaceful period and

Dubrovnik began to concentrate on its own independence and develop trade, but neither were destined to enjoy a long period of undisturbed peace. In Dubrovnik's case further problems arose from conflicts with Prince Vojislav Vojinović, Count of Hum.⁷¹ Early in 1359 he raided Dubrovnik territory (Astarea and Šumet), burning houses and churches, cutting down vineyards, taking prisoners and arresting Dubrovnik merchants in his territories. He was described as "like a wolf who wishes to devour us lambs".⁸¹ Dubrovnik itself was attacked by Vojislav's ships in July 1361.⁹¹ The republic retaliated by confiscating money the prince had had deposited in the city (the Slavs used Dubrovnik as their banking centre). This money was used to finance a naval expedition against Vojislav's port base in Kotor, together with landward raids into his territory, but the conflict lingered on for over two years, finally being ended through Venetian and Serbian intervention.

Another war took place in 1363-1364 between Hum and Dubrovnik. An alliance be-

tween Dubrovnik and the Balša family agreed to attack Kotor; this port was Vojislav's ally, which Dubrovnik agreed to assault by sea whilst the Balšas assented to invasion by land.^{10/} Finally, in August 1362, the Serbian Tsar intervened and peace was signed at Onogošt (present-day Nikšić in Montenegro).^{11/} All parties regained their former privileges, prisoners were liberated, and compensation paid for injuries. The chief result for Dubrovnik was the introduction of the plague from the interior.^{12/}

Peace failed to prevent the lawless Count of Hum, Nicholas Altmanović, cousin of Vojislav Vojinović, from raiding neighbouring territory. He was described in Dubrovnik documents as "the worst of all the Slavic barons, although they are all false and infamous".^{13/} The Count was not content with the gifts given to him by Dubrovnik's rulers, and demanded the financial tribute due to the Serbian Tsar. On refusal he invaded Dubrovnik territory and tortured its prisoners. At this time during the early 1370's the whole of the interior Balkans was in a state of anarchy, and inland trade was almost at a standstill; Dubrovnik's leaders requested the Hungarian King to intercede with the Pope to allow two ships to be sent annually to the lands of the Infidel. By the mid-1370's however, the demise of Altmanović left Tvrtko as the most powerful ruler in the western Balkans; Bosnian territory in 1376 extended over a great part of the Serbian lands as far as Trebinje, Kotor, and Nikšić in the south, to Sjenica in the east and included the important Mileševo monastery.^{14/}

The death of the Hungarian king (Ludvik) in 1382, was followed by civil war which was to devastate Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia over the next quarter of a century. Tvrtko was determined to take advantage of these disturbances and aimed at

capturing Dubrovnik. He knew this could not be achieved without a large fleet which he did not possess; his alternative was to establish a rival trading centre at the entrance to Kotor Bay at Novi (later Erzegnovi) for he realized Dubrovnik's citizens lived entirely by commerce. The newly opened salt-pans at Erzegnovi (Herceg Novi) created direct competition for Dubrovnik in the whole of Dalmatia and Croatia; fortunately with Hungarian support Dubrovnik managed to persuade Tvrtko to close his salt market.^{15/} In April 1387, Tvrtko concluded a treaty with Dubrovnik, in which he promised to protect the city from all enemies, and in return its citizens granted him the right of asylum should he ever be in need of it.

By the following year, 1388, Bosnia's power in Croatia and Dalmatia had greatly increased; Tvrtko obtained possession of such important castles as Klis, Vrana, Ostrović, and probably Knin, the key to Croatia.^{16/} In an atmosphere of war and revolution, Tvrtko tried to obtain Dalmatian coastal towns; whilst Dubrovnik remained loyal to the Hungarian crown, various other Dalmatian towns, including Split, raised the Bosnian standard on June 15, 1389 - ironically the very day when the death-knell of the Southern Slavs sounded on the faral "Field of Crows" (Kosovo Polje).

This significant date enabled the Ottoman Turks to march onward into the Balkans, at a time when Tvrtko was consolidating his kingdom at the expense of his neighbours, while Hungary was prey to civil war, and while the Serbian princelings were eternally fighting amongst themselves. By 1390 Tvrtko had conquered the whole territory from the Velebit mountains and Zadar in the north to Kotor in the south, along with the central Dalmatian islands of Brač, Korčula and Hvar. Dubrovnik alone remained outside his domain. Under him, Bosnia enjoyed an expanse of territory

previously unknown. Unfortunately, much of this enlargement was not based on solid foundations and with Tvrtko's death in 1391 soon crumbled; his brother and successor (Stephen Dabiša) soon lost the greater part of Dalmatia and Croatia.

The year 1395 proved an unfortunate one for Dubrovnik. First, the Balša family obtained a trade monopoly in the Zedda, which reached as far inland as Prizren and Novo Brdo, and its ruler Constantine Balša laid heavy impositions on Dubrovnik traders in an attempt to exclude them from his territory.^{17/} Secondly, in that year heavy rains flooded the city and its immediate environs, destroying all the crops; thirdly, on May 19th a severe earthquake wrought great havoc - the first to be felt in Dalmatia for many centuries.^{18/} On top of such disasters, this was a period of intense piracy, the Adriatic infested with the ships of George de Palma, which affected Dubrovnik's maritime trade.

By the turn of the century however, Dubrovnik's situation had improved. Bosnia was now ruled by Stephen Ostoja, who had defeated Hungarian incursion, whilst the Ottoman threat had receded with Sultan Bayazet I having to hurry off to Asia to defend his Empire (1400-1402) against Tamelan Timur in the battle for Ankara. Meanwhile Ostoja had granted Dubrovnik a stretch of coast from Ston to Klek (at mouth of the Neretva river) in 1399. Nevertheless, he continues to pester Dubrovnik into recognizing his supremacy, but its citizens reconfirmed their fealty to the Hungarian crown. Fortunately for Dubrovnik, Ostoja was deposed and the new ruler Stephen Tvrtko II was more friendly to the small republic.^{19/}

Also of interest is Dubrovnik's relations with the Balša family. On the death of its ruler George II, in 1403, his son Balša III succeeded him. The Zedda was now surrounded by jeal-

ous rivals; the Turks claimed tribute, Venice wished to establish trading posts in the country against the Turks, and various native princelings aspired to enlarge their estates. Dubrovnik sided with Venice, but Balša III was determined to oust the Venetians from Albania with Turkish support. In the ensuing conflict (1410-1412), Dubrovnik tended to sit in the fence, fearful of losing her Albania trade links. Haplessly, Dubrovnik's ambiguous attitude annoyed both parties in the conflict and her merchants suffered accordingly.

Fresh disturbances in Bosnia now attracted Dubrovnik's attention. Stephen Tvrtko II was troubled by a rebellious faction led by Hrvoje, who had been given shelter in the republic much to the former's annoyance. The Bosnian king was defeated and Hrvoje called in Ottoman support to fight against Hungary and Bosnia. Sultan Mohammed I sent a force into Bosnia and defeated the Hungarians near Usora, together with obtaining much booty. Once the Ottomans had retired from the scene, civil war again broke out. Hrvoje died in March 1416 and in October of that year a Dubrovnik despatch noted that "the whole of Bosnia is laid waste, and the barons are preparing to exterminate each other".^{20/} Rebel magnates continue their warring conflicts, some requesting Ottoman help, which continued to trouble Dubrovnik for years to come.

Even so the early 1420's was a period of greater calm for Dubrovnik. The Balša dynasty had died out and the Zedda principality disappeared, much of the territory being occupied by Venice. Bosnia was quieter and the Turks had been driven out of the country, their leader (Isak Beg) being defeated in a raid on Hungary and the Bosnian king Stephen Tvrtko II was able to reoccupy Vrhbosna (later Sarajevo). The long civil war in Croatia and Dalmatia had resulted in acquisition of

the littoral by Venice. However more ominously, by 1426 there were 4,000 Ottoman troops in Bosnia, who seized a number of towns and raided Croatia, Usora, and Srebrenica with the Bosnian king powerless to even resist.^{21/} Similarly, Dubrovnik's trading colonies in Novo Brdo and Prizren were besieged by the Ottomans and found to be in great danger; the routes through Albania, Bosnia and Slavonia were also interrupted.^{22/} Inland trade was at a standstill.

In 1431 Council of Basle had met, and one of its most active members was Johannes Stoicus from Dubrovnik. He made every effort to promote the union of Eastern and Western Christian Churches, and end the religious strife in the Balkans with a view to common action against the Ottomans. He also requested the Dubrovnik Senate to try and induce the chief princes of Serbia, and Bosnia, whether schismatics or Bogomils, to send envoys to Basle. The attempt was unsuccessful. Meanwhile a war broke out between the King of Bosnia (Stephen Lazarević) and the Despot of Serbia, which was destined to last for thirty years. By now all the Slav princes were fighting amongst themselves, and Dubrovnik had the opportunity to extend her territory at their expense; prudently she refused realizing that the Ottomans had earmarked the whole of the area for themselves, and to have done so would have created future annihilation.

Ottoman influence upon the internal divisions of the Slavic states was gradually becoming apparent. By the midfifteenth century Serbia was little more than an Ottoman vassal state under Stephen Kosača. He was one of the fated rulers of the Balkans; his attitude contributed to the Ottoman conquest of the South Slavonic lands for his aim was simply to consolidate and extend his territory at the expense of neighbours. To achieve this he availed himself of Ottoman assistance, which

the Turks were always only too ready to give. He also proved to be an inveterate enemy of Dubrovnik, by raising customs duties for its merchants, and opening competitive salt markets in the Neretva valley. War followed in which he occupied part of Dubrovnik's territory (Konavle), and laid waste other areas of the republic. Peace was made at last (1454) through the intervention of the Turkish Vizir, and confirmed the 'status quo'. Kosača promised never to attack Dubrovnik again, "save by order of the Sultan of Turkey, Mehmet Beg" (Mohammed II).^{23/} It was becoming crystal clear that already the Sultan's influence in this part of the world was predominant.

The Balkans were indeed in a most terrible condition at this time. The Ottoman Turks threatened from the south, the Croatian ruler from the west, and internally the Bogomils were in open revolt and protected by Kosača, himself a member of this religious sect. Perhaps more importantly Kosača was a mere pawn in Ottoman ambitions; they supported him only as long as he was useful to them. Similarly, many of the Bosnian magnates were holding treasonable intercourse with the Turks, while countless innocent Bosnian fugitives were fleeing to Dalmatian cities, especially the ever-hospitable Dubrovnik. There were frequent Ottoman raids into Hercegovina from southern Bosna, clearly in attempt to control the mouth of the Neretva river. Likewise, Dubrovnik too was subject to such raids as in 1469 and 1470, causing a defensive moat to be built around the city.^{24/}

b). Relations with Venice.

The Dubrovnik Republic was not only in constant danger from the powerful landward enemies which surrounded it on all sides, but also from the sea. The Venetians, who were always trying to claim the monopoly of the Adriatic, were ever anxious to increase their

influence and to become absolute masters of Dubrovnik, as they were of the other Dalmatian towns. After their forced withdrawal from Dubrovnik in 1358, they made attempts to reinstate their authority in the city. In that year having lost Dalmatia with Dubrovnik its chief naval base, Venice turned her attention towards Albania and the adjoining Slavonic countries. Trade was encouraged, and the foundations laid for the revival of Venetian influence in the Adriatic.^{25/}

In 1378, as a consequence of intrigues by the Venetians and Genoese over Constantinople, the Chioggia War began between them, and involved Dubrovnik. The latter, as a vassal of the Hungarian potentate, found itself at war with Venice. Dubrovnik's vessels harried and blockaded other Venetian-held Dalmatian ports amongst them Kotor, taking the opportunity to destroy its salt-pans and rid itself of a dangerous competitor.^{26/} Such escapades placed the republic in great fear of attack by the Venetian fleet and therefore desperate efforts were made to strengthen the city's defences and those of Ston. Total defeat of the Venetian fleet off Pula in May 1379, led to the re-occupation of Kotor and its allegiance to the Hungarian crown.^{27/} However, final victory for the Venetians in 1381 was somewhat hollow as the republic had to renounce all its claims to Dalmatia, much to the satisfaction of Dubrovnik.

Nevertheless, amidst all the confusion in the Balkans, and the internal complications of the Hungarian kingdom during the first decade of the fifteenth century, Venice was able to obtain virtual control of almost the whole of the Dalmatian coastline. In 1409 Venetian ambitions in Dalmatia led to an outbreak of hostilities between them and the Hungarian king, who regarded the Dalmatian coast as an integral part of his dominions. Meanwhile the real enemy was advancing ever closer, for in

1411 the Ottoman Turks had captured and burnt down Srebrenica in Bosnia. Surprisingly oblivious to this fact, the maze of intrigue and counter-intrigue between Venice, Hungary, Dubrovnik, Bosnia and the various Slav and Albanian princes continued unabated and became hopelessly involved. No one trusted the other as reflected in a Dubrovnik despatch warning that the republic "had to be on good terms with these lords of Slavonia, for every day our merchants and our goods pass through their hands and their territory, and we fear lest they (the merchants) should suffer injury"^{28/} The protection and promotion of trade was the key-note of Dubrovnik's policy, and everything was done with that end in view.

The year 1420 opened a new epoch in Dalmatia's history, for it marked the final reconquest of the country by Venice and the withdrawal of Hungary from the Adriatic. Dubrovnik alone remained outside their sphere and it is likely that Venice may have thought of uniting her Dalmatian possessions by reoccupying Dubrovnik. From now on Venice was able to assert the idea of "mare clausum" on the Adriatic, with the Dalmatian coast supplying it with raw materials and providing markets, whilst the smooth Italian coastline offered few sites suitable for the rise of rival ports, and prevented the establishment of competing cities. This led to numerous skirmishes between Dubrovnik and Venice until in 1444, the former's neutrality was finally recognized.^{29/} Even so, Dubrovnik remained suspicious of every Venetian move in its attempt to gain an unbroken line of trading posts down the length of the east Adriatic coast. Distrust between them continued as exemplified in 1484, with the imposition of a Venetian decree forbidding Dubrovnik to trade with the city or its possessions, following Dubrovnik's support for the Duchy of Ferrara during local hostilities.^{30/} (Fig.3).

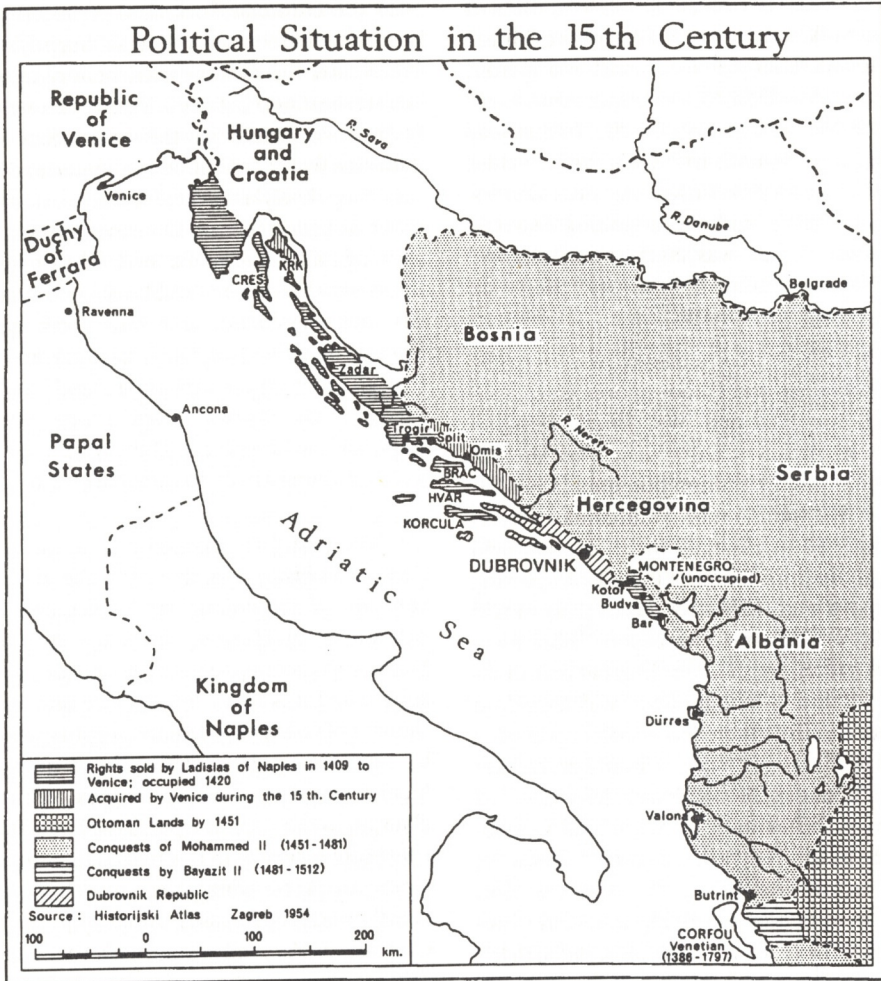


Fig. 3. Political Situation in the 15th Century
 Sl. 3. Politička situacija u 15. stoljeću

c). Relations with the Turks.

During the Later Middle Ages, the Ottoman Turks were destined to conquer much of the Balkan peninsula, a large part of Dalmatia, and nearly the whole of Hungary. The Dubrovnik Senate had the foresight to understand the growing importance of the Ottoman

and obtained from Pope Urban V an exemption to trade with the Infidel. Dubrovnik was one of the first Christian states to make a treaty with the Ottomans and its citizens were enabled to penetrate into the remotest parts of the Turkish Empire and form permanent settlements there, at a time when

other Christians were either excluded altogether, or limited to a few coastal towns. The tributes Dubrovnik paid for these advantages proves a most profitable investment, although its amount increased with the passage of time.

At first the Ottoman Turks were content to obtain control through alliance, and where force had to be used, to restore the defeated local rulers as their vassals. After the fall of Niš in 1375, and Sofia in 1382 almost all of southern Bulgaria was in Turkish hands; in 1392, all of Bulgaria passed under the Turkish yoke and was to remain so until the nineteenth century. With the defeat of the Serbian-Bosnia

army in the Kosovo plain (June 1389), no one realized at the time what a crushing blow had befallen the Slavonic peoples of the Balkans. By their civil wars and mutual jealousies, they had prepared the way for their greatest enemy and that of all Christendom.

As in the 1350's so in the 1390's the citizens of Dubrovnik realized the impending danger of the Turks in Europe. During the last decade of the fourteenth century the Turks were to occupy Macedonia, and pressed into southern Serbia. In 1396, Dubrovnik traders were given permission by the Turks to trade in Serbia.^{31/} The following year a treaty was draw



Fig. 4. The Turkish Expansion into Europe, Asia Minor and Africa 1358-1683.
Sl. 4. Turska ekspanzija u Europu, Malu Aziju i Afriku između 1358. i 1683. godine

up allowing Dubrovnik to trade in any part of Sultan Bayezit I's empire.^{32/} It should be noted that so great was Dubrovnik's diplomatic skill such events were allowed to occur without offending the Hungarian throne. Dubrovnik's citizen realized that they had to live by trade irrespective of who were the political rulers of a country. Thus during the fifteenth century, Dubrovnik came increasingly under the Turkish sphere of influence, although continuing to recognize Hungarian sovereignty until the Battle of Mohács in 1526.

In 1453 the whole of Europe was shaken to its foundations with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.^{33/} This event did not however have much direct effect on the Balkans, particularly Bosnia as the Turkish conquest there was well under way. For Dubrovnik it did mean firstly, the raising of her tribute to the Sultan (totalling 5,000 ducats), and secondly the city became a haven of refuge for fugitives from Turkish-held territories, (e.g. Greeks from Constantinople) often en route to Ancona. Meanwhile Sultan Mohammed II's main objective was to prepare for his conquest of Hungary, the only power he feared, for Genoa was weak and Venice was only interested in preserving her own commercial privileges under the Infidel ruler.^{34/}

Turkish pressure continued. In 1459 the whole of Serbia including Belgrade was under Turkish rule; in the same year the final conquest of Bosnia was begun and completed in 1463. Dubrovnik's main concern was the increasing cost of its annual Turkish tribute (now at 1,500 ducats),^{35/} but it was difficult to object with Turkish block-houses standing only a few kilometres from the city gates. Conversely, in part this amount replaced tributes previously paid to inland Slavonic princes, and Dubrovnik's citizen obtained many new trade privileges. The real danger for them was a Turkish desire to suddenly capture the city,

which required all the Senat's diplomatic skill to avoid such a contingency, as well as renewed efforts at fortification, recalling the fleet to home waters, and plans for conserving water supply.

In 1474 the Ottomans renewed their incursions into Albania, reducing Venetian influence there except for a few coastal towns. Dubrovnik was more fortunate; all her privileges contracted with Mohammed II were reconfirmed by his successor Bayazit II on the former's death in 1481. The following year he successfully conquered Hercegovina, bringing Dubrovnik's contacts with the Turks even closer. By 1500, the Ottomans controlled the whole of Bosnia, Hercegovina, most of Albania, parts of Croatia, Slavonia and Hungary. Dubrovnik's land frontier was almost encompassed by the Infidel, except for the marshy delta in the north which divided it from Venetian-held Dalmatia.

d) Relations with Southern Italy

During the second half of the fifteenth century difficult conditions prevailed in the hinterland, which subsequently caused a decline in trade for Dubrovnik. Coupled with this was a need for a constant watch to be kept on Venetian activities in the Adriatic. Dubrovnik found it therefore a refreshing change to possess a stable political relationship with southern Italy. There had always been friendly relations between Dubrovnik and southern Italy, but these reached a climax during the reigns of Alfonso I (1416-1458) and his son Ferdinand I (1458-1494), in the Aragonese kingdom of Naples, and like Dubrovnik, adversaries of Venice.

Alfonso realized that southern Italy would stagnate without its trade and maritime relations.^{36/} He saw Dubrovnik as a useful commercial partner and by his uniting Aragon and Sicily in 1442 inadvertently increased

Dubrovnik's trading sphere at the expense of Venice. This came at a most appropriate time for Dubrovnik, when its commercial hinterland was subjected to disruption through Turkish conquest. Moreover, southern Italy's richness in wool and corn, and relative proximity proved strong reasons for Dubrovnik cementing closer links with Alfonso and his heir's kingdom. Unfortunately, the final succession of the Spaniards, Ferdinand and Isabella to the kingdom of Naples in 1490 led to a deterioration in Dubrovnik's relations with the Aragonese kingdom, probably resulting from their resentment of Dubrovnik's close ties with the Ottoman Turks.

e) Relations with Hungary.

Finally some evaluation should be made of Hungarian rule in Dubrovnik during the Later Middle Ages. During the period of Hungarian control over Dubrovnik, the Magyar kings did not behave tyrannically towards their subjects. In fact Dubrovnik's citizens were allowed to make their own laws in their own Senate, promulgating them without the King's sanction. Also the Magyar rulers respected Dubrovnik's political, economic, religious, social and cultural attitudes. This was largely because of too many other interests in Italy, the Empire, in the Balkans, in the Czech, Austrian, Russian and Polish lands, and overseas, to be too involved in a distant Croatian city. Moreover, after 1420 Hungary's relationship with Dubrovnik was considerably altered as they no longer shared a common border. This meant that Dubrovnik was allowed even more independence than previously, but they continued to recognize the suzerainty of the Hungarian crown.^{37/}

By the fifteenth century Hungary was no longer able to offer Dubrovnik valid protection, for she was weak on her southern border. Nevertheless, Dubrovnik continued to keep

on good terms with the Hungarian monarch, furnishing him with information on enemy movements, and made an irregular tribute payment of 500 ducats. This was partly for commercial reasons as the Hungarian trade was still significant for them; furthermore Dubrovnik did not trust the Venetians. For the next hundred years (until 1526) Dubrovnik was bound by such vague ties that for all practical purposes it may be regarded as an independent state. Perhaps the best testimony of Dubrovnik's relationship with Hungary and the latter's general tolerance of the former's individuality is the surprising lack of material reminders of Hungary rule in Dubrovnik itself, and compares favourably with the imprint of Venetian rule on most other cities along the Dalmatian littoral.

Political Relations of the Dubrovnik Republic during the Early Modern Period (1500-1800).

The last years of the fifteenth century and the first of the sixteenth were to prove a turning point in the life of Dubrovnik. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the political, commercial and cultural relations of Europe became, for the first time in history, world-wide in extent. The Early Modern Period was to see not only a new sea route with the East brought into use, thanks to the discoveries of the Portuguese navigators, but further the discoveries of Columbus and the Cabots opened up parts of the American continent to European colonization, exploitation and trade.

a). Changes in Western Eutope.

The discovery both of the new ocean route to the East and of the American continent and West Indian islands effected a reorientation in European commerce. These two events changed the geographical values of

European lands. The Baltic and the Mediterranean lost their former centrality and supremacy in European trade. In the new oceanic world those states which had more westerly situations, which sea-boards fronting the Atlantic and the North Sea enjoyed geographical advantages in relation to the sea routes to the Indies and the Americas.

It was a fortunate circumstance for at least some of these states that the new opportunities came at a time of political consolidation; certainly in Spain, Portugal and England the growth of royal power and national unity favoured economic advances. The Mediterranean and Baltic Seas although they lost their importance, nevertheless continued to play an active part in European commerce. Venice ceased to rule in European trade, and began to lose its entrepot business in such a lucrative trade as spices. Similarly what affected Venice was also felt by Dubrovnik for although they were competitors these external events were experienced by them both. Venice now increasingly restricted her commercial activities to the Mediterranean thus intensifying her political and economic competition with Dubrovnik.^{38/}

b). Events in South-East Europe.

Dubrovnik also had to take account of events in south-eastern Europe situated as she was on the borders between East and West. Dubrovnik was especially affected by Ottoman Turkish influence, owing to her semi-independent position and her close intercourse with her powerful neighbour. (Fig.4). Ottoman policy was always founded more on expediency than on far-sighted diplomacy, whilst Turkish aggression was usually a response to external pressure or foreign alliance. Thus prolonged war was often astonishingly indecisive.

The period opened with unusual peace in south-eastern Europe. The mild and studious son of the conqueror of Constantinople, Sultan Bayezid II (1498-1512) was too involved in struggles with the rising Persian state and the mameluks of Egypt to pay much attention to events in the West, like his successor Selim I (1512-1520). Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) realized that his two weaknesses were the fortress city of Belgrade and the heavily fortified island of Rhodes, both important trading centres for Dubrovnik's merchants.^{39/} The first endangered the security of his northern frontiers and the second threatened the communications between Cairo and Constantinople. Belgrade fell to him in 1521 and Rhodes a year later.

The year 1526 was a momentous one for Christendom. Previously the Turkish Wars with Hungary had continued intermittently; the aim of the Ottomans was to open up the rich Hungarian plains for their invading armies. The great Battle of Mohács led by Suleiman saw the Hungarians totally defeated and they suffered 20,000 dead including the Hungarian monarch. Dubrovnik's dependence on Hungary now ceased. Henceforth the Republic was more or less under Turkish protection until its fall,^{40/} and yet its trade was to flourish just as much under the Crescent as the Cross.

c). Dubrovnik and the European Wars.

The various European Wars of the Early Modern Period were to prove a trying time for Dubrovnik, whose diplomats needed all their political skill to tread the wary path of independence. The first years after the cessation of the Hungarian protectorate were again disturbed by quarrels with the Venetians. Her galleys patrolled the Dubrovnik coast harrying Dubrovnik shipping and threatening vengeance for any strategic information relayed by Dubrovnik citizen to the Turks.^{41/} In

1538 the Pope (Paul III) issued a decree as head of the Christian League, against the Turks. It was hostile to Dubrovnik (probably Venetian inspired) forbidding all Christians from selling arms, gunpowder, cables, ship-timber, iron etc. to the Ottoman Empire. Dubrovnik was ordered to cease all contacts with the Ottomans and join the League. Clever diplomacy on the part of Dubrovnik won the day; it argued that by joining the League the city would be destroyed, all its precious Christian relics falling into the hands of the Infidel, with little advantage accruing to Christendom. The Pope relented his demands

on the city and the matter passed. There is no doubt that Dubrovnik's position was always a very risky one and it required all her diplomatic skill to save it from ruin.

In 1566 Suleiman the Magnificent died and his successor, Selim at once began to cast covetous eyes on Cyprus. War between the Turks and Christian powers was again imminent, and Dubrovnik began to fear that she might get into difficulties with either of the belligerents. A Holy League was formed between Spain, Venice and other Italian states under the leadership of Pope Pius V. Venetian jealousy was ever present in the life of

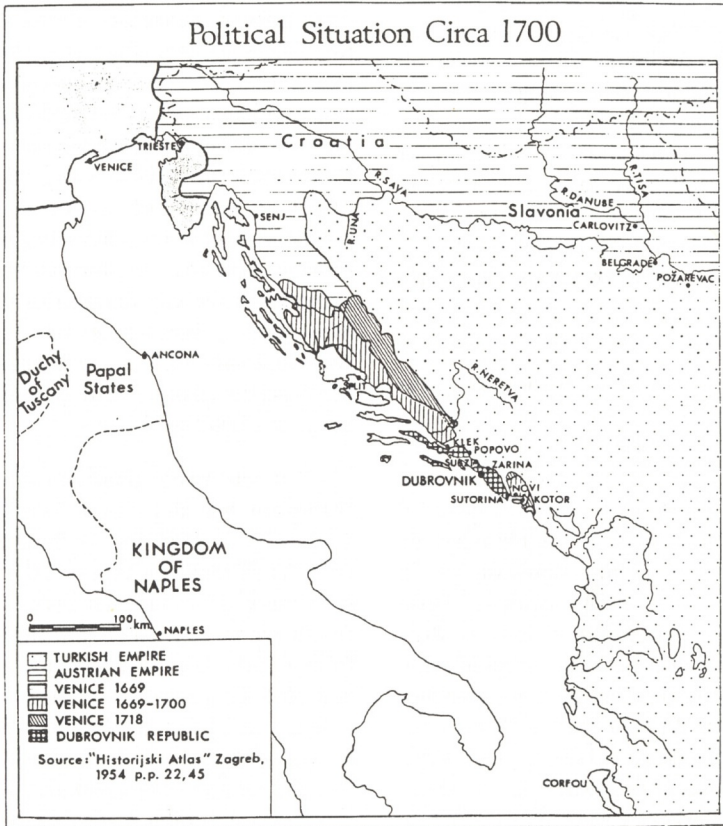


Fig.5. Political Situation circa 1700
 Sl 5. Politička situacija oko 1700. godine

Dubrovnik, but the latter managed to avoid joining the league on the pretext that loss of trade meant she would be unable to pay the Sultan's tribute, leading to his seizure of the city to the great detriment of Christendom.^{42/} The plea was successful and in the same year (1566) Pius V renewed the exemption allowing Dubrovnik to trade with the Infidel; the city could once more act as an intermediary between Christian and Turk in her role as a neutral state.

One of the decisive events in the war between Turkey and the Holy League was battle of Lepanto in which the Ottoman fleet was completely defeated.^{43/} Lepanto was the true signpost to the decline of Turkish power, although the road was to be a long one. Moreover, it also meant that the Turks were now more dependent on Dubrovnik's shipping for maritime trade. Peace came in 1573, much to the disgust of Venice which wished to follow up enemy successes, but to the delight of Dubrovnik with the removal of danger from both quarters.

Another source of worry for the city was the disturbances created by the Uskoks, a group of Christian pirates predominant in the Adriatic.^{44/} Originally from lands now occupied by the Turks, their activities included raids on Ottoman territory, plundering trade caravans, and conducting guerillawarfare in frontier areas. They saw Dubrovnik as a Turkish vassal state, and captured some of their galleys; conversely, the Turks accused Dubrovnik of harbouring these freebooters as they were Christians. In 1617-1618 further trouble arose when Venice, Austria and Spain tried to force the Uskoks inland away from coastal locations. The Turks charged Dubrovnik's government of allying with Spain to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire, a situation which again demanded delicate diplomacy on the

part of Dubrovnik citizens accompanied by gifts and tributes to the inland pashas.

When the War of Candia (Crete) broke out in 1645 again between the Turks and Venetians, Dubrovnik once more feared she would be drawn into the conflict.^{45/} The Venetians managed to repulse the Ottomans from Cretan waters, but the confrontation was to last for twenty two years, much of it concentrated on the Venetian/Turkish border in Dalmatia. Dubrovnik successfully appealed to the Pope for neutrality in the struggle, allowing the city to become the main port for oriental and occidental trade in the Balkans. On the acceptance of a peace formula in 1669, Venice found herself evacuating Crete after pouring men, money and supplies into an encounter which had no beneficial effect; for the Turks it meant a revival of their aggressive policy towards western Christendom, and for Dubrovnik a period of intense commercial prosperity as a neutral state acting as an entrepreneur between the two enemies. Such euphoria in the city during this period had been partly dimmed by the catastrophic earthquake and subsequent fire in April 1667 which destroyed much of the city and killed an estimated 5,000 inhabitants.^{46/}

The next major political event to affect Dubrovnik was the Austro-Turkish War of 1683-1699. In 1683 the Turks attacked Vienna. Their repulsion revealed that Ottoman supremacy in the Balkan lands had passed its zenith and was a prelude to further disasters for the Turks. Dubrovnik was forced to join a new Holy League in 1684 (Austro-Hungary, Poland, the Pope and Venice). Fortunately, danger of incurring Ottoman wrath had now receded, whilst the Hungarians merely saw it as a renewal of their former protection over the city. Finally the Sultan was forced to sue for peace losing large tracts of land throughout the northern Balkans. Even so Dubrovnik

still found herself surrounded by Ottoman, not Venetian territory through the enclaves of Klek (Neretva valley) and Sutorina (Kotor Bay)^{47/} (Fig.5). Any outstanding tributes owed by Dubrovnik were quickly paid to the Sultan and the republic once more became a tributary to the Porte; this situation was preferred to Venetian proximity, and there was a partial revival of the republic's land trade.

d). Eighteenth Century Decline.

During the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire began, at first slowly and intermittently, eventually catastrophically, to decline. The decay had become unmistakable in their struggles with Austria, Poland and Venice, which were ended at the Treaty of Karlovitz in 1699. Inevitably Turkey's internal difficulties and military campaigns had indirect effects on the Dubrovnik republic. The small republic was to suffer economic collapse in the years 1699-1740; Venice gained considerable territory as a result of this peace treaty, and like Turkey opened up "new" harbours to serve the Bosnian markets. Sarajevo expanded at the expense of Dubrovnik.^{48/}

In 1714 war between Venice and Turkey broke out once more, the Sultan desiring above all to reconquer the Morea (Peloponnese). Although this venture was successful he lost territory in the northern Balkans leading to the capture of Belgrade by Venice's ally the Austrian Emperor. The ensuing Treaty of Passarowitz (Požarevac) in 1718 meant the Emperor kept all his conquests, but Morea remained under Turkish control. On the other hand some of the agreements of the Karlovitz peace were reconfirmed, including Venice's withdrawal from trading posts on the Dubrovnik border at Popovo, Zarina and Subzi.

Two political events during the second half of the eighteenth century proved influen-

tial on Dubrovnik's trade. First, the Seven Years War between England, France and Spain (1756-1763), meant Dubrovnik as a neutral power could exploit Mediterranean trade, much of it passing into her hands. Secondly, the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, led the Russians to believe Dubrovnik was an Ottoman ally. Bribery on Dubrovnik's part averted Russian occupation, but the latter continued to harass the former's trade movements. For Dubrovnik the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji in 1774 had two main consequences; firstly, in the long term, Bulgaria would now be open to even more foreign merchant competition given that the Black Sea was no longer an Ottoman "mare clausum". Secondly, in the short term, Danubian conflict and plagues had ruined Dubrovnik's main Bulgarian trading colony at Rušćuk.

e). The Final Blow.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Dubrovnik was forced to enter into the vortex of the Napoleonic Wars, in which she, like her great rival Venice, both with their particular brand of aristocratic government, was to disappear, along with many other still more powerful states. (Fig.6). In 1805, war broke out between France and Austria and the ensuing Peace of Pressburg meant Napoleon gained amongst other possessions, that of Dalmata as far south as Makarska, to which he attached great importance. Dubrovnik continued a policy of neutrality, but Russian involvement in southern Dalmatia during 1805-1806 threatened their occupation of near-by Cavtat which would become a Montenegrin garrison, well knowing how Dubrovnik's citizens hated and feared lawless mountaineers.

Meanwhile the French under Marshal Molitor were marching south from Makarska, capturing with ease the various fortifications

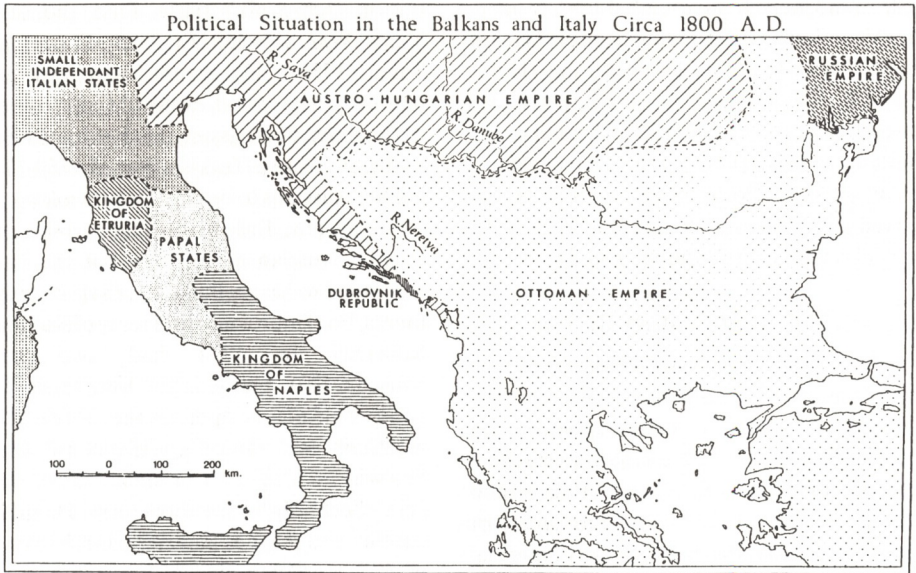


Fig. 6. Political Situation in the Balkans and Italy circa 1800 A.D.

Sl. 6. Politička situacija na Balkanskom poluotoku i Italiji oko 1800. godine

en route. Impending pressure from Russia on one side and France on the other led Dubrovnik's citizens to believe their power of neutrality would face its severest test.^{49/} Loyalty to the Tsar, and possibly bribes, averted likely Russian occupation. Meanwhile Napoleonic troops came ever closer and in 1806 seized the city; although the republic was not decreed as having "ceased to exist" until 1808, effectively this was the end.

Conclusion.

In this study of Dubrovnik's small republic one cannot pretend to offer a general theoretical model to explain why city-states appeared under some presumably governing set of circumstances. That would demand analysis of a far larger number of case studies, and even then they may lack the necessary data to embark on such a task. Neither can one assume that the factors studied here would be

present in other instances of city-states. While it is tempting to pronounce on a basic model of the city-state, much work has yet to be done on many other case studies before such a systematic model could be made.^{50/}

In studying Dubrovnik's political relations during the Later Middle Ages, three characteristics emerge. In order of importance these are the growth of Turkish power in Europe, the Venetian reoccupation of Dalmatia and the essentially loose relationship that prevailed between Dubrovnik and Hungary. All three factors must be thoroughly understood before any appreciation of its commercial development can be made. The foresight of Dubrovnik's government in seeing the rise of Ottoman power is to be commended, together with her skilful contacts with the Infidel. The fear of Venetian hegemony in the Adriatic arose from similar interests to her own. The tolerant rule of the

Magyar monarchs allowed Dubrovnik to develop her own self-interests during a period of intense unrest and mistrust in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean.

Political events in the Early Modern Period provided Dubrovnik with new problems for her economic development. New sea routes to Asia and America diverted their older counterparts from the Mediterranean Sea. Involvement in the European wars were averted by her government's shrewd diplomacy, although on occasion placing Dubrovnik on the edge of extinction. The ensuing policy of neutrality was turned to commercial advantage. Certainly the diplomatic skill of Dubrovnik's political envoys played a significant role in preserving privileges and upholding the Republic's autonomous position. Finally it should be stressed that the political relationship between Turkey and Dubrovnik was one of mutual advantage, perhaps comparable in modern times with that of China and Hong Kong. In both cases these small enclaves presented no military danger to their larger neighbours, but were both useful points of contact with a wider world, and a strategic source of information, especially during war-time.

For wider geopolitical understanding of the Dubrovnik case study reference may be made to three significant sources. The first in 1904 was a predictive study by Sir Halford J. Mackinder. "The settled peoples of Europe lay gripped between two pressures - that of the Asiatic nomads from the east, and on the other three sides that of the pirates from the sea"^{51/} - perhaps a definition of Dubrovnik's position in microcosm. The second by Jovan Cvijić (1912) refers to Serbian aspiration on the Adriatic coast which, as this study has shown, have a long history, and continue up to our present decade.^{52/} Finally, one is informed by John Naylis (1992) that the Civil War in Yugoslavia and Iraqi invasion of Kuwait have provided an apt reminder that military force remains an important feature of international relations in the post-Cold War world.^{53/}

In the last twentieth century it is still too soon to predict that the future is not going to be like the past. Similarly, it would be too deterministic to argue that Europe is destined to relive the violent conflicts of the previous generations. The Dubrovnik city-state may nevertheless provide a pointer on how survive should the latter prevail.

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Sažetak

Političko-geografski prikaz Dubrovačke republike

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U članku se obrađuje historijsko-geografski prikaz razvoja Dubrovačke republike, s naglaskom na političke i geostrateške odnose prema svojem okruženju. Pogotovu su temeljito razrađeni odnosi u politici Dubrovačke republike prema bližnjim i daljim susjedima tijekom kasnoga srednjeg vijeka, od 1358. do 1500. godine, dakle u vrijeme kada je stvarana i kada se teritorijalno širila ova državnica na Jadranskom moru. U tom kontekstu posebno su prikazani politički odnosi prema slavenskom okruženju, prvenstveno prema Bosni, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji; potom prema Veneciji kao dominirajućoj pomorskoj sili ovoga dijela Sredozemlja; prema Turskoj koja je bila u nadiranju na zapad; prema državicama južne Italije, te naspram Mađarske, odnosno Hrvatsko-ugarskog kraljevstva.

Drugi dio članka obuhvaća razradu političkih odnosa Dubrovačke republike prema susjedstvu kroz razdoblje modernoga razvoja ove državnice, od oko 1500. do propasti početkom 19. stoljeća (Napoleon). Ovdje se prikazuju političke promjene u zapadnoj i jugoistočnoj Europi u to doba i prilagođavanje dubrovačke politike novim uvjetima.

Pogotovu je temeljito prikazan odnos Dubrovnika prema raznim ratovima koji su tih stoljeća harali Europom, poglavito pak u balkanskom prostoru. Rat između napoleonske Francuske i Austrije stavio je 1806-1808. točku na samostalnost Dubrovnika.

U opsežnoj literaturi, uz hrvatske, od interesa je osobito navođenje engleskih i drugih autora, koji su se bavili poviješću Dubrovnika i ovog dijela Sredozemlja.

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