

Marco Moroni, *Tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico. Rapporti economici, culturali e devozionali in età moderna* [Between the Two Adriatic Coasts. Economic, Cultural and Devotional Relations in the Modern Era]. Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2010. Pages 226.

The essays collected here by Marco Moroni, some of which already published, suggest the existence of a basic unity of the Adriatic basin and its two shores that from the fourteenth century spans until the fall of the Republic of Dubrovnik in 1808. It is an image of a unity built essentially on trade ties which, however, reaches far beyond the economic sphere, and which from the nineteenth century on—with the formation of national states (and various nationalisms)—would definitely be compromised. Underlying the author's concept are the views of Fernand Braudel on the Adriatic Sea as the most coherent maritime region of the whole Mediterranean, followed by many scholars who tended to identify the Adriatic as an element of strong connection between the two shores and their populations.

The great question evoked in the *Introduction*, giving a reference frame to particular issues, is the role of the Ottoman presence in the Adriatic with its military and political aspects, which had remarkable impact on the religious attitude, on the security of communication, on the dynamics of integration of the populations living on the coasts of this narrow sea. Constantly present are also the great themes that cross the religious aspects of early modern Italy, and that reflect on the realities of the two shores. According to the author, many aspects should be considered in order to understand the relationship between the Adriatic populations. Moroni selected particular topics which allow the reader to grasp the interior logic and acquire a holistic view on the broadly-scoped phenomenon of economics.

Moroni illustrates how the conflicts, especially those of religious nature, leave room for economic interests, and for the webs of contacts woven particularly by the merchants, but not only them. The intensity of contacts and the circulation of goods does not necessarily mean the melting of

the cultural and religious differences, nor does it exclude coercive elements in their interaction. During Italian supremacy in the Mediterranean trade, the Venetian control of the Adriatic in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries set up this sea as the main crossroads of the Orient-Occident exchange. Here passed luxury goods (spices, silks, ivory) from the Levant on their way to Venice in exchange for iron, wood, and armson on their route to the East. In the next century the merchandise changed, but the function of the bridge continued at least until the “overturning of the European balances” (C.M. Cipolla), when Venice and the Adriatic economy were driven to marginality, best witnessed from the seventeenth century. With the seventeenth and the eighteenth century a new chapter opened, marked by a relative economic decline of the city of Ragusa and its Balkan hinterland, by the presence of English, Dutch and French ships in the Italian ports, by the institution of free ports (Trieste and Ancona), and by a most general impulse to the expansion of the Mediterranean trade. The role of the Habsburg Empire would become more and more relevant in the period, reaching absolute prominence in the 1800.

On the other hand, a quite different picture appears, bearing witness to different evolutionary phases, uneasy moments and rivalry which sometimes led to serious tensions and open conflicts, most often temporary. Although under constant presence of the two rival imperialisms of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice (A. Tenenti), the cities involved in this lively movement of men, goods, ideas, and books are not of secondary importance for the history of the Adriatic. The cases that attract attention are Ancona and Ragusa, naturally, which constituted a competitive axe against the Venetian supremacy, but the contemporaries saw the three cities as connected realities in which they used to place investments and develop commercial operations: the network of the Jewish enterprises is a good testimony of it. But we find also Zadar and Split, the latter seen by Venice as a bridge towards the Orient, which could compete with the commercial trade Ancona-Dubrovnik. We notice also many smaller coast cities, which—sometimes under Venetian protection—struggled for the affirmation as trade centres.

But, it is not only about goods and money. To circulate are first of all men. In the fifteenth century the immigrants of Slav origin (*schiaconi, morlacchi*), or Albanians were filling the demographic gap left by the plague of mid-fourteenth century, and by the famine. It is not only about the need for manpower in the fields or around the livestock: during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period circulate lawyers and other educated people, craftsmen, masons, *maestri di intaglio*, goldsmiths, artists, who mastered techniques, aesthetic taste, and cultural heritage. Among them, as Moroni emphasises, are also men travelling across the Adriatic for religious reasons. In the increasingly strict Italian Catholicism, a centre as Loreto became emblematic of the rise and the image of the Church. A sanctuary of European importance, it attracted many pilgrims, among whom outstanding personalities and young members of the clergy, ready to serve the cause of the Counter-Reformation and its militant spirit. A reference point was the *Collegio Illirico* founded in Loreto in 1580, temporarily closed during the crisis at the end of the century, but again in function in 1627 by will of Urban VIII. The cities of the western Adriatic coast proved to be of a great importance for the Catholics living in the area under the Ottoman rule or in its immediate vicinity. There was, for example, a constant call of the clergymen from Ragusa to assist the communities of merchants scattered in the Balkan interior, and many of them were educated in the *Collegio Illirico* of Loreto (more than 700 between 1628 and 1796), or in that of Fermo, founded in 1663, which must have had not less than 200 pupils (but the numbers are not complete). The first works in the Cyrillic were printed in Ancona. The Marche was the region where men of importance for the religious history of Italy and the Balkans were educated, such as Nicolò Bobadilla, who spent long time in Zadar and Dubrovnik. The image of the Adriatic after the expansion of the Ottoman state provided by this book proves to be quite complex: neither the Koiné, nor the “zone of frontier”, as interpreted by Alberto Tenenti.

The composition of the articles collected in this volume reflects a comprehensive perspective on the ground of changing views and topics. Any scientific work, in fact, should also be valorised on the basis of the research lines it opens, and it is certain that many issues of the Adriatic in the early modern period, pertaining to the economic or cultural history, will remain on the agenda for further research. What strongly emerges is the interest paid to the families who migrated between the two shores in pursuit of economic and personal ambitions, or stayed in one place, but still continued to maintain connections with the opposite coast. Notably with regard to the seventeenth and eighteenth century, there still remain a number of topics to be researched concerning the process of the economic decline of the Adriatic area and the inter-Adriatic exchanges.

Luca Andreoni

*Rijetkosti u knjižnici Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti. Katalog inkunabula i knjiga 16. stoljeća* [The Rarities in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Catalogue of the Incunabula and Sixteenth-Century Books]. Compiled and annotated by Tamara Runjak. Editions of the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, vol. 10. Zagreb: HAZU, 2011. Pages xxv + 645.

Together with the National and University Library in Zagreb (*Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica*), the Library of HAZU (Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) is rightly credited with being a custodian of the Croatian librarian treasure. This institution of national importance for the culture of written word has recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, in the same year as HAZU, its parent institution. Thus this great jubilee occasioned the publication of this splendidly furnished and clearly structured