

in Dobričević's day, prices and the Ragusan art market of altarpieces, as well as the functioning of the Ragusan painting workshops in the fifteenth century. Further, she interprets fifteenth-century Ragusan altarpieces as an expression of the desires and world views of particular social groups, bearing in mind the role of the Ragusan humanists, antiquarians, noblemen, citizens and fraternities as commissioners of the paintings. The volume is equally devoted to the history of the reception of Dobričević's work after his time, following the reappraisal of his artistic significance through the fate of some of his single works currently displayed in the museums. Special attention is being paid to the paintings attributed to Dobričević which, with time, have earned a symbolic aura of exceptionally praised regional reliquiae, supported by detailed analysis of the relatedness and interplay between legend and historical facts depicted in these works.

Lovro Dobričević is not the only protagonist of this book. The monographic perspective takes a broader span by addressing the wider social and cultural context surrounding his work, probing deeply into the overall contemporary art production of this region that includes a large number of works, some of which are but of vague relevance to Dobričević's circle. Considering that only a few works of undisputed attribution are extant, many of them are merely pinpointed and/or subject to various interpretations. By coming forward with a series of assumptions on some of the single works and the protagonists of art and painting on the territory from Dubrovnik to Kotor in the course of the latter half of the fifteenth century, Prijatelj Pavičić not only broadens the scope of the methodological frame, but makes it accessible to the opinions that have no direct grounding in facts provable with exactitude, that is, to which exactitude is but a departure point for creative 'story' construction on and surrounding master Lovro, his work, and the work of his contemporaries in the region.

The approach of Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić allows for a broader problem perspective, her monographic synthesis being amplified by the power of her own imagery rooted in the principles of art history as a scientific discipline and beyond, pointing to

a variety of possibilities within which she poses multiple questions, most of which remain open. The author's bold approach to build her 'stories' into a mosaic calls for most attentive readership, scholarly and general alike. The many aspects and layers of this demanding volume cannot be surveyed on one level only. Though essentially a collection of essays, this book will inevitably become an indispensable reference point for all the future researchers into the Ragusan and Kotor painting circle, a motivation for rethinking some of the issues here discussed possibly from a different vantage point than that of the author—and that is where the value of this book rests.

Ljerka Dulibić

Francesco Bettarini, *La comunità pratese di Ragusa (1414-1434): Crisi economica e migrazioni collettive nel Tardo Medioevo* [The Pratoese Community in Dubrovnik (1414-1434): Economic Crisis and Collective Migrations in the Late Middle Ages]. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki editore, 2012. Pages 296.

Francesco Bettarini's study covers a short period of only twenty years (1414-1434), during which the closely-knit community of 23 Tuscan cloth manufacturers and merchants who settled in Dubrovnik from Prato developed, prospered and declined. The naturally limited time frame proved of benefit to the author in his systematic research of a series after series of the Dubrovnik archives, from the decisions of the three councils, contracts and promissory notes, to wills, dowry arrangements, including even the criminal records. The density and diversity of the material helped him draw a perceptive picture of individual fates, their business success and failure, social strategies, long-term plans and day-to-day concerns.

What was it that connected the two late medieval cities from Bettarini's book? The Black Death of 1348 seriously depopulated Dubrovnik and Prato, other circumstances having little in common. While in 1358 Dubrovnik was granted almost full independence by the Visegrád Treaty,

in 1351 Prato lost its political autonomy and was forced to endure various measures of the economic policy introduced by the Florentine government, which eventually culminated in unbearable tax burdens that could hardly be evaded thanks to the newly inaugurated financial control (the *Catasto* from 1427). This was a hard blow to the local cloth industry and many workshops were closed down, forcing their owners to seek their fortune elsewhere. Thus, while writing to his brother Giuliano in Dubrovnik, Sandro Marcovaldi complains that Prato brings little profit but huge taxes (*abbiamo assai dazi e pocho guadagno*). While by the early fifteenth century Prato had not yet recuperated from the demographic implosion and economic crisis, Dubrovnik's prosperity was well under way. Having outnumbered Prato's population by two to one, Dubrovnik was a city of open opportunities that attracted business of every kind—'Hong Kong of the Adriatic', as Sergio Anselmi once wittily remarked.

In the early fifteenth century Ragusan merchants were battling at the international market for a larger share in profit from cloth trade, specifically, a type of woollen fabric of medium quality that sold well in Apulia and the Balkan hinterland, in particular. Their business gradually brought them to Florence and Prato where they purchased a ready supply of cloth, avoiding thus the Tuscan retailers. The amount of debts Benko Gondula, Petar Primi, Ivan Župan, Vlahota Hranković and others made for the purchase of cloths speaks eloquently of how thriving that *business* actually was. Ragusan entrepreneurs—Bettarini holds—were cloth 'thirsty', and the production of Florentine workshops was insufficient to satisfy their thirst. This proved to be a good chance for Prato, and its workshops soon became important suppliers of the Ragusan merchants with the so-called 'Florentine cloth'. With time, the manufacturers of Prato sought to relocate some of their production process to Dubrovnik. In this way the customs dues on the final product could be avoided, the goods would find an easier way to the Balkan market.

Established business relations with the Ragusans, along with good business prospects on the other shore of the Adriatic encouraged

the entrepreneurs of Prato to take their chances on the Ragusan scene. In the first decades of the fifteenth century Dubrovnik saw at least 300 Italians (mostly from Tuscany, and fewer from Venice and Genoa), whose business activities can be traced in the archival documents. While the Venetians and the Genoese usually arrived in Dubrovnik upon a business of specific nature, more than a half of the Tuscans from Florence and Prato settled in Dubrovnik for good. Emigration was a logical solution for businessmen, who, because of the local crisis, sought their future where offered. Dubrovnik left the doors open to them because they were not viewed as threatening competition, but were expected to act as a welcome new link in the network of the Ragusan trade, and hence contribute to the expansion of the Ragusan markets and greater earnings of the Ragusan merchants. One of the measures that the government promptly introduced to spur this idea were the privileged customs dues granted to these Italians. This decision no doubt leaned on the commendable century's experience with the representatives of the eminent Florentine trade corporations (Baldi, Peruzzi, Acciaiuoli). On the other hand, the consolidation of Venetian rule 1409-1420 led towards a natural integration of the Dalmatian towns into the trade network of Venice, whereas the Tuscans turned more intensively towards Dubrovnik. In addition, the city needed experts whom the local community either could not provide (physicians, pharmacists, teachers, engineers), or whom the city wished to engage from the outside in order to maintain impartial service (chancellors, state accountants, etc.).

At the time, Dubrovnik had little technology and expert knowledge for large-scale cloth production in which its merchants traded, but soon reached a point at which it was a logical and desirable step. In 1419 the state financed the building of a large and carefully planned cloth factory at Pile, its management being offered to the weavers from Piacenza stationed in Venice—Paolo Busino and Pietro Pantella. The avoidance of regular business partners was ill received by the Tuscan weavers, who soon claimed their debts from the Ragusan merchants in a most

resolute manner—by dispatching their partners to Dubrovnik. However, the collection of debts did not develop as planned because Ragusan merchants often proved heavily indebted and practically insolvent. In their flight from the creditors, some merchants immediately left for Bosnia where they had business contacts, and once located beyond Ragusan jurisdiction, they negotiated on the repayment of debt in part or in instalments. The letters of the Prato merchants home reveal their disappointment and even resentment at the way they had been treated by the debtors, the authorities showing no serious concern either. Moreover, the interests of the Tuscan creditors were sometimes two-fold: loud complaints about their uncollectible debts in Dubrovnik brought them tax incentives at home, as these allegedly uncollectible amounts were easily deducted from their tax base.

Although the initial trust of Pratoese businessmen in the Ragusans was marred by the collection of the long overdue debts, the establishment of Pantella's manufacture at Pile gave a profoundly new impetus to cloth manufacture in which they could fit without greater difficulty. The privileges that the Ragusan authorities lavishly granted in this period left the door wide open to the weavers of Prato. Behind the newly-established production was the Italian *know-how* ideally merged with the domestic capital, while the Ragusan authorities secured good terms and premiums, providing the whole project with a well-defined contractual frame supported by the state. Under the standard terms with the Ragusan government, the latter was to pay a part of the building's rent and an incentive per bale of cloth, while the foreign weavers, on pain of high penalties, were obliged to a production of certain size. Though efficiently organised, the "state factory" at Pile soon became too small and led to discontent among the weavers, which resulted in the opening of other workshops, such as that privately owned at the spring of River Ombla, the partners being Andrija Volzo, Niccolò Cianfanelli, Ivan Menze and Jakov Kotrulj.

The weavers and merchants of Prato tended to diversify their activity in Dubrovnik, engaging in every business that could bring profit: like

the Ragusans, they traded in metals, grain and oil from Apulia, salt and wood from the forests of Kvarner, but also slaves from Bosnia, whom they sold as domestic servants in Tuscany. Some of them, alongside the Florentines, lent and exchanged money, issued bills of exchange and were engaged in the insurance of goods. By adapting to the new commercial environment, the businessmen of Prato accepted the form of partnership commonly practiced by the Ragusan patricians, who were well versed in maritime trade. Preference was given to *collegantia*, in which the roles of investor and merchant were clearly defined, and with it the business risk. The merchants of Prato did not have access to two sectors: trade in wool from the Pyrenean Peninsula remained firmly in the hands of Catalonian merchants, who were later to establish their consulate in Dubrovnik, while the Ragusans blocked the supply of silver from the Balkan mines and thus established a monopoly on it.

The inflow of weavers from Prato may be accounted by the high status some of their compatriots enjoyed in the Ragusan service. A forerunner of this group was Benedetto Schieri, exiled from his native Prato after an abortive conspiracy, a long-term Ragusan chancellor, but also a kind of an informal representative of the Pratoese immigrants, since by virtue of office he had direct access to the government structures. Besides Schieri, the government soon engaged another notary from Prato, Tommaso, the brother of a well established merchant Niccolò Ringhiadori. Recruited from the circle of Tuscan merchants in the first half of the fifteenth century were also the candidates for the office of state accountants, whose work not only included meticulous record of the state expenditures and income, but that of financial advisors to the Republic as well. The "Ragusan Tuscans" were often entrusted with the supply of grain because of their business ties with the merchants in Apulia.

The close connection between entrepreneurship and government offices may be clearly traced through the career of the earlier mentioned chancellor Benedetto Schieri. Like the rest of the officers, in addition to state service he was

engaged in business, and as a person of confidence, he informed his nephews about the opportunities offered by the new Ragusan economic measures. Attracted by the idea, they soon joined their uncle in Dubrovnik and engaged in textile production. The kin-based business experience proved to have many disadvantages, eventually leading Schieri towards a genuine model of professional business partnership outside the family. The government introduced certain regulations aimed at curbing the business pursuits of the chancery staff, in fear that their private interests would gain priority over the duties to the state. This measure seemed to have been of little concern to Schieri, as he made the best of his legal expertise to avoid it: he started joining commenda partnerships, through which he made investments from the shadow, having thus found a hole in the law.

The majority of Pratoese businessmen arrived in Dubrovnik with an intent to settle there temporarily. However, out of 23 merchants, 18 of them lived in Dubrovnik at least a year in continuity, often accompanied by the family and servants. They all belonged to six great families, closely linked through marriage ties. Prompted by kinship ties and relying on a relative who had already established himself in the Ragusan community, at first they usually shared the living quarters, leased private houses, often located next to the workshops and stores. Beside logistic support, the family circle provided a solid frame for a partnership based on trust, of the essence to the partners. The Pratoese weavers had no particular interest in seeking Ragusan citizenship, however, with time, they built stronger ties with the local merchants and gradually blended into the Ragusan community. The immigrants from Prato made no haste about marriage, as they postponed it to a more mature age following their final return home. Yet, there were those who decided to settle in Dubrovnik for good. The traditional determination of Ragusan patricians by which they forbade marriage outside their circle was an obstacle for the Tuscan merchants to marry into the houses of their business partners of noble birth, even when they themselves were

born to privilege. Instead, they found brides among the wealthy citizen rank and often received substantial dowries, notably if they married a widow. This dowry served as a very useful injection in cash. Marriage ties and birth of children helped further their integration into Ragusan society. For instance, after the sudden death of his first wife, probably during an outbreak of pestilence, daughter of chancellor Iacopo Ugodinici, Benedetto Schieri married Maruša, widow of Pavao Ilijić, well-off merchant and, most likely, his good acquaintance. Apart from three step-children, with Maruša he had five children. Two of his daughters married the sons of a prosperous merchant Vlaho Hranković, his sons having successfully assimilated, too. The offspring of merchant Luca di Cecco grew into a genuine Ragusan family surnamed Gabrielli, later Monaldi. However, not all of them chose Dubrovnik for their official family nest—some practiced concubinage with the local girls, mostly domestics, and upon departure from Dubrovnik took with them their illegitimate children, whom they integrated into their Tuscan-based families.

Once the local entrepreneurs acquired the technique of wool production and its organisational aspect, Dubrovnik became a serious threat to the competition and foreign merchants. The law of 1434 by which foreigners were excluded from wool manufacture, except those currently in business, marked a *coup de grâce* to this declining trend. The arrival of new members being hindered, it became perfectly clear that the future would bring only harder and less secure conditions in terms of business, which inevitably led to the depletion of the Prato community in Dubrovnik. Unfavourable restrictions imposed upon foreign cloth manufacturers bankrupted some of them, such as Antonio di Lorenzo, and his ruin affected all those with whom he traded, Italian merchants in particular. Due to mounting debts, some saw the flight from Dubrovnik and the creditors a real and ultimate option. Others, however, managed to close down their family business on time, withdraw the capital from Dubrovnik (e.g. Ringhiadori family) and move out in far less dramatic circumstances.

These are the main results of Bettarini's research and pivotal topics of his book. But like any good historical analysis, Bettarini's work holds a mirror in which much of today is vividly reflected. The book essentially focuses on the Pratoese back in the fifteenth century, but calls for re-examination of the well-wrought formula of Dubrovnik's economic success: 'yes' to foreign capital, but not in every line of economy; 'yes' to the opportunities for foreign businessmen, but never to the harm of the domestic market; 'yes' to new technologies from abroad, but only if they offered knowledge that could later be applied for one's own benefit. Bettarini's book reveals how insightful and determined the framers of the Ragusan economic policy actually were, and on the other hand, how business-minded and bold were Luca di Cecco, the Marcovaldi and Ringhiadori brothers, Benedetto Schieri and all their compatriots and fellow-partners when they decided to seek their fortune in no other place but Dubrovnik. Lastly, Dubrovnik here features at its best, as a city of opportunities, a community in which the Tuscans settled in quest of better life.

As the author underlines in his conclusion, the protagonist of this story is, in true fact, the man of *Quattrocento*, versatile and flexible in making personal choices and business shifts between production and trade, between entrepreneurship and state service. He is versed in classical literature—an interest often shared with the like-minded in the new environment—but equally so in modern manufacture technologies or double-entry bookkeeping. He is a polite, lettered and well-read collocator. His mental frame is broad, he is open to novelty and follows the developments other than his own. He could be from Prato but just as well from Dubrovnik, and is ready to pursue his fortune wherever it takes. One cannot but notice that some of the author's characteristics are discernible in this portrayal. Broad interests, profound learning, refinement in style, as well as mobility in search of new challenges (between his native Prato, Florence, Paris and Reading)—all this is reflected in Bettarini's biography and his approach to work.

Dubrovnik archives and Dubrovnik themes continue to attract foreign scholars, from the great Braudel to the modest I. Mahnken and many others, up to the youngest generation of recently accomplished historians. Foreign historiography on Ragusan topics over the last ten years has not always been up to the standard, and much of it lags well behind Croatian historical production. Yet Bettarini's book contains not a single trace of bias or obscurity we often frown upon when reading studies on Dubrovnik written by our foreign colleagues. Bettarini experiences Dubrovnik from the inside, and that is because he entered it by sifting a myriad of documents of the Dubrovnik archives that safely guided him through Ragusan reality: society, people, localities.

Nella Lonza

*The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán, Lovro Kunčević. Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2013. Pages x + 448.

An international conference 'European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries in Comparative Perspective', organised within the project *Ottoman Orient and East Central Europe: Comparative Studies in the Perceptions and Interactions in the Border Zones* by the Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (CASA) and Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropa (GWZO) from Leipzig, was held in Dubrovnik from 22 to 23 May 2009. The representatives of these institutions—Lovro Kunčević and Gábor Kármán—have taken upon themselves the task to edit the material presented at the conference, expanded by most recent contributions of the Bucharest and Budapest experts.