

passed the decision on Acciarini's arrest. The reasons underlying such a decision remain unknown, and so do many puzzling and obscure details of Acciarini's life and work awaiting to be explored by future researchers.

The example of Tideo Acciarini best illustrates how a teacher can be eclipsed by his students, at least when it comes to those on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Marko Marulić and Ilija Crijević are far better known than Acciarini, not only in the Croatian literary scholarship but in that of Italy as well. As recurrently underlined, the best expert on Acciarini's life and work is Francesco Lo Parco, who performed his research during the 1920s. Lo Parco's fundamental flaw, and of all the scholars who leaned on him, is the fact that their study is not based on archival sources, as masterfully shown by Silvia Fiaschi and Gabriella Albanese. Their papers are this volume's most valuable contribution to the understanding of Acciarini's life and work. In-depth philological and comparative approach paved the way and introduced the methodological apparatus that should be used in future in order to elucidate the fate of this little-known teacher of the famous students. Although Fiaschi and Albanese have pinpointed almost all the relevant places on the map of Acciarini's movements after his return to Italy, many more questions related to his stay on the eastern coast of the Adriatic still remain open. His days in Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik are known, as well as his students and friends, but a wider cultural context necessary for understanding his work is still lacking. Unfortunately, these proceedings fail to meet this need in full.

Although the title of the proceedings suggests Acciarini's activity between Italy and Dalmatia and Dubrovnik, modest presence of Croatian literary historians and their lack of interest in the topic strike the eye. Besides Petar Kolendić, Smiljka Malinar and Bratislav Lučin, no one else has tackled this Italian Humanist despite his valuable importance for the formation of some of the greatest intellectuals of the era on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Therefore, these proceedings provide Croatian literary scholarship with a clear indication of the path towards such research by basing the work on the immensely rich archival material and good knowledge of the fate of Acciarini's students.

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Zlata Blažina Tomić and Vesna Blažina, *Expelling the Plague. The Health Office and the Implementation of Quarantine in Dubrovnik, 1377-1533*. Montreal-Kingston-London-Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. Pages xxii + 363.

Published as volume 43 in the prestigious series *Studies in the History of Medicine, Health, and Society*, funded by the eminent charity organisation *Associated Medical Services Inc.* (Canada), is this excellent monograph co-authored by the Blažina mother and daughter. It crowns more than twenty years of their research, whose embryo lies in the PhD thesis entitled *Uloga javnih zdravstvenih službenika - kacamorata, vijeća i medicinske profesije u sprečavanju kuge u Dubrovniku u prvoj polovici 16. stoljeća*, defended by Zlata Blažina Tomić at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb in 2001. Thoroughly revised and expanded, it was published in 2007 under the title *Kacamorti i Kuga: Utemeljenje i razvoj zdravstvene službe u Dubrovniku*. The English edition before us, titled *Expelling the Plague. The Health Office and the Implementation of Quarantine in Dubrovnik, 1377-1533*, has been expanded with few new chapters marked by accentuated comparative approach, with revised and up-dated bibliographies, the whole volume being re-designed to suit international readership.

In the introduction (pp. 3-7) the authors explain the motives behind the emergence of this book, draw attention to most important primary sources, and raise questions of relevance to their research. By their own admission, they found inspiration in the study of Mirko Dražen Grmek, Croatian historian of medicine of international acclaim, thanks to whom Dubrovnik has been widely recognised as a precursor in the legal regulations concerning epidemic diseases. The point of departure of this in-depth study and multi-year research into the rich archival series of the State Archives in Dubrovnik was an assumption that the Ragusans continued to advance the plague control measures well after the establishment of the legal frame for the implementation of quarantine in 1377. Archive sources provide evidence on the founding of the first permanent health office not later than 1397, as well as data on the decisions of various administrative bodies of the Dubrovnik Republic which supervised the work of this health office. The main source upon which the book draws is the only complete record of the work of the health office during the plague years 1526-27.

Not only with the targeted international readers in mind, who are often unfamiliar with the general history of Croatia including that of Dubrovnik, but also with an aim to pinpoint certain details of significance for the understanding of the health office and its role, in the first chapter (pp. 8-41), the authors provide a short survey of Dubrovnik's history with regard to population and geographical position, organisation of government, economy, role of the Church, public health, food and water supply, as well as the relations with the Ottoman Empire.

The second chapter (pp. 42-67) gives a brief outline of the phenomenon of plague, with emphasis on its outbreaks in Dubrovnik. Following the Black Death of 1348, most devastating was the sweeping wave of 1526-27 which killed more than 20,000 people. Presented in detail is the *Libro deli signori chazamorbi*, main source for the study of the health office in the early sixteenth century, as well as the role of St Roch and Blessed Virgin Mary as protectors against plague.

In the chapter addressing the public health of Dubrovnik (pp. 68-104) most space has been devoted to the work of physicians and surgeons (pp. 71-104). On the basis of notary records, the authors have compiled a valuable list of the Ragusan physicians and surgeons in the period 1280-1600. Generally, the Ragusans were medically treated by foreigners, who arrived either from the Apennine Peninsula, but there were also Spaniards, French, Greeks, Jews and those of Croatian provenance. A detailed description of their recruitment is given, their duties and salary, along with the extra assignments they performed in diplomatic missions as persons of esteem and confidence for the Republic. Sixteenth-century Dubrovnik, for example, witnessed the practice of some famous physicians, such as that of the Portuguese Jew Amatus Lusitanus.

The core of the volume is the chapter which explores the founding and development of the permanent health office in Dubrovnik (pp. 103-137). By grounding their argumentation on archive sources as well as Croatian and foreign literature, the authors prove that the Ragusan health office established in 1390, with regular staff from 1397 at the latest, was the first of its kind in Europe. More complex and stricter anti-epidemic measures, the authors argue, were not the result of legal repression against the citizens but rather reflected the specific aspect of Dubrovnik's public health characterised by early sanitary measures, hospitals, pharmacies and medical care available to all citizens.

The second part of the book details the events from the start of the sixteenth century, focusing on the 1526-27 plague. Chapter five (pp. 138-161) may serve as a good example how a dry source, a list of travellers who arrived in Dubrovnik, can become a vivid and eventful text that guides the reader from the regular plague control measures to the steps undertaken during the disastrous outbreak of 1526-27. Last four chapters make abundant use of the archival documents dating from the period of the worst pestilence that struck Dubrovnik after the Black Death.

Chapter six (pp. 162-182) opens with a dramatic description of the plague symptoms suffered by a patrician girl, as documented by the Ragusan state physician Donato Muzi of Venice, who himself fell ill but survived. Further, the authors thoroughly analyse the anti-epidemic measures undertaken against this particularly severe outbreak of plague, killing its first victims on 6 December 1526, with a regular comment on the efficiency of the procedures. It is interesting to note that only one health official died during this plague epidemic.

The authors joined the researchers who have recognised the significance of criminal court records for the study of groups that rarely appear in other sources. The register *Libro deli signori chazamorbi* also makes record of the legal procedures filed by the health officials against the offenders of the plague control regulations. These records are invaluable because they, among other things, reveal the details from the lives of those who survived plague and belonged to the lowest social orders (pp. 183-197). In terms of implementation, the authorities adopted a stricter approach and harsher sentences towards female offenders than their male counterparts.

During plague epidemics, *signori chazamorbi* were authorised by the court to take action against those who violated the regulations whether they came from the lowest ranks or were their equals in status and wealth. However, despite extensive powers given to the patrician health officials, in some cases they proved insufficient to prevent and punish the offenders of the plague regulations who came from the higher ranks. The authors succeed in elucidating diverse activities of the health office, providing a discerning portrayal of some of the officials and their relationship (pp. 198-212).

A separate chapter examines the cases of plague concealment, import of goods of suspicious origin, and the government attitude towards clerical offenders and those from holy orders (pp. 213-228). In the conclusion (pp. 229-238) the authors point to the factors that might have influenced the development of the anti-epidemic system in the area of the Dubrovnik Republic, stressing that the early adopted plague control measures in Dubrovnik had become a European standard in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If the sanitary cordon saw its first implementation in Milan in 1400, and if the first hospital for plague victims was established in Venice in 1423, Dubrovnik should be credited with the first resolute steps undertaken by the government aimed at permanent anti-epidemic measures framed in a law on the “quarantine” of 1377, and a provision of 1390 governing the establishment of a permanent health office.

The main text is followed by three appendices, one of which describes the history of the State Archives in Dubrovnik, related mainly to the preservation of documents from the period of the Dubrovnik Republic, excerpts from Diversis’ description of Ragusan trade, and a transcription of a Ragusan testament from the time of the Black Death.

Blažina’s book is a rewarding and welcome contribution that casts light on a part of Dubrovnik’s rich history, and provides an insight into a fragment of Croatian historiography which, for reasons known yet not insurmountable, chronically lacks publications intended for international readership. An additional step in the promotion of this book has been made by the publisher’s by now standard procedure of publishing not only the printed but also the electronic version of this interesting and valuable monograph. This volume best shows how Croatian historiographical themes, notably those that have already been presented by distinguished Croatian publishers, may and should be submitted to international public, too.