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HUIUS... EST OMNIS REIPUBLICAE POTESTAS: DUBROVNIK'S PATRICIAN HOUSES AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN POWER (1440-1640)

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ABSTRACT: This study is an analysis of the share that each patrician house had in the exercise of the most important functions in government (the Rector, the member of the Minor Council, the Senator, the Guardian of Justice), and the ratio of these houses in the Major Council. Some houses secured more offices than they were entitled to according to their numerical strength in the Major Council (Gradi/Gradić, Gondola/Gundulić, Georgi/Đurđević, Cerva/Crijević, Menze/Menčetić, Zamagno/Džamanjić, Resti/Rastić, Bona/Bunić), while others did not get their fair share (Caboga/Kaboga, Sorgo/Sorkočević, Pozza/Pucić, Ragnina/Ranjina, Bobali/Bobaljević, Gozze/Gučetić). Despite these differences, one cannot talk of an oligarchy within Dubrovnik's ruling class.

Introduction

The patriciate held the monopoly of power in the Republic of Dubrovnik for four and a half centuries, i.e. from the departure of a Venetian Rector

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(*comes*) as a supreme functionary of Venetian rule in Dubrovnik, following the Treaty of Zadar (1358), to the abolition of the Republic by Napoleon in 1808. During this period the same patrician houses (with minimal exceptions, such as in the case of Darsa/Držić) participated in the exercise of power, and held all offices from the highest to the lowest, with the exception of some unimportant functions that did not challenge the patriciate's monopoly of power.

Between 1332, when it was decreed that all houses eligible for membership in the Major Council must be registered,¹ and 1348, when the Major Council ordered that henceforth all patricians, upon reaching the age of eighteen, "can and must enter the Major Council",² the patriciate succeeded in differentiating itself from commoners who were completely pushed out of any participation in power. At the same time, the representatives of the Venetian supreme power, could not rule directly, but through the aristocratic councils and offices.

Since the departure of the Venetian Rector in 1358, following the defeat of Venice in a war with the Croatian and Hungarian king, Dubrovnik was *samovlasan*, which is the old Ragusan expression for self-governing. The patriciate (*vlastela*) established a complete monopoly of power, and continued to rule for the next four and a half centuries. To the Major Council (*Consilium maius*, *Il Maggior Consiglio*, *Velje vijeće*)³ belonged "all the power in the Republic" (*huius...est omnis Reipublicae potestas*),⁴ as Philippus de Diversis de Quartigianis already put in ca. 1440. Its members carried out all the state functions both as a duty and as a privilege.

¹ *Libri reformationum* V, ed. J. Gelcich. Monumenta Ragusina, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, XXIX. Zagreb: JAZU, 1897: p. 349: *...ad scribendum et reducendum in scriptis omnes qui ad presens sunt de maiori consilio et alios qui videbuntur eis fore dignos esse de maiori consilio.*

² *Libri reformationum* II, ed. J. Gelcich. Monumenta Ragusina, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, XIII. Zagreb: JAZU, 1882: p. 25.

³ Irmgard Mahnken, »O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima i njihovoj političkoj ulozi u XIV veku.« *Istoriski glasnik* 2 (1955): p. 81: "The definition of a patrician was that he was a member of the council, i.e. that he participated in the governing and ruling of the Republic, which was manifested in belonging to the Consilium Maius".

⁴ Philippus de Diversis, »Situs aedificiorum, politiae et laudabilium consuetudinum inclytiae civitatis Ragusii«, ed. V. Brunelli. *Programma dell'I.R. Ginnasio Superiore in Zara* 24 (1880-1881): p. 6.

The patriciate glorified its own rule as an expression of Dubrovnik's liberty, as the greatest of the Ragusan poets, Đivo Gundulić (1589-1638), put it so eloquently in his best works, *Dubravka* and *Osman*. In *Dubravka* Gundulić offers a magnificent pean to Dubrovnik's freedom thus:⁵

O beautiful, dear and sweet Liberty,
 God's gift to us, containing all treasures,
 The true cause of all our glory,
 The only embellishment of this Dubrava—
 All silver, all gold, all human lives
 Are not the measure of your pure beauty!

That "gift containing all treasures given to us by God" is exactly "self-rule", i.e. the rule of the Ragusan patriciate as "the only embellishment of this Dubrava". In his *Osman* Gundulić compared the state of South Slavic lands under the Ottoman and Venetian rules with "this free city" (*u slobodnu gradu ovomu*):⁶

A greater part of the Hungarian Kingdom,
 And the whole Kingdom of Bosnia,
 And the land that Herceg ruled over,
 Have been subjugated by Ottoman power.

(...)

Thy neighbors are all slaves,
 Heavy yoke rules over them all,
 Only thy realm is sitting
 On the throne of Liberty.

That is why Dubrovnik is "(the) white city, // Glorious to the world, pleasing to Heaven" (*bijeli grad, // slavan svijetu, nebu ugodan*).⁷ The author, Đivo Gundulić, who belonged to not only one of the leading patrician houses (*Gondola, Gundulići*), but the most prominent, makes the rule of Dubrovnik's

⁵ Đivo Gundulić, »Dubravka«, in: *Djela Giva Frana Gundulića*, ed. Đuro Körbler. Stari pisci hrvatski, IX. Zagreb: JAZU, 1938: p. 314, verses 1571-1576 (and many refrains).

⁶ Đivo Gundulić, »Osman«, *ibidem*: p. 450, Canto VIII, lines 573-576 and 581-584.

⁷ *Ibidem*, lines 581-582.

patriciate synonymous with Ragusan Liberty (*sloboda*) and with that “shield” (*štit*) which is “the true cause of all our glory” (*uzroče istini od naše sve slave*). Đivo Gundulić is a great poet; we must look at historical facts nevertheless.

In this article I have given a statistical study of the evolution of Ragusan patriciate from the inception of its official registration in *The Mirror (Il Specchio del Maggior Consiglio)* in 1440, until 1640, i.e. for the period of 200 years. The first date coincides also with De Diversis’s description of Dubrovnik (ca. 1440) and with the first specific mention of Dubrovnik as a Republic in 1441. The terminal date was chosen arbitrarily as coming shortly after Đivo Gundulić’s premature death in 1638 (he was not even fifty). After 1640 there was a new period in the history of the Ragusan patriciate characterized by the admission of several houses from the ranks of the upper stratum of the commoners of Dubrovnik (the so-called *Antunini*) and the division within the patriciate between those houses which intermarried with the newcomers (the so-called *Sorbonezi*) and those who did not and remained “pure” (the so-called *Salamankezi*), in addition to the descendants of the new patrician houses. This has been treated separately in a recent study by Stjepan Ćosić and Nenad Vekarić.⁸

The Patrician Houses and the Evolution of the Patriciate

It is impossible to ascertain exactly the original number of patrician houses in the 13th and 14th centuries. The best study of this period written by Irmgard Mahnken, a German scholar, found that there were 78 houses (*sclata, casata*),⁹ in contrast to the old Ragusan chroniclers who claimed that there were 150.¹⁰ Many patrician houses were wiped out by the repeated outbreaks of plague which devastated late medieval Dubrovnik, and which decimated the patricians and a large number of the rest of the population as well. The Black Death alone carried away 273 patricians. There were repeated outbreaks of the plague in 1400, 1401, 1416, 1419, 1422, 1427, 1428, 1430, 1431, 1436, 1437 and later, and throughout the 16th century. In 1400 the plague laid low 560 patri-

⁸ Stjepan Ćosić and Nenad Vekarić, »Raskol dubrovačkog patricijata.« *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku* 39 (2001): pp. 305-379.

⁹ Irmgard Mahnken, *Dubrovački patricijat u XIV veku*, II. Beograd: SANU, 1960.

¹⁰ »Annali della nobilissima Republica di Ragusa«, ed. Natko Nodilo. *Scriptores I, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*, XIV. Zagreb: JAZU, 1883: pp. 147-163 and 181-186.

cians and 207 of their noble women (*vladike*).¹¹ Due primarily to this “scourge of God” the patriciate was already reduced to only 37 houses in 1423, and to 33 only at the beginning of the period under study, i.e. in 1442.¹² The following houses were extant in 1442: Gozze (*Gučetići*), Bona (*Bunići*), Sorgo (*Sorkočevići*), Gondola (*Gundulići*), Menze (*Menčetići*), Cerva (*Crijevići*), Gradi (*Gradići*), Georgi (in the 15th century also known as Zorzi;¹³ *Đurđevići*), Resti (*Rastići*), Caboga (*Kaboga* or *Kabužići*), Ghetaldi (*Getaldići*), Pozza (*Pucići*), Ragnina (*Ranjine*), Zamagno (*Džamanjići*), Palmotta (*Palmotići*), Tudisi (*Tudizići*), Basilio (*Basiljevići*), Benessa (*Benešići*), Luccari (*Lukarevići*), Saraca (*Saračići*), Bucchia (*Bučići*), Bonda (*Bundići*), Proculo (*Prokulo*), Binciola (*Binčulići*), Bobali (*Bobaljevići*), Prodanello, Croce (*Krucići*), Calich (*Kalići*), Volzo, Martinussio (*Martinušići*), Bocignolo (*Bučinići*), Lucha and Mlascogna.

Already at the beginning of the 15th century one can detect a differentiation among the houses. Mahnken stated that of 78 houses (though some of these are only branches of more extensive houses), nine were the richest: Volcasso, Georgio, Crieva, Lucari, Goçe, Gondola, Menze, Bona and Sorgo. According to Mahnken, they were the most powerful politically as well. She found out that the following were the most numerous in the Major Council: Menze, Sorgo, Georgio, Bodaca-Binciola (a single house), Goçe-Pecurario (a single house), Petrana, Resti and Ragnina. Of the eight houses mentioned, only four (Menze, Sorgo, Georgio, Goçe-Pecurario) belonged to the wealthiest and politically most powerful ones as well. It is thus clear that from the very origins of the formation of the patriciate as the ruling class in Dubrovnik, there is a close relationship between wealth and power, but only partially between wealth and power on one hand, and the numerical strength of individual houses in the Major Council, on the other.¹⁴

¹¹ Risto Jeremić and Jorjo Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, I-III. Beograd: Biblioteka Centralnog higijenskog zavoda, 1938-1940.

¹² Alexandre Soloviev, »Le patriciat de Raguse au XVe siècle.«, in: *Rešetarov zbornik iz dubrovačke prošlosti*. Dubrovnik, 1931: pp. 59-66.

¹³ That Zorzi and Georgi are synonymous is confirmed by I. Mahnken, *Dubrovački patricijat u XIV veku*, I: pp. 213 and 225.

¹⁴ I. Mahnken, »O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima«: p. 82: “In practice there were real differences in the political status of individual *nobiles* and particular houses. One must reach this conclusion if one follows the activities of individual patricians in public life of the city. Accordingly one must state that certain functions were always filled by the members of a certain group of patrician houses, and that the differences in the importance of various offices was mirrored in the differences between within the political statuses of various patricians and certain families”.

Table 1. Ten most prominent patrician houses in the 14th and 15th centuries

House	Number of functions					
	14 th century	%	15 th century	%	Total	%
Menze	326	8.74	244	4.79	570	6.46
Sorgo	293	7.85	317	6.23	610	6.92
Georgio	216	5.79	357	7.02	573	6.50
Gondola	215	5.76	439	8.63	654	7.42
Goce	199	5.33	604	11.88	803	9.11
Bona	194	5.20	435	8.55	629	7.13
Crieva	154	4.13	265	5.21	419	4.75
Luccari	128	3.43				
Bobali	124	3.32				
Bodača	122	3.27				
Resti	331	6.51			414	4.69
Poca	275	5.40			316	3.58
Zamagno	234	4.60				
Volço	303	3.43				
Ukupno	1971	52.87	3501	68.86	5291	60.04

SOURCE:

B. Krekić, "O problemu koncentracije vlasti u Dubrovniku u XIV i XV vijeku.", in: *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 24-25 (1986): pp. 398-399.

Table 2: The order of the ten most influential and wealthiest houses in the 14th and 15th centuries

Rank	The most influential houses in the 14th century	The most influential houses in the 15th century	The wealthiest houses in the 14th century
1	Menze	Goçe	Volcasso
2	Sorgo	Gondola	Georgio
3	Georgio	Bona	Gondola
4	Gondola	Georgio	Menze
5	Goçe	Resti	Luccari
6	Bona	Sorgo	Goçe
7	Zrieva	Poça	Zrieva
8	Luccari	Zrieva	Croce
9	Bobali	Menze	Bodaza
10	Bodaza	Zamagno	Sorgo

SOURCE:

B. Krekić, "Influence politique et pouvoir économique à Dubrovnik (Raguse) du XIII^e au XVI^e siècle.", in: *Gerarchie economica e gerarchie sociali, secoli XII-XVIII*. Firenze: Le Monnier, 1990; reprinted in B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society, 1300-1600*. Aldershot-Brookfield: Variorum, 1997: I, p. 249.

Bariša Krekić wrote a very important work on the evolution of the patriciate from the 13th to the 16th century.¹⁵ Taking into account only the highest functions (those of the Rector, member of the Minor Council, Senator, and

¹⁵ Bariša Krekić, »Influence politique et pouvoir économique à Dubrovnik (Raguse) du XIII^e au XVI^e siècle.«, in: *Gerarchie economica e gerarchie sociali - secoli XII-XVIII*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1990: pp. 241-258, reprinted in: *idem, Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society, 1300-1600*. Aldershot-Brookfield: Variorum, 1997: I; *idem, »O problemu koncentracije vlasti u Dubrovniku u XIV i XV vijeku.« Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 24-25 (1986): pp. 397-406.

judge),¹⁶ Krekić came up with the most prominent houses in the 14th and 15th centuries (Table 1). Two important features should be pointed out: the rise in the total share of the ten most prominent houses from ca. 53 percent in the 14th to 69 percent in the 15th century, and the rise of the house of Gondola from the fourth place in the 14th century to the second in the 15th century, i.e. from 5.76 percent of all important functions to 8.63 percent.

Krekić was absolutely right when he stated that there is no complete correlation between the most influential and wealthiest houses (Table 2), but one must state as well that 2/3 of the most powerful houses are identical with 2/3 of the wealthiest: Menze, Sorgo, Georgio, Gondola, Goçe and Crieva. With the exception of the house Bona, these are also the most numerous of the houses throughout the patriciate's history.

The Membership of the Major Council

Since 1440 (all the way to the fall of the Republic) young patricians were registered in the so-called *Mirror of the Major Council* (*Specchio*) when they reached the age to enter that body. This was normally at eighteen, but laws were repeatedly changed. Next to most names a scribe would add *aetatis annorum*, i.e. "(so many) years of age". Also, between 1440 and 1455, young patricians were registered without an indication of the year of enrolment, which is indicated only after 1455. That makes it impossible to establish the number of the new members of the Major Council between 1440 and 1455. In order to achieve statistical uniformity, the numerical state of the newly enrolled patricians is presented by decade since 1460, but the period 1440-1460 is given as a unit. That means that the numbers for the new members in the period between 1440 and 1460 must be halved in order to get the average for those two decades. In addition, it must be emphasized that, apart from registering new members at the time of their accession to the Major Council as well as giving the officials of all the functions, *The Mirror* does not include either yearly or periodic lists of all the members of the Major Council,

¹⁶ B. Krekić, »O problemu koncentracije vlasti u Dubrovniku«: p. 398 ("Starting with the fact that the four most important institutions in Dubrovnik were the Rector, the court, the Minor Council, and the Senate..."). Mahnken has a similar definition (»O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima«: p. 83). She included in the above group in addition to the Rectors (*rectores*), judges (*iudices maioris curiae*), members of the Minor Council (*consilarii consilii minoris*), and the Senate (*sapientes*) both the bearers of important missions (who were mostly the members of the Senate) and the *capitanei guerre*.

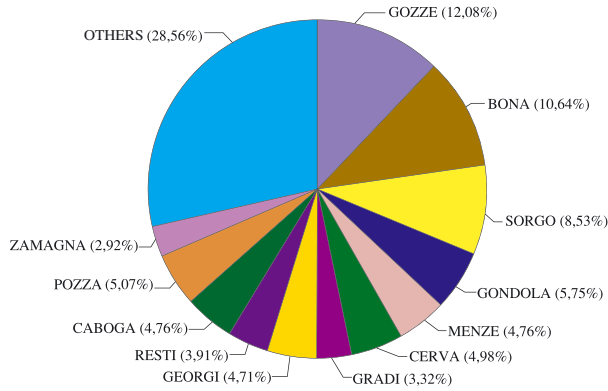
Table 3: Number of new members in the Major Council by house per decade (1440-1640)

Decade	Total of new members	Annual average
Ukupno	2201	11.0
1440-1460.	384	19.2
1461-1470.	110	11
1471-1480.	169	16.9
1481-1490.	124	12.4
1491-1500.	133	13.3
1501-1510.	90	9
1511-1520.	118	11.8
1521-1530.	142	14.2
1531-1540.	90	9
1541-1550.	119	11.9
1551-1560.	118	11.8
1561-1570.	90	9
1571-1580.	114	11.4
1581-1590.	98	9.8
1591-1600.	74	7.4
1601-1610.	87	8.7
1611-1620.	52	5.2
1621-1630.	47	4.7
1631-1640.	42	4.2

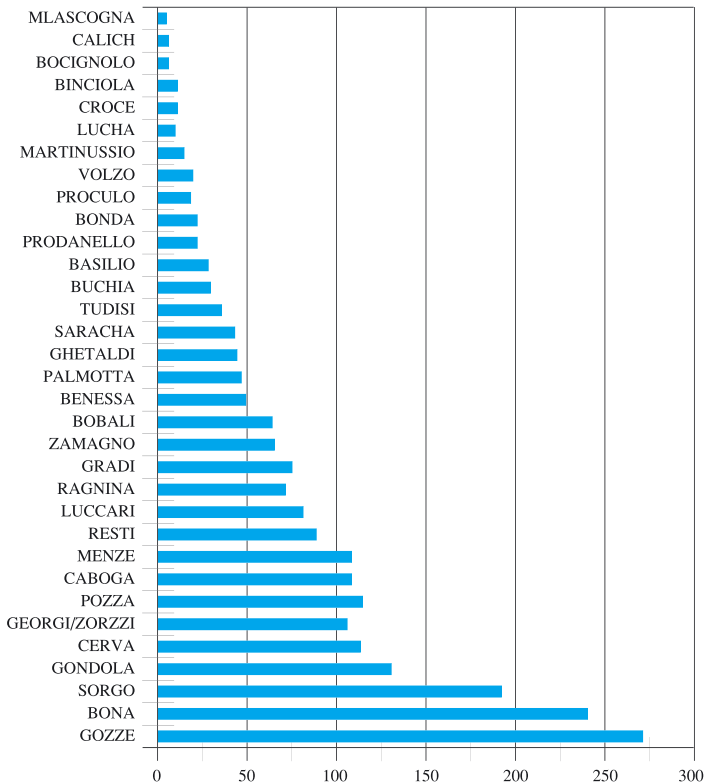
Table 4: Membership of the Major Council by house (1440-1640)

House	Number of members in the Major Council	Share (%)	Number of members in the Major Council acc. to Rheubottom	Share (%)
GOZZE	267	12.13	269	12.08
BONA	240	10.90	237	10.64
SORGO	190	8.63	190	8.53
GONDOLA	124	5.63	128	5.75
CERVA	109	4.95	111	4.98
GEORGI/ZORZI	109	4.95	105	4.71
POZZA	108	4.91	113	5.07
CABOGA	107	4.86	106	4.76
MENZE	105	4.77	106	4.76
RESTI	83	3.77	87	3.91
LUCCARI	77	3.50	80	3.59
RAGNINA	72	3.27	71	3.19
GRADI	71	3.23	74	3.32
ZAMAGNO	65	2.95	65	2.92
BOBALI	64	2.91	64	2.87
BENESSA	49	2.23	48	2.16
PALMOTA	46	2.09	46	2.07
GHETALDI	43	1.95	44	1.98
SARACA	41	1.86	43	1.93
TUDISI	36	1.64	36	1.62
BUCCHIA	30	1.36	29	1.30
BASILIO	27	1.23	28	1.26
PRODANELLO	24	1.09	22	0.99
BONDA	19	0.86	22	0.99
PROCULO	18	0.82	18	0.81
VOLZO	18	0.82	19	0.85
MARTINUSSIO	14	0.64	15	0.67
LUCHA	10	0.45	12	0.54
CROCE	10	0.45	11	0.49
BINCIOLA	9	0.41	11	0.49
BOCIGNOLO	6	0.27	6	0.27
CALICH	5	0.23	6	0.27
MLASCOGNA	5	0.23	5	0.22
TOTAL	2201	100	2227	100

Graph 1: Share of membership of the Major Council by house (1440-1640)



Graph 2: Number of new members in the Major Council by house per decade (1440-1640)



thus making it impossible to ascertain exactly the total number of all members of the Major Council in any particular year. It should be kept in mind that some new members never participated in the proceedings of the Major Council nor were they elected to any functions due to either their early death or joining the Church (this was regularly indicated in the records next to their names). Nevertheless, since some of them participated in at least some elections for offices or discharged some functions, it is not possible to leave out such members without a proper cause which in most cases cannot be determined.

The total figure for the Ragusan patricians registered in the three books of *The Mirror* for the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries respectively comes to 2,201 (according to my calculations), but, if we take into account some additional information unearthed by David Rheubottom (Table 4),¹⁷ the number comes to 2,227 (Table 3, Graphs 1 and 2). That means that, between 1440 and 1640, on the average, about 110 new members entered the Major Council every decade, or 11 per year. Such a uniform influx of new members, however, does not correspond to the real evolution of the numerical state of the Major Council.

In its initial phase, from 1440 to 1460, the average annual influx of new members stood at 19.2. Between 1455 and 1460, however, only 47 new patricians or, on the average, 7.83 annually, entered the Major Council. That means that between 1440 and 1455 altogether 337 patricians entered the Major Council, or on the average 24.07 per year. This seems impossible to me. It is quite likely that, when the first *Mirror* was set up, all the members of the Major Council were registered *regardless of when they joined that body*. That would also explain the absence of the year of their accession to the Major Council before 1455.

The influx of new members into the Major Council was heavily dependent on demographic fluctuations. In particular, the ravages of the plagues that recurred throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, left their mark on the numerical state of the patriciate. Still, the rate of mortality alone cannot explain why certain houses remained numerically strong to the end of the period under study (or at least until the beginning of the 17th century when the annual in-

¹⁷ David Rheubottom, *Age, Marriage, and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Ragusa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: pp. 175-191 (Appendix C: Politically Active Men, 1440-1490), on the basis of the sources on the elections to the functions filled in certain blanks and uncertainties in the list of the patriciate found in *Specchio* for the 15th century. The difference between the above-mentioned number (2,201) and his (2,227) is 26 members of the Major Council or 1.17 percent.

flux of new members declined precipitously), while others died out or were barely present in the Major Council (Table 4).

If we take into account all those houses that participated in the Major Council with 5 percent or more, then nine houses (Gozze, Bona, Sorgo, Gondola, Cerva, Giorgi, Pozza, Caboga and Menze) accounted for 63 percent of the membership of the Major Council. If we add the house of Resti with 4 percent of the members of the Major Council, then these ten houses accounted for 2/3 of the whole membership of the Major Council for the period between 1440 and 1640. The remaining 23 (out of 33) houses only provided 1/3 of the membership of the Major Council.

The Participation of Houses in the Main Functions

At this stage we must pose the cardinal question: was there some sort of an *oligarchy* in Dubrovnik between 1440 and 1640, i.e. did these ten houses dominate over the main functions in the Republic of Dubrovnik?

I chose as the main functions those offices that became a part of the Senate indirectly, i.e. the Rector, the member of the Minor Council, the Guardians of Justice (*Provveditori della Città*, office formally instituted in 1480) and the “pure” Senate, i.e. the directly elected members of the Senate. The total number of patricians performing these four functions, for the period between 1440 and 1640, is 8,636 (Table 5).

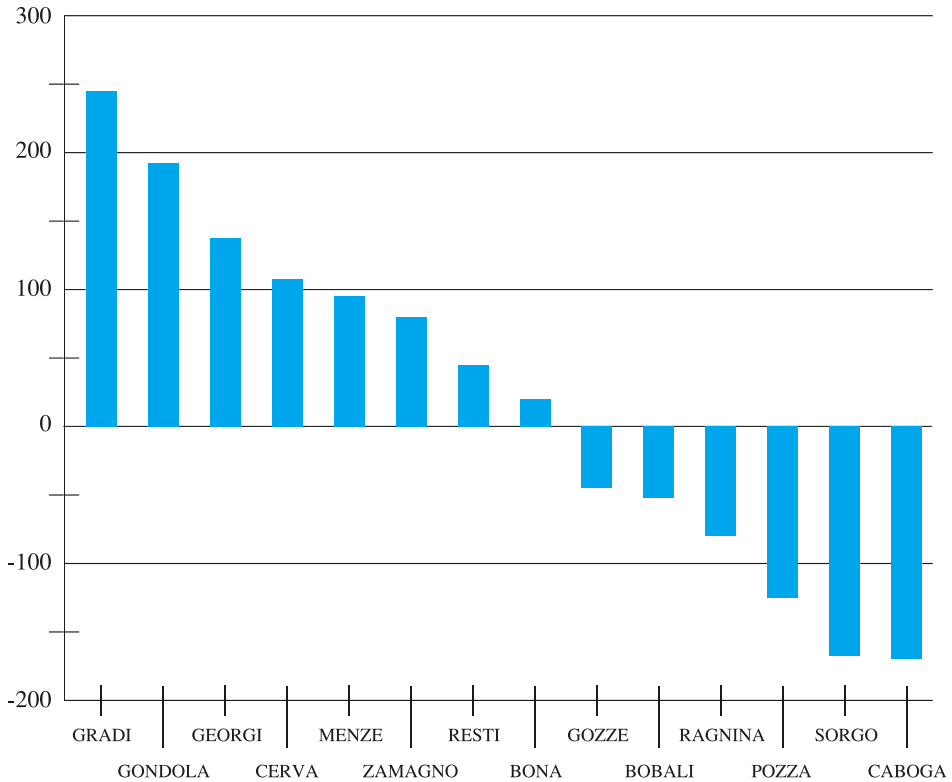
The houses whose share of the number of rectorships exceeded their numerical strength in the Major Council (only the houses with the difference bigger than 1 percent are listed) are the following: Gradi (the difference is +3.07 between their share of Rectorships and their membership in the Major Council), Gondola (+1.97), Giorgi (+1.89), Gozze (+1.14) and Menze (+1.11). The houses that had a negative difference, i.e. which received less than their share of Rectorships *proportionate* to their numbers in the Major Council were Sorgo (-1.46), Caboga (-1.59), Pozza (-1.34) and Bucchia (-1.15).

The houses whose members were elected to the so-called “pure” Senate, i.e. the Senate *without* the office-holders who entered the Senate as of right (*ex officio*), more numerous than their *proportionate* share of the membership of the Major Council would entitle them to, were the following: Gondola (+2.05), Cerva (+1.45), Caboga (+1.35), Giorgi (+1.26) and Gradi (+1.02). The houses which had a negative balance were Sorgo (-1.44), Bobali (-1.10) and Pozza (-1.02).

Table 5: Main office-holders by house (1440-1640)

House	Senate	Rector	Minor Council	Guardians of Justice	Total
GOZZE	425	316	175	94	1010
BONA	383	280	194	105	962
SORGO	235	167	147	62	611
GONDOLA	251	181	157	62	651
MENZE	161	140	141	50	492
CERVA	209	132	121	56	518
GRADI	139	150	134	62	485
GEORGI	203	163	137	41	544
RESTI	131	97	101	34	363
CABOGA	101	78	84	21	284
GHETALDI	57	37	35	12	141
POZZA	127	85	88	19	319
RAGNINA	88	55	57	14	214
ZAMAGNO	114	85	89	33	321
PALMOTTA	67	42	34	15	158
TUDISI	37	30	32	3	102
BASILIO	44	21	29	5	99
BENESSA	93	38	65	24	220
LUCCARI	87	69	86	32	274
SARACA	40	24	36	11	111
BUCCHIA	27	5	5	0	37
BONDA	27	27	25	7	86
PROCULO	27	15	25	10	77
BINCIOLA	24	5	10	1	40
BOBALI	59	59	66	23	207
PRODANELLO	20	20	20	10	70
CROCE	2	1	0	0	3
CALICH	14	9	13	5	41
VOLZO	25	21	25	3	74
MARTINUSSIO	15	10	16	4	45
BUCIGNOLO	24	15	15	3	57
LUCHA	12	5	3	0	20
MLASCOGNA	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	3268	2382	2165	821	8636

Graph 3: Estimate of power exercised by houses - difference between share of main functions and their respective share in the Major Council (1440-1640)

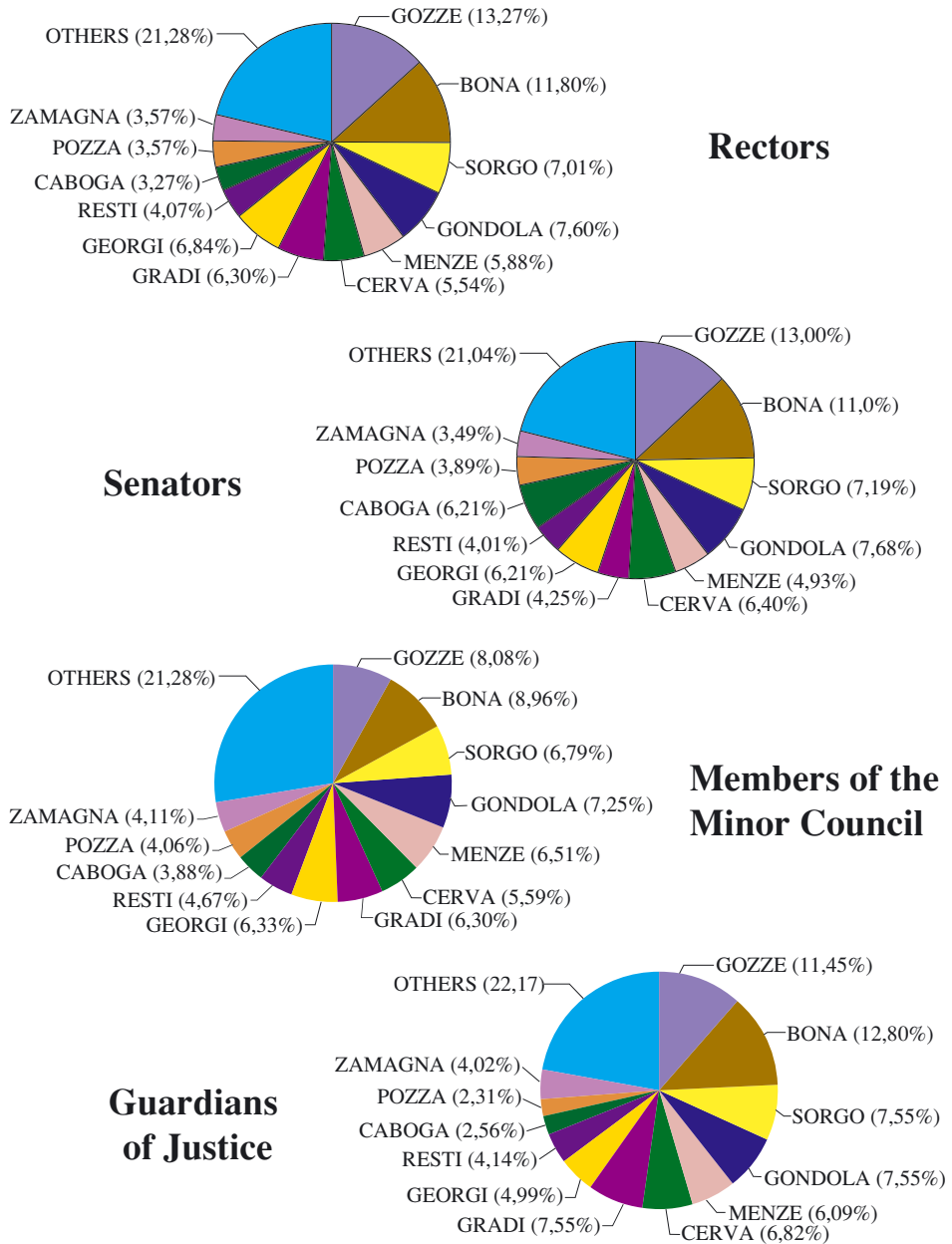


The houses that contributed a greater share in the Minor Council than they were entitled to according to their numerical strength in the Major Council were the following: Gradi (+2.96), Menze (+1.74), Gondola (+1.62), Giorgi (+1.38), and Zamagna (+1.16), while the houses which were underrepresented were Gozze (-4.05), Bona (-1.94), Sorgo (-1.84), Bucchia (-1.13) and Caboga (-1).

Table 6. Ratio between share of main functions by houses and their respective share in the membership of the Major Council (1440-1640)

House	Major Council	Rectors		Senators		Minor Council		Guardians of Justice		Total (4 functions)	
	Share (%)	Share (%)	Respective share in the membership of the Major Council	Share (%)	Respective share in the membership of the Major Council	Share (%)	Respective share in the membership of the Major Council	Share (%)	Respective share in the membership of the Major Council	Share (%)	Respective share in the membership of the Major Council
GOZZE	12.13	13.27	1.14	13.00	0.87	8.08	-4.05	11.45	-0.68	11.70	-0.43
BONA	10.90	11.80	0.90	11.70	0.80	8.96	-1.94	12.80	1.90	11.10	0.20
SORGO	8.63	7.01	-1.62	7.19	-1.44	6.79	-1.84	7.55	-1.08	7.00	-1.63
GONDOLA	5.63	7.60	1.97	7.68	2.05	7.25	1.62	7.55	1.92	7.51	1.88
MENZE	4.77	5.88	1.11	4.93	0.16	6.51	1.74	6.09	1.32	5.69	0.92
CERVA	4.95	5.54	0.59	6.40	1.45	5.59	0.64	6.82	1.87	6.00	1.05
GRADI	3.23	6.30	3.07	4.25	1.02	6.19	2.96	7.55	4.32	5.62	2.39
GEORGI	4.95	6.84	1.89	6.21	1.26	6.33	1.38	4.99	0.04	6.29	1.34
RESTI	3.77	4.07	0.30	4.01	0.24	4.67	0.90	4.14	0.37	4.21	0.44
CABOGA	4.86	3.27	-1.59	6.21	1.35	3.88	-0.98	2.56	-2.30	3.21	-1.65
GHETALDI	1.95	1.55	-0.40	1.74	-0.21	1.62	-0.33	1.46	-0.49	1.63	-0.32
POZZA	4.91	3.57	-1.34	3.89	-1.02	4.06	-0.85	2.31	-2.60	3.68	-1.23
RAGNINA	3.27	2.31	-0.96	2.69	-0.58	2.63	-0.64	1.71	-1.56	2.48	-0.79
ZAMAGNO	2.95	3.57	0.62	3.49	0.54	4.11	1.16	4.02	1.07	3.73	0.78
PALMOTTA	2.09	1.76	-0.33	2.05	-0.04	1.57	-0.52	1.83	-0.26	1.83	-0.26
TUDISI	1.64	1.26	-0.38	1.13	-0.51	1.48	-0.16	0.37	-1.27	1.18	-0.46
BASILIO	1.23	0.88	-0.35	1.34	0.11	1.34	0.11	0.61	-0.62	1.15	-0.08
BENESSA	2.23	1.60	-0.63	2.85	0.62	3.00	0.77	2.92	0.69	2.55	0.32
LUCCARI	3.50	2.90	-0.60	2.66	-0.84	3.97	0.47	3.90	0.40	3.17	-0.33
SARACA	1.86	1.01	-0.85	1.22	-0.64	1.66	-0.20	1.34	-0.52	1.29	-0.57
BUCCHIA	1.36	0.21	-1.15	0.83	-0.53	0.23	-1.13	0.00	-1.36	0.43	-0.93
BONDA	0.86	1.13	0.27	0.83	-0.03	1.15	0.29	0.85	-0.01	1.00	0.14
PROCULO	0.82	0.63	-0.19	0.83	0.01	1.15	0.33	1.22	0.40	0.89	0.07
BINCIOLA	0.41	0.21	-0.20	0.73	0.32	1.15	0.74	0.12	-0.29	0.46	0.05
BOBALI	2.91	2.48	-0.43	1.81	-1.10	3.05	0.14	2.80	-0.11	2.40	-0.51
PRODANELLO	1.09	0.84	-0.25	0.61	-0.48	0.92	-0.17	1.22	0.13	0.81	-0.28
CROCE	0.45	0.04	-0.41	0.06	-0.39	0.00	-0.45	0.00	-0.45	0.00	-0.45
CALICH	0.23	0.38	0.15	0.43	0.20	0.60	0.37	0.60	0.37	0.48	0.25
VOLZO	0.82	0.88	0.06	0.76	-0.06	1.15	0.33	0.40	-0.42	0.86	0.04
MARTINUSSIO	0.64	0.42	-0.22	0.46	-0.18	0.74	0.10	0.49	-0.15	0.52	-0.12
BUCIGNOLO	0.27	0.63	0.36	0.73	0.46	0.69	-0.27	0.40	0.13	0.66	0.39
LUCHA	0.45	0.21	-0.24	0.37	-0.08	0.14	-0.31	0.00	-0.45	0.23	-0.22
MLASCOGNA	0.23	0.00	-0.23	0.00	-0.23	0.00	-0.23	0.00	-0.23	0.00	-0.23
TOTAL	100	100		100		100		100		100	

Graph 4: The share of the houses in main functions (1440-1640)



When analyzing the office of the *provisores civitatis* (Guardians of Justice) one must keep constantly in mind that this function was established in 1480, and the first office-holders were elected for 1481. Their number was five, but it varied slightly. Only one member of a particular house could be elected to this office in any one year, though if a member of a particular house serving in office died, another member from the same house could be elected in his stead. The houses that performed a greater number of functions than their numerical strength in the Major Council warranted were the following: Gradi (+4.32), Gondola (+1.92), Bona (+1.90), Cerva (+1.87), Menze (+1.32), and Zamagna (+1.07). Those houses who did not secure the proportionate number of functions were: Pozza (-2.60), Caboga (-2.30), Ragnina (-1.56), Bucchia (-1.36), Tudisi (-1.27) and Sorgo (-1.08).

Altogether, the houses that secured a greater share of the main functions than their respective share in the membership of the Major Council would entitle them to, were the following (Table 6, Graph 3): Gradi (+2.39), Gondola (+1.88), Giorgi (+1.34) and Cerva (+1.05). Those houses who did not receive a proportionate share of the main functions were: Caboga (-1.65), Sorgo (-1.63) and Pozza (-1.23). It is very important to keep in mind that every percentage point for the combined total of these four (most important) functions amounts to about 86 main functions. That means that the members of the Gondola house performed 154 more functions over the two centuries than their numerical strength in the Major Council would proportionately allow them to. In the Major Council their membership came to 128, i.e. 5.63 percent of all members, while their share of functions was 651 (7.54 percent of all functions) instead of (in proportional terms) 496 functions. The house of Gradi topped the house of Gondola with 74 members in the Major Council (3.32 percent of all members), but secured 485 functions (5.62 percent of all functions), i.e. 198 functions more than their proportionate share of membership in the Major Council would entitle them to.

Conclusion

In Dubrovnik, throughout the period during which the patriciate exercised its monopoly of power, i.e. from 1358 to 1808, there were three kinds of functions: purely administrative ones (e.g., the counts of Mljet or Konavle), diplomatic (e.g., the envoys sent to the Porte, to the Pope or the King of Spain), and the main ones, i.e. those which belonged to the Senate and for which a

member had to be 50 years of age according to Ragusan usage.¹⁸ Certainly, there is quite a difference in being a Rector or a curator of the Cathedral, and, again, between the Rector of the Republic and the local count of Konavle. Here one must draw a bottom line between those who carried out the decisions of the Senate and other main institutions,¹⁹ and those who made such decisions as Rectors, members of the Minor Council, or the Guardians of Justice. This study was concerned with precisely these main, so to speak *governing* functions as correlated between the share of particular houses in securing them and their respective numerical presence in the Major Council over the period of two centuries (1440-1640).

Though the most prominent houses secured the majority of the main functions (the Rector, the member of the Minor Council, the Senator, the Guardian of Justice), there were among them, nevertheless, real differences. Some houses discharged more functions than their numerical strength in the Major Council would entitle them to proportionately, while others did not receive quite the number of functions that, proportionately, they were entitled to. The houses of Gradi, Gondola, Giorgi, Cerva, Menze, Zamagna, Resti, and Bona belonged to the first group while the other group included Caboga, Sorgo, Pozza, Ragnina, Bobali and Gozze.

In my book, *Our Kingdom Come*,²⁰ I asked the following question: Can

¹⁸ I. Mahnken, »O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima«: pp. 83-84: "It, i.e. the Senatorial circle rises from the wider membership of the Senate. According to De Diversis, to the Senate, during the 15th, but most probably during the entire 14th century as well, belonged 33 older and more prominent patricians, who were deciding matters mostly of foreign policy, and related to that on dispatching Ragusan envoys. The Council had rather permanent membership. Belonging to this council is what distinguished that precisely limited circle of the patriciate which played the main role in the political life of the city. Belonging permanently to this council symbolized the prestige that a particular patrician enjoyed. The number of members of a particular house in this council, which did not reflect automatically the numerical strength of a house, was the mark of its importance and influence." It should be pointed out, that the Senate included not just the Rectors and the members of the Minor Council for that year, but the twelve Rectors and the members of the Minor Council of the previous year whose mandate had just come to an end. Since they entered the Senate *ex officio* they were not included in the number of Senators elected according to houses each year. One must also bear in mind that for a period the so-called *Collegio di ventinove*, i.e. 29 members of the appellate court, also belonged to the Senate as its branch.

¹⁹ I. Mahnken, »O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima«: p. 82: "The two councils, the Senate (*Consilium Rogatorum*) and the Minor Council (*Consilium minus*) were in a particular sense only committees of the Major Council, which theoretically exercised all power and rule in the city..."

²⁰ Zdenko Zlatar, *Our Kingdom Come: The Counter-Reformation, the Republic of Dubrovnik, and the Liberation of the Balkan Slavs*. New York: Boulder-Columbia University Press, 1992: p. 60.

one ascertain the existence of an oligarchy, made up of the leading houses in the Major Council, in 16th- and 17th-century Dubrovnik? I came to the conclusion that one cannot talk of an oligarchy, for, by definition, an oligarchy is a *minority* within a larger group, whereas the leading houses made up about half of the number of patricians in the Major Council. Moreover, all the members of particular houses, and even more all the members of all the leading houses making up about half of the membership of the Major Council, had no joint interest in uniting against the rest of the patriciate. Accordingly, I concluded that there was no rule of an oligarchy in Dubrovnik. Since my book is concerned mainly with the end of the 16th and the first few decades of the 17th century, i.e. roughly during the lifetime of Đivo Gundulić (1589-1638), my conclusion applies primarily to this period. Nevertheless, it is not correct to state, as Zdenka Janeković-Römer does, that “a part of the historiography characterized this as an appearance of oligarchy”,²¹ and then she cites my book in note no. 596. It is true that my book proved the existence of various factions in the Senate which arose due to the attempts on the part of Western rulers, like the dukes of Savoy and Mantua, backed by the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs and with the papal blessing, to liberate the South Slavic peoples from the Turkish yoke. But these factions are not based on a simple division between the leading and other houses, but on the relations which existed primarily *within* the patriciate as a whole. Accordingly, one cannot speak of an oligarchy, for the dominant faction was neither the wealthiest nor the most numerous within the patriciate. The factions that emerged in the Senate, and were backed up by the family relations in the Major Council, were formed on an *ideological* and not on a demographic, economic, social or religious basis. This led to the split *within* the leading houses, with some of their members in favor of the participation of Dubrovnik in a “crusade” aimed at liberating the Balkans from the Turkish rule, and some who were resolutely opposed to these plans and wanted Dubrovnik to remain “loyal” to the Ottoman Porte, while the third, were neutral. Accordingly, it is not accurate to interpret the results of my study as amounting to “an appearance of an oligarchy”.

²¹ Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode: Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999: p. 177. Altogether, the book is an excellent work.

The greatest pride and glory of Old Ragusans was their claim that they were self-ruling (*samovlasni*), while, “on both sides” of Dubrovnik there were “neighbours” who were “slaves” of those “great powers which dominated over all”, as Đivo Gundulić so magnificently put it. This class “self-rule” rested on the golden principle that all members of the Major Council, i.e. all male, mature patricians have an equal access to power, limited only by their age (one had to be fifty to exercise the main functions), and an equal opportunity of being elected to them.²² This golden rule was not breached in principle, but, some houses and individuals, as always in life, fared better than others. This is particularly true of several leading houses—Gradi and Gondola, for example—which used their numerical strength in the Major Council to not only secure their fair share of main functions, but to exceed it as well. And that means, as I already emphasized in my monograph *The Slavic Epic: Gundulić's Osman*: “It is thus perfectly clear from the above analysis that Đivo Frana Gundulić belonged not only to one of the small group of dominant *casate*, but that his house was actually the most prestigious, powerful and respected of them all. In overall terms no other house exceeded that of Gondola (*Gundulići*) except in sheer numbers”—i.e. Gozze, Bona, Sorgo—“and none exceeded it in the quality of its members. Our poet came from a house that stood brilliant and supreme at the very pinnacle of power and prestige in early 17th-century Dubrovnik.”²³

This analysis has confirmed it once more.

²² I. Mahnken, »O dubrovačkim vlastelinskim rodovima«: p. 82: “The patriciate was in principle a body of equal members. This equality was symbolized by the Major Council (*Consilium maius*), to which all the patricians belonged, up to 1348 when they reached 20, and after 1348 when they reached 18 years of age.”

²³ Zdenko Zlatar, *The Slavic Epic: Gundulić's Osman*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995: p. 63.

