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ON THE “TEMERITY” OF RAGUSANS: VENETIAN-RAGUSAN CONFLICT IN THE SUMMER OF 1630*

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ABSTRACT: The article is dedicated to one of the most serious incidents between the Venetian and Ragusan Republics: the armed conflict between the Venetian galleys and Ragusan armed ship and fortresses in front of Ragusa on 28 July 1630. The first part of the article offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the event itself, represented in very different ways in the Venetian and Ragusan documents. The second part addresses the immediate aftermath of the event, that is, the reactions of the Venetian and Ragusan governments and various diplomatic initiatives that followed. Finally, the third part investigates the significance and long-term consequences of this incident, questioning the established interpretation according to which it was the beginning of the so-called “Lokrum crisis”, a prolonged diplomatic conflict between Venice and Ragusa. The article is largely based on the hitherto unknown documents from the Venetian archive, which not only bring a wealth of new data, but also reveal a serious methodological issue inherent in relying exclusively on Ragusan documents when reconstructing the diplomatic history of the small state. The appendix of the article is the transcription of the report regarding the incident, written by the commander of Venetian forces, Giovanni Battista Grimani.

Key words: Ragusa, Venice, seventeenth century, diplomacy, Lokrum

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Introduction

The topic of this article are the dramatic events of one summer afternoon in 1630. More precisely, this article is dedicated to one of the most serious incidents between the Venetian and Ragusan Republics: the armed conflict between the Venetian galleys and Ragusan fortresses and armed ship in front of Ragusa itself on 28 July 1630.¹ This episode is interesting for at least two reasons. First, it is usually seen as the beginning of the so-called “Lokrum crisis”, a long-lasting and intense diplomatic conflict between the two Adriatic Republics, during which, to the absolute horror of Ragusan government, the Venetians openly claimed the small island of Lokrum, situated in front of the Ragusan harbour. Second, this episode is interesting because its detailed analysis reveals a significant and yet disregarded problem inherent in the work with Ragusan diplomatic sources. That problem becomes clearly visible when one does the obvious thing—compares Ragusan documents with those of foreign provenience.

The first part of the text is dedicated to the precise reconstruction of the events, which is based on the critical analysis of the often contradictory accounts in the Venetian and Ragusan sources. The second part analyses the immediate aftermath of the incident, investigating the reactions of Venetian and Ragusan authorities, i.e. primarily the diplomatic initiatives that followed. Finally, the third part investigates the broader significance of this incident, questioning the traditional assumption that it represents the beginning of the “Lokrum crisis”.

“The temerity of Ragusans” or the Venetian harassments: contradictory reports on the incident

Grimani’s report to the Venetian Senate

It is best to begin with an interesting and hitherto unknown document. In the State Archives of Venice there is a copious report regarding the incident, directed to the *Serenissima’s* Senate and written by its protagonist from the Venetian side—Giovanni Battista Grimani, the Captain of the Cretan guard

¹ The most important historiographic overviews of this episode are: Antonije Vučetić, »Dubrovčani na obrani svog teritorija i slobodne plovidbe prema Mlečanima početkom XVII. vijeka.« *Glasnik dubrovačkog učenog društva “Sveti Vlaho”* 1 (1929): pp. 96-97; Radovan Samardžić, *Veliki vek Dubrovnika*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1983: pp. 83-84; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, II. Zagreb: NZMH, 1980: pp. 98-99.

(*capitano delle guardie di Candia*).² At the moment of the conflict, Grimani commanded three galleys that were passing by Ragusa en route to Corfu, where they were to join the rest of the Venetian fleet.³

Details about the earlier career of this patrician are not known, but the fragmentary data about his later positions reveal a capable individual who climbed high in the Venetian state apparatus.⁴ Thus, already in 1631—when he was the protagonist of a new skirmish with Ragusans—Grimani held the office of the Captain of the Gulf (*capitano di Golfo*),⁵ while in the early 1640s he served as the governor general (*provveditore generale*) of Dalmatia.⁶ In the early phase of the War of Candia he participated in the maritime operations in the Aegean, which culminated with his appointment as the general commander

² *Senato, Dispacci, Provveditori da terra e da mar e altre cariche* (henceforth: *PTM*), busta 922: no pagination, no numeration, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, henceforth: ASV. The transcription of the entire letter by Grimani is to be found at the end of this text.

³ The Venetian fleet was gathering at Corfu due to the news that Spanish fleet was preparing to enter the Adriatic. Spanish ships were to enter the Gulf as an escort to the Princess Marie Anne, daughter of the King Phillip III, who was travelling to Vienna in order to marry Ferdinand III, the Hungarian and Bohemian King and future Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (see the letter of the Senate to Grimani from 19 July 1630, in: *Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, Secreti*, filza 143: no pagination, the letters in the codex are arranged chronologically).

⁴ The only biography of Grimani known to me—if it may be called that at all—is a panegyric description of his participation in maritime operations during the War of Candia, written by the Neapolitan author Lorenzo Crasso and included in his book about the famous captains (Lorenzo Crasso, *Elogii di capitani illustri*. Venezia: Combi e Là Nou, 1683: pp. 237-239; available at: https://books.google.hr/books?id=ff6JnQEACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, accessed on 10 February 2020).

⁵ In the summer of 1631, immediately after the new conflict with Grimani, Ragusan Senate wrote to Petar Benessa in Rome, stressing that they had complained about Grimani's behaviour, but seeing that meanwhile he had been promoted to the Captain of the Gulf, they feared *che la cosa non si habbi a fermare qui... non che ui siano altri disegni di meno* (*Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, III/1, ed. Jovan Radonić. Beograd: SKA, 1939: p. 349).

⁶ For Grimani's role in the modernisation of the Venetian army in this period, i.e. the standardisation of the use of muskets, see: Nikola Markulin, »Vojne inovacije u mletačkoj Dalmaciji 17. i 18. stoljeća«, in: *Dalmacija u prostoru i vremenu. Što Dalmacija jest, a što nije?*, ed. Lena Mirošević and Vera Graovac. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2014: pp. 80-81. Ragusan authorities were certainly not thrilled in the summer of 1641 when they found out who was appointed as the new governor general of Dalmatia. However, this did not stop them from sending their warmest congratulations (for the congratulatory letter to Grimani, see: *Litterae et commissiones Ponentis*, series 27.6 (henceforth: *LP*), vol. 17, f. 184r-184v, State Archive in Dubrovnik, henceforth: SAD). On the other hand, it seems that Grimani also did not harbour serious animosity, since he fulfilled their pleas and ordered the liberation of a captured Ragusan ship (*LP*, vol. 17, f. 187r).

of the Venetian fleet in 1647. He died while holding that post, in 1648, when his fleet was caught in a storm near the Aegean island of Psara.⁷

In the report dated two days after the incident, on 30 July 1630, Grimani writes that while his galleys were passing by Dubrovnik, they heard an artillery shot without a cannonball and saw smoke—the usual signal used between ships when they called for help or wanted to negotiate. He therefore turned his galleys and, rowing against the strong western wind, soon saw a smaller ship (*fusta* ò *fregata*) heading towards the rocky shore opposite the island of Lokrum.⁸ Since there were rumours that two pirate ships had recently left Herceg Novi, Grimani decided to investigate and gave the vessel a sign with a flag on the prow of his galley, signalling for it to approach in order to be searched. However, the small ship disobeyed and soon reached the shore near the monastery of St. Jacob where some forty armed men disembarked from it. This prompted Grimani to send one of his officers (*offitali*) in a boat towards the ship, but its crew could not restrain from its “temerity” (*temerità*) and, using the cover of the rocky shore, started shooting at the closest Venetian galley. The musket salvo killed four and wounded several Venetian crewmen, while one bullet nearly missed Grimani himself, stopping in the cheek of one of his officers (*capo*).

Unwilling to tolerate such an insult, despite the unfavourable wind threatening to wreck his galleys on the rocks, Grimani dispatched several boats with soldiers from all the three galleys. After a brief skirmish and more casualties, they captured the ship. At that moment two Ragusan envoys arrived and started to insolently threaten that the Venetian galleys would pay if the ship was not liberated. As the envoys were leaving, Ragusan fortresses opened fire and several cannonballs fell in the immediate vicinity of the Venetian galleys. However, Grimani stresses that he did not let that intimidate him, and that without any damage he led his galleys and the captured ship to the safety of the neighbouring islet of Lokrum.

Later, when Grimani was on that “island which belongs to your Serenity”, two new envoys came from Ragusa, chosen from among the most influential patricians (*doi altri de più principali*). Having realised their mistake, they tried to justify the attack on the Venetians by stressing the temerity of the ship’s crew and the recklessness (*furor*) of the castellan of the Ragusan fort. They insisted

⁷ Kenneth Meyer Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century*. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991: pp. 145-149.

⁸ Although *fusta* and *frigata* are two different types of ship, Grimani surprisingly uses both terms for the Ragusan armed boat.

that the Ragusan authorities deeply regretted the incident and begged Grimani not to be offended, promising that he would soon receive satisfaction. He answered politely, stating that the *Serenissima* was always gladdened by the goodwill of its neighbours for whose benefit it did so much. Then he told the Ragusan envoys his version of the events.

According to Grimani, when he heard the artillery signals from the city’s direction, he turned towards Ragusa and caught sight of a ship. He thought it was a pirate from Herceg Novi, since it started fleeing from his galleys. In line with his duty, by signalling from his galley and sending a boat towards it, he invited the ship to stop and submit to inspection. But at that very moment he was attacked by its crew, the offense being even worse since it came from “friends and proteges” (*amici et dependenti*). The whole situation was further exacerbated by artillery assault from the fortresses. All of this was done with the goal of intimidating him and forcing him to a shameful retreat, which had never happened nor ever would due to his zeal in the service of the most Serene Republic. Grimani stated that he would accept the Ragusan apology if the crew of the ship were turned over to him and if those who shot from the fortresses were properly punished. Ragusan envoys responded that at the moment they could not give him that satisfaction, because the crew had dispersed among the hills and the superintendent of artillery had fled. Grimani writes that he answered in very general terms and that Ragusans left fairly confused. He spent most of the following evening and night struggling to save the galleys from the violent wind which threatened to break them on the rocky shore of Lokrum.

At the break of dawn, when Grimani started towards Kotor (*Cattaro*), he was followed by a boat with Ragusan envoys. The envoys told him that they had orders from their government to follow him until he accepted their apologies and showed them his benevolence and favour. They agreed that it was impossible to justify the behaviour of the ship’s crew and that the temerity of the artillery commander was unfathomable. However, they insisted that Grimani should take into account the profound respect and loyalty of those good citizens of Ragusa who had already opened an investigation which would certainly lead to severe punishment of the culprits. Regarding the captured Ragusan ship, they said that they were asking for it only as a sign of his mercy. If, however, he should deem otherwise, it should remain in his possession. In other words, they suggested that he could rightly consider that ship as a compensation for the crew members he had lost.

Sensing that it would be prudent to react less severely, Grimani answered that he could not have suffered a greater insult because he was attacked by Ragusans with no reason whatsoever, at the very moment when he went to their aid. He stressed the sovereignty of the Most Serene Republic over these seas, his orders to capture armed ships regardless of their provenience, the obligation of the weak to obey the strong as well as the benevolence with which Venice treated Ragusans. All of that was blatantly disregarded in this incident. However, hearing their pleas, he renounced the compensation for the killed members of his crew. Regarding the captured Ragusan ship, it was beyond his power—its fate should be decided by the Venetian Senate and therefore he would take it to the governor (*provveditore*) of Kotor. He also stressed that he would convey to the Venetian Senate the promise that Ragusan culprits, the ships' crew and the castellan, would be punished (in order for the punishment to be as public as possible, in his report Grimani even suggested that they be forced to serve as oarsmen on his galleys). Since he had to continue his voyage in order to join the remainder of the Venetian fleet, Grimani told Ragusan envoys that they should thenceforth communicate with the governor of Kotor, who would ensure that all their promises regarding that incident were fulfilled. The envoys agreed to these terms and left after a display of extraordinary respect and submission. Grimani arrived in Kotor and gave the captured ship to the governor—attached to the letter is the vessel's inventory—and then continued his voyage towards the remainder of the Venetian fleet.

Although the text is somewhat unclear, it seems that at the very end of the letter Grimani makes yet another quite serious accusation against the Ragusans. He claims to have found out that this “brigantine” (*brigantino*—probably the captured ship?) is the vessel which often preys on ships in this area and conducts them to the Ragusan port under the threat of artillery. According to Grimani, the inhabitants of the Ottoman Herceg Novi—otherwise known for piracy—are then falsely blamed for these robberies. At the very end of the letter Grimani suggests to the Senate to send some Venetian ships into these waters, because allegedly eleven pirate fusts have been equipped in Herceg Novi, Ulcinj, St. Maura and Preveza.

The Ragusan version of the events

Not surprisingly, the Ragusan version of this incident is completely different. It is found in four letters which the Ragusan Senate wrote immediately after

the incident, addressing them to a group of merchants in Venice, Ragusan ambassadors in Istanbul, the Venetian Doge, and the governor general of Dalmatia.⁹ Fragmentary data regarding this event can also be found in the minutes of the Ragusan Senate and in its letter to Petar Benessa, a prominent official in papal curia, written roughly a year after the incident.¹⁰ However, doubtlessly the most important document containing the Ragusan version is the record of the investigation, conducted by the Minor Council on Senate’s behalf, in the days after the incident. This hitherto unknown document was attached to the Senate’s letters to the Doge and governor general, and its only known copy is preserved in the State Archives of Venice.¹¹

All of these documents contain a very similar narrative. On Sunday afternoon of 28 July, Mara, Rector’s wife, together with several noblewomen and younger noblemen, left the city port for a boat trip to the neighbouring islet of Lokrum. Their barge was escorted by an armed boat, the so-called *ormanizza* (*barca longa*) with 15 soldiers, because there were rumours of ships from Herceg Novi in the Ragusan waters. At the same time, the youths who applied for the post of bombardiers were proving their skills by shooting from the Fort of St. John at a target set in the sea channel between the shore and Lokrum.¹² Just below that fort, in the harbour, two noble envoys were preparing to embark on a boat in order to greet the commander of the Venetian galleys whose approach was already known in the city.¹³

⁹ In the abovementioned order these letters are to be found in: J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: pp. 342-344 (dated 1 August 1630); *Litterae et commissiones levantis* (henceforth: *LL*), ser. 27.1, vol. 45, f. 111r-112v (dated 11 August 1630), SAD; *LP*, vol. 15, f. 110r-111r (dated 1 August 1630); *LP*, vol. 15, f. 111v-112v (dated 1 August 1630), SAD.

¹⁰ For the references to the minutes of the Senate see the next subchapter. The letter to P. Benessa in Rome, dated 26 June 1631, is published in: J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: pp. 347-351.

¹¹ The record, encompassing 17 folios, was attached to the letter of Ragusan authorities to the Doge, dated 1 August 1630. It was preserved among the various letters by foreign rulers to the Venetian Republic from the late 1620 and early 1630 (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, no foliation, ASV). It should be stressed that the document was erroneously bound among the letters from 1629.

¹² Interestingly, this artillery practice is mentioned only in the record of the investigation, but not in the letters of Ragusan authorities (for several examples of such mentions see: *Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 1v, 4r, 6v, 8v, ASV). It is possible that the Ragusan Senators decided not to mention this detail in order to present Grimani in a less favourable light. Namely, when one omits the fact about the shots which Grimani heard—and, as he stresses, understood as a call for help or negotiation—his actions seem even more excessive and aggressive.

¹³ According to the record’s introduction, the city guard reported that the galleys were approaching, while according to another testimony, the news were brought by one frigate from Kotor (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 1r, 4r).

As the Rector's wife and her entourage disembarked on Lokrum, three Venetian galleys, propelled by a strong wind, appeared in front of the city. The Venetian ships immediately started towards the Ragusan armed boat and one of the galleys fired a warning shot. Although originally bound for the city, after seeing the galleys rushing towards it, the armed boat turned towards Ploče, the Eastern suburb of Ragusa.¹⁴ Chased by the galleys, it reached the shore and its crew hastily disembarked near a cave in the vicinity of the monastery of St. Jacob. At that point the Venetian ships started shooting at the boat and its crew, which led the Ragusans to return fire from muskets and arquebuses.¹⁵ The Venetians refused to stop shooting even after the arrival of two envoys from the city, who told Grimani that the armed ship was Ragusan, explained its purpose, and asked him to halt the attack. Soon two new envoys arrived from Ragusa, the Senators Ivan Kristov Benessa and Ivan Serafinov Bona, but their intervention

¹⁴ It is impossible to precisely reconstruct where the armed boat was at the moment when the galleys arrived. That Ragusan vessel was attacked while returning towards the city harbour may be concluded from the decision of the Senate to open an investigation *super reditu predictae barce lunghe à* (sic) *scopulo Lacrome versus civitatem (Acta Consilii Rogatorum* (henceforth: *ACR*), series 3, vol. 92, f. 111v, SAD). Similarly, in the letter to the ambassadors in Istanbul, the Senate writes *in qualche esse gentildonne erano sbarcate allo scoglio de Lacroma et ormaniza ritornava nel porto, fu assalita da 3 galere venetiane...* (*LL*, vol. 45, f. 111r, SAD). It seems that the forceful entrance of the galleys in the channel between the city and Lokrum made it impossible for the armed boat to return to the harbour. Moreover, the aggressive approach of the Venetians persuaded the Ragusan crew that it was best to get out of the way. This is confirmed by the testimonies of two crewmembers, contained in the record of the investigation. Thus, enquired as to why the said vessel turned towards Ploče, Michele di Marino, oarsman aboard the armed boat, replied: *perche viddimo entrar le tre galee venetiane et noi ci retiravamo in terra, credendo che passassero avanti* (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 14r, ASV). Similar answer was given by Michele Rosa, a musketeer, who stated: *perche viddimo le tre galee che venivano sopra di noi à voga battuta, et cosi ce ne andavamo à riparare in terra* (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 5r, ASV).

¹⁵ In a letter to ambassadors in Istanbul the Senate mentions the exact spot where the crew disembarked: *in quella spelunca di Menze che e sotto il giardino di Caramonda* (*LL*, vol. 45, f. 111v, SAD). Vague formulations in the letters of Ragusan Senate might lead one to conclude that the Venetians opened fire while the armed boat was still at sea (for several examples of such unclear formulations, see: *LP*, vol. 15, f. 110r, SAD; *LL*, vol. 45, f. 111r, SAD; J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 342). However, judging by several testimonies in the investigation report, it seems that the galleys started to shoot only after the crew disembarked. Thus, enquired explicitly about the time at which the galleys opened fire, Michele di Marino, an oarsman aboard the armed boat, responded that it was only after the crew had disembarked (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 14v, ASV). A similar statement is to be found in the testimony of Claudio Faboné, a captain of a *tartana* anchored in the city harbour, who also witnessed the event (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 11v, ASV).

also proved in vain.¹⁶ In fact, according to one of the witnesses, the Venetian attack only intensified.¹⁷

In all the letters of the Ragusan government—but, oddly enough, not in the record of the investigation—it is stressed that during his negotiations with Ragusan envoys Grimani had promised not to commit further hostilities against the armed boat until one of the envoys returned from the city with further instructions from the Senate. However, by the time that envoy reached Ragusa, Grimani disembarked his soldiers and resumed the attack, using not only his boats but also the one by which the Ragusan envoys had come. The remaining envoys protested in vain, claiming that it was a blatant disregard for the international law. Moreover, they protested that Grimani broke his promise to refrain from hostilities, to which he replied that it was simply a ploy to gain time and prevent the Ragusan boat from defending itself.¹⁸

All the letters by Ragusan government as well as numerous witnesses in the record of the investigation claim that Venetian galleys were exposed to the artillery from the city’s walls, which could have easily destroyed them. However,

¹⁶ Judging by the biographies of these two individuals, they belonged among the most influential patricians. Ivan Kristov Benessa (c. 1583-1646) was elected to the highest office, the rectorship of the Republic, for six terms during his lifetime (Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 2 - *Vlasteoski rodovi (A-L)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 2012: p. 65). Ivan Serafinov Bona, better known in the Croatised version as Ivan Bunić Vučić, also held the Rector’s office six times, but on top of it performed important diplomatic duties. Today he is best known for his literary work (for his biography, see: Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 4 - *Odabrane biografije (A-D)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 2013: pp. 153-158).

¹⁷ The most detailed description of this part of the incident is found in the testimony of Francesco Crasso, Ragusan physician, who watched from the city’s harbour. He described seeing a boat *à sei remi con sopravi i rivieri vestiti di rosso, et dua signori di negro*, i.e. the two Senators, Bona and Benessa, leave towards the Venetian galleys (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 5r, ASV). When these two new envoys climbed the galley, Crasso stated that he believed that the conflict was to abate. However, to his surprise, the exact opposite happened: while until then only one galley was firing towards the Ragusan armed boat and its disembarked crew, now all three opened fire. Crasso soon saw several Venetian boats moving towards the Ragusan vessel and then he saw them returning with the captured Ragusan ship (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 5r, ASV).

¹⁸ None of this is mentioned in the investigation record, but is found in several letters by Ragusan government describing the incident, for instance: J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 343; *LP*, vol. 15, f. 110r. Although that is not specified in the sources, one may assume that there were two Ragusan boats near the Venetian galleys: one, aboard which the first two envoys came and another, used by Senators Benessa and Bona. Grimani obviously took one of these boats to attack the Ragusan vessel, while the other was used by the envoy who went back to the city for additional instructions.

the only shots fired were from the Fort of St. John and, according to the testimonials in the record, they were clearly meant only as a warning, hitting the mountain slopes high above the galleys.¹⁹ Nonetheless, this did not prevent fifty Venetian soldiers from an instant seizure of the Ragusan armed boat, since its crew, outnumbered and lacking ammunition, abandoned the vessel and withdrew inland.²⁰

Venetian galleys, together with the captured Ragusan boat, then retreated to the Port of Portoč (*portoccio*) on Lokrum in order to spend the night.²¹ There the Venetian troops had the Rectoressa and her entourage “almost besieged”—from the summary of the incident it is clear that the hapless members of the excursion spent the entire night in fear, hiding in the Lokrum monastery.²² In the evening Ragusan envoys tried again to negotiate with Grimani. As their boat approached the Lokrum port, Venetian guards on the island asked who was coming. The crew of the boat responded that it was the envoys from Ragusa who wished to talk with the Venetian commander. According to one witness, Venetian guards answered “then come”, and according to another, they asked “which envoys”. Both witnesses, however, agree that after that the Venetians

¹⁹ With minor variations, all the letters of Ragusan Senate insist that the fortresses only “warned” (*ammonire*) the Venetian fleet: J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 342; *LP*, vol. 15, f. 110v, 112 r; *LL*, vol. 45, f. 111v. In the letter to Benessa from the summer of 1631 the Senate makes a similar claim: *si tirrò anco dal castello... ma piuttosto per forma che altrimenti* (J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 348). The most detailed description is found in the record of the investigation conducted by the Minor Council. Its introductory part stresses that the Fort of St. John *fece sparare tre tiri verso delle dette galee, ma con ordine di non colpirle tenendosi alta la mira, che colpino le palle, se bene à drittura, sul monte appresso del monastero di Santo Giacomo, dove si trovavano le galee; à fine che si levassero, senza fare altri oltraggi di nuovo* (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 2r-v, ASV). Similarly, the French captain Claudio Faboné stated that the Ragusan artillery shot high above the galleys, with the obvious intention of intimidating and not destroying them *perche se havessero havuto volontà di colpirle, lo haveriano potuto fare sicuramente per essere in luogo sì vicino, che con temerità si erano soggettate al cannone* (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 11r, ASV). Likewise, the English merchant Guglielmo Yat stated the following regarding the artillery shots in his testimony: *Credo io per far paura e non per colpirli* (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 9r, ASV).

²⁰ On this see the testimonials of several crewmembers of the armed boat: *Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 14v, 15r, ASV.

²¹ While most sources simply mention that the Venetian ships docked at Lokrum, several witnesses in the investigation report specify that the galleys took shelter in the small port (*portoccio, portoccio piccolo*) on that island (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 5v, 9r, ASV).

²² *...pose quasi in assedio alle dette gentildonne* (J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 343). See also: *Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 3r, 7v, 9v, ASV.

opened fire and that one bullet hit the boat. Nonetheless, Ragusans waited for a while, hoping that the Venetian commander would come. Since that did not happen, they returned to the city.²³ The next morning Venetian galleys headed South-East, together with the captured Ragusan boat. The Senators Bona and Benessa tried once again to persuade Grimani to return it, meeting with him near the shore of Župa, but they failed to achieve anything.

The minutes of the Ragusan Senate

It is immediately obvious that the Venetian and Ragusan sources offer drastically different versions of the event. A slightly clearer idea of what actually happened may be obtained from yet another document—the minutes of the Ragusan Senate. Namely, in the ensuing days and weeks the Senate repeatedly debated the incident and brought a series of concrete measures.

Just a day after the event, on 29 July, the Senate ordered the Minor Council to open an investigation “about the yesterday’s incident between the three Venetian galleys and our armed boat in front of the city harbour.”²⁴ The Senate then voted whether to discuss “how the castellans of the fortresses should behave in similar cases in the future”, but it was decided to postpone that debate for the day after the next.²⁵ The Rector then proposed to entrust the Minor Council with yet another separate investigation. Its goal would be to establish whether certain individuals committed mistakes “regarding the return of the aforementioned armed boat from the island of Lokrum towards the city and regarding the artillery shots fired from the Fort of St. John as well as those who attempted to shoot from the Revelin [i.e. another fortress]”.²⁶

²³ This episode is shortly mentioned in the letters of the Ragusan government, but the most detailed descriptions are found in the investigation report, which contains two testimonies of crewmembers who accompanied the Ragusan envoys (*Collegio, Lettere principi*, filza 58, f. 16r-17r, ASV).

²⁴ ...*super casu, hieri fiunto, ante portum civitatis inter tres triremes venetas et nostram barcam lungam* (ACR, vol. 92, f. 111r, 29 July 1630, SAD).

²⁵ *Prima pars est de terminando in presenti consilio quomodo capitanei castrorum posthac in similibus casibus procedi debeant* (cassatum) (ACR, vol. 92, f. 111r, 29 July 1630, SAD).

²⁶ *Prima pars est de committendo M. D. R. et suo consilio ut forment et ad Consilium Rogatorum deferant procesum separatim, utrum aliquis ex particularibus commiserit aliquem deffectum, in dicto casu heri occorso et presentim super reditu predictae barce lunghe à (sic) scopulo Lacrome versus civitatem, ac super ictibus bombardeis proiectis a castro Sancti Iohannis, et super illis qui e castro Revellini projicere attentarunt huiusmodi ictus* (ACR, vol. 92, f. 111v, 29 July 1630, SAD).

However, it seems that after this proposal was discussed, the Minor Council decided to change it—that is, to omit the part about the artillery shots from the Fort of St. John from the planned investigation. This may be gleaned from the fact that immediately below the text of this proposal there is a note about the so-called intromission. An intromission was a legal mechanism, an intervention by powerful officials, the *provisores civitatis*, whose task was to watch over the legality of the council's proceedings.²⁷ The intromission states that the Rector and Minor Council decided to remove the part about the artillery shots from St. John from the text of the proposal, but the *provisores* opposed it. Their argument was that the opinions of the speakers during the debate on that question differed significantly, and that therefore this part should remain in the text of the proposal, which should be voted on in its original form.²⁸ In other words, the *provisores* thought that one should not exclude the garrison of St. John from the future investigation, because among the Senators there were contradictory opinions about its behaviour. However, when the vote was taken on whether to accept this intromission, the majority of the Senators decided against it. Therefore, the Rector proposed and the Senate accepted the modified version of the proposal which opened a separate investigation regarding only the return of the armed boat and those individuals who attempted to shoot from Revelin.²⁹ The last decision of that day might also be connected to the recent incident: it was decided that the *provisores* of the guards should repair or even install (*faciant accommodare*) the big chain at the entrance of the city's harbour.³⁰ One may assume that the Senators, after a discomfiting episode with three Venetian galleys in front of the city, decided that its port was not sufficiently protected.

²⁷ On this important magistracy, see: Nella Lonza, *Pod plaštem pravde. Kaznenopravni sustav Dubrovačke Republike u XVIII. stoljeću*. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1997: pp. 74-76; Nella Lonza, »Dubrovački patriciji pred izazovom prava: druga polovica 14. i 15. century«. *Acta Histriae* 16/1-2 (2008): p. 125.

²⁸ *Et cum Ill.mus et Ex.mus D. R. cum suo Minori Consilio terminaverint, tollere e supradicta prima parte clausulam super ictibus proiectis e castro Sancti Johannis DD. Provisores Civitatis intromisserunt dictam terminationem dicentes quod cum fuerint in presenti consilio varie opiniones arengatorum super dicta clausula ampliata per Minus Consilium tolli non potet sed ballotari prout a principio fuit proposita* (ACR, vol. 92, f. 111v, 29 July 1630, SAD).

²⁹ *Prima pars est de commitendo M.co D. R. et suo Consilio ut forment et ad Consilium Rogatorum deferant procesum separatum, utrum quis, ex particularibus commiserit aliquem defectum in dicto casu heri occorso, et praesentim super reditu supradictae barcae longhae à (sic) scopulo Lacromae versus civitatem et super illis ex dictis particularibus qui attentarunt projicere ictus bombardeos e castro Revellini* (ACR, vol. 92, f. 111v-112r, SAD).

³⁰ ACR, vol. 92, f. 112r, 29 July 1630, SAD.

The questions concerning the relationship with Venice dominated senatorial debates also in the next few days. The discussion regarding “how the castellans of the fortresses should behave in the similar cases in the future” was held on 2 August. It concluded with the decision that the *provisores* should formulate their proposal of the new regulations (*opinionem*) and present it to the Senate the next Thursday.³¹ As to how important this issue was is visible from the rigorous additional decrees. Namely, all the councillors, except the sick ones, were obligated to attend that session under threat of a heavy fine of 100 ducats. Equally so, the Rector was obligated to put the *provisores*’ proposal on the agenda before any other matter.³² The session was indeed held on 8 August and the Senators voted on several parts (*capitula*) of the *provisores*’ proposal. The new vote on the modified version after the Senators’ remarks was scheduled for 17 August, with the same rigorous threats to the councillors and the Rector.³³

Unlike the laconic minutes of the previous meetings, those from the 17 August offer a glimpse of the topics which were intensively debated in the Senate in those days. This is because they include the text of the *provisores*’ proposal, i.e. the several articles (*capitula*) which were approved by the Senate—the articles 2, 5 and 6.³⁴ Thus, the second article determined that every time that armed ships came in the vicinity of the city, the supervisors of the guard had to gather in the loggia, under the penalty of 100 ducats. They should organise the city watch and ensure that the artillery is put on alert. They are to remain on duty as long as foreign ships are in the vicinity and are allowed to leave the loggia only to organise the defence.³⁵ According to the fifth article, the ships used for securing the city and its port are not to be used for private purposes under the fine of 100 ducats, which might imply that the Rectoressa had used the armed ship in an illicit manner. Finally, the sixth article regulates how the castellans should act in the incidents similar to the one from a few weeks before. If foreign ships attack any part of the

³¹ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 113r, SAD. Probably due to an overcrowded agenda of the Senate, this debate, originally scheduled for 31 July, was postponed to 2 August.

³² *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 113r, SAD.

³³ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 116r, SAD.

³⁴ As was decided, that day the Senate debated on the *opinio* of the *provisores*. The first *capitulum* was returned to *provisores* to be modified and the debate on the third and fourth was postponed. However, the full text of the second, fifth, and sixth *capitulum*, which were accepted, was written down (*ACR*, vol. 92, f. 119v-120r, 17 August 1630, SAD). I was unable to find further debate on these *capitula* in the minutes of the Senate.

³⁵ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 199v-120r, SAD.

city or any ship fleeing into its harbour—and pursue it “from the cape of St. Jacob up to here”—the castellans were entitled to do whatever necessary for the defence without waiting for the orders of the authorities. If the city magistrates do not order them otherwise, they first had to warn the assaulting vessels with one artillery shot without the cannon ball, and then fire the fully loaded cannons “as many times as necessary” (*quante volte sarà necessario*).³⁶

There is yet another part of the Senate’s minutes which reveals few details concerning the incident with Grimani. Namely, on 9 September, the Senate heard and debated the report of the investigation, conducted by the Minor Council, regarding whether certain individuals committed mistakes during that incident. The laconic minutes unfortunately do not reveal much besides the sentences against several individuals whose exact offices are mostly not mentioned. Thus, the Senate proclaimed with overwhelming majority that Klement Mihov Menze was guilty “of the things mentioned in the record read in front of this council” and condemned him to a one-month imprisonment in the Fortress of Lovrijenac (St. Lawrence).³⁷ Immediately afterwards the Senate brought a similar verdict regarding Lamprica Vlahov Sorgo, who was to be imprisoned in Lovrijenac for two weeks.³⁸ Another patrician, Miho Gaudencijev Sorgo was acquitted, albeit with a very thin majority.³⁹ Pasko Geugij, the

³⁶ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 120r, SAD.

³⁷ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 117r, SAD. He was declared guilty with the following vote count: 27 Senators voted for, 6 voted against, 2 were excluded. It was additionally decided that the duration of the imprisonment was to be doubled if Menze were to be seen outside of the fortress during his sentence. Little is known about Klement Mihov (around 1592-1649): he was the ambassador with the Ottoman tribute in 1642 and was elected to Rectorship in 1648 (Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 3 - *Vlasteoski rodovi (M-Z)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 2012: p. 56). Moreover, in this period Menze is mentioned in the decision of the Minor Council from 22 June by which he and Luka Nikole Bucchia were elected as *offitiales qui exigant datium vinorum insulae Melitae (Acta Consilii Minoris*, series 5, vol. 74, f. 175v, 22.6.1630, SAD).

³⁸ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 117r, SAD. He was declared guilty with the following vote count: 22:11:2. It was also decreed that the duration of the imprisonment was to be doubled if he were to be seen outside of the fortress while serving his sentence. In his comprehensive work about the patriciate, Vekarić brings only an estimate of Sorgo’s lifespan (1598-1667) and the fact that he died in the Great Earthquake of 1667 (N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 3: 287).

³⁹ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 117v, SAD. *Secunda pars* proclaiming him not guilty won with the thin majority of 18:15:2. Roughly a month afterwards, on 7 September 1630, he was chosen in the Minor Council as the castellan of Lovrijenac during harvest (*Acta Consilii Minoris*, vol. 74, f. 191r, SAD). In the following decades Miho Gaudencijev (around 1610-1664) was to have a respectable diplomatic career as the tribute emissary and the envoy to the sanjak-bey of Herzegovina (N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 3: 287; *Isprave i akti*, series 76, 17. c., vol. 34, no. 1762, 1764 and 1766, SAD).

commander of *zduri* (guards), was found guilty and condemned to be imprisoned for two weeks.⁴⁰ Finally, Nikola Radin, who was the captain of the armed boat, was proclaimed innocent with a strong majority of the votes.⁴¹

From all the aforementioned it is possible to draw certain, though very tentative, conclusions as to how the Senate majority saw the conduct of its troops during the skirmish as well as the best strategy in similar cases in the future. Judging by the debate concerning the mistakes of individuals, and especially the failed intromission, it seems that the Senators were most displeased with the behaviour of the Revelin garrison. More precisely, it appears that they had a far bigger problem with the Revelin garrison which only “attempted” to shoot, than with the garrison of St. John which actually did shoot at the Venetians (and was, due to that, probably excluded from the investigation about the mistakes during the incident).⁴² That the Ragusan authorities were in fact prepared to enter into a military conflict with Venice—of course, only if truly necessary—is clear not only from the aforementioned sixth article in the proposal of the city’s *provisores*. It is also confirmed by another incident, again with Grimani, which took place roughly a year afterwards, and during which the Ragusan fortresses actually did open fire on the Venetian troops on Lokrum.⁴³ Since I was unable to reconstruct the specific offices held by the convicted noblemen, it is impossible to get a precise idea of what “mistakes” the Senators were unhappy about. It can be assumed with a dose of caution that Klement Mihov Menze, Lamprica Vlahov Sorgo, and Miho Gaudencijev Sorgo held various commanding posts at the city’s fortresses and that one of them was probably the castellan of Revelin.

The situation is only a bit clearer when it comes to the non-nobles mentioned in the investigation report. Pasko Geugij, the commander of *zduri* who was sentenced to two weeks of imprisonment, could have been in charge of the soldiers on the boat by which the Ragusan ambassadors came to Grimani and which he then captured and used to attack the armed ship. In that case, this

⁴⁰ *ACR*, vol. 92, f. 117v, SAD. He was declared guilty with the vote count of 22:11:1.

⁴¹ ...*Nicolaum Radi Caporalem qui fuit pro capitaneo in barca lunga...* The proposal to exonerate him was adopted with *omnes*: 4:2 (*ACR*, vol. 92, f. 117v, SAD).

⁴² Of course, it is likely that the garrison of St. John reacted more promptly because of the artillery practice which was taking place in the fort when the Venetian galleys arrived.

⁴³ A. Vučetić, »Dubrovčani na obrani«: pp. 96-97; R. Samardžić, *Veliki vek Dubrovnika*: pp. 83-84; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, II: pp. 98-99.

verdict would imply that the Senate was unhappy with Geugij's (failed) resistance to the Venetian attack. However, it is also possible that Geugij was the commander of *zduri* on the armed boat itself, which would imply that he was condemned because of inadequate resistance to the Venetians or, even, because his crew was the first to open fire. On the other hand, the liberating verdict for Nikola Radov, the captain of the armed boat, suggests that the Senators thought his conduct was justified (including the retreat from the galleys and abandoning the ship in the face of the overwhelming Venetian attack).

The discrepancies between the Ragusan and Venetian version

Although they are describing the same event—and, importantly, an event which happened recently—Grimani's report and Ragusan documents offer drastically different accounts. This subchapter is an attempt to analyse the most glaring discrepancies and to reconstruct, as far as it is possible, what had actually taken place.

The first striking discrepancy is that in his report Grimani fails to mention the boat with the Rectoressa and her noble entourage. If one is to trust Ragusan documents, Grimani must have heard about it when the city's envoys explained the purpose of the armed boat. Equally so, it is hard to believe that during the night spent on Lokrum, he did not learn about that boat and the nobles who were on it (and later hid in the monastery on that same island). It is possible that Grimani decided to omit this detail in order to make Ragusan behaviour seem even more insolent. Namely, Venice was extremely sensitive when it came to the armed ships of other nations in its "Gulf" and this was a constant source of tensions with Ragusa.⁴⁴ By not mentioning the justified reason for the presence of the armed boat—that is, the protection of the Rectoressa's boat—Grimani perhaps hoped that the Venetian Senate would see the Ragusan actions in an even more negative light.

⁴⁴ The scholarship on the Venetian dominion over the Adriatic is fairly rich and some of the more important works are: Alberto Bin, *La repubblica di Venezia e la questione adriatica 1600-1620*. Roma: Il Veltro Editrice, 1992; Roberto Cessi, *La Repubblica di Venezia e il problema Adriatico*. Padova: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1943; Sergio Anselmi, *Venezia, Ragusa, Ancona tra Cinque e Seicento: un momento della storia mercantile del Medio Adriatico*. Ancona: SITA, 1969. For an analysis of the ideology behind the Venetian claims, see: Filippo de Vivo, »Historical Justifications of Venetian Power in the Adriatic«. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64/2 (2003): pp. 159-176.

Another somewhat confusing detail is that Grimani mentions a very strong western wind (*il vento gagliardo di Maestro*) which blew when he arrived in front of the city, and later he also adds that the wind threatened to wreck his galleys on the rocks near St. Jacob. It is, however, unclear why the Rectoressa and her entourage would even go for a boat trip on such weather? It is possible that Grimani exaggerates in front of the Senate by providing an overly dramatic description of the weather conditions in order to make his efforts seem more heroic. The Ragusan record of the investigation is probably closer to the truth: it mentions that Grimani’s galleys “sailed in a favourable western wind” and that they turned towards the city “in a good wind”.⁴⁵

One of the few unclarities which are actually resolved by comparing the Ragusan and Venetian version of the events is the artillery shot from the city’s direction, which, according to Grimani, made him turn his galleys towards Ragusa. From Ragusan documents it is clear that Grimani did not hear a signal for help, but the shot(s) fired by applicants for bombardiers at a target from the Fort of St. John. In other words, it seems that the whole incident was due to a set of unfortunate circumstances: the fact that the bombardiers were practicing exactly as Grimani’s galleys passed by.

According to Grimani’s letter—and this is confirmed by all Venetian documents—the main cause of all the later problems was the fact that Ragusan armed boat refused to submit to the examination of the Venetians. The Ragusan sources also admit that the boat’s crew began to retreat as soon as it saw the Venetian fleet. However, according to Ragusan sources, this was a natural reaction to the aggressive stance of the galleys which immediately rushed towards the Ragusan vessel.⁴⁶ As has already been pointed out, it seems that the majority of Ragusan Senators saw nothing wrong with this, because the captain of the armed boat was exonerated. Besides an aggressive approach of Grimani’s galleys, there might have been other reasons why the decision to retreat was seen as justified. It is likely that the Senators saw the inspection of

⁴⁵ ...*con buon vento di Maestro velleggiavano (Collegio, Lettere principi, filza 58, f. 1r) or con prospero vento (Collegio, Lettere principi, filza 58, f. 1v, ASV).*

⁴⁶ According to the investigation report, the three Venetian galleys entered the channel between the city and Lokrum, and *hauendo ueduto la detta barca lunga si posero à seguirarla et darle la caccia senza aspettare altro, la quale uedendosi seguita, se ne andò à terra dal canto de le Plocce...* (*Collegio, Lettere principi, filza 58, f. 1v, ASV*). As has already been stressed in note 14, two witnesses who were on the armed boat stated that it retreated towards Ploče having seen the aggressive approach of the Venetians.

the official Ragusan vessel in front of the very city as deeply humiliating, i.e. as an overly forceful demonstration of Venetian jurisdiction over the Adriatic. Equally so, they probably thought that Grimani could have seen that a boat with Ragusan envoys was coming to meet him and that a reasonable reaction would have been to wait for it instead of rushing towards the retreating vessel.

Another crucial difference between the Venetian and Ragusan account regards the question as to who was the first to open fire. While Ragusan sources insist that Venetian galleys started shooting as the crew of the armed boat disembarked, Grimani writes it was the Ragusans who, once behind the rocks, began firing at the closest galley. In either case, it seems like a very odd reaction. On the one hand, it is quite surprising that the three far superior galleys would, without any clear reason, begin shooting at an armed boat which withdrew from them. On the other, equally puzzling is Grimani's claim that the Ragusan crew, "encouraged" by the cover provided by the rocks, began firing at the overwhelming Venetian force approaching them. In sum, the only thing which is clear is that each side is trying to shift the blame for the beginning of the hostilities on the other. However, there is yet a third possibility: that the entire conflict was a consequence of an accident or misfortune. More precisely, it is possible that in the tense and chaotic situation someone on either the Venetian or Ragusan side opened fire without the formal order, which then quickly led to an escalation.⁴⁷

There is yet another related discrepancy between the Ragusan and Venetian version of the incident. While Grimani writes about several dead on his side—at one point he mentions four killed crew members and later he adds that there were more dead and wounded—Ragusan sources do not mention any casualties on either side.⁴⁸ There is no reason to doubt that there indeed were casualties among the Venetian troops, because it is hard to believe that Grimani would

⁴⁷ In this context it is worth recalling that the Ragusan Senate condemned Pasko Geugij, the commander of *zduri*, to be walled in the dungeon for two weeks. Unfortunately, from the Senate's minutes it is impossible to reconstruct the exact reason for this harsh sentence and whether Geugij was the commander of *zduri* on the armed boat or, perhaps, on the boat by which the Ragusan ambassadors arrived. If he was the commander on the armed boat, it is possible that he was condemned precisely because of the escalation of enmities with the Venetians.

⁴⁸ Grimani writes: *...e con salva impetuosa di moschettate, non tentassero il danno di questa galera, che loro era più vicina, con le quali levorno immediate la vita à quattro miei huomeni di libertà de migliori, ferendone alcuni altri.* A bit later he adds: *...con morte d'altri miei soldati, con ferita del mio cap(titan)o, e d'alcuni della galera Morosina, restò presa la fusta.*

misinform the Senate on such an important and verifiable issue.⁴⁹ On the other hand, it seems that there were no casualties among the Ragusans, because the Ragusan Senate would have surely mentioned that fact in its letters to foreign princes, in which it insisted exactly on the Venetian aggressiveness.

Ragusan and Venetian accounts also differ regarding the conduct of Ragusan fortresses. Grimani writes that cannonballs fell into the sea in the immediate vicinity of his galleys, which suggests that Ragusans had actually shot at the Venetian ships. Equally so, Grimani mentions that Ragusan envoys had repeatedly apologised for those shots, explaining them with the recklessness of the castellan and promising that he would be punished once caught. On the other hand, all the Ragusan sources claim that the Venetian galleys were exposed to the artillery from the fortresses, but that they were only “warned” with several salvos which went high above the ships and hit Mount Srđ. As was already mentioned, the senatorial proposal to open an investigation “regarding the artillery shots fired from the Fort of St. John as well as those who attempted to shoot from the Revelin” reveals two important facts. First, it seems that the garrison of St. John indeed did shoot, while the garrison of Revelin did not, probably because it was caught unprepared. Second, it appears that the majority of the Senators was perfectly content with the reaction of St. John yet unhappy with the lack of reaction on behalf of Revelin. Regarding the question as to whether St. John did actually shoot directly at the Venetian galleys, it is impossible to be certain. Although it does not seem probable that the fortress fired at the Venetians—especially since Ragusan envoys and armed boat were also in the vicinity—it is not excluded that someone on it had reacted too nervously (perhaps even one of the youths applying for the post of bombardiers).

Another odd discrepancy regards the question when and where Grimani negotiated with the two Ragusan Senators who came after the first two “ordinary” envoys. Ragusan documents claim that Grimani met with the Senators while still attacking the armed boat. On the other hand, Grimani writes that these two envoys came to him while he was “on that island which belongs to your Serenity”, i.e. on Lokrum. Admittedly, Ragusan documents also claim that the Senators tried to talk to Grimani while he was on Lokrum, but that they were

⁴⁹ The fact that there were casualties on the Venetian side is also confirmed by one, albeit later, Ragusan document. Writing to P. Benessa in Rome on 26 June 1631, the Senate reminded him of this incident and mentioned that the crew of the armed boat *uciso oferito alcuno delli suoi* [Grimani's] *con risposte di tirri da moschetti* (J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 348).

chased away by the gunshots of the Venetian guards. All in all, although it has no significant consequences on the meaning of the entire incident, this puzzling discrepancy clearly points towards a serious methodological problem which will be addressed at the very end of this chapter.

Last but not least, describing his negotiations with the city's envoys, Ragusan sources insist that Grimani had blatantly broken his word and violated the international law. Although he had promised not to proceed with the attack on the armed boat until one of the envoys returned from the city with new instructions, he not only continued his attack but, even more, used the boat with which the envoys had come in order to capture the Ragusan vessel. It is hard to verify this claim, especially the part about the confiscation of the envoys' boat. On the one hand, it is a serious accusation and it is hard to imagine that it was (completely) invented by the Ragusan government. On the other hand, while it would not be surprising that Grimani chose to omit this fact from his letter, it is odd that no witness in the record of Ragusan investigation mentions it either.⁵⁰

All the aforementioned discrepancies between the Ragusan and Venetian versions of the incident reveal an intriguing fact. Although we have at our disposal numerous and, at first glance, high quality documents—created by participants in the immediate aftermath of the event—it is nonetheless impossible to clearly reconstruct what happened on that summer afternoon in 1630. The reason is simple: besides Ragusan sources, we also have an extensive document of *non-Ragusan provenience*. Although certainly biased, with a clear goal of justifying and glorifying his actions, Grimani's letter is definitely not to be discarded. To begin with, it reveals an important detail which is conspicuously absent from the Ragusan sources—the fact that during the skirmish several Venetian soldiers were killed and few more were wounded. Equally so, Grimani's letter casts doubt on an apparently unproblematic claim of all Ragusan sources that there were only fifteen soldiers on the armed boat. According to Grimani, there were around forty, which does somewhat change the odds and nature of

⁵⁰ Although these are the most salient discrepancies between the Ragusan and Venetian accounts, they are by no means all. For instance, another detail in which the two versions differ is the number of people on the Ragusan armed boat. While the Ragusan documents unanimously speak about some fifteen soldiers, Grimani claims that there were forty (*...degl'armati, che teneva al numero di quaranta...*). Of course, it is possible that Grimani overstated the number of Ragusan soldiers to justify his causalities. However, it is just as likely that the Ragusans downplayed the number of their troops in order to make Grimani's behaviour seem even more aggressive.

the skirmish between the Ragusan and Venetian forces. Finally, Grimani’s report sheds new light on the negotiations between him and the Ragusan envoys, revealing many details which, probably not by accident, are absent from the Ragusan accounts. The most important among them is the alleged promise of the envoys that the Ragusan subjects who participated in the incident would be severely punished. While his account should be taken with extreme caution, the fact that Grimani accentuates this promise, discusses the possible punishment for culprits, and adds that he told Ragusans to complete that affair with the governor of Kotor, suggests that Ragusans really did undertake some kind of obligation to punish their subjects for their behaviour.⁵¹ Taking all the aforementioned into account, can one be absolutely certain that Ragusans were not the first to open fire? Or that the Ragusan fortresses actually shot in the air? If nothing else, Grimani’s letter makes a historian far more careful with the apparently coherent narrative offered unanimously by numerous Ragusan documents.

Importantly, all of this points towards a much broader issue. If only one, clearly tendentious, document of non-Ragusan provenience is enough to cast doubt on the story repeated consistently by Ragusan sources, what does that imply regarding Ragusan diplomatic documents in general? It implies an obvious fact which is nonetheless often forgotten: that diplomatic sources are by their very nature highly utilitaristic and tendentious texts which are far from being an objective representation of what happened. This, in turn, leads to another uncomfortable question: what does all of the aforementioned mean for the studies of Ragusan diplomatic history which are usually based *exclusively* on the Ragusan diplomatic sources?

Diplomatic initiatives after the incident

Although in the summer of 1630 Venice had far more pressing problems than Dubrovnik—the city was ravaged by plague and the War of Mantuan Succession entered its final phase—the incident with Grimani did provoke a

⁵¹ ...guardassero però bene che à loro nome havrei promesso all’ EE.VV. che certamente quelli sarebbero stati severamente castigati. E perche fosse publica la dimostratione intendevo dovessero servire come condannati sopra le galere di questa squadra, il che pure era seguito d’altra gente, che non è molto tempo e che questo con buona mortificatione al castellano potesse radolcir gli animi d’Ecc.ze V.re, e render poi me particolarmente sodisfatto, e perche non restasse imperfetta la trattatione, obbligato io à spingermi all’armata, ricoressero all’Ecc.mo S. Generale di Dalmazia, implorando il suo benigno impegno, sodisfacendo quanto prima si fosse potuto...

certain response. Its first trace is to be found in the letter of the governor general of Dalmatia, Antonio Civran, to the Venetian Senate, dated with 8 August from Zadar. Similar to other Venetian documents, Civran's letter contains nothing but glowing praise for Grimani's behaviour. According to governor general, the refusal of Ragusan armed boat to submit to inspection gave Grimani "a completely justified reason" for the assault and capture of that vessel, a decision which was "worthy and necessary" because it was provoked by "insolent and inimical" behaviour of the Ragusans.⁵² The same attitude is visible in Civran's response to the aforementioned letter by the Ragusan government, dated with 1 August.⁵³ Civran makes it clear that he is not in the least impressed by Ragusan arguments and that he completely believes Grimani's version of the events. The most important fault which Civran finds with the Ragusan armed ship is that it did not heed the signal from the galleys and allow the Venetians to inspect it. General governor stresses that the ships of all rulers, even the most powerful ones, always acknowledged Venetian authority in such a way—similar deference is especially important in times such as these, when the pirate ships from Novi are on the prowl.⁵⁴ After that serious mistake, Civran continues, the armed boat made yet another, even worse, and that is firing at the galleys which caused the death of several crewmembers. Finally, the governor general writes that he is scandalised with the fact that Ragusan fortresses fired at galleys of a ruler whose efforts to ensure the safety of Adriatic for the sake of all are well known.⁵⁵

⁵² *Rimango informato pienamente dal S.re Capitano della guardia Grimani dello incontro havuto in andando verso levante sopra Ragusi con genti di fregata armata pur Ragusea; che non volendo prestare il dovuto termine di essere riconosciuti, facendo anzi renitenza col mettersi à combattere, come è seguito arditamente, anco da morte di alcune persone della galia capitania, et del modo che V. Ser.tà intenderà distintamente da lettere che portano à lei, et à me in conformità tutta l'intiera notitia del fatto, ha dato giustissima occasione et impulso à detto S.re di combattere le genti et di fermare la fregata stessa; Rissoluzione... tanto degna, et neccessaria, quanto che essendo provocata... con maniere insolenti et hostili...* (PTM, busta 288: No. 21, 4 August 1630 from Zadar, ASV).

⁵³ The copy of that letter is attached to his letter to the Venetian Senate, dated 6 August 1630 (PTM, busta 288: No. 22, 6 August 1630, ASV).

⁵⁴ *....che non sia seguito dalla parte delle barche (sic!), che furono ritrovate transitando à coteste rive, et di quella armata in particolare, il buon termine, pur sempre usato, anco di vasseli da qualunque principe, pur grande, che sia di prestare la ricognitione debita alle galee in tutti i tempi; ma principalmente in questi presenti, che come elle dicono, et come tutti li Ss.ri capi da mare rimangono informati, vedendosi ben spesso fuori in cotesti mari caichi et legni armati di Castel Nuovo...* (PTM, busta 288: No. 22, 6 August 1630, ASV).

⁵⁵ *Da questo mancamento essendo passate le genti di essa barca come qui corre voce ad altro maggior, di essercitare le offese, con la stessa galea capitana col sbarro di moschettate, et che più importa, colla morte di alcune persone...* General governor then added that he found out *non senza*

All of these incidents originated from the first one, because the armed boat should have allowed the galleys to inspect it, and its crew would have surely been treated justly and with respect.⁵⁶ At the end of the letter Civran softens his tone somewhat, writing that he is waiting for a more detailed report from Grimani and that Ragusan authorities may be certain he will do everything in his power to end this dispute in an amicable way.

Civran’s attitude was shared also by the Venetian Senate. Answering to his letters in mid-August 1630, the Senators agreed that Grimani, provoked by Ragusan insolence, acted prudently (*prudentermente*). They also wrote to Civran that they approved of his answer to the letter of the Ragusan government.⁵⁷ If the Ragusans were to write to him again regarding the incident, the Senators instructed the governor general to warn them that it was a very serious matter and that Grimani had been treated in a scandalous way, although he was simply doing his duty. Civran was also instructed to tell Ragusan authorities that Venice insisted on the due respect for its representatives, in accordance with her international status and her efforts at maintaining peace in the Adriatic.⁵⁸ Several days later, the Venetian Senate wrote a letter to Grimani himself. In this short text the Senators spare no compliments, praising his “decisive” and “wise” actions towards the Ragusan vessel which resisted its “duty to undergo inspection”. The letter ends with unambiguous lauds for Grimani: “In sum, we wanted to

mio stupore, il sbarro della artiglieria dalla città medesima contro galee di Principe, che ben si sa con quanto studio et dispendio procura la quiete di questo Golfo... (PTM, busta 288: No. 22, 6 August 1630, ASV).

⁵⁶ *Non posso dico non sentire un sommo dispiacere di questi successi che provengono tutti dal primo disordine, dovevano lasciarsi riconoscere, che al sicuro haveriano provato degno trattamento, et cortesia molta da detto signore... (PTM, busta 288: No. 22, 6 August 1630, ASV).*

⁵⁷ *All’altro capo delle due altre vostre lettere di 4 et 6 del corrente circa all’incontro havuto dal Capitano della Guardia di Candia Grimani in andando verso Levante sopra Ragusi, con giunto di fregata armata pur Ragusea, et per haver voluto prestare il dovuto termine di esser riconosciuto et per altri mali modi hanno provocato et posto in giusta neccessità esso capitano di operare come ha prudentemente fatto, quanto ben si conveniva, veniamo à dirvi coll’istesso Senato, che si come la vostra risposta alle lettere di essi Ragusei è stata molto propria et agiustata al bisogno... (Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, filza 143, no pagination or foliation, ASV. This codex contains only a part of Civran’s letter—the end with datation is missing. However, it is clear that the letter was written in the mid-August 1630, because it is immediately followed by the letter to Civran, dated 16 August 1630).*

⁵⁸ *...esser nella Ser.ma Rep.ca la solita e sempre costante rissoluzione et volontà di voler il dovuto rispetto verso li suoi rappresentanti et la manutenzione del quel posto proprio di principe, che con tanto studio et dispendio procura, et invigila alla quiete nel suo Colfo al servizio di sudditi e cose loro, al beneficio de medesimi Ragusei, con quello insieme di tutti li naviganti di ogni stato et conditione (Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, filza 143, no pagination or foliation, ASV).*

let you know of the public approval of your worthy and laudable decision and action in the aforementioned occasion, in accordance with the duties vested in your office and honour and dignity of the Republic”.⁵⁹

All in all, from *Serenissima's* perspective, the main problem with this incident was Ragusan disrespect for the Venetian dominion over the Adriatic, i.e. the refusal of the armed boat to submit to inspection and the ensuing skirmish with its crew and the city's fortresses. Equally so, it seems that neither the general governor nor the Venetian Senate took seriously Ragusan complaints regarding Grimani's behaviour. Quite to the contrary, his aggressive attitude was seen as an effective way to tackle the problem and avenge the *Serenissima's* injured honour. As far as Venice was concerned, this was the end of the affair.

Of course, Ragusan Senate saw things very differently. Immediately after the incident the Senators wrote the four letters mentioned above—to the Doge, governor general, Ragusan merchants in Venice and its ambassadors in Istanbul. In those letters the Senators explicated their version of the events, complained bitterly about Grimani's behaviour, requested the return of the armed boat and, as additional argumentation, sent to the Doge and governor general a copy of the aforementioned investigation report.

The most important diplomatic initiative was directed towards Venice. Already on 1 August, the Senate sent the letter for the Doge, together with the copy of the report, to four Ragusan merchants in Venice. In a determined, even slightly irritated tone, Ragusan Senators order these *ad hoc* representatives to urgently go to *collegio* and present these documents, asking for a prompt reply.⁶⁰ Ragusan merchants were to request compensation for such an enormous offence

⁵⁹ 16. Agosto 1630 in Senato

Al capitano della guardia di Candia Grimani

Rimanemo molto sodisfati di quanto s'è operato da Voi con vigore, et con prudenza nell'accidente dell'incontro havuto in andando verso Levante sopra Ragusi, con le genti di fregata armata pur Ragusea, renitenti al dovuto termine d'esser riconosciuti, al prestar quel rispetto che ben si conveniva à nostro rappresentante, et che con li mali et improprij modi, et termini usati vi hanno giustamente provocato alla risoluzione di fermar et trattener essa barca, et di corriger et reprimer l'ardire et il mancamento d'essi Ragusei. Sopra di ciò sarà preso da noi opportunamente l'ispeditione che giudicheremo bene, con darne gl'ordini convenienti al Prov. Gen. Civran; in tanto habbiamo voluto col Senato confirmarvi il publico gradimento della vostra degna et lodevole rissoluzione et operatione nella predetta occasione, aggiustata al dovere, all'obbligo della vostra carica, al decoro, et alla dignità publica (Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti, filza 143, no pagination or foliation, ASV).

⁶⁰ J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: pp. 342-344, the letter is addressed to *Antonio Criuonossi, Benedetto Fornari, Giovanni Petchi and Simone Vincenti*.

(*disordine, tanto notabile*), which the Republic had no intention of suffering, and for the return of the armed boat, “seized with such temerity” (*ritenuta con tanta temerità*). The Senate also allowed the merchants to hire a lawyer, if they saw fit, and promised to promptly reimburse all the expenses.

Yet this energetic diplomatic gesture yielded no results. More than two months later, on 13 November, the Senate wrote to the four merchants again, stressing that it was still waiting for news regarding the letter they were to deliver to the Venetian authorities. Moreover, the Senators learned that one of the merchants—they do not specify who—had written about this affair to certain private persons. Therefore, the merchants were ordered once again to immediately report any developments to the Senate, since their duty was to inform the government first.⁶¹

However, it seems that there was little to report. Almost a year after the incident, in June 1631, Ragusan Senate wrote to P. Benessa that it still had not received any reply from Venice. At first, they attributed the delay to the plague on the lagoons, but as the time passed, it was becoming increasingly clear that they were hoping in vain.⁶² As is obvious from Civran’s response to the Senate’s letter mentioned above, Ragusans received no satisfaction from the governor general either. Quite to the contrary, Civran completely ignored their complaints and only scolded them regarding their alleged disrespect for the Venetian dominion over the Adriatic.

Another diplomatic initiative was directed towards the great patron of the Republic: the Senate wrote to its ambassadors at the Sublime Porte on 11 August.⁶³ Unsure of their current location, the Senate ordered them—if they were in Istanbul—to communicate the news about the incident to Ottoman dignitaries together with the other *avvisi*. However, the ambassadors were instructed not to complain, i.e. not to petition for the intervention of the Porte, but only mention the incident. Namely, the Senate was still hoping for the reaction of the Venetian authorities and a favourable resolution of the problem. If the ambassadors were not in Istanbul but elsewhere following the court, they were ordered to inform their dragoman who certainly was in the capital. However, he was supposed to speak about the issue only if he found out that the Venetians

⁶¹ *LP*, vol. 15, f. 124v, 13 November 1630, SAD.

⁶² J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: p. 349.

⁶³ *LL*, vol. 45, f. 111r-112v, SAD.

had already complained and then he was to defend and justify Ragusa. Anticipating the usual Venetian accusations, the Senate stressed that the dragoman had to deny that the crew of the armed boat consisted of Uskoks, as its crew consisted of Ragusan subjects only.

All in all, it seems that at this point the Senate still hoped that the appeals to the Doge and governor general would bear some results and therefore did not want to escalate the conflict by drawing the Sublime Porte into it. However, in the same way in which there was no reaction from the Venetian authorities, there seems to have been no action on behalf of the Venetian Bailo either. Thus, with time this affair simply faded into oblivion.⁶⁴

Epilogue: the beginning of a crisis?

In historiography this episode is usually considered the beginning of the so-called Lokrum affair, one of the fiercest conflicts between Venice and Ragusa which lasted from 1630 until 1635.⁶⁵ However, as this subchapter will show, a detailed analysis of the documents reveals that what happened in the summer of 1630 was simply an isolated incident. The Lokrum affair—understood as a direct jurisdictional conflict regarding the island of Lokrum—actually began only in the spring of 1631.

More precisely, it began with rumours: on 24 March 1630 Governor General Civran wrote to the Venetian Senate that he heard that Ragusans had erected some new buildings on the island of Lokrum. Therefore, he sent one of the more reliable captains of the armed boats with the order to secretly investigate the situation while pretending to be carrying mail for Kotor. The captain did manage to take a walk on the island, sneaking a look at the monastery and

⁶⁴ With due caution this may be inferred from the fact that after this letter from August 1630, there are no more senatorial letters to the ambassadors in Istanbul until March 1631 (*LL*, vol. 45, f. 131r). It should also be stressed that the ambassadors' reply to this letter has been preserved, dated 30 August 1630 (*Isprave i akti*, 17 c., vol. 36, no 1783/12, SAD). The ambassadors write that they do not know whether Bailo has done anything regarding the matter, because they are not in Istanbul. As far as their dragoman is concerned, he could not help anyway, because he is gravely ill, perhaps even on his deathbed. Therefore, they did not write to him, not wishing to risk that, in the event of his death, such confidential documents fall into wrong hands. Unfortunately, further letters by the ambassadors are not preserved and thus it is impossible to be absolutely certain whether or not this incident was discussed on the Sublime Porte.

⁶⁵ See the literature quoted in note no. 1.

church and meeting several fairly distrustful workers as well as one monk. Civran attached his report to his letter, but that document actually revealed nothing scandalous, only the fact that certain construction works were taking place in the monastery of Lokrum.⁶⁶ However, roughly a month afterwards the governor general received more substantial news, when the Venetian informant from Ragusa answered his query regarding the works on the island. The informant confirmed that certain repairs were made on the monastery, but also added that on the orders of the Ragusan authorities several wooden houses, used for quarantine, were built near an old wall. He also wrote that in this way, as far as he could discern, the Ragusans planned to gradually build a proper quarantine station on Lokrum, unless they were stopped by Venice.⁶⁷ Civran mentioned to the Senate that he considered dealing with this matter personally, but postponed it as something that could wait.

However, it was the Senate itself that prompted the governor general to act. Answering his letter, the Senators ordered Civran to warn Ragusans to remove the novelties (*novità*) from Lokrum. If the “pleasant ways” and persuasions

⁶⁶ Civran writes: *Hebbo sentire à passati giorni che da Ragusei venisse fatto qualche accrescimento di fabbriche sopra il scoglio di San Marco dirimpetto à quella città, il che mi mosse à risoluzione di spedire espressamente una delle barche armate in quel luoco con ordine al capo che scielsi delli migliori di dover con ogni diligenza andare osservando, et fuori et dentro tutti li particolari senza dare di se ombra ne sospetto alcuno.* The extreme secrecy with which the captain performed his mission is revealed by the fact that not even the officer who escorted him knew anything about his true intentions and thought that they were carrying mail for Kotor (PTM, busta 289: No. 121, 24 March 1631, ASV). Importantly, already in October 1629 the Count of Split reported to the Venetian Senate that Ragusans were erecting new buildings on Lokrum. The Senate ordered the governor general to persuade them to demolish these buildings, and if they refused, to do it himself. It seems, however, that the governor never fulfilled this order (»Isprave za odnošaj Dubrovnika prema Veneciji«, ed. Vikentij Makušev and Milan Šufflay. *Starine JAZU* 31 (1905): p. 256).

⁶⁷ Civran writes: *Oltre le cose che feci riconoscer sopra il scoglio di S. Marco all'incontro de' Ragusi, riverentemente significate à V. Ser.tà, ho voluto ancor valer mi d'alcun confidente per indagar più à dentro tutte le cose, et mi scrive che la fabbrica della chiesa, e monasterio di quei monaci, altro non sia che la reparatione delle cose vecchie, e rovinose, et erettione d'un altare et d'un dormitorio che cadeva; effetti della buona mente del presidente loro, et stimoli ancora delli Ss.ri di quella città; che sopra il medesimo scoglio, per ordine delli medesimi Ss.ri, si siano fatte et accostate alcune case di legname al antico muro, e postevi à far la contumacia dentro quelli che da Venezia andavano giogendo; che il proposito loro sia per le congetture, che si potevano havere, d'introdur à puoco à puoco con questo ancorche debole rinovato principio, l'intiera costruzione del lazzereto, quando non sia lor opposto per parte di V. Ser.tà (PTM, busta 289: No. 133, 22 April 1631, ASV).*

failed, he was to personally demolish these new buildings.⁶⁸ Resorting, for a start, to the “pleasant ways”, in May Civran wrote a letter to Ragusan authorities. Unfortunately, this letter has not been preserved, but its contents can be gleaned not only from the aforementioned order of the Venetian Senate, but also from the shocked reaction of the Ragusan Senate.⁶⁹ It seems that governor general reproached Ragusans for the newly-erected wooden houses on the island and demanded that they be demolished, basing this request on the claim that Lokrum and the monastery on it were Venetian possessions. This much is clear from the answer which the Ragusan Senate sent to Civran on 23 May 1631. Warning the governor general that he was seriously misinformed, the Senators left no room for doubt regarding their position: “because *ab urbe condita* [Lokrum] has been under our indisputable jurisdiction, and has been our unquestionable possession, and we hope it will remain that way until the end of the world... so many representatives of the Most Serene Republic passed in these parts, and not one of them ever thought of questioning this, because they knew the notorious truth of our centuries-old jurisdiction over that island and that monastery...”⁷⁰ Ragusan Senators then stressed

⁶⁸ *Quanto à quelle riparationi, e fatture di legname fatte da Ragusei allo scoglio di San Marco con ragionevol disegno in loro di portarsi à poco à poco alla costruttione quivi del lasaretto sarà bene per ostarsi ai principij, che col termine premeditato dalla vostra virtù li rendiate ammoniti à levar qualunque novità di fresco introdotte, e quando non bastassero li modi soavi, e le persuasioni per far che essi le tolgano da loro, volemo che le facciate levare voi stesso, come ben saprete fare con maniera pronta, et sicura per il fine della nostra sodisfattione, et dignità (Senato, Deliberazioni, Rettori, Registri, vol. 2, f. 35r-35v, 29 April 1631, ASV).*

⁶⁹ This letter, written obviously in May 1631, is not preserved in either the extensive collection of diplomatic letters *Isprave i akti*, 17. c. (ASMM) nor in the somewhat smaller *Miscellanea saec. XVII*, which are both kept in the State Archive of Dubrovnik. Although its copy was probably attached to one of the letters of governor Civran, as was the custom, these *dispacci* are unfortunately not available for consultation due to bad condition (the exact shelf mark of the codex is: PTM, busta 290, ASV).

⁷⁰ *...imperocche ab Urbe condita è stato di nostra indubitata giurisditione e di possesso assoluto, e speriamo in Dio che cosi sarà sino alla fine del mondo, perche come anco l'E. V. con somma sua prudenza ne accenna l'innouationi non sono mai ben intese, e perciò per quanti Rappresentanti della Ser.ma Rep.ca sono passati per queste parti nessuno si è indotto mai à toccar questo punto, come consapeuoli della notoria uerità del nostro immemorabile dominio di quello scoglio e Monasterio... (LP, vol. 15, f. 146r, 23 May 1631, SAD). A similar summary of the governor general's letter is to be found in the Senate's letter to P. Benessa in Rome, dated 26 June 1631 (J. Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta*, III/1: pp. 347-348). It should be noted that the claim that Lokrum was a Venetian possession and that it was called “Island of St. Mark” was not merely an opportunistic lie. The island is called *scoglio di San Marco* also in the Venetian documents from the 1620s, and in 1626 the *provveditore* of ships even explicitly mentioned *scoglio de San Marco di ragione della serenità vostra* (»Isprave za odnošaj Dubrovnika prema Veneciji«: pp. 214, 223, 230, 256).*

that the monastery on Lokrum was built by their “fathers”, and erected in its vicinity were wooden houses in which the guards lived. Hence they urged Civran to believe them that he was “extremely badly” (*malissimamente*) informed and that Lokrum was “our absolute possession and dominion since the ancient times” (*ab antiquitate di nostro assoluto possesso e dominio*).

This already serious conflict soon escalated due to one decision of the Venetian Senate. Obviously provoked by a negative report on Ragusa which they received in the meantime and the news that Ragusan authorities had confiscated grain from one ship headed for Venice, the Venetian Senators took an aggressive stance. Without really giving a chance to Civran to resolve the issue in a diplomatic way, already on 22 May they issued an order regarding Ragusa to Gianbattista Grimani, at that point the Captain of the Gulf.⁷¹ The main instruction to Grimani was to patrol between Ancona and Ragusa, capturing merchant vessels and directing them towards Venice, so that through various “discomforts” Ragusans could learn that it was not wise to “clash with a great power such as the Republic”.⁷² Almost by the way, Venetian Senate

⁷¹ At the beginning of its letter to Grimani, Venetian Senate mentions the report *del provveditor nostro general dell' isole ciò che nel suo passaggio per Ragusi è venuto à comprendere degli andamenti e mali modi tenuti da Ragusei contro il nostro servizio, et de pregiuditiij, et isprezzi usati da quelle genti per toglier non solo al comercio della scala di Spalato, ma di questa città stessa...* Later in the letter, without giving details, they also mention that Ragusans confiscated the grain from a certain ship which was carrying it for Venice (*Senato, Deliberazioni, Rettori, Registri*, vol. 2, f. 55v-56r, 22 May 1631, ASV). Importantly, these orders to Grimani were issued on 22 May, i.e. only three weeks after the letter in which the Senate had ordered to the Governor General Civran to try to resolve the issue with Lokrum in a diplomatic way. That was clearly not enough time for the governor general to achieve anything. Equally so, these orders to Grimani were issued one day *before* Ragusans had even responded to Civran's request that the wooden houses be demolished. In other words, Grimani was ordered to resort to military option even before the Venetian Senate could have known the Ragusan answer to its request. On the other hand, it is obvious that Ragusans had no intention of meeting Venetian demands and therefore a diplomatic solution was not really likely.

⁷² *Onde vi commettimo col senato, che frequentando voi con la vostra diligenza bene spesso quelle marine, e scorrendo quel tratto d'Ancona à Ragusi cerchiate d'incontrare e fermare tutti li vasselli, deviandoli da quel camino, e dricciandoli con le proprie sicurezze in questa città, dove con incommodo uguale à quello, che li porgerete voi, e nelle contumacie e in altro, coll'acquisto de datij ancora per conto nostro, se li verra rimonstrando quanto disconvenga cimentarsi in qual si voglia modo con un Principe grande pari alla Republica, che in tanto ha mira di colpirli, in quanto stima di farli avvedere dell'intrapresa loro pregiudiciale, et al rispetto che se le conviene verso di noi* (*Senato, Deliberazioni, Rettori, Registri*, vol. 2, f. 55v, ASV).

added that Grimani should also check whether Ragusans had built some houses on Lokrum, and, if that was the case, he should demolish them.⁷³

Very soon Grimani followed this order, again causing a serious incident. On 22 June 1631 he arrived in front of Ragusa with three galleys and two armed boats and at dawn of the next day disembarked some 200 men on Lokrum. The Venetian troops demolished the contentious wooden houses near the detention station and retreated from the island only after Ragusan fortresses opened fire on them.⁷⁴ Unlike the incident from a year before, this event caused serious panic among the Ragusan elite. The memories of Lastovo crisis—a dramatic conflict regarding that island which tried to exchange Ragusan for Venetian sovereignty in early 1600s—were still very fresh. Consequently, the Ragusan government responded with the diplomatic manoeuvre usual in the gravest situations—the so-called “internationalisation of the crisis”. In only few days after the incident, the Senate wrote over *twenty* letters to the key personalities of European politics: from the Pope, Holy Roman Emperor, French, and Spanish Kings; the dukes of Savoy, Genoa, and Florence; all the way to Spanish viceroys and the ambassadors of great powers in Venice and Rome.⁷⁵ In all of these letters the Senate offered its version of the incident, insisted on Ragusan jurisdiction over Lokrum, and, more or less openly, complained about the Venetian harassments.

When all the aforementioned is taken into account, it is clear that these events from the spring and summer of 1631 represent the true beginning of the “Lokrum crisis”. The incident from 1630, analysed in this article and usually seen as the beginning of that crisis, was in fact an isolated event. Namely, neither during nor after that incident was there any dispute regarding the ownership

⁷³ ... e con cio ve la passarete, et essequirete i nostri ordini con puntualità e vigore, riconoscendo anche se sopra lo scoglio di San Marco havessero i medesimi Ragusei piantate barache per contumacie à comodo della scala loro, e trovatele ne le farete disfare, sequendo quello ch'è stato altre volte ordinato nella materia stessa (*Senato, Deliberazioni, Rettori, Registri*, vol. 2, f. 56r, ASV). In an uncharacteristic explication of its broader strategy, the Senate continued to explain that the aforementioned actions of Grimani, together with the new order issued by the Bosnian Passa by which Bosnian merchants had to use the port of Split and the new measures introduced regarding the merchant galleys, should significantly help the recovery of trade in Split.

⁷⁴ The most important overviews of this episode are: A. Vučetić, »Dubrovčani na obrani«: p. 97; R. Samardžić, *Veliki vek Dubrovnika*: p. 84; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, II: p. 99.

⁷⁵ *LP*, vol. 15, f. 151v-166v, SAD. Similar letters were written also at the beginning of July (for instance, f. 167r-171r).

over Lokrum.⁷⁶ From Ragusan point of view, the main problem in 1630 was the violent behaviour of Grimani and his troops, while from Venetian perspective the central issue was Ragusan disrespect for *Serenissima*'s dominion over the Adriatic. On the other hand, the question of ownership over Lokrum became the main problem between Venice and Ragusa in May and July 1631. Even more importantly, this question was to profoundly shape their relations for years to come: the prolonged and bitter conflict of the two Republics lasted until the summer of 1635.⁷⁷

In other words, Venetian documents make it clear that Grimani's behaviour in 1630 was not a part of a premeditated strategy of annexing Lokrum, as has been suggested in the classic works of R. Samardžić and V. Foretić.⁷⁸ This mistaken interpretation seems obvious because of the chronological vicinity of two incidents with Grimani and the crisis which ensued. Moreover, it is a result of the fact that the works of these two, undoubtedly brilliant, scholars were based exclusively on the Ragusan diplomatic material. However, that material is permeated with traditional animosity and suspicion, even paranoia, towards Venice. Therefore, a corrective or that proverbial *altera pars*, is crucial for a historian. On the bottom line, the point is very simple, even banal: in order to get an unbiased understanding of the Ragusan seventeenth century, one should not forget to ask Venice.

Appendix: Grimani's report

The bust 922 of the series *Provveditori da terra e da mar e altre cariche* contains the letters of various maritime magistrates to the Venetian Senate from

⁷⁶ This, of course, does not mean that the two Republics ever agreed on that issue. For traces of Venetian claim to Lokrum well before 1630, see note 70.

⁷⁷ Admittedly, the ownership of Lokrum was just one, albeit from Ragusan perspective the most important, among several issues between the two Adriatic Republics. Other contested issues were: freedom of navigation in the Adriatic (paying fees to Venice), ownership of Sušac and Molunat, compensation for the damages caused by various Venetian pressures on Ragusan trade, Venetian attempts to limit Ragusan salt trade, return of the armed boat captured by Grimani, and so on. For the list of these problems see the final report of Ragusan envoy to Venice, Miho Sorgo, after the negotiations were concluded in 1635 (Antonije Vučetić, *Lokrum i odnošaji Dubrovnika sa Mletcima u XVII vijeku. Iz izvještaja poslanika M. Sorga*. Split: A. Zannoni, 1889: pp. 24-25).

⁷⁸ R. Samardžić, *Veliki vek Dubrovnika*: pp. 83-84; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, II: pp. 98-99.

1630 to 1631. Among them is also the letter by Gianbattista Grimani, describing the incident in front of Dubrovnik.⁷⁹ Below is a transcription of that document, in which, for the sake of clarity, abbreviations have been resolved and the punctuation has been slightly modernised.

Serenissimo Principe,

Aviso altrettanto inaspettato quanto grande è stato l'ardire de Ragusei, ch'io porto à Vestra Serenità; poiche mentre continuavo il viaggio per l'armata con le conserve de signori Girolamo Marcello e Bernardo Morosini, trascorso oltre la città di Ragusi d'un miglio in circa, sentito da quella un tiro d'artiglieria senza balla, e veduto fumi, segni tra marinari & soldati ò di voler avisi ò d'implorar aiuto, repplicati da loro. Superato con li remi il vento gagliardo di Maistro, à quella volta mi spinsi, nel qual punto scopersi fusta ò fregata che tentava, come poi le riuscì, di procurar la salvezza con investire in terra rimpetto lo scoglio di San Marco. E fatto nel seguirla lo sbarco degl'armati, che teneva al numero di quaranta in circa, ben che prima le havessi con bandiera alla proda della mia galera fatto cenno di doversi accostare, e che per riconoscerla, al certo avviso che fuori di Castel Nuovo erano uscite doi fuste, haversi espedito con schiffo uno de miei migliori offitiali, non pote ad ogni modo la temerità di costoro trattenersi, che fortificati dietro trincee e congerie di sassi, non si dessero immediate à combattere, e con salva impetuosa di moschettate, non tentassero il danno di questa galera, che loro era più vicina, con le quali levorno immediate la vita à quattro miei huomeni di libertà de migliori, ferendone alcuni altri, e passando un braccio al mio primo capo de bombardieri, la qual balla si fermò nella guancia d'altro capo a prova, vicino à me, che per dar conforme al mio solito gl'ordini necessarij mi trattenevo à quella parte. Si procurò immediate sebene con sommo disvantaggio il risarcimento dell'ingiuria, e benche il vento sopradetto battendomi in terra mi facesse certa conoscere la frattura di queste galere, sostentandomi nondimeno con li remi, poste genti nelli schiffi di tutte tre, spaleggiandoli con le prove, con morte d'altri miei soldati, con ferita del mio capitano, e d'alcuni della galera Morosina, restò presa la fusta. Nel qual punto sopraggiungendo doi di questi cittadini Ragusei, dandosi arditamente à protesti, che quando non si lasciasse la fusta sudetta, desolate restariano queste

⁷⁹ PTM Busta 922: no number, no foliation, ASV. I am deeply indebted to Francesca Maria Gabrielli for her selfless and extensive help with deciphering Grimani's Baroque syntax.

galere, e nel punto medesimo del loro partire, sbarando la città molti tiri con balla, che vicinissimi scorserò fra le galere medesime, stimai proprio con rinfacciar l'attione, risponder loro ch'ero avezzo à perigli, e da quelle uscij salvo con le conserve et fusta senza punto sconcertarmi. Conosciuto questi poco dopo l'errore, mentre allo scoglio di Vostra Serenità mi trattenevo, mi espedirono doi altri de più principali, incolpando l'ardire degl'assalitori, attribuendo il successo delle canonate al furor d'un histrione che soprintendeva quel giorno alla fortezza, attestorno incomparabile essere l'afflittione de loro signori, pregandomi à radolcire il mio animo, con esibitioni di rendermi prontamente soddisfato. Io risposi loro aggradir sempre Vostra Serenità l'affetto de suoi vicini per la salvezza et indennità de quali senza pari s'adopera, restando il vantaggio et conservatione loro incarricata à suoi rapresentanti, essermi à questo effetto per li loro segni e tiri spinto à quella volta, e scoperta la fusta creduta di Castel Nuovo per la fuga et andamenti loro, restai obligato à seguirla, chiamatala prima all'obediencia con farle il segno et espedirle il mio schiffo, ma dagl'huomini di quella nel medesimo punto assicurati per l'avantaggio del monte e delle trincee esser io restato impetuosamente e fuor di dovere offeso, ingiuria tanto più grande quanto era provenuta da amici et dipendenti, con peggiori conseguenze per l'ostilità usata dalla fortezza, nello sbarro delle canonate, et per li pretesti, non con altro ogetto che d'avilirmi et necessitarmi al partire con scorno, il che però non essere seguito, ne per seguir mai à questa galea e conserve per aiuto particolare del Signor Dio, fatto ardito sempre dalla brama ch'io tengo di ben servire Vostra Serenità. Che le loro escusationi potriano esser gradite, mentre le genti sopravanzate dalla fusta fossero à me condotte, et castigato chi anch' dalla città aventarmi canonate, eccitandoli in accidente cosi grande, à render proprio e celere il rimedio. Replicarono essi le genti dalla stessa fusta essere sparse per quei monti e nascosto quel tale che soprintendeva agl'aritgliaria, togliermi all'ora la sodisfattione. Ond'io premendo negl'ultimi del discorso con parole generali, benche efficacissime, lasciai quelli confusi partire; et applicandomi alla salvezza di queste galere, mentre il vento girandomi à terra impetuosamente, mi infastidiva, convenni trattenermi per molte hore della notte, e nello spuntar dell'aurora, mi spinsi à questa volta, seguendomi con barche, usciti dal punto della mia partenza gl'ambasciatori, et assistendo à me questi illustrissimi passigieri, m'esposero tener ordine de loro signori di continuar à seguirmi, finche con loro riverenti supplicationi, non per quelli che malamente operarono, ma per gl'altri che s'affligono del seguito, havessero ottenuto dichiarazione del mio affetto. Che le colpe de soldati ch'erano nella fusta si

facevano inescusabili, e grande l'ardire del castellano ma altrettanto il rispetto e la riverenza di quei buoni e prudentissimi cittadini, li quali impiegati nella formatione di diligente processo haveriano procurato sicuramente à rei severo castigo. Che la fusta benche di loro non era pretesa da me se non per gratia, ch'essendo diverso il mio senso assolutamente non ne haveriano più discorso, che non solo quella dovesse restare alla mia dispositione, ma quasi m'eshibirono risarcimento degl'huomeni morti implorando repplicatamente la mia sola benignità. Al che stimai bene in questi tempi con senso meno rigoroso rispondere; che ingiuria et offesa più grande non potevo ricevere poi restai in tal maniera offeso, e provocato da gente nemica e dipendente fuori d'ogni dovere, e senza causa, mentre per loro servitio mi spinsi alla loro volta. Rappresentai il sopremo possesso che tiene Vostra Serenità in questi mari, l'ordine di trattener li vasseli armati di qual si sia Principe benche grande, poiche altro non sono, disconci alla navigatione, et alla quiete, l'obbligo del più debole nel render obediencia al più potente in ogni luoco, il termine suavissimo con quale tratta Vostra Serenità con loro, come costantemente sempre vengono rintuzzate le temeriarie pretensioni; essere questi termini essenziali stati violati in questo accidente; tuttavia, che intenerito dalle loro supplicationi, mi dichiarivo nel mio particolare non pretender ne voler certo risarcimento de morti, benche assenda il danno ad un migliario di ducati, donando io ciò, tutto che di ristrette fortune alla loro submissione. La fregata presa non essere più in potesta mia ma di Vostra Serenità, la quale condotta à Cattaro restarà à quell'Illustrissimo Viceprovveditore consignata, e che s'attenderano gl'ordini intorno à ciò, trattenendo io in tanto gl'affetti miei e regolando il disgusto; guardassero però bene che à loro nome havrei promesso all'Eccellenze Vostre che certamente quelli sarebbero stati severamente castigati. E perche fosse publica la dimostrazione intendevo dovessero servire come condannati sopra le galere di questa squadra, il che pure era seguito d'altra gente, che non è molto tempo e che questo con buona mortificatione al castellano potesse radolcir gli animi d' Eccellenze Vostre, e render poi me particolarmente sodisfatto. E perche non restasse imperfetta la trattatione, obbligato io à spingermi all'armata, ricoressero all' Signor Generale di Dalmazia, implorando il suo benigno impegno, sodisfacendo quanto prima si fosse potuto, à quello spontaneamente m'hanno esibito, il che tutto dissero, et s'impegnorono d'esseguire, et con segni di non ordinaria riverenza, et altri effetti di sommissione finalmente partirono. Et io spintomi qui à Cataro, à questo Illustrissimo Viceprovveditore ho consignato la fregata sodetta con le robbe che in essa si ritrovavano, l'inventario delle quali invio qui occluso à Vostra Serenità, et mi

incamino senza dilatione all’armata. Aggiungendo all’ Eccellenze Vostre, haver sottrato qui à Cataro esser questo brigantino de Ragusi, che bene spesso s’impiega nell’arresto de vasselli, che stimano di lor servitio, conducendoli à forza d’artiglieria con violenza in porto, come bene può restar informata Vostra Serenità d’altre parti, ne lasciano costoro di far anche qualche danno, paliando il tutto sotto nome di quelli di Castel Nuovo, nel qual luoco ritrovandosi tre fuste. Servitio publico sarebbe ch’alcuno vi tratenessi qualche giorno per veder di ridurli negl’aguati, che necessario certo sarà di porgere rimedio non lasciando proseguire le loro prave volontà poichè è cattiva et universale dispositione di questi confinanti essendosi armati quest’anno, tra Santa Maura, Prevesa, Dulcigno e *cassatum*: *Castel Nuovo*, undeci fuste che quando con li bottini sentissero l’allettamento del corseggiare al sicuro si farebbero, e di forze e di numero maggiori, e più infesti in quell’acque.

Di galera li 30 di luglio 1630.

Giovanni Battista Grimani

