

EASTERN ADRIATIC CITIES AND THEIR ROLE IN VENETIAN (LONG-DISTANCE) COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE 13TH AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 14TH CENTURY – AN OVERVIEW¹

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During the 13th and 14th centuries Venice worked on gaining military and economic control over the Eastern Adriatic and “prepared the ground” for its later long dominance in that area. In this period, from Venetian perspective, the cities were primarily strategic and exchange points – and were increasingly perceived as the natural hub of connections between the Mediterranean and Central Europe or the West and the Levant. The infrastructures that supported the Venetian long-distance trade in the 13th and 14th centuries were related to security, equipment, and the possibility of transit, as well as supplying enough manpower on the way. The main strategy was to maintain the sea route from the northernmost point of the Adriatic to the Levant, and to introduce the necessary legal, commercial, and administrative practices modelled upon its own.

Keywords: Eastern Adriatic cities, Venice, commercial activities

Introduction

The Venetian economic empire depended on the sea as it interconnected various parts of its territory, cities, islands, and coasts. It was crucial for Venice to dominate politically over the Eastern Adriatic in order to ensure a safe

¹ This study was financed by the Croatian Science Foundation, project nr. 2055 (Topography of power. Eastern Adriatic cities in medieval spheres of power (TOPOS) (<http://topos.s11.novenaweb.info/en/home/>).

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path to the Mediterranean and the Levant.² The cities in that coastal area were mostly located along the easily navigable, indented coastline and could serve as points of departure, return, or maritime relay for Venetian military and merchant ships or those destined for the Holy Land.³ In their harbours, vessels could be sheltered and supplied with merchandise, food, water, and manpower. Venice showed strong aspirations towards this area from the early 11th century, as it was the simplest natural maritime route serving its targeted expansion; however, the symbolic connection with the Adriatic towns was also very important.⁴ Besides Venice, the Hungarian-Croatian kings and the local (especially Croatian) magnates aspired to bring the Eastern Adriatic – particularly its cities – under their control because of its geostrategic position as well as its existing heritage and “infrastructure” – solidly built harbours that could be enlarged if needed, the existing customs and laws that could be easily adjusted.

This paper will address the role of Eastern Adriatic cities (particularly of nowadays Croatia) in Venetian (long-distance) commercial activities before the Serenissima’s political and economic domination in the Adriatic (from the 15th century on). Venice exerted strong control over the upper Adriatic

² Alberto Tenenti, *Venezia e il senso del mare. Storia di un prisma culturale dal XIII al XVIII secolo* (Milan: Guerini, 1999); Reinhold C. Mueller, “Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty in Medieval and Renaissance Dalmatia,” *Quattrocento Adriatico: Fifteenth-Century Art of the Adriatic Rim*, ed. Charles Dempsey (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1996), pp. 29-57; Bariša Krekić, “Venezia e l’Adriatico,” in: *Storia di Venezia 3: La formazione dello Stato patrizio*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), pp. 51-85; Elisabeth Crouzet Pavan, *Venezia trionfante: gli orizzonti di un mito* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2001); Jean Claude Hocquet, *Venise et la mer: XIIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2006); Ermanno Orlando, *Altre Venezie. il dogado veneziano nei secoli XIII e XIV (giurisdizione, territorio, giustizia e amministrazione)* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2008), 224-229; Roberto Cessi, *Venezia nel Duecento: tra Oriente e Occidente* (Venice: Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, 1985); Bernard Doumerc, “L’Adriatique, une proie dans les griffes du lion vénitien (XIe-XVIe siècle)”, in: *Les territoires de la Méditerranée, XIe-XVIe siècle*, ed. Dominique Valèrian, Christophe Picard, Damien Coulon (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013), pp. 15-34; *Balceni occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo / Der westliche Balkan, der Adria-raum und Venedig (13.-18. Jahrhundert)*, Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Jens Schmitt (eds.) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009); Roberto Cessi, *La repubblica di Venezia e il problema adriatico* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1953), pp. 84-110.

³ For instance, pilgrims who came by land embarked in Venice and then travelled between three to eight days to Zadar, where they visited the relics of Saint Simeon. Cf. Sabine Florence Fabijanec, “La vie maritime de Split et de Zadar du XIIIe au XVe siècle”, in : *The Sea in History: The Medieval World / La mer dans l’histoire. Le Moyen Âge*, ed. Michel Balard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017) 184-191, here 190.

⁴ Elisabeth Crouzet Pavan, *Venezia trionfante: gli orizzonti di un mito* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2001).

before the 13th century, in the Quarner islands (Rab/Arbe, Cres/Cherso, and Krk/Veglia), but the Hungarian rulers had considered themselves to be the natural heirs of Dalmatian cities ever since King Koloman's crowning in the city of Biograd/Zara Nova in 1102.⁵ Not all Hungarian rulers had the same level of power and interest to engage in active governance over the Adriatic. This weakening grip on the coastal area resulted in the cities' attempts at securing their independence, but also an increase in the aspiration of other powers, primarily Venice. In the 12th century, Dalmatian cities alternately recognized the rule of Venice and the Hungarian rulers. Although Istrian cities were ruled by the Patriarchs of Aquileia until the end of the 13th century, the city podestàs were often members of Venetian nobility (but also Friulian, or local Istrian),⁶ and Venice signed special trade agreements with specific cities (Koper/Capodistria,⁷ Rovinj/Rovigno, Poreč/Parenzio, Novigrad/Cittanova, and Umag/Umago, as with the Italian cities of Rimini, Cremona, Treviso, Aquileia, Ravenna, and Verona).⁸ These actions clearly show that the Upper Adriatic area was of primary interest in the 12th century.⁹ Still, some of the most attractive Eastern Adriatic cities for Venice were two cities in central and southern Dalmatia – Zadar/Zara¹⁰ and Dubrovnik/Ragusa – which had

⁵ Istvan Petrovic, "Hungary and the Adriatic Coast in the Middle Ages: Power Aspirations and Dynastic Contacts of the Árpáadian and Angevin Kings in the Adriatic Region", *Chronica: Annual of the Institute of History* 5 (2005), 62-73; Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje: prostor, ljudi, ideje* [*The Croatian Middle Ages: Space, people, ideas*] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga and Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1997).

⁶ Antonio Stefano Minotto, "Documenta ad Forumiulii, Istriam, Goritiam, Tergestum spectantia" 1, *Atti e memorie della Società istriana di archeologia e storia patria* 8 (1892): 3-47; Milan Prelog, *Poreč, grad i spomenici* [*Poreč: The city and its monuments*] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2007), p. 35.

⁷ For instance, the doge signed a treaty in 1182 with Kopar where he established the "salt stage"; cf. Jean Claude Hocquet, *Venise et le monopole du sel: Production, commerce et finance d'une République marchande*, 2 vols. (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012). Kopar was a major commercial hub in Istria and beyond; Suzanne Mariko Miller, *Venice in the East Adriatic: Experiences and Experiments in Colonial Rule in Dalmatia and Istria (C. 1150-1358)*, PhD dissertation (Stanford University, 2007), 52.

⁸ Darko Darovec, "I giuramenti di fidelitas delle città istriane nel XII secolo," *Atti del Convegno internazionale Venezia e il suo Stato da mar* (2018): 21-50; Giovanni De Vergottini, "L'Impero e la 'fidelitas' delle città istriane verso Venezia," *Atti e memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria* 53 (1949): 87-104.

⁹ But the cities signed trade contracts despite the fact that they were subjected to different central authorities: cf. Josip Lučić, "Pomorsko-trgovačke veze Dubrovnika i Venecije u XIII. stoljeću" [*Maritime trade relations between Dubrovnik and Venice in the 13th century*], in: *Dubrovačke teme* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1991), 413.

¹⁰ Zadar is situated on the peninsula between protective islands in the centre of the Eastern Adriatic: cf. Fabijanec, *La vie maritime de Split et de Zadar*, 185. By 1202, before the crusaders

extensive trade networks *infra* and *extra culfum*.¹¹ Venice had economic interest in Zadar also because of the salt pans on the island of Pag (mostly owned by the nobles of Zadar and partly Rab).¹² Moreover, Zadar was surrounded by large agricultural hinterland, and had trade networks with the Croatian and Hungarian continental lands.¹³ The city was a potential supplier of food to Venice (meat, fish, wine, oil, figs, leather, etc.).¹⁴ Owing to its geopolitical position, Dubrovnik functioned as a link between Italy, the Slavic hinterland, and the Levant.¹⁵ The Balkan hinterland was important for Venice because of the growing exploitation of precious metals and other raw materials in the area of present-day Serbia and Bosnia. However, Dubrovnik did not recognize the Venetian rule before the 13th century (except briefly in 1171-1172) and Zadar repeatedly rebelled against the Serenissima, relying on the Hungarian king in the 12th century.

devastated the city, it had a strong harbour with an iron chain: cf. Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Prolegomena to a World History of Harbour and River Chains," in: *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of John Pryor*, Ruthy Gertwagen and Elizabeth Jeffreys (eds.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 10.

¹¹ Dubrovnik maintained active economic ties with cities on both sides of the Adriatic in the 12th century. Just like Zadar, it had numerous trade contracts with Italian cities: with Pisa (1169), Ravenna (1188), Fano, Ancona (1199), Molfetto in Apulia (1148), the nearest dominion across the Adriatic, Bari, Monopoli (1201), and Termoli (1203): cf. Lučić, *Teme*, 518.

¹² Nikola Čolak, "Proizvodnja paške soli i pomorska trgovina do pada Paga pod mletačku vlast godine 1409." [*The production of salt and maritime trade on the island of Pag before its fall under Venice in 1409*], *Pomorski zbornik* 1 (1963): 484-485; Šime Peričić, "Proizvodnja i prodaja paške soli u prošlosti" [*The production and sale of Pag's salt in the past*], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 43 (2001): 45-83; Tomislav Raukar, "Zadarska trgovina solju u XIV i XV st." [*Zadar's salt trade in the 14th and 15th centuries*], *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu* 7-8 (1969-1970): 39, 41-48, and 72. Salt from Pag (as well as from Kopar and Piran) was similar in quality to that of Chioggia; Jean-Claude Hocquet, "Le Sel au cœur de la puissance maritime de Venise," *Venise et la Méditerranée; Studi Veneziani* 67 (2013): 150.

¹³ In 1216, the Hungarian-Croatian king concluded a treaty with Venice on free trade. According to this treaty, Venice was obliged to allow the Croatian merchants from the hinterland to pursue free trade in Zadar, and the people of Zadar to trade in the hinterland; cf. *Listine o odnošajih između južnog Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* [*Documents on the relations between south Slavs and the Republic of Venice*] vol. 1, Šime Ljubić (ed.) (Zagreb: JAZU, 1868), pp. 29-31.

¹⁴ Mlacović, *Rapsko plemstvo*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁵ Dubrovnik developed strong trade contacts with Byzantium and through it with the distant overseas: cf. Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries: A city between East and West* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 16; Nenad Fejić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) au Moyen Âge, Espace de convergence, espace menacé* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2010), pp. 35-36; Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society, 1300-1600* (Aldershot and Brookfield, WI: Variorum, 1997).



Securing the trade route in the first half of the 13th century

In the 13th century, in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, Venice became one of the leading powers in the Mediterranean, which caused profound changes in its political, territorial, and economic ambitions. The main strategy was to maintain the sea route from the northernmost point of the Adriatic to the Levant, and to introduce the necessary legal, commercial, and administrative practices modelled upon its own. In the beginning of the 13th century, its rule was consolidated in the Quarner bay and established in several key ports of the coast (Zadar, Dubrovnik, and briefly Dyrrachium). The sea route towards the Levant continued across the Ionic Sea with its newly conquered cities of Corfu, Coron, and Modon in south-western Peloponnese, all the way to Crete in the Aegean. Venice was also connected to Constantinople via Negroponte, and another route led to Syria (the newly conquered cities of Akkon and Tyr).¹⁶ Parts of the acquired territory along the route were soon lost (Dyrrachium and Corfu were now in the hands of the Despot of

¹⁶ Charalambos Gasparis, "The Period of Venetian Rule on Crete: Breaks and Continuities during the Thirteenth Century," in: *Urbs capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences / La IVe Croisade et ses conséquences*, ed. Angeliki Laiou (Paris: Lethielleux, 2005), pp. 233-246; David Jacoby, *Collection of Essays: Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (Alder-

Epirus),¹⁷ which made the Dalmatian cities even more important. Certainly, the conquest of Zadar and Dubrovnik was a great success, but the situation was far from stable. Zadar rebelled several times and pledged allegiance to the Hungarian kings, and Dubrovnik was likewise unstable in the first half of the century. Although Venice did manage to conquer most of the Istrian cities and the (island) cities of Hvar and Korčula in the second half of the 13th century, some of the important coastal ports in central Dalmatia (Split, Trogir, Šibenik) accepted her rule only in the 14th century.¹⁸

Venetian governance was not organized in the same way across the Eastern Adriatic – differences depended on the importance of the area in question and its geographic position. Venice respected pluralism and particularities of the Eastern Adriatic cities and showed willingness for compromise, as some of these cities were geographically distant. Those that were closer proved easier to control (especially the island cities). The differences also depended on the given local circumstances (especially the inherited degree of autonomy) and the historical relations with Venice. Thus, on the islands of Osor, Rab, and Krk, Venetian (but also local) patricians were often given territories in hereditary lease, in exchange for consolidating the Venetian rule and offering military and trade support (often the sons of the doges were granted countships there).¹⁹ Elsewhere there was a system of public governance – podestà-style rectorship – in which this post was not hereditary. Thus, from the beginning of the 13th century, Zadar and Dubrovnik were governed by Venetian patricians who were appointed city counts.²⁰ But this type of countship with a temporary mandate (the regimen of 2-3 years) was established only in the 2nd or 3rd decade of the 13th century, and the first counts were appointed for life. Venice occasionally changed the system of governance if it was in the best interest of consolidating its rule. The relation between the Eastern Adriatic cities and Venice as the central authority was neither simple nor unilateral, but situational, changing with regard to the interests of individual cities.

shot, Variorum, 2001); idem, *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2005).

¹⁷ Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 401.

¹⁸ *Venezia e Dalmazia*, Uwe Israel and Oliver Jens Schmitt (ed.) (Rome: Viella, 2013).

¹⁹ Beginning with Doge Pietro Polani in the 12th century and continuing with the doges Domenico Morosini and Vitale II Michiel: cf. Miller, *Venice*, 64.

²⁰ In the 13th century, Venice signed contracts with some of the Eastern Adriatic cities, in which it negotiated their rights and obligations. The degree of their autonomy was a result of political history, geopolitical position, and the development of urban elite, and was expressed in the form of institutions, municipal bodies, and statutes.

Doge Pietro Ziani (1205-1229) dedicated the first decade of his mandate to securing the sea route from Venice to the Levant by conquering a series of cities and fortresses and investing in the fortification of Eastern Adriatic cities. It was necessary to ensure safe navigation in this part of the Adriatic, so the merchant ships would not be robbed by pirates²¹ or enemies.²² Zadar (after signing the pact with Venice) had to supply military aid when needed – when Venice was at war in the Adriatic. The existing fortifications (especially those located at the city margins) were restructured to accommodate the count and his entourage. In Dubrovnik, the locality chosen for the count's lodgings was an area surrounded by a wall and separated from the city, which included the fortress. This building complex was close to the city harbour and the later arsenal.²³ To ensure a safe journey through the Adriatic, Venice had to confront its enemies with the help of its subjects and allies. Particularly problematic were the Genoese, as they were fighting for the same economic area. Moreover, merchants were often attacked by pirates from the city of Omiš (south of Split).²⁴ Venice forbade the coastal cities to trade with the pirates²⁵ and supported them with the necessary vessels for fighting them: for instance, in 1280 Venice sent a galley (with this sole purpose) to Dubrovnik,²⁶ and in 1288 one was given to the city of Rab. In 1301, it was ordered to Zadar's count to launch a military campaign against the pirates.²⁷ In the mid-13th century, Venice even allied with the Dalmatian cities that were under the Hungarian-Croatian crown for combating the Omiš pirates.²⁸

²¹ Irene B. Katele, "Piracy in the Venetian State: The Dilemma of Maritime Defence in the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 63 (1988): 865-868.

²² Benjamin Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis: Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth Century Depression* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

²³ Irena Benyovsky Latin, "Governmental Palaces in Eastern Adriatic Cities (13th-14th Centuries)," in: *Political Functions of Urban Spaces and Town Types through the Ages: Making Use of the Historic Towns Atlases in Europe*, ed. R. Czaja, Z. Noga, F. Opll, and M. Scheutz (Torun and Vienna, 2019), pp. 111-161.

²⁴ For instance, in 1224 there is a mention of pirates attacking merchants in the Adriatic, when a *capitaneum galearum* was sent from Venice because in front of Ancona "the people of Split and people who call themselves Kačići" robbed *barcam* that belonged to a Venetian merchant; *Listine*, I, 33 XLIII.

²⁵ Like in 1226, when Dubrovnik, for instance, established trade contacts with the Omiš pirates.

²⁶ In 1293, it was again ordered to the city count to fight the pirates if they approached the city from the sea; *Listine*, I, p. 151.

²⁷ *Listine*, I, p. 194.

²⁸ CD, V, 236-237, 420, 456, and 583; Miller, *Venice*, 84.

If there were riots in the cities, Venice imposed its authority by means of trade embargos. Thus, in 1226, when Zadar and Dubrovnik rebelled, the Venetians were forbidden to buy goods from the local merchants.²⁹ In 1228, the Venetian government forbade the Venetians to travel to Zadar until the following year without a permission of the doge and his council.³⁰ In 1228, the doge concluded treaties with some Italian cities (Osimo, Recanti, Castel-fodardo) in order to weaken the monopoly of Ancona, which remained the largest trading competitor in the Adriatic after the conquest of Zadar and Dubrovnik.³¹ In a new treaty with Dubrovnik, the navigation activities of the Ragusans were even more limited: it was declared that when Dubrovnik merchants bring goods from Byzantium, they had to pay 5% of the customs duty and if they exceed the norm, they had to pay 20%. For the goods from Egypt, Tunisia, and Barbaria, it was as much as 20%. This order was repeated in 1236 and later (which means that the people of Dubrovnik still traded in these areas).³² On the other hand, the Venetians in Dubrovnik had no such limits and were privileged there. As for the goods imported from “Sclavoniae” (the hinterland lands), the Ragusans had a freer initiative.³³ For the Venetians, people from Dubrovnik were of great help as intermediaries, since they spoke a language similar to that of these relatively dangerous areas and had better knowledge of the situation. Thus, Dubrovnik continued its relations with the hinterland: in 1215, the king of Serbia granted free trade to merchants from Dubrovnik³⁴ and in 1230, the Bulgarian tsar allowed the people of Dubrovnik to trade throughout the country.

Venice tried to limit the commercial benefits and trade activities of the Eastern Adriatic cities in the Gulf. According to the documents, Zadar’s merchants maintained connections with the Levant, Alexandria, and Egypt as early 1224.³⁵ In the 1220s, Dubrovnik renewed some of the old commercial contracts with Italian towns (Molfetto and Recanti in 1229, Termoli in 1224, Ferrara and Rimini in 1231 and 1235). Dubrovnik and Zadar had developed

²⁹ *Listine* I, p. 37, doc. 52; p. 41, doc. 60; p. 37, doc. 52.

³⁰ *Listine*, I, p. 45.

³¹ Mlacović, *Rapsko*, p. 163.

³² *Listine*, I, 84-85.

³³ Nenad Fejić, “Dubrovnik et la mer (XIIIe–XVe siècle),” in: *The Sea in History – The Medieval World*, C. Buchet and M. Balard (eds.) (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), pp. 192-202

³⁴ In the 13th century, Serbia became very powerful under the rule of Uroš I and that is the time when mines of noble metals are first mentioned. The king tried to conquer Dubrovnik several times. Dubrovnik had a very complex relationship with the hinterland – the populations spoke similar languages but were of different confessions (Dubrovnik being Roman Catholic).

³⁵ *Listine*, III, 394.

trade across the Adriatic, especially with Ancona, whose merchants were very active in trade with the Levant.³⁶ In 1258, Zadar signed a privileged agreement with Ancona, which indicated the beginning of a lasting cooperation.³⁷

Doge Giacomo Tiepolo (1229-1249) was a member of the new trading patrician circles. During the first part of his rule, he had to focus on problems with Emperor Frederick II and some Eastern Adriatic cities used this period of instability to enhance their autonomy. Ferrara and the surrounding cities with which Dubrovnik had concluded treaties at the time recognized the rule of Frederick II and were in competition with Venice. Venice tried to bind the commune of Dubrovnik more tightly to its authority with the treaty of 1232.³⁸ This order was repeated in 1236 and later.³⁹ On the other hand, the Venetians in Dubrovnik had no such limitations and were privileged in the distant trade. In 1236, the doge appointed his son, Giovanni Tiepolo, as the count of Dubrovnik (he was the first one to serve in the city for two years and not for life, and the first one who swore oath to serve the commune of Dubrovnik besides the doge, and to protect the city's customs.⁴⁰

The Lower Adriatic was not subject to the Venetian commercial regulations and the trade was still relatively unlimited. Dubrovnik's merchants traded freely *extra Culfum*, but in the immediate vicinity, and in the Ionian Sea, with Crete. There were many trade connections with the area of Byzantium (Romania) and in the Levant.⁴¹ In 1237, the despot of Epirus gave the merchants of Dubrovnik the privilege of free trade, and from 1238 to 1240 they settled their relations with Corfu by contract. In the mid-13th century, Dubrovnik still maintained lively trade connections with Dyrrachium and Corfu, when the cities were under the rule of the Despotate.⁴² Outside these borders, Dubrovnik could trade only with the permission of the doge.

³⁶ Eliyahu Ashtor, "Il commercio levantino di Ancona in basso Medioevo," in: *Studies of the Levantine Trade in the Middle Ages* (London: Variorum, 1978); Bariša Krekić, "Le port de Dubrovnik (Raguse), entreprise d'État, plaque tournante du commerce de la ville (XIIIe-XVIe siècle)," in: *I porti come impresa economica: atti della diciannovesima settimana di studi, 2-6 maggio 1987*, ed. S. Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1988), pp. 653-673.

³⁷ CD, V, 88-90. (Trade contracts between Ancona and Zadar from the 12th and 13th centuries show that wine and salt were the most important merchandise.)

³⁸ *Listine* I, pp. 46-49, doc. 75. pp. 53-55, doc. 80, pp. 67-68, doc. 93.

³⁹ *Listine*, I, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁰ CD, IV, p. 32.

⁴¹ For Dubrovnik, the Levant started from Corfu and the coast of Epirus and extended to the Black Sea, descending the coasts of Syria and through Egypt to Tunisia.

⁴² Bariša Krekić, "Dva dokumenta o Krfu u 13. st." [Two documents on Corfu in the 13th century], *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* 3 (1958): 50-51.

After another rebellion of Zadar in 1242, Venice began to build a fortress to house the Venetian army and countship was converted from lifelong to two-year, which made Venice change the offices without the consent of the citizens. In order to stabilize the situation in 1248, Venice allowed Zadar to freely export all goods from Tunisia, Sicily, Romania and the “barbarian countries” to Venice, paying only the tax paid by the Venetians themselves.⁴³ Later on, Venice also allowed Zadar to keep all trade agreements concluded in foreign countries. On the other hand, in 1240-1250 Venice started to import salt: the salt of Chioggia (*sal Clugie*) was collected in the Lagoon, but the *sal maris* arrived from the salt pans in the Adriatic or the Mediterranean, or even from the Black Sea. The year 1243 was marked by intense Venetian presence in the entire Eastern Adriatic: according to the narrative sources, in the Quarner island cities of Krk and Osor/Osera, the hereditary counts were temporarily substituted through direct governance.⁴⁴ That same year, the Istrian city of Pula/Pola (which was under the rule of the local Castropola family, relatively independent of the patriarch, until the early 14th century) was briefly subjected to the Venetian rule.⁴⁵ After recurring instabilities in Dubrovnik, a new peace treaty with Venice was signed in 1252.⁴⁶ Venice again imposed a customs tax that limited Dubrovnik’s trade, while the Venetian merchants were again exempted from these limitations. Merchants from Dubrovnik were allowed to travel to Venice with only four small ships per year, and there was a prohibition of trade between them and other foreign merchants in the Venetian territory.⁴⁷ Venice also prescribed that if Venice was banned from trading in the Kingdom of Sicily, this was also to apply to the people of Dubrovnik.

⁴³ *Listine*, I, p. 49.

⁴⁴ Instead of Bartol Krčki, another son of Doge Tiepolo (and a future doge himself), Lorenzo Tiepolo, was appointed to the count’s office in 1243. Marco Contareno was the count of Krk from 1248 until 1253. *Raccolta degli italiani storici*, vol. 12 (Milan, Typographia societatis patinae, 1728) (*Chronicon Venetum Andreae Danduli*, 1389), p. 354, c. 5, 37. In 1243, Giovanni Tiepolo, formerly the count of Dubrovnik, was appointed the count of Osor (and in 1236, the same office was occupied by the doge’s third son, Pietro Tiepolo).

⁴⁵ Giovanni de Vergottini, *Lineamenti storici della costituzione politica dell’Istria durante il Medio evo* (Trieste: Casa editrice LINT, 1974); Pietro Kandler, *Cenni al forestiero che visita Pola* (Trieste: Tipografia del Loyd austriaco, 1845), 21.

⁴⁶ *Listine* I, p. 82, doc. 106.

⁴⁷ The decree was repeated in the later decades, as in 1290: obviously, Dubrovnik’s merchants were travelling *ultra mare* despite the limitations. *Listine*, I, p. 149.

Intense focus on the Adriatic from the mid-13th century

Doge Rainero Zeno was the last doge who had authority over Romania.⁴⁸ He worked on establishing safe strategic harbours on the way to the Levant – along the Adriatic route, he relied on individual Venetian patricians such as Marsilio Zorzi, who was granted the newly conquered island of Korčula as a hereditary lease.⁴⁹ He particularly focused on maritime trade, codifying the famous *Statuta navium et navigantium* in 1255. The Venetian (trade and maritime) law and institutions were gradually introduced in the cities under control, but it was a long process and Venice had to adapt to the local circumstances and customs. At that time, Venice still primarily controlled trade in the northern Gulf: for instance, Ferrara's Adriatic economic activities were limited by 1240 (the city was a large trading hub through which the trade of the Po Valley ran).⁵⁰ In 1258, Zadar's and Ancona's merchants agreed to abolish *datiam et debitum, omnem iniuriam et rubbariam*.⁵¹ But after the fall of Constantinople, in 1261, Venice intensified its control over the whole Adriatic, as it had lost the coastal holdings around the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara. In 1264, Ancona was forced to recognize the Venetian system of staple in the northern Adriatic, while its trade with Palestine, but also with Bologna and Ferrara, was limited. At the time, the lower Adriatic was not subject to the Venetian commercial regulations, and trade with the Dalmatian cities on the other side of the Adriatic was still relatively unlimited. There were continuous attempts to avoid limitations in trade. For instance, in 1293 Dubrovnik and Ancona signed a new trade contract.⁵² (It was forbidden though to transport

⁴⁸ David Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean: Variorum Collected Studies* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variorum, 2001).

⁴⁹ Joško Belamarić, *Osnutak grada Korčule [The foundation of the city of Korčula]* (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2005); *Gli accordi con Curzola. 1352-1421*, Ermanno Orlando (ed.) (Rome: Viella, 2002); Gherardo Ortalli, "Il ruolo degli statuti tra autonomie e dipendenze: Curzola e il dominio veneziano," *Rivista storica italiana* 98/1 (1986): 201-204 and 208.

⁵⁰ Michele Steno, *Venice in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: A Sketch of Venetian History from the Conquest of Constantinople to the Accession, 1204-1400* (Fb&c Limited, Oct 25, 2017), p. 83.

⁵¹ CD, V, 88-90. Thirty years later, they signed a contract according to which an Anconite merchant could shop in the Zadar area just like Zadar's own citizens, and the citizens of Zadar could operate in Ancona under the same conditions. However, the people of Zadar did not release the Anconian merchants when they came to their port with goods from the Levant because they themselves paid a fee for such goods; CD, VI, 621; Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409.: Prošlost Zadra [Zadar in the Middle Ages before 1409: Zadar's past]* vol. 2 (Zadar: Sveučilište u Splitu and Filozofski fakultet u Zadru, 1976), p. 424.

⁵² *Listine*, I, p. 151.

cotton in the Adriatic.)⁵³ Some Eastern Adriatic cities were transit centres in trade with the continent, and thus, for example, there were warehouses of goods in Rab in 1267 that served a Venetian merchant for trade between Hungary and Venice.⁵⁴

Genoese support to the Byzantine restoration of 1260 worsened the relations with Venice, and during the war with Genoa (1257-1270) Venice triumphed owing to its strong galley fleet and established supremacy in the Adriatic. The new doge, Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-1275), son of the famous Giacomo, focused on the Adriatic even more intensely. He abolished the office of hereditary counts in the Eastern Adriatic and restored the practice of podestà government in the Northern Adriatic – thus, the count of Osor was to stay in the office for only two years. Soon thereafter, Venetian sovereignty was acknowledged by the Istrian cities of Poreč, Umag, Novigrad, Sveti Lovreč, and briefly Pula (which would be subjected to the Venetian rule only in the 14th century), Motovun and Kopar.⁵⁵ Under Doge Jacopo Contarini (1275-1280), it was decreed in 1278 that Dalmatian governors should be appointed by the Major Council, and a year afterwards that the election of some city governors in the Venetian territories should be double.⁵⁶

The representatives of central government (counts, podestàs) and administration played a key role not only in the relationship between the authorities and the cities, but also between the cities themselves, because their service was temporary and mobile with regard to the area and the amount of power. They were transmitting influences and knowledge.⁵⁷ During the first countship of Marco Giustinian in Dubrovnik, the city statute was codified in 1272, assigning an important role to navigation. An entire book (VII) with 64 chapters is dedicated to the regulation of seafaring and shipping, as well as piracy, smuggling, and shipwrecks. The citizens of Dubrovnik were forbidden to rent foreign ships (with the exception of Venetian ones) and they were also forbidden to sell, sublet, or donate their ships to the Slavs, for fear of competition.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the Dubrovnik Statute stipulates that the citizens

⁵³ Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 63.

⁵⁴ Mlacović, *Rapsko*, p. 154

⁵⁵ Egidio Ivetić, “Le città dell’Istria (1250-1330),” in: *Le città del Mediterraneo all’apogeo dello sviluppo medievale: aspetti economici e sociali* (Pistoia: Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d’Arte, 2003), pp. 73-110.

⁵⁶ *Listine* I, pp. 118-119, doc. 167; p. 123, doc. 170.

⁵⁷ http://toposdb.sl1.novenaweb.info/web/topos_osoba/Pagetopos_Osoba.aspx?topos_osoba_id=48

⁵⁸ DS, II, 24.

of Dubrovnik who sailed to Corfu would receive money.⁵⁹ In Dubrovnik's statute of 1272, one finds three types of limited liability contracts – *entega*, *collegantia*, and *rogantia* – which enabled merchants with insufficient capital to engage in long-distance trade: these new forms of business and institutions had developed in Venice as a result of risky long-distance trade in the 13th century.⁶⁰ During the second countship of Marco Giustinian, the *Liber statutorum doane Ragusii* was codified in 1277, with regulations on customs taxes and excise duties in the commune of Dubrovnik.

One chapter of the Zadar Statute drafted at the end of the 13th century was also entirely devoted to seafaring (Chapter IV). The legislation covers the employment contracts of seafarers, the construction and sale of ships, cargoes and ballasts, insurance and liability for goods on board, shipwrecks, etc. A customs tariff was set for the import of cotton bags from Romania or Calabria and wool bags from Tunisia.⁶¹ The Zadar Statute from 1305 contains a book entitled *Liber quartus de navibus et navigiis*, which in some aspects coincides with regulations in the Venetian maritime statutes from 1255.⁶² Venetian law was an instrument of both political control and coordination,⁶³ but some aspects were useful for the local communities, like the development of institutions and maritime law or the introduction of urban infrastructures.

Members of patrician families from Venice were involved in the local economies at the time (for instance, the Querini and Contarini families in Dubrovnik). Thus, the Querini were owners of various real estates and speculated with them: in the 13th and 14th centuries, eleven members of this family

⁵⁹ DS, II, 24.

⁶⁰ The Statute of Dubrovnik likewise contains elements of the Venetian law, the European *ius commune*, and various customs from a wider Eastern Adriatic area. In 1277, the Venetian count Marco Giustinian codified the *Liber statutorum doane Ragusii*, which defined the regulations on customs taxes and excise duties in the commune of Dubrovnik. Lonza, *Statut. passim*.

⁶¹ *Statuta Iadertina*, L 4, doc. 24, pp. 414 and 416.

⁶² Ivan Beuc, "Statut zadarske komune iz 1305. godine" [Statute of the Zadar commune from 1305], *Vjesnik historijskih arhiva u Rijeci i Pazinu* 2 (1954): 491-781, here 679. The *Statuta navium* were promulgated in 1255 by Doge Raniero Zeno: cf. "Gli statuti marittimi veneziani fino al 1255," ed. Riccardo Predelli and Adolfo Sacerdoti, *Nuovo archivio veneto* 4 (1903); Frederic C. Lane, "Maritime Law and Administration, 1250-1350," *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani* 3 (1962): 21-50.

⁶³ Ermanno Orlando, "Beyond the Statutes: The Legal and Administrative Structure between Split and Venice," in: *Splitski statut iz 1312. godine: povijest i parvo: Povodom 700. obljetnice*, Željko Radić, Marko Trogrlić, Massimo Meccarelli, and Ludwig Steindorff (eds.) (Split: Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu, 2015), pp. 131-147, here 132.

are mentioned in Dubrovnik, as well as thirteen from the Contarini family.⁶⁴ Venetian counts from these families used their position to pursue the private commercial interests of their families. Such a network of contacts could help them in overseas trade. From 1283 to 1289, *carauanas* are mentioned that travelled from Venice to Dubrovnik and from there towards the Levant.⁶⁵ In 1281, when Venice prohibited its subjects to export wood and iron to the overseas regions, Acre and Tyre were exempted from this ban, and so were Dubrovnik and Zadar. The notarial documents indicate that some merchants came from Acre to Dubrovnik in order to buy slaves, as Dubrovnik was a crucial point for slave trade on the Levantine route.⁶⁶ From the end of the 13th century, Dubrovnik's merchants can be found in Cyprus as well, as transporters of goods but also as traders: Famagusta grew commercially after the loss of Acre and Tyre in 1291, and became a major slave market.⁶⁷

In the last decades of the 13th century, local harbours were becoming increasingly important for military and economic reasons, for sheltering and supplying ships: according to the documents, in 1272 Venice leased a galley to Cres and sold one to Dubrovnik and Korčula, respectively.⁶⁸ One galley was sold to the communes of Rab and Krk each in 1273, *per patronos arsane*. We find the same declaration in 1273 for Krk, which created the need of building and restructuring the arsenals.⁶⁹ Those ships had multiple functions: from merchant ships they could become military as needed and vice versa. To strengthen its position in the Adriatic, Venice implemented the *custodia Culphi* from 1280, meaning that the gulf squadron controlled navigation in the Gulf.⁷⁰ In 1280, the office of the Contraband was founded as responsible for coordinating different administrative offices, but also for suppressing the

⁶⁴ Bariša Krekić, "Venetians in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and Ragusans in Venice as Real Estate Owners in the Fourteenth Century," in: *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society, 1300-1600* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1997), pp. 27-35.

⁶⁵ *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia*, vol. III, ed. Roberto Cessi (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1950), pp. 42, 115, 180, 212, 213, and 232.

⁶⁶ *Deliberazioni* III, 212-213; Bariša Krekić, "Le rôle de Dubrovnik (Raguse) dans la navigation des 'mudae' vénitienues au XIV^e siècle," in: *Dubrovnik: Mediterranean Urban*, p. 248. According to a document from 1274 (when the count of Dubrovnik was Nicolo Querino), a bailo from Acre continued his journey from Dubrovnik.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Coureas, "Cyprus and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) 1280-1450," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 17 (2002), no. 2: 1-13.

⁶⁸ *Listine*, I, p. 105, CXXXVIII; p. 106, d. CXLI, d. CXLIV.

⁶⁹ DCM II, p. 62, doc. 71.

⁷⁰ Doris Stöckl, "Quod vita et salus nostra est quod galee nostre navigent': Les gens de mer à Venise du XIII^e au XV^e siècle," in: *The Sea in History – The Medieval World*, Michel Balard (ed.) (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), pp. 158-169.

smuggling.⁷¹ The office dealt with maritime trade in the upper Adriatic⁷² and the rectors received its orders regarding the trade regulation (from the turn of the 14th century, the office of Contraband-Cattaver controlled illegal trade and smuggling).⁷³ Venice tried to hinder the Istrian cities in establishing their own duties and tariffs on exports and imports.⁷⁴ Venice tried to shape the commercial network with the Istrian communes, and in 1293 Istrian merchants were allowed to transport freely grain, wine, and livestock.⁷⁵ However, it systematically suppressed the salt production in Piran and Pula.⁷⁶ In 1281, the import of salt became compulsory: the Major Council ordered merchants to return to Venice with a load of salt (*ordo salis*).⁷⁷

During Gradenigo's dogeship, Venice was again at war with its rival Genoa (1293- 1299) and the subjected cities were giving military support. Thus, in 1297 the count of Rab was ordered to prepare armed ships against Genoa. Besides military support from the cities under her rule, Venice also expected their services to work within a network. This was especially important after the failed Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy, as Baiamonte Tiepolo fled to the Eastern Adriatic and to Paul I of Bribir, a Croatian magnate from the hinterland, with whom he was related⁷⁸ (members of Paul's family were counts in Šibenik, Trogir, and Split at the time). The beginning of the 14th century was very dynamic and variable in the political sense – at first marked by the dominance of Croatian magnates, the Counts of Bribir, and ultimately by the instability and dynastic struggles within the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom. Venice was defeated by the Genoese near Korčula in a new war, but the treaty of Milan from 1299 banned Genoa from the Adriatic (and Venice was forbidden to enter the territories under Genoese control).

⁷¹ Miller, *Venice*, 175; *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia*, vol. II, Roberto Cessi (ed.) (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1931), p. 220.

⁷² Archivio di Stato Venezia (ASV), *Ufficiali al Cattaver*, reg. 1. (Cattaveri were the auditors of public accounts, and they controlled the receipts and expenditure of Venice.)

⁷³ ASV, *Ufficiali al Cattaver*, reg. 1, f. 8v.

⁷⁴ *Deliberazioni*, II, 328. In 1281, the Venetian Maggior Consiglio ordered the Istrian cities to provide official inventories for the ships, in order to control maritime traffic in the upper Adriatic: Cf. Miller, *Venice*, pp. 181-182; *Deliberazioni*, II, pp. 219-220 and 330.

⁷⁵ ASV, Collegio Commissioni Formulari, reg. 1, f. 79v; *Deliberazioni*, II, p. 332.

⁷⁶ Hocquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise*, I, pp. 181-184.

⁷⁷ Salt transport and export trade became closely linked; Hocquet, *Au coeur de la puissance maritime*, p. 152.

⁷⁸ *Listine*, I, p. 241.

Cities as part of a long-distance trade system

Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1328), once the podestà of the Istrian city of Koper, managed to remedy the consequences of revolt in Venice. In this period – in 1315 – Venice introduced a system of leasing galleys for individual sea-trade voyages, called *Incanto*. Before the introduction of the system, there were state (municipal) *galee da mercato* and private ones, which were relatively poorly controlled. A stable commercial convoy system, often carrying valuable cargo, was established with military protection. Those *mudae* are mentioned in Dubrovnik as early as 1313, on their journey from Venice to Cyprus and Romania.⁷⁹ Once the ship left Venice, it spent prolonged time sailing or in the ports under the Venetian rule. In order for the convoys to be regular and reliable on the market, safe, well equipped, and properly supplied ports along the Eastern Adriatic coast were very important.⁸⁰ Although new navigation techniques and methods of shipbuilding enabled the ships to use new routes even during the winter months,⁸¹ they continued to sail along the coast, from port to port, delivering goods, people, and information. Gradually, a private-public partnership developed (thus sharing the risk with private individuals who in turn benefited from the Venetian ships and secured the sea routes). Specific legal models also needed to be introduced in the local communities of the Eastern Adriatic.⁸²

But the system of leasing lucrative galleys was associated with the Venetian notion of citizenship, divided into full citizens, subjects, and protected persons.⁸³ The *serrata* and political closure spilled into economic closure and the most lucrative international trade was now reserved for the wealthiest

⁷⁹ Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Age* (Paris: Mouton, 1962), p. 180; State Archives in Dubrovnik (DAD), Reformationes, V, f. 7v; Krekić, *Dubrovnik dans la navigation*, p. 249.

⁸⁰ Gino Luzzatto, “Navigazione di linea e navigazione libera nelle grandi città marinare del Medio Evo,” in: *Studi di storia economica veneziana* (Padua: CEDAM, 1954), p. 55; Frederic C. Lane, *Navires et constructeurs à Venise pendant la Renaissance* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1965), p. 228.

⁸¹ Frederic C. Lane, “The Economic Meaning of the Invention of the Compass,” *The American Historical Review* 68 (1963), no. 3: 605-617.

⁸² During the Venetian domination in the 14th century, most city statutes were revised (and the older versions are mostly lost).

⁸³ Gerhard Rosch, “The Serrata of the Great Council and Venetian Society, 1286-1323,” in: *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, John Martin and Dennis Romano (eds.) (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 67-89; Reinhold Mueller, “Veneti facti privilegio: stranieri naturalizzati a Venezia, 1300-1500,” in: *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri: XIV-XVIII secolo*, Paola Lanaro and Donatella Calabi (eds.) (Bari: Laterza & figli, 1998), pp. 41-51.

Venetian patricians. According to the regulation of 1305, only Venetian citizens *de extra* had the right to participate in long-distance trade. Others could be involved in peripheral, minor trade activities. In 1307, it was decided that the people of Zadar or Dubrovnik could not become Venetian citizens or buy a ship (*navim vel lignum*) from Venice unless they followed the Venetian rules.⁸⁴ Afterwards, the *per gratiam* was granted rarely to Eastern Adriatic merchants: in 1354, for example, to Marin de Canaruto from Zadar on the recommendation of Zadar's count.⁸⁵ (The Canaruto family was pro-Venetian and after 1358 Marin lived in Venice.) Dubrovnik nobility also exceptionally received the privilege of Venetian citizenship. It was only in 1358, several months before Dubrovnik came under the Hungarian crown, that all of its citizens received Venetian citizenship and thus obtained the right of navigation on Venetian ships, as had been requested before.⁸⁶ Venice, at war with the Hungarian king at the time, undoubtedly tried to buy Dubrovnik's loyalty by granting this privilege, but the Ragusans nevertheless chose the king's protection and soon became an autonomous Republic.

The safety of Venetian convoys was of crucial importance. The Venetian military fleet in the Adriatic was recruited *ad hoc* before 1301, although merchant ships were accompanied by warships.⁸⁷ From the 14th century on, a permanent fleet was established: the captain of the Gulf was officially entrusting with the surveillance of the Sea and his duty was to escort merchant galleys if necessary, and to control the waters of the Gulf and beyond. He was to command over maritime control in the Adriatic and organize operations when needed. In Dubrovnik, there were galleys for *custodiam Culfi* and the *Capitaneus Culfi* would lead them from there *pro maiori mari*. In the beginning of the 14th century, the Venetian policy against smuggling in the Adriatic was even stricter, and so was its control over lucrative goods, especially in Istria. For instance, the statute of Piran assigns the Venetians a privileged place in the city's economy.⁸⁸

In this period, Venice extended its rule in the Adriatic: in 1322, the "protection" of Venice was accepted by the Dalmatian cities of Šibenik/Sebenico and Trogir/Traù, in 1327 by Split/Spalato. Already in 1328 Trogir, Šibenik,

⁸⁴ *Listine*, I, p. 213, CCCXXXII.

⁸⁵ <http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?id=2401>

⁸⁶ DS, VIII, XCVIII; Krekić, *Dubrovnik dans la navigation*, p. 250.

⁸⁷ Ruthy Gertwagen, "The Naval Power of Venice in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Middle Ages," in: *The Sea in History*, p. 173; Frederic Lane, *Venetian Seamen in the Nautical Revolution of the Middle Ages* (Florence: Leo S. Olschi, 1973).

⁸⁸ De Franceschi, *Statute*, pp. 113, 103-105, 82-83, and 122-123; Darja Mihelič, *Najstarejša piranska notarska knjiga (1281-1287/89)* (Ljubljana: SAZU, 1284.).

Split, and Dubrovnik had to equip two *galee subtiles* and three *ligna subtilia* for Venice, and in 1335 Dubrovnik and Šibenik had to equip one galley and Trogir, Split, and Hvar one each.⁸⁹ (An arsenal was built in Hvar/Lesina in 1347). Although pacts with the cities were a result of Venetian sovereignty as well as of negotiation, dialogue, and consensus, in the 14th century communal services in Eastern Adriatic cities were under far greater state control than before, and more integrated into the institutional structure of Venetian administrative bureaucracy. During the dogeship of Francesco Dandolo (1328-1339), who also had experience in the Eastern Adriatic as he had served as the *podestà* in Istrian cities, Venice managed to conquer Pula.

In 1329, Venice ordered the construction of the most important Venetian arsenal in the Eastern Adriatic (*arsenatum, in quo galee et ligna illuc missa conserventur*) in Dubrovnik.⁹⁰ While the 13th-century harbour offered protection to Venetian galleys, in the 14th century the new arsenal served for shipbuilding.⁹¹ In the 14th century, there were three main Venetian collection ports for the Levant: Dubrovnik, for actions in Otranto, Corfu for those in the Ionian Sea, and Candia for those in the Aegean and the Levant. In Dubrovnik's arsenal, the *capitaneo unionis* would come to collect ships (galleys) and receive instructions for further operations.⁹² On their way to the Mediterranean ports and the Levant, merchants regrouped in Dubrovnik "as it was the custom."⁹³ In 1346, the city of Dubrovnik closed the entrance to the harbour with a strong iron chain that served as a defensive measure but also for the control of maritime traffic.⁹⁴ In this period, the main street in Dubrovnik, Placa, gradually changed into an exclusive business area at the eastern end, where the customs house was located. Dubrovnik's local merchants were themselves engaged in trade with the Levant, for instance with spices, but their activities

⁸⁹ Lučić, *Dubrovačke teme*, pp. 164-165.

⁹⁰ *Listine*, I, p. 163.

⁹¹ Maria Georgopoulou, *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 66; Stjepan Vekarić's research for the first half of the 14th century indicates that from 1300 to 1359, according to the incomplete data due to the lack of preserved sources, seventy merchant ships were built, the total value of which was about six thousand perpers: cf. Stjepan Vekarić, "O gradnji dubrovačkih brodova u XIV stoljeću" [On shipbuilding in 14th-century Dubrovnik], *Pomorski zbornik Društva za proučavanje i unapređenje pomorstva Jugoslavije* 1 (1963): 467.

⁹² *Listine*, II, p. 4.

⁹³ *Listine*, II, pp. 13, 143, and 214-215; Senato Misti, 1344, 18.

⁹⁴ Kedar, *Prolegomena to a World History of Harbour*, pp. 11 and 21; V. Zorić, "La catena portuale: Sulle difese passive dei porti prima e dopo l'adozione generalizzata delle bocche a fuoco: Il caso di Palermo, con alcune noterelle di sua topografia storica", *Schede medievali: Rassegna dell'officina di studi medievali* 30-31 (1996): 75-108.

in long-distance trade were controlled and approved by Venice.⁹⁵ Dubrovnik was still a very important transit port towards the hinterland, for example for raw materials (minerals such as silver and copper), which Dubrovnik merchants brought from mines in Bosnia and Serbia. Merchandise that came from Dubrovnik to Venice was sometimes loaded on Venetian ships in Istria. Some merchants received permits to enter Venice: for example, in 1324 ships from Zadar loaded with goods were allowed to enter Venice from Istria. Three galleys *ad custodiam Culfī* were based in the Istrian city of Pula, conquered in 1331 – it was an important port on the way to the Levant as the city was located within a protected bay.

Eastern Adriatic ports were important for the couriers who travelled across the Adriatic and were involved in all kinds of activities, carrying crucial information. Almost 30 courier trips are documented between Dubrovnik and Byzantine cities in the period between 1323 and 1348: for Venice, Dubrovnik was the main communication centre towards Constantinople and South Italy.⁹⁶ In Eastern Adriatic cities, Venice recruited oarsmen, some voluntarily and others by conscription. In 1343, the count of Rab was ordered to recruit 50 men for the galleys that were to fight the pirates.⁹⁷ In this period, the patrons of galleys that travelled to Constantinople for trade were allowed to pick up 50 men for each galley in the Adriatic (*a nostris terris consuetis usque Raguxium*).⁹⁸

The (foreign) merchant and military vessels were sometimes hard to distinguish, as the merchant ones were also armed for protection, but the crew from a friendly territory was a good sign. In the war with Genoa in 1350, the Senate decided that the Dalmatian cities, including Šibenik and Dubrovnik, should prepare men for the galleys (the same was decreed in 1351).⁹⁹ State

⁹⁵ Bariša Krekić, “La navigation ragusaine entre Venise et la Méditerranée orientale aux XIVe et XVe siècles,” *Actes du II Colloque international d’histoire. Economies méditerranéennes: équilibres et intercommunications, XIII–XIX siècles* 1 (1985): 129–141; Bariša Krekić, “Ragusa (Dubrovnik) e il mare: aspetti e problemi (XIV–XVI secolo),” in: *Ragusa e il Mediterraneo*, A. Di Vittorio (ed.) (Bari: Caccuci editore, 1990), pp. 131–151.

⁹⁶ In Dubrovnik, besides the Venetian count, Venetian, Florentine and local Ragusan merchants engaged couriers for transferring information to Constantinople or Thessaloniki; cf. Bariša Krekić, “Kurirski saobraćaj Dubrovnika sa Carigradom i Solunom u prvoj polovini XIV veka” [Courier traffic between Dubrovnik and Constantinople or Thessaloniki in the first half of the 14th century], *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 1 (1952): 113–120; Jorjo Tadić, *Litterae et commissiones ragusinae* (Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1935), p. 4.

⁹⁷ *Listine*, II, CCCX.

⁹⁸ *Listine*, II, 34; Stockly, *Les gens de mer à Venise du XIIIe au XVe siècle*, p. 162.

⁹⁹ Danilo Klen, “Galiotti i ratni brodovi na vesla u našoj prošlosti” [Galeotti and warships propelled by rowing in our past], *Pomorski zbornik* 1 (1962): 121–123.

galleys served various other functions as well – such as transporting the Venetian officials, counts/rectors and their families, especially when their service began or ended. For example, in 1335 Blasio Geno, the new count of Šibenik, came to the city on a Venetian ship (*lignum*), and the former count Marco Cornaro returned to Venice on the same ship.¹⁰⁰ In 1336, *lignum riparie Ystrie* was sent to pick up the former Split's count; the same ship was to return from Venice to Split with the new count *cum arnesiis et familia sua*.¹⁰¹ The city's ports and arsenals were used to house galleys, which had a dual role – military, in times of war, but also economic in peacetime, which rendered were more profitable.

With the conquest of Nin in Dalmatia (1339), Venice came to rule the entire Eastern Adriatic from Istria to Dubrovnik. The importance of the Adriatic is reflected in the fact that of the 50 rectors whom Venice had outside its core territory, half of them were installed in the cities of Istria and Dalmatia.¹⁰² Although the Venetian rule over the Eastern Adriatic is sometimes considered as unique and effective, the sources show a far more complex picture. The Eastern Adriatic area was a heterogeneous geographical entity – there existed a number of urban communities that had specific relations with the local, central, or regional authorities. Venice tended to resolve the potential conflicts between various Dalmatian cities, as they had a long history of border quarrels. For instance, in 1327, a treaty of friendship was signed between Trogir, Split, and Šibenik under the auspices of Venice.¹⁰³ By stabilizing and unifying the Dalmatian communes, Venice could better control the entire area and contributed to the formation of a homogeneous zone.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, this was not enough to establish its sovereignty over the Eastern Adriatic through the cities, such as was achieved in the 15th century.

¹⁰⁰ *Listine*, I, p. 459, DCLXXXIX.

¹⁰¹ *Listine*, II, p. 3.

¹⁰² See the TOPOS database of the research project “Topography of Power: Eastern Adriatic Cities in the Medieval Spheres of Power”: <http://topos.s11.novenaweb.info/en/database/>.

¹⁰³ CD, IX, br. 306. 372. Under the auspices of Venice, the issue of borders between Trogir and Šibenik was resolved in 1329. CD, IX, 481-2. Before the alliance between Trogir, Split and Šibenik, that between Trogir and Šibenik resulted in the improvement of relations between Šibenik and Zadar, where Trogir's count Marino Morosini was a negotiator between two long-time rivals. CD, IX, 193-194.

¹⁰⁴ However, there were still occasional disagreements, such as in 1340, when the count of Trogir accused Split and Šibenik of not adhering to the agreement signed in 1327. CD, X, 559-561.

The Venetian crisis and revival in the Eastern Adriatic

In the period before and during the rule of the famous doge Andrea Dandolo (1342-1354), Venice was struck by internal instabilities and the Black Death. The new Hungarian dynasty of Anjou had the ambition to create a powerful continental maritime state, and controlling the entire Eastern Adriatic was crucial for that. In this “campaign”, King Louis I was the most successful. His alliance with the Patriarch of Aquileia and the Counts of Gorizia posed a new threat to the Venetian governance in the Eastern Adriatic. In the 1340s, conflicts with Hungary began, which intensified and started to exert pressure on the Eastern Adriatic from 1344. The mid-14th century was also marked with new wars with Genoa in 1350-1355. In 1354, the Genoese burned the city of Pula, while Poreč was looted and partially burned down. In 1345, Zadar rebelled again, and in 1347 the reconstruction of the city’s fortress began – defence towards the sea was strengthened, and part of the ramparts and the surrounding houses were demolished in order to separate the castle area from the rest of the city.¹⁰⁵ In 1347, Venice introduced a new system of taxes (*reformationes dationum*) in Zadar, all of which went to the Venetian Chamber, and at the same time imposed a new system of salt sales in Zadar. Half of the profits from the sale of salt went to Venice, and only half to the commune of Zadar (the contract stipulated that there would be a *portus salis* in Zadar).¹⁰⁶ Zadar’s exports were to be directed to Venice (e.g. cattle) because only in that case no customs duties were paid (this was also determined in 1314). Venice tried to secure the lines of transport from Dalmatian cities to Venice, and in 1350 the Major Council promulgated a statute with the conditions of legal salt export.¹⁰⁷ The counts of Dalmatian cities were to write letters of recommendation for the merchants, similar to the Istrian ones.¹⁰⁸

Finally, in these altered political circumstances, Venice was to cede all its territories from the Quarner Gulf to Dyrrachium, and the cities came under the Hungarian rule. When they were subjected to the sovereignty of the Hungarian Crown in 1358, this resulted in institutional changes and changes in economic policy.¹⁰⁹ After 1358, Venice still controlled the Upper Adriatic: the Istrian

¹⁰⁵ Emil Hilje, “Mletački kaštel u Zadru” [The Venetian fortress “Kaštel” in Zadar], *Ars Adriatica* 1 (2011): 109-116; Ivo Petricioli, “Lik Zadra u srednjem vijeku” [The appearance of Zadar in the Middle Ages], *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 11-12 (1965): 143-186, here p. 173; *Listine* II, doc. DCLXXXVI, p. 432, doc. DCCXXIII, p. 459; *Listine* III, doc. CLXXVI, p. 113. *Obsidio*, lib. II, cap. 12, p. 258. *Obsidio*, lib. I, cap. 24, p. 198.

¹⁰⁶ CD, X, 559-561.

¹⁰⁷ Jean-Claude Hoquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise*, I, pp. 177-190.

¹⁰⁸ Miller, *Venice*, 190.

¹⁰⁹ Benyovsky Latin, Governmental Palaces, *passim*.

cities, Ferrara, Ravenna, and Ancona (although in 1380 Trieste renounced its allegiance to Venice). Thus, Venice invested in salt production in Piran, *ad consuetudines Pagi*.¹¹⁰ But the cities in Dalmatia and Quarner were irreplaceable for distant trade. In the new war with Genoa (1379-80) some Dalmatian ports were used as front bases against Venice, which highlighted even better the crucial strategic importance of this zone. Circumstances started to change in favour of Venice in the early 1380s. In 1381, a peace treaty with Genoa was signed in Turin, and in Hungary the situation became unstable after the death of the king Louis Anjou. This was followed by the conquest of the *Terraferma* and finally, in the first decades of the 15th century, Venice substantially expanded its territory along the Eastern Adriatic coast, and many of the cities remained under its rule until its fall (except for the Republic of Dubrovnik). Early in the 15th century, the territorial-political relations changed considerably as to the role of Venice, and the new circumstances were caused both by the Ottoman incursions and by their important consequences for the Hungarian Kingdom.

Conclusion

As part of the *Stato da mar*, most of the Eastern Adriatic cities shared the fate of Venetian political, social, and military plans. During the 13th and 14th centuries, through several stages with their ups and downs, Venice worked on gaining control over the Eastern Adriatic and “prepared the ground” for its later long dominance in that area. In this period, the cities were primarily strategic and exchange points – and were increasingly perceived as the natural hub of connections between the Mediterranean and Central Europe or the West and the Levant. The infrastructures that supported the Venetian long-distance trade in the 13th and 14th centuries were related to security, equipment, and the possibility of transit, as well as supplying enough manpower on the way. In that long period, the maritime policy changed, the balance of power with Genoa and the Hungarian king was challenging, and the activity of economic competition (Ancona, Zadar, Dubrovnik) had to be limited. Venice established its political power by means of military ventures and/or diplomacy and agreements. But the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of power were carried out in different ways and through different channels – through institutions, offices, personal relations, legal and administrative models and so on. The Serenissima relied on the communal elite in the Eastern Adriatic and was therefore deeply involved in the local social and economic relations, creating personal and institutional ties and new loyalties.

¹¹⁰ Venice had a monopoly over the production and sale of salt and signed five-year or ten-year contracts with the local cities (Mercati di Sali, Capitoli), e.g. in 1375 with Piran; Flavio Bonin “Piranske solne pogodbe (1375- 1782)”, *passim*.

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