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***QUESTA REPPUBLICA NON SI LASSA AVVANZARE  
D'ALCUNO NELL'OSSERVANZA ET DIVOTIONE:  
CONGRATULATIONS AND CONDOLENCES  
IN THE RAGUSAN DIPLOMACY  
TOWARDS PAPAL ROME***

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*Abstract:* This article discusses a specific level of relations between the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and papal Rome. Apart from the official letters exchanged by the Ragusan government with eminent curial officials and the pope regarding many political and economic issues during the seventeenth century, there was also correspondence of less formal nature concerning private occasions of curial dignitaries, most often the pope and his family members. Such events were good opportunities to deepen their relationship or, at least, to show that they might have been even closer and more personal given that Baroque rhetoric supported such a discourse. This occasional correspondence between Ragusa and Rome overlapped with the ceremonial practices of papal Rome. The diplomatic exchange here analysed encompasses the end of Barberini's pontificate (after the death of Urban VIII) and those of Innocent X Odescalchi and Alexander VII Chigi. Repetitiveness in referring to original formulations seeks to convey the true style and purpose of the epistolary skills that the Ragusan diplomatic service used very thoughtfully in its relations with papal Rome.

*Keywords:* diplomatic correspondence, early modern diplomacy, Republic of Ragusa, papal Rome, Barberini family

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## Introduction

In the context of the seventeenth century history of Dubrovnik, the Ragusan Senate addressed much of its ponentine (western) correspondence to papal Rome. The reasons were manifold: whether it was regulating relations with the church, the economic relationship between Ragusa and the papal ports, or finding adequate political protection for the Republic of Ragusa due to the geopolitical constellation of the Adriatic-Balkan region during the *seicento*.<sup>1</sup> Significant dynamics and the quality of their relations may be accounted by the mutual economic interests of the two Adriatic ports, papal Ancona and Ragusa, but also numerous opportunities arising from the vassal status of the Republic of Ragusa, “the most loyal tributary of the Sublime Porte” and at the same time “the most faithful daughter of the Roman Church”, that greatly contributed to the successful realisation of the various policies of the Roman Curia concerning the early modern Balkans.<sup>2</sup> This fact led to a favourable outcome of most of the Ragusan diplomatic initiatives towards the Holy See, primarily those aimed at realising the political patronage and material support that Rome provided to the Republic of Ragusa during many

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<sup>1</sup> For the multiple connections between Ragusa and Rome in this period, see more in: Nikša Varezić, *Dosta je reči u Rimu da bi se reklo čitavom svijetu. Dubrovačka Republika i Sveta Stolica tijekom 16. i 17. stoljeća*. Zagreb – Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti - Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovnik, 2018; Nikša Varezić, »Solidarnost u doba krize: rimski kardinal „zaštitnik” i Dubrovačka Republika tijekom velikih izazova 17. stoljeća«, in: *Sačuvaj nas Bože rata, kuge, gladi i velike trešnje. Dubrovnik kroz krize, sukobe i solidarnost*, ed. Gordan Ravančić. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2018: pp. 35-76;

<sup>2</sup> For more on mission policy in: Antal Molnár, *Le Saint-Stège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie Ottomane 1572-1647*. [Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae. Studia, vol. I]. Rome-Budapest: Accademia d’Ungheria in Roma, 2007; Antal Molnár, *Confessionalization on the Frontier. The Balkan Catholics between Roman Reform and Ottoman Reality* [Interadria. Culture dell’Adriatico, vol. 22]. Rome: Viella, 2019; Antal Molnár, »Ragusa and the Beginnings of the Balkan missions«. *Dubrovnik Annals* 25 (2021): pp. 89-112; N. Varezić, *Dosta je reči u Rimu*: pp. 25-41. On the trade relations between Ragusa and Ancona, see: Sergio Anselmi, »Le relazioni economiche tra Ragusa e lo Stato Pontificio: una schema di lungo periodo«, in: *Ragusa (Dubrovnik): Una repubblica adriatica. Saggi di storia economica e finanziaria*, ed. A. Di Vittorio, S. Anselmi and P. Pierucci. Bologna: Monduzzi Editore 1994: pp. 261-276; Sergio Anselmi, »I ragusei nelle fonti notarili di Ancona: 1634-1685. Materiali e appunti per una ricerca«, in: *Ragusa (Dubrovnik): Una repubblica adriatica. Saggi di storia economica e finanziaria*: 277-312; Marco Moroni. *L’impero di San Biagio. Ragusa e i commerci balcanici dopo la conquista turca (1521-1620)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011: pp. 147-153.

uncertain periods of that indeed turbulent seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> However, it would be wrong to think that everything went smoothly in the relationship between Ragusa and Rome.<sup>4</sup> During the seventeenth century, the inertness of the bureaucratized curial apparatus burdened their relations. The jurisdiction of post-Tridentine Rome had already taken on a framework including several continents. The Curia developed into a complex and powerful bureaucratized apparatus. The secular authorities of the Papal State often overlapped with those of the Curia within the same institutions responsible for the governing of the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> Thus, to obtain the required papal “grace” in Rome, it was not enough to have diplomatic skills but also perseverance and patience.<sup>6</sup> The Ragusan authorities were often dissatisfied with the dynamics of the Roman Curia (*lunghezze ordinarie della Corte Romana*) in resolving issues of essential importance to them, since “the expectation of any help makes us exhausted”, as much as the real threat that prompted them to seek help by addressing Rome in the first place.<sup>7</sup> To stir a massive bureaucratic curial apparatus to action was not an easy task. Therefore, the Ragusan government used all available mechanisms, such as its envoys in Rome, their network of contacts and well-thought-out diplomatic rhetoric. Using official channels, public and private ceremonial occasions, the Republic adhered to the postulate of Ragusan diplomacy based on the continuous practice of sending

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on this in: Nikša Varezić, »La Santa Sede e la Repubblica di Ragusa nella prima età moderna: Continuità e mutamenti di una complessa storia diplomatica«. *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 60 (2018): pp. 117-147.

<sup>4</sup> Although the Ragusan-Roman relations as a whole show exceptional intensity and quality, the simplified conclusions lose sight of all the complexities of their relations. Certain reactions of the Italian trade milieu, including that of Ancona, to the competitiveness of Ragusan merchants, as well as the complex relations between the church and secular authorities, were often a source of disagreement. For more on this in: Nikša Varezić, »In riguardo di buon governo et della preservatione di questo stato: Dubrovačka Republika i kužne epidemije - slučaj sa sredine 17. stoljeća«. *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 53/1 (2021): pp. 95-100; N. Varezić, »Solidarnost u doba krize«: pp. 59-71.

<sup>5</sup> Antony David Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy. From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution 1564-1789*. London: Longman 2000: pp. 111-113.

<sup>6</sup> Irene Fosi, »Sovranità, patronage e giustizia: suppliche e lettere alla Corte romana nel primo Seicento«, in: *La Corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento. “Teatro” della politica europea*, ed. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Visceglia. Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1998: pp. 208-209.

<sup>7</sup> *Le lunghezze ordinarie della Corte Romana ci fanno languorie tra le speranze di qualche soccorso...* the Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, July 25, 1668. *Litterae et commissiones Ponentis*, series 27.6 (henceforth: *LP*), vol. 27, f. 166v, State Archives in Dubrovnik.

letters to Rome—*sempre tenere viva la pratica intorno a Sua Santità*.<sup>8</sup> The Ragusan authorities corresponded with Rome not only in those extraordinary situations and crises that required an urgent and concrete reaction from the pope, but on every occasion that could serve as an opportunity to gain a new confidant or deepen the existing relations. Of course, this required an appropriate diplomatic intelligence service.<sup>9</sup> The Ragusan Senate insisted on regular reports of its envoys (*ogni settimana almeno una volta ci dobbiate scrivere e ragguagliarci*)<sup>10</sup> concerning everything that could be useful in relation to the most delicate current events as well as only seemingly trivial information. The Ragusan Senate awaited the letters of its Roman envoys with great interest, not only because of the information that had repercussions on the current political and economic situation in Ragusa, but also concerning a much broader geopolitical context (*novità del mondo*) and the information related to the public or private life of the Roman secular and curial elites.<sup>11</sup> The Senate expressed its dissatisfaction with the lack of standard dynamics of receiving diplomatic letters from Rome, since “we want to be involved

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<sup>8</sup> This formulation can often be read in the letters of the Ragusan government to its envoys in Rome, for example: *...per tenere sempre viva la pratica intorno a Sua Santità et per avere dall'istessa qui soccorsi et aiuti che saranno mai possibili nelli correnti pericoli et contingenze, essendosi la medesima così abbondante dimostrata con li sig.ri venetiani, che sono senza comparatione più divitiosi et abbondanti di noi in ogni cosa, ... havemmo rissoluto di scrivere a Sua B.ne...* The Senate's letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, March 24, 1657. *LP*, vol. 22, f. 34v.

<sup>9</sup> On Ragusan intelligence policy and intelligence channels as a well-organised and functional system, which was necessary for the Republic to survive in such a sensitive geopolitical space, more in: N. Varezić, *Dosta je reči u Rimu*: pp. 106-110, 140-153; Johann Petitjean, «On His Holiness' Secret Service: How Ragusa Became an Intelligence Agency after Lepanto.», in: *Europe and the »Ottoman World«*. *Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kárman and Radu G. Păun. Istanbul: Isis press, 2013: pp. 83-106.

<sup>10</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy Nikola Pavlov Gondola in Rome, March 10, 1663. *LP*, vol. 24, f. 55r.

<sup>11</sup> Rome was the meeting point of a broad network of communication routes, a residence of accredited diplomatic envoys of other European courts and a place where the information arrived, where it was gathered and passed on (Mario Infelise, «Gli avvisi di Roma. Informazione e politica nel secolo XVII.», in: *La Corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento, "Teatro" della politica europea*, ed. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia. Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1998: pp. 189-198). At the same time, the court culture of papal Rome, Baroque lifestyle and the behaviour patterns practiced by the Roman nobility and cardinals were emulated even in the European socio-cultural context (Claudio Strinati, «Presentazione», in: *I Barberini e la cultura europea del seicento. Atti del Convegno internazionale (7-11 dicembre 2004)*, ed. Lorenza Mochi Onori, Sebastian Schütze and Francesco Solinas. Roma: De Luca Editori D'Arte, 2007: pp. XIII-XIV).

in world affairs, which we can reach [precisely] through each of your letters".<sup>12</sup> Diplomatic occasions, whether public or private, were favourable for the sender as they did not require any additional engagement of the addressee, except for a confirmation that the latter was informed or given a courteous gesture to the heart. Such occasions were an opportunity to form a circle of close contacts and friends. Ragusan envoys tried to establish a circle of the most influential curial dignitaries, primarily cardinals, congregational heads, and to gain favour with the members of the papal family, trying to follow their major life events. They were carefully selected individuals close to the pontiff or in direct contact with him who could *con la favorevole Sua raccomandazione*<sup>13</sup> speed up, intervene, or contribute in any manner whatsoever to the final realisation of a Ragusan affair, avoiding the standard inertness of the curial administration and procedure at the court. Also worth noting is that these were the persons who could channel the problem to the discretion of the pope himself, escaping at all costs the procedure of the competent congregation, which could significantly slow down the entire process (*perche altrimenti andaria in lungo*).<sup>14</sup> The Ragusan government often expressed its dissatisfaction by "being surprised that you were in an audience with His Beatitude only once in four months" and sometimes even the intervention of influential cardinals was not enough to speed things up.<sup>15</sup> It is hard to say

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<sup>12</sup> ...[perchè] *desideriamo d'essere partecipi della novità del mondo, che ogni vostra relatione ne riuscirà*. The Senate's letter to its Roman envoy Antonio Diodati, January 5, 1656. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 216v. On another occasion, the Senate sent a letter to Antonio Diodati in Rome, visibly surprised that it had not received anything from Rome for some time, even though the ships from Ancona arrived regularly, only without his letters: *Restiamo molto maravigliati in non vedere in tanto tempo le vre. let.re ne alcuna partecipat.ne di negotii accomessivi et delle novità del mondo et tanto più essendo comparsi qui piu vasselli di Ancona senza vre. let.re; si che avvisatene se dopo l'ult.me vre. delli 22. giugno decorso ne havete scritto qualche cosa et per qual strada senza astenervi di comunicarci sempre le novità che costì si sentono et d'ogni altra cosa che giudicherete essere degna della notitia nostra*. The Senate to its Roman envoy Antonio Diodati, August 22, 1652. *LP*, vol. 20, f. 232r.

<sup>13</sup> From a petition sent on May 11, 1626, to Cardinal Francesco Barberini to support the engagement of the Ambassador Extraordinary of Ragusa to Rome, Gabriel Cerva. *LP* vol. 14, f. 72v.

<sup>14</sup> *Però abbracciate con caldezza questo negotio che grandmente ci preme appuntando con detto s.r Protettore ò quel substitutto chi doverà presentare a Sua B.ne le nre. Ira. e farle questa istanza. ...nel che adoperare anco il favore di detti sig.ri cardinali a i quali raccomandiamo questo negotio, specialmente che non sia commesso alla congregazione ma che Sua B.ne lo rovochi, perche altrimenti andaria in lungo*. The Senate's letter to its envoy Giovanni Andrea di Resti in Rome, October 26, 1623. *LP*, vol. 13, f. 179r.

<sup>15</sup> For example: *Meravigliandoci assai che in quattro mesi non siate stato che una volta all'udienza di Sua B.ne essendo stato a cio anco sollecitato dal Sig.r Card.l [Barberini] Nro. Prottett.re e tanto più essendovisi Sua S.tà nella prima udienza mostrata tanto propensa, e favorevole a questa Rep.ca*. The Senate's letter to its envoy Nicolino Paolo di Gondola in Rome, March 31, 1663. *LP*, vol. 24, f. 59v.

whether the Ragusan government's anxiety and criticism unjustly referred to the negligence of its Roman envoys<sup>16</sup>, or the Senate sought to alleviate its frustration (regarding the slowness of the curial administration that was always sensitively addressed) with the Ragusan envoys as "scapegoats".<sup>17</sup> That is why Ragusan envoys were required to constantly send information from Rome (*degno della nostra saputa*)<sup>18</sup>. In coordination with the Ragusan government and the assistance of Ragusan contacts in the Curia, the Ragusan Senate put much effort to maintain the intensity of the diplomatic relations with Rome until the very completion of the diplomatic mission.<sup>19</sup> The examples provided in this article certainly contributed to the intensity, closeness and betterment of the relations between Ragusa and Rome.

### *Baroque politics, Baroque Theatrum Mundi*

Some of the main characteristics of the Baroque—circuitousness, ambiguity, intertwinement of senses and expressions—permeated not only art and literature but also practical forms of life, primarily interpersonal relationships. The historiographical concept of the so-called Baroque politics as a particular type of activity identifies specific patterns, such as intrigue, cunning and deceit.<sup>20</sup> In the turbulent times of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only the word of God, written in the sacred texts, rendered reliable truth. The concealment of the

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<sup>16</sup> For example, the Senate reproaches its envoy in Rome for not making the necessary efforts to resolve and end a dispute that the Republic had in front of the curial institution with the Ragusan archbishop. A letter to envoy Girolamo di Andrea di Resti, April 22, 1626. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 67r.

<sup>17</sup> The Senate expresses its discontent over the slowness with which the curial administration resolved the dispute it had with the Archbishop of Dubrovnik: *Ma non caviamo altro che buone parole e lungarie delle quali come vidianno con altre nostre semmo di gia strachi quasi per uno anno continuo che siete costì di che caviamo tanto maggiore disgusto quanto che non veggiamo di esservi ancora abbocato con Sua Santità*. The Senate's letter to envoy Gabriele Cerva in Rome, March 20, 1627. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 175r.

<sup>18</sup> *Spediamo la presente filuga et attendiamo di sentire da voi tutto quello che in questo proposito stimarete degno della nostra saputa*. The Senate's letter to Marino Cortois in Barletta, November 28, 1656. *LP*, vol. 22, f. 16v.

<sup>19</sup> ... for example, the Senate once expressed satisfaction with the acquired favour of Cardinal Flavio Chigi, nephew of Alexander VII, noting: *... e con l'essibitione della sua assistenza in coadiuvare ad ottenere il nostro intento, così dovemo credere che lo farà mediante la giustitia della nra. causa, e mediante le vive pratiche che tenerete sino al fine et all'effettuazione del negotio*. The Senate's letter to its envoy Nicolino Paolo di Gondola in Rome, February 1, 1663. *LP*, vol. 24, f. 43v.

<sup>20</sup> Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione. La lotta politica nel Seicento*. Bari: Editori Laterza, 2003: pp. 3-4.

truth for political purposes, for example, was not considered a lie, but was relativised by different interpretations of the reality or by interpreting that it represented the other side of the same coin. In this way, that method was legitimised as a means of struggle within the political arena, being an essential component of the art of governing, serving either as an instrument of power or a way to achieve and preserve freedom, making it one of the most refined arts of politics.<sup>21</sup> Renaissance theorists perceived such a pattern of behaviour as a *virtue* required for adequate governance. In order to achieve their goals, high-ranking politicians, as if in a well-orchestrated play, acted according to certain rules of behaviour and communication on this Baroque stage of life.<sup>22</sup> This might explain why Giovanni Bonifacio emphasised gesticulation and body language in his work *L'arte dei cenni* (1616), though not in the way that most of his contemporaries and predecessors did—as a significant complement and aid to efficient oratory and communication—but as a natural, universal, and most reliable way of communication. Since deceptive speech can deceive, just as “paper bears anything”, gestures as natural body language and a reflection of the inner state, the author believed, could hardly deceive the interlocutor.<sup>23</sup> However, apart from its pragmatic purpose, the style of the official letters was characterised by circumlocution, flattery, and false servility. But it was also an expression of a genuine effort to establish the necessary order in everyday life, perceived by contemporaries as *mundus furiosus* due to the social, political, intellectual, and religious antagonisms.<sup>24</sup> In the given circumstances and the regional, Adriatic-Balkan geopolitical constellation of the first half of the seventeenth century, Ragusan envoys had to rely on this kind of diplomatic rhetoric and practice.

With the establishment of the resident ambassadorial mission in the fifteenth century there arose a need for the improvement of the envoys' rhetorical skills,

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<sup>21</sup> Torquato Accetto, *Della dissimulazione onesta – Rime*, ed. Edoardo Ripari. Milano: RCS Rizzoli 2012: pp. 2-5.

<sup>22</sup> Anton Brignole Sale also detects such relations between the prince and his courtiers in the already mentioned text, stating: *Essi con ossequiosi inchini e con mentite altezze, ò con serenitadi cercan di abbagliarlo ò corlo nelle gambe in guisa, ch'egli cada loro nelle braccia opima spoglia, et egli con palpar di spalle, ò soavità gli ghigni, e di occhi cerca di dar loro a creder, che gli sian felici predatori nel sen caduti. Con fallaci balzi sono palla l'un dell'altro in perpetuo giuoco.* Anton Giulio Brignole Sale, *Tacito abburattato. Discorsi politici e morali*. Venetia: Combi, 1646: pp. 152-153.

<sup>23</sup> Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: pp. 22-25.

<sup>24</sup> Rosario Villari, »Introduction«, in: *Baroque Personae*, ed. Rosario Villari. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995: pp. 1-8.

applied both to the courtly conversation and epistolary correspondence, aligned with the oratory principles defined by Cicero and Quintilian. Diplomats were aware of the power of the written word, which could support political concepts, by using rhetorical principles and the manipulative potential of the rhetorical modes. Therefore, epistolary correspondence was considered one of the main political tools in creating and maintaining diplomatic relationships.<sup>25</sup> The promotion of these communication skills as true virtues continued, since they significantly contributed to the art of governance. Practical manuals offering advice on writing letters for various purposes and occasions were printed throughout Italy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Besides style and concept, the epistolary form required more details to be considered: from the proper forms of address, which implied reference to a manual with the lists of all titles according to the rank of each addressee, to the physical characteristics of the paper, ink, wax and seals, as befitted the title of each addressee.<sup>26</sup> The fact that the office of the state secretary of the Dubrovnik Republic had a special manual written for this purpose entitled *Titolario* testifies to what extent Ragusan envoys followed the epistolary practice of the time. They used the manual for writing official letters to European rulers and high officials, since it contained their titles, form of address and all kinds of preambles.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Ragusan government frequently ordered supplies through its envoys, such as a sufficient quantity of the highest quality paper available in Rome, “to serve us at the first opportunity to write to the rulers.”<sup>28</sup> It was not only advisable for political and diplomatic pragmatism to follow the rules and modes of epistolary correspondence, but with all other diplomatic forms it was a fashionable way of self-presentation.<sup>29</sup> In this way,

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<sup>25</sup> Salvatore S. Nigro, »The Secretary«, in: *Baroque Personae*: pp. 83-93.

<sup>26</sup> One of the first works of this kind was written in 1528 by Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, which offered professional, practical guidance for court policy and services of the prince's secretary, writing skills and diplomatic correspondence. A number of new texts emerged from this, while the treatise of 1564, *Il segretario*, signed by Francesco Sansovino, set out the means and rules of epistolary correspondence, ways and skills on various occasions, as well as the correct titles, given according to position and function. Salvatore S. Nigro, »The Secretary«: pp. 83-84.

<sup>27</sup> Stjepan Ćosić, »Prilog poznavanju tajništva i arhiva Dubrovačke Republike«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 37 (1994): p 132.

<sup>28</sup> *Con prima occasione ci facciate havere sei quinterni di carta bona et di qualità tale che sia migliore, che vi si trova costa, bianca, tagliata et che sia ben dorata, perchè svasata in forma appannata dovendoci servire per scrivere in occasione alli Principi, con avvisarci di costo et spese.* The Senate to Nicola Rossi in Rome, October 21, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 46r.

<sup>29</sup> Salvatore S. Nigro, »The Secretary«: pp. 89-90.



regardless of the flattering tone of the written lines, the Ragusan government certainly wished to confirm the political status of the Republic, leaving the impression of an exceptionally relevant interlocutor concerning each addressee. Interestingly, the epistolary diplomatic discourse and practice took into account the emotional and cognitive aspects of the addressee. It was like a verbal communication process in which the interlocutors exchanged rhetorical skills by influencing each other.<sup>30</sup>

According to the diplomatic protocol, Ragusan envoys first presented the content to a private audience on behalf of the Republic (*a viva voce per parte nostra*) and in an appropriate style and wording (*con parole molto affettuose, riverente et vive espressioni*)<sup>31</sup>, after which they delivered the letters to the addressee. If the addressee was the College of Cardinals, the letter was delivered with every public reputation, following the customs of public protocol (*con ogni pubblica riputatione*)<sup>32</sup>. In urgent situations, Ragusan letters were characterised by an overly dramatic tone and often by exaggerated seriousness (*con quella maggior essagerationi e appassionato*)<sup>33</sup>. In the same way, the courtesy letters this paper focuses on used excessively rich rhetoric and flattery, which expressed the degree of Ragusan compassion concerning the specific occasion that was the reason for sending the letter (*ralleghiamo più di ogni altro con Vostra Eminenza di così segnalate Sue felicità*), which in turn implied certain benefits and favours on behalf of the addressee himself (*suplicandola di aggradire benignissimamente questo nostro cordialissimo ufficio, riceverci nella Sua gratia et protettione*).<sup>34</sup> Therefore, what we are dealing with here is a strategic use of words and phrases that were directly aimed at arousing an emotional reaction of the interlocutor.

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<sup>30</sup> Nick Crossley, »Emotions and Communicative Action: Habermas Linguistic Philosophy and Existentialism«, in: *Emotions in Social life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues*, ed. G. Bendelow and S. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 1998: pp. 17-18.

<sup>31</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome regarding promotion to cardinalate of Flavio Chigi and Giulio Rospigliosi, May 10, 1657. *LP*, vol. 22, f. 42r.

<sup>32</sup> *La congiunta per l'eminentissimi Sig.ri Cardinali, capi di Ordini di Sacro Collegio Sede Vacante, della quale vi si trasmette la copia scriviamo a medesimi secondo si usa da tutti gli'altri Principi Sede vacante però la presenterete con ogni pubblica riputatione al detto Sacro Collegio*. The Senate's letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić, January 29, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 143rv.

<sup>33</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy Girolamo Andrea di Resti in Rome, March 3, 1625. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 55v.

<sup>34</sup> The Senate's letter of congratulations to Camillo Pamphili on his promotion to the rank of cardinal, October 13, 1650. *LP*, vol. 20, ff. 93v-94r.

Characterised by repetitiveness and phraseological clichés, Ragusan diplomatic documents of this kind follow the pattern of the already known, traditional models from the Ragusan diplomatic arsenal, which used emotions in diplomacy applicable to different socio-political and civilisational contexts.<sup>35</sup>

*“The generous affection of the very happy Barberini family towards this Republic”<sup>36</sup>*

As early as the seventeenth century, the theorists observed that the sphere of the pretentious high politics was dominated by the mutually beneficial relationships and formal friendship, where the term friendship no longer implied a level of sincere closeness.<sup>37</sup> In communication with curial dignitaries and most eminent cardinals, Ragusans often referred to the traditional friendship and close mutual relations, even in the cases where archival registers do not record the dynamics that would suggest such a quality of contacts (*antica et continuata benivolenza di tutta la Sua casa verso questa repubblica sua divotissima*).<sup>38</sup> In this case, reference to an old friendship is truly reminiscent of the formal, phraseological

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<sup>35</sup> Lovro Kunčević, »The Rhetoric of the Frontier of Christendom in the Diplomacy of Renaissance Ragusa (Dubrovnik)«. *Dubrovnik Annals* 17 (2013): p. 39. On the rhetorical and emotional strategy of Ragusan diplomacy during the late Middle Ages, see in: Valentina Šoštarić, *Dubrovački poklisari: u potrazi za novim teritorijima*. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2021: pp. 146-157, 223-243.

<sup>36</sup> From the Senate's letter to Rome *al Antonio Barberino, nipote di Sua Santità*, July 18, 1626. *LP*, vol. 14. 106v.

<sup>37</sup> For example, Marquis Anton Giulio Brignole Sale (1605-1662), who was for a short time a Genoese senator and then a Genoese diplomat in Spain, finally took vows and entered the Society of Jesus. In the seventh chapter of one of his most famous texts, *Tacito abburattato*, he reveals the hypocrisy and pretence of the customs of the time, citing: *E perche ama per esempio il Cardinal ... di esser amico del suo Rè? Sol che per rimirarsi a'piedi supplichevoli le teste più superbe per haver in un sol cenno il fato di nazioni intiere, per girar con un sol guardo le fortune, or fortunate, or misere d'innnumerabili, per haver un gabinetto, il quale sia quel luogo, ove Archimede desiava porre il piede, per voltar a suo talento sotto sopra il mondo con mirabil facilità? Or per ottener un simil fine non è necessario di essere, ma basta al Cortigiano di parere amico, dunque in ordine à ciò, ch'egli vuole, l'apparenza stessa intieramente gli sia sostanza* (Anton Giulio Brignole Sale, *Tacito abburattato. Discorsi politici e morali* Venetia: Combi, 1646: pp. 145-146).

<sup>38</sup> For example, from a letter that the Republic sent to Cardinal Capone on April 20, 1646, petitioning for his protection due to the prolonged absence from Rome of Cardinal Protector Francesco Barberini... *si compiaccia adesso, che è tempo più opportuno che mai a farne experimentar e godere della sua protezione... con l'affetto suo particolare che ne porta per sua gratia dell antica et continuata benivolenza di tutta la sua casa verso questa repubblica sua divotissima... LP*, vol. 18, f. 174r.

interplay, just as Brignole Sale rightly detects, in which a particular service is sought and rendered to the mutual benefit upon which their relationship rests. By so doing, Baroque politicians shaped friendship into a specific form of trade between the two sides.<sup>39</sup> The concept of friendship was binding and required reciprocity in the feelings expressed and accompanied by expected deeds. However, we should not underestimate or fail to consider all the complexity of the Ragusan-papal relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the mutual benefit that resulted from it.<sup>40</sup> We should not neglect the Baroque post-Tridentine piety and the needs of the public figures who were obliged to promote Christian virtues of faith and charity publicly,<sup>41</sup> which was a kind of a trump card that Ragusans counted on when asking for help from the Roman cardinals. Nevertheless, the relationship that Ragusans developed with the Barberini family was a unique phenomenon, with a long tradition of interconnectedness.<sup>42</sup> Given their Tuscan origins, the Barberini family had maintained ties with Ragusans even before their arrival in Rome, when they traded in precious textile from Florence via Ancona and Ragusa and connected with the Levant.<sup>43</sup> After some of them settled in Rome, they used their wealth to continue their careers within the various services of the Roman Curia. Their influence culminated in the period when Maffeo Barberini served as Roman pontiff under the name Urban VIII (1623-1644). That pontificate and curial staff with whom Ragusans exchanged diplomatic letters determined the mutual Ragusan-Roman diplomatic relationships in the period after the death of Urban VIII.<sup>44</sup> The details relevant to the topic of this article indirectly testify to the dynamics and quality of these relations regarding the pope's death and a centuries-old ritual of mourning and burial of the pontiff.

On the occasion of the death of Urban VIII on September 3, 1644, the Ragusan government sent precise instructions and a bundle of letters to its envoy in Rome, Nicola Rossi, which he had to deliver to several addressees (*per gli Eminentissimi Signori Cardinali della Sacra Congregatione del Conclave, fratello, nipote di Nostro Signore Urban VIII, Sacro Collegio*). Although these were only the letters

<sup>39</sup> Salvatore S. Nigro, »The Secretary«: p 94.

<sup>40</sup> N. Varezić, *Dosta je reći u Rimu*: pp. 25-41.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Rietbergen, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006: pp. 178-179.

<sup>42</sup> For more on that issue, see: N. Varezić, *Dosta je reći u Rimu*: pp. 153-170.

<sup>43</sup> Antony Majanlahti, *Guida alle grandi famiglie che fecero Roma*. Milano: Antonio Valardi Editore, 2007: p. 245.

<sup>44</sup> N. Varezić, *Dosta je reći u Rimu*: pp. 117-127.

of condolence, the government instructed its envoys to report back on their effect on the recipients (*avvisandoci come saranno aggradite le dette nostre lettere*).<sup>45</sup> In a letter to the pope's brother, Antonio Marcello Barberini, Cardinal-priest of Cardinal Titular Church Sant'Onofrio, the Senate express "deepest pain, this Republic felt along with the rest of the world, with heartfelt sorrow and sadness over the death of Our Lord Urban VIII, the glorious memory of Your Excellency's brother, which we cannot express in any language other than tears..." The Senate did not miss the opportunity to mention the connection between the Republic, "more loyal than any other to his glorious family", and the Holy See, moreover the pope's commitment to the Republic "which he helped with the expressed and paternal signs of love during his happiest governance."<sup>46</sup> Ragusans had only words of praise for the deceased. Their seemingly sincere participation in the emotional community<sup>47</sup> that mourned and regretted the loss of a human life was also a kind of emotional manipulation aimed at provoking such a reaction from the addressee that would suit the Ragusan needs. A period of uncertainty followed the death of any pontiff as it did the transition of power. Given the non-dynastic character of the papacy, its structural complexity, and multiple actions (ecclesiastical, secular, and those related to the City of Rome), the period of *sedis vacante* was a great challenge to its order. The suspension of law in the interregnum provided an opportunity or often resulted in increased violence and disorder in the city.<sup>48</sup> Apart from the dialectical relationship between order and lawlessness, Ragusans equally emphasised the issue of continuity and discontinuity. So, in the same letter to the Cardinal-priest of Sant'Onofrio, the Ragusan government asked the cardinal to continue with his affection in the following period, alluding to the continuity of papal policy towards the Republic as Urban VIII himself treated it.<sup>49</sup>

In the letter to the pope's nephew, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the Senate referred to good relations with the Curia in the previous pontificate and "the

<sup>45</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy Nicola Rossi in Rome, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 41v.

<sup>46</sup> The Senate's letter to Cardinal of Sant'Onofrio, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 42r.

<sup>47</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein postulates the existence of "emotional communities" as "groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions." Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2006: p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa. Norme, riti e conflitti. L'età moderna*. Roma: Viella, 2013: pp. 61-90.

<sup>49</sup> *Sarà [questa Republica] ancora eternalmente protteta nella patria celeste, et qui dal med.mo da Vra. Em.za mediante la Sua riguardevole gratia perpetuamente difesa et favorita...* The Senate's letter to the Cardinal of Sant' Onofrio, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 42r.

affections and graces that the Republic received during the reign of His Holiness Urban VIII, [therefore] may they be truthful witnesses to the sorrow and pain we felt because of the death of our great benefactor and our sole defender and most merciful protector.”<sup>50</sup> This formulation also indirectly refers to the engagement of Francesco Barberini himself in that period, because from 1626 he held the title of Cardinal Protector of Ragusa (*cardinal protettore*). The affection that the Ragusans ascribe to their mutual relations is essentially an expression of their focus on a relevant authority capable of providing them with adequate protection, considering that placing hope in someone was a morally binding expression whose aim was to prompt the addressee towards the actions stated in the letter. Barberini’s reputation was the reason for the election of Cardinal Francesco Barberini as the official Cardinal Protector in 1626, just as he was returning to Rome from the diplomatic mission he led, “after the happiest peace agreement between the two eminent crowns of [Spain and France], and due to your supreme ability that brought success and general satisfaction to the world, deepening your eternal glory”, and concerning that fact and “the generous friendship that your most excellent Barberini house showed to this Republic”<sup>51</sup>, the cardinal seemed a logical choice for that ministry.<sup>52</sup> During his election to this position, Ragusan authorities resorted to another practice which was an integral part of the ceremony and was

<sup>50</sup> The Senate’s letter to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 42v.

<sup>51</sup> The Senate’s letter to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, July 18, 1626. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 107r

<sup>52</sup> Previously, Odoardo Farnese held the function of Cardinal Protector. When Urban VIII ascended to the papal throne in August 1623, Cardinal Farnese was already absent from Rome. He had been in Parma as the regent of that Duchy on behalf of his underage nephew. He went there a year earlier and remained until his death. In the absence of Cardinal Farnese, the Ragusan Senate sought to find an adequate replacement in Rome, who was to compose an official letter, handing the newly elected pontiff a letter of congratulations on behalf of the Republic (the Senate’s letter sent to Cardinal Farnese in Parma, September 6, 1623. *LP*, vol. 13, f. 173r). Farnese chose Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, ... *il quale da lui [card.le Farnese] ci fu assegnato per v[ice]protettore* (the Senate’s letter sent to its envoy Giovanni Andrea di Resti in Rome, September 6, 1623. *LP*, vol. 13, f. 173v). Aldobrandini held the position of deputy until the election of Francesco Barberini as the new official protector after Farnese died in Parma in 1626. When Innocent X ascended the papal throne, Barberini had to seek asylum in France in 1645 and remained there until 1648; Ragusans turned to Cardinal Luigi Caponi, seeking an adequate replacement for the protector...[che] *si compiacca adesso, che è tempo più opportuno che mai a farne experimentar e godere della sua protezione* (the Senate’s letter to Cardinal Caponi in Rome, April 20, 1646. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 174r.), referring to the traditional affection of his entire family towards Ragusans. In time, the Republic also turned to Cardinal Francesco Cherubin... *a restar servita V. Ecc.za di raccomandandar speso alla Santità di Nro. Sig.re gl’interessi e la necessità d’questa Rep.ca.* (the Senate’s letter to Cardinal Cherubin, December 23, 1647. *LP*, vol. 19, f. 134r), shortly after his promotion to the rank of cardinal.

extremely important as it could provoke an increased emotional reaction, and that was the use of diplomatic gift.<sup>53</sup> Being a non-verbal communication gesture, its effect and implications were such that the act itself and the gift recipient were always carefully considered.<sup>54</sup> Since the Republic gained the protectorate of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the Senate ordered its envoy in Rome to commission a silver basin and a jug (*un bacile et un bocale di argento*) at the expense of the Republic, as a token of gratitude for accepting the function of protector (... *perche è solito nostro di presentar il dono al Protettore in principio della sua creatione*). According to the instructions, the envoy was to deliver the gift only after the cardinal had confirmed the patronage (*li presentare a Sua Signorià Illustrissima dopo qualche giorno che sarà accettata la protettione*).<sup>55</sup> On this occasion, the chosen gift testified to the hierarchical relationship between the two parties (*presentarete li detti bacile e boccale in nome della Republica, è in segno dell'osservanza che gli professarà sempre*), the identity of the giver (*farete ponere in mezzo del bacile S. Biagio nostro Protettore*), his financial standing and artistic taste (*fateli fare alla moderna dal maestro perito, advertendo alla bontà dell'argento*). After some time, the Senate referred to Cardinal Barberini's letter of "acceptance of protection [which was why], we were very comforted by the heartfelt affection he showed in this; he and his entire family."<sup>56</sup>

Significantly, the letter sent to Francesco Barberini on his uncle's death (like the previous one sent to the pope's brother) ended with a formulation suggesting continuity of the policy towards Ragusa. Also, the letter appeals that "with the wisdom of your inevitable consistency, please accept the warmest condolences of this letter, assuring this Republic that whenever it needs your service, we can be sure that it will not be beyond your memory and your mercy."<sup>57</sup> It is not surprising that the Senate focused on the cardinal's nephew, Francesco Barberini, whose reputation was exceptional not only among the Curia but in the international diplomatic circles as well. That was why they could count on him in the long

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<sup>53</sup> On the significance of material culture during the Middle Ages and early modern times, see: *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History*, ed. Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, Sarah Randles. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

<sup>54</sup> On the gift-giving practice the Ragusan diplomacy embraced during the late Middle Ages, more in: V. Šoštarić, *Dubrovački poklisari*: pp. 115-136.

<sup>55</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy in Rome, Gabriele Cerva, July 18, 1626. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 108r.

<sup>56</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy in Rome, Gabriele Cerva, December 16, 1626. *LP*, vol. 14, f. 158v.

<sup>57</sup> The Senate's letter of condolences to Cardinal F. Barberini in Rome, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 42v.

run. The Senate sent a letter of condolences to the Cardinal's brother, Antonio Barberino, the Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, using the same tone, phrases, and images.

It is truly hard to find another example when the Republic maintained contacts with so many members of the papal family, as was the case with the Barberinis during the pontificate of Urban VIII. One of the features of the mentioned pontificate was the nepotism of Maffeo Barberini, who, after he had become pope, surrounded himself with reliable relatives and appointed them to crucial curial positions.<sup>58</sup> Expressing condolences to Taddeo Barberini, the Prince of Palestrina, the civilian dignitary of the Papal State, the Senate insisted on emphasising the commitment of Prince's uncle, Urban VIII, to the Ragusans, implying "in the moments of indescribable sorrow" a special relationship between the Republic and the entire Barberini family. It was an occasion to stress Barberini's affection as a pledge of the future relations, "so if we did not firmly believe in the protection and help of his [i.e., pope's] glorious family and its members, following his [i.e., pope's] best example, that loss would keep us extremely inconsolable." Continuation of good relations with the Republic as an imperative, imitating the example of the late uncle, certainly represented an emotional manipulation. The letter continues with a formulation which reveals the nature of the official friendship: "Thus, to comfort this sorrow of ours, may Your Excellency be available and not leave us without much affection with your commandments, which we will always be so ready to embrace as much as we desperately desire."<sup>59</sup> There is no doubt that the Senate, writing these lines, could have been motivated by a true sense of sadness and gratitude for the beneficial experience with the eminent Barberini family. However, these emotions essentially served the purpose of achieving the goals of the Ragusan foreign policy. The Senate expressed a disguised feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about the future relations with the new curial dignitaries in the next pontificate, instrumentalising the sad occasion to sensitise the Barberinis to connect more with the Republic.

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<sup>58</sup> Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini) promoted his brother, Antonio Marcello Barberini, and two nephews (Antonio and Francesco) to the College of Cardinals immediately after he acceded to the papal throne. He soon appointed his nephew Taddeo Prefect of Rome and Prince of Palestrina (*Principe di Palestrina*). He also placed the other brothers in lucrative positions, and many of his other relatives acquired wealth thanks to him. He conferred the titles of Duke of Monterotondo and Gonfaloniere of the Church-State on his elder brother Carlo (father of Antonio, Francesco and Taddeo). A. Majanlahti, *Guida alle grandi famiglie che fecero Roma*: pp. 246-258.

<sup>59</sup> The Senate's letter to Taddeo Barberini, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 43v.

During the vacant see, the feeling of uncertainty was even more pronounced and required a reliable and relevant partner who would support Ragusan presence in seventeenth-century Rome, which still represented the true stage of European politics.

*“Hand in all the letters and do not fail to obtain response in any manner possible”:<sup>60</sup> the imperative of maintaining diplomatic dialogue*

In a bundle of letters of condolence on the death of Urban VIII, which the Ragusan envoy was to deliver personally to several relevant Roman addressees as instructed by the Senate, was a letter addressed to the highest dignitaries of the College of Cardinals (*Cardinali, capi dei ordini del Sacro Collegio*).<sup>61</sup> In this way, the Senate sought to gain the allegiance of the College of Cardinals, within which a new pontiff of the Catholic Church was soon to be elected, recalling the notable respect and loyalty the Republic had always shown to the Holy See. Also, it was an opportunity to remind of the mutual friendship that implied a two-way relationship, binding for both sides, given the “respect and loyalty which this Republic, through its ancient and uninterrupted custom, maintains towards the Holy See and [therefore this Republic] should not keep in silence its longing and desire to serve Your Excellencies in all your needs.” The Senate expressed hope for the favourable outcome of the forthcoming conclave, “invoking God’s blessing but also the favour and help of the Holy Spirit to inspire you to participate in the election of the universal shepherd and new vicar of Christ Our Lord as we humbly ask him for the glory of God and the pronounced upliftment of the Holy Church, and the tranquility and peace of the whole Christian flock, according to His Divine Will and your most holy desires.” The Senate sent almost the same letter on January 29, 1655, on the eve of the conclave to elect a new pope, Alexander VII, after the death of Innocent X. This letter testifies not only to a well-developed dictionary of phrases suitable for any occasion, but also reveals a detail that represents a significant segment of occasional epistolary communication. The Senate’s letter from 1655 instructs its Roman envoy to “present [this letter] with every public reputation to that Holy College, and obtain response in whatever manner possible; and if, by any chance, which we do not believe, they tell you

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<sup>60</sup> From the Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, January 29, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 143v.

<sup>61</sup> The Senate’s letter to the College of Cardinals in Rome, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 44r.



that there was no response to our similar letters recently, tell them that there was no response because our letters arrived when the new pope had already been elected.”<sup>62</sup> The Senate always asked the addressee for a formal reply to such protocol letters of extreme courtesy. That was not only a confirmation of the receipt of all those suggestive messages that filled the courtesy letters of the Republic, but they also maintained and deepened the existing relations with a reciprocal gesture, or gave way to a new dialogue. Although the Baroque protocol style and format may seem like an empty ornate form without actual content and effect, this, however, was not the case, especially because a courteous letter was morally binding for the addressee, prompting him to act according to the needs of the addresser. Thus, such protocol situations, as well as those beyond the protocol framework, were opportunities for dialogue, one of the core goals of diplomacy, i.e., communication between the two sides. What the Senate tried to prevent with the letter from January 1655 was a situation that could have left them without a reaction from the addressee or confirmation of receipt of their courteous gesture, since they did not address a specific individual but an institutional body (*Sacro Collegio*). The Senate’s insistence on obtaining a reply through its envoy resulted in the courtesy letter of thanks that the College of Cardinals sent to the Senate only a few months later.<sup>63</sup> On the occasion of sending a letter of condolence to the relatives of the deceased Urban VIII, the Senate explicitly instructed its envoy to Rome, Nicola Rossi, to “obtain responses from all of them and send them as soon as you receive them, informing us how our letters were accepted.”<sup>64</sup> Diplomats put much effort to obtain the desired response letter even on the happy occasion of electing a new pontiff. After the election of Innocent X, the instructions to the Ragusan envoy explicitly state that Cardinal Protector Francesco Barberini himself was engaged in obtaining a response letter to Ragusan courtesy letters.<sup>65</sup> Confirming the receipt of diplomatic mail from Rome in Dubrovnik, the Senate emphasised that only the reply of Cardinal Pamphili, the pope’s nephew, was

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<sup>62</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, January 29, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 140v-141r.

<sup>63</sup> The receipt of the mentioned letter in Ragusa is confirmed by the statement of the Senate in its letter sent to Stjepan Gradić in Rome on May 7, 1665. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 169v.

<sup>64</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Nicola Rossi in Rome, September 3, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 41 v.

<sup>65</sup> *Pregarlo* [Em.z istessa del Nro. protettore] *ancora che resti servita di procurarci la risposta et darla a voi la quale di poi voi con prima occasione ci mandarete in qua alligata con altre che da voi saranno presentate in proposito tanto all’istesa Eminenza, quanto alli detti Signori Nipoti di Sua Santità*. The Senate’s letter to its envoy Nicola Rossi in Rome, October 21, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 45v.

received, though two months after the Senate had sent its courtesy letters of congratulations to the pope and his relatives. Since the others who had previously received the letters did not reply, the Senate ordered Rossi to make sure that he obtained the responses and sent them to Dubrovnik at the first opportunity.<sup>66</sup> During the meetings, Ragusan envoy had to detect the emotional state of his interlocutor in order to provoke the desired emotional reaction by means of a carefully devised strategy (*con quei maggior ringratiamenti che giudicarete piu proprii*).<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, a letter could result in a delayed reaction of the addressee, and was therefore devoid of any impulsiveness. This time, the ceremony of the papal accession to St. Peter's chair was followed by the same courteous gestures from countless other addresses, which may have accounted for the delay of the response to those Ragusan letters. It was an opportunity for everyone to participate in a truly exceptional public ceremony and an appropriate occasion for self-presentation, of which the Ragusan envoy was to make the most. The Ragusan Senate was satisfied "that you went on our behalf to kiss the Most Holy Feet of His Beatitude, congratulating him on his exaltation, especially since all the envoys of other rulers did it. We received the news with great pleasure that His Holiness liked your performance."<sup>68</sup>

Every reciprocal gesture (*lettera affettuosissima, con espressioni di molta benivolenza*)<sup>69</sup> implied the acceptance of this specific phraseological interplay as if in a perpetual game, as the already mentioned Anton Giulio Brignole Sale suggestively described the baroque relations of this kind (*sono palla l'un dell'altro in perpetuo giuoco*).<sup>70</sup> However, in the case of the Ragusan-Roman relations, they

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<sup>66</sup> *Havemmo ricevuto l'ultime vostre delli 16 del pasato insieme con la risposta alle nostre dell'Emin.mo Sig.r Card.le Panfilii, nipote da Sua Sant.à, et ne aspetiamo con desiderio che ci capitano gl'altre, così da Sua Beatitudine, come dal Sig.re Card.le Barberini, nostro protettore, et dal Sig.re Marchese Giustiniani, le quali quando non fossero spedite non mancate con la vostra solita diligenza di procurarne et inviarcele con prima occasione.* The Senate's letter to its envoy Nicola Rossi in Rome, December 17, 1644. *LP*, vol. 18, f. 51 v.

<sup>67</sup> From the Senate's letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić, August 24, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 13r. For more about emotional strategy in: V. Šoštarić, *Dubrovački poklisari*: pp. 238-240.

<sup>68</sup> The Senate's letter to its envoy Antonio Diodati, May 7, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 169v. Although this quote refers to the accession to the papal throne of Alexander VII, who succeeded Innocent X, there is no doubt that Ragusan envoys followed the same practice during each new papal enthronement.

<sup>69</sup> From the Senate's letter (July 21, 1655) to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, referring to the pope's affection, having previously received through Francesco Barberini courtesy letters from the Republic regarding his election to the papal throne. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 188r.

<sup>70</sup> A. G. Brignole Sale, *Tacito abburattato*: p. 153.

never remained only on that official level, because on the very first occasion they most often resulted in concrete engagements. Cardinal Conti sent an interesting letter from Ancona, which arrived in Ragusa in early December 1695. The Cardinal expressed his gratitude to the Republic for the letter of condolence on the death of his nephews. He concluded his letter by stating “the gratitude I show cannot be separated from my deepest desire to serve Your Excellencies, so please feel free to command me.”<sup>71</sup> Although the archival records do not contain any diplomatic exchange that preceded that occasion, the speed with which the Senate achieved the favour of this high ecclesiastical prelate should not be surprising. Since the letter came from Ancona, we can assume that the cardinal had a significant administrative function in the main Adriatic port of the Papal State, which showed the mutual strategic orientation of Ragusa and Ancona. The mentioned letter certainly did not only represent an official reciprocal courtesy. It was significant for the addressee but also binding for the addresser.

*“Given that His Holiness invited relatives and nephews and all who arrived at the court”<sup>72</sup>: a new occasion for congratulations*

As in the case of the election of the previous pope, Innocent X Pamphili, a new bundle of diplomatic letters was sent to Rome on the occasion of the election of Alexander VII Chigi to the papal throne in April 1655. Nicola Rossi and Antonio Diodati delivered letters of congratulations intended not only for the pope but for his relatives as well, which was also very important because they had the most direct contact with the Highest Priest of the Catholic Church. On that occasion, the Ragusan envoys excessively flattered the Chigi family, nurturing cordial relations with such letters, because the elected pope, acting previously as the cardinal secretary of state of Innocent X, proved to be very inclined to the Republic. Therefore, the Senate immediately instructed its Roman envoys “to inform us at the first opportunity about the relatives and nephews of His Holiness and their statuses, functions and titles so that, like other rulers who compliment them, we can do the same with the same letters and necessary forms.”<sup>73</sup> Such a diplomatic protocol followed established procedures and a set of rules that were formally,

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<sup>71</sup> The letter Cardinal Conti sent to the Republic of Dubrovnik on December 1, 1695. *Diplomata et Acta*, series 76, vol. 5, f. 384, State Archives in Dubrovnik.

<sup>72</sup> From the Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić, July 21, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 258Bv.

<sup>73</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Antonio Diodati, May 7, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 169v.

socially and culturally accepted and expected by the parties involved. Thus, at the beginning of each new pontificate, the purpose of the diplomatic exchange was to establish closer relations with each newly installed holder of the highest position of the Catholic Church. Welcome speeches contributed to the positive atmosphere of mutual respect and were a pledge of good interpersonal relationships in the period that followed.

Hardly a year after Chigi was elected pope, his relatives (brother and nephew) came to Rome. Presumably, it was due to the plague pandemic that ravaged Rome and that part of Italy at the time.<sup>74</sup> Alexander VII sought support among the members of his close family, “given that His Holiness invited relatives and nephews and all who arrived at the court,” giving some of them the high-ranking curial positions. Ragusan envoy immediately reacted with congratulations letters (*ci è parso di rallegrarne con loro, come facciamo con le congionte lettere*).<sup>75</sup> The pope’s brother Mario and nephews Agostino and Flavio Chigi came to Rome from Siena in the summer of 1656 to assume leading curial offices in the Papal State.

Flavio first became the Governor of Ferno and was gradually appointed to other positions in the Papal State. Congratulating Flavio on his new office, the Senate eloquently pointed out that “the Lord God heard the voice of all Christianity who most wanted to see Your Brightest Lordship participating in the management of the Holy Church in such difficult times, which require your wise counselling. This Republic rejoices greatly and more than any other since it has longed for it with much more enthusiasm.”<sup>76</sup> The following year, the Senate congratulated him on acquiring the title of cardinal. The style of the letter and its content were very similar, and shortly, the Senate confirmed to its envoy Gradić that it had received the cardinal’s response, “which was very kind and obliging with the praise for the performance you made on our behalf.”<sup>77</sup>

The letters of congratulations were also sent to the newly appointed civilian officials, starting with pope’s brother, Mario Chigi, for his promotion to the

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<sup>74</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić of July 14, 1656, refers to the plague pandemic, instructing Gradić to advocate the interests of the Republic in the legal proceedings currently conducted in the Curia, in accordance with the possibilities under the given circumstances (... *se per il male contagioso che intendiamo esersi scoperto costì, non vi foste retirato ne absentato per propria salveza et vi ritrovaste ancora in cotesta città*). *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 258Av- 258Br.

<sup>75</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić, July 14, 1656. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 258v.

<sup>76</sup> The Senate’s letter to Flavio Chigi in Rome, July 14, 1656. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 259r.

<sup>77</sup> The Senate’s letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, July 14, 1657. *LP*, vol. 22, f. 62v.

commander of the army of the Papal States<sup>78</sup>, and then to the pope's nephew, Agostino Chigi, for becoming the captain of the papal guard and castellan of the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. Consequently, "in line with the general approval and desire of all Christianity to see as we see Your Excellency close to His Holiness and in managing the Holy Church, this Republic feels the immense debts towards His Beatitude and feels greater joy than others... that we look forward to [all this] together with Your Excellency, wishing you the happiest enjoyment of even greater glory, asking you to be pleased with these humble and sincere feelings of ours."<sup>79</sup>

The Senate used every opportunity to deepen the favourable relationships with the pope, the highest curial dignitaries, and the Roman elite. So, the letter of congratulations sent to Pope Alexander VII on the birth of his nephew describes "an immense joy brought by the news of the birth of a male nephew, given by the Lord God Himself, which strengthened the family joy of Your Beatitude. Hence, we humbly bring before the holiest footsteps of Your Beatitude our most attentive congratulations, praying fervently to His Majesty [i.e., God] to grant Your Beatitude a long and prosperous life, as much in the service of his Holy Church as for enjoying temporal happiness in this world."<sup>80</sup> When Prince Camillo Pamphili (nephew of Innocent X) had his first child, the Senate did not fail to congratulate the pope. It was again an opportunity to show deep respect for the pope and his family, to an extent, as compared to other Christian governments, that of Ragusa expressed the most cordial and loyal feelings, considering that "this Republic felt endless and extraordinary joy and enthusiasm for the birth of the firstborn Our Lord God gave to the Highest Lord Prince Don Camillo Pamphili, nephew of Your Holiness. No one of all those who are the friendliest and who respect the nobility of your family has felt it more strongly than us. Just as our loyalty and servility to Your Beatitude cannot be more consistent and affectionate than they are."<sup>81</sup> With equally ornate style and exaggerated expressions of admiration, the Senate sent a letter of congratulations to Camillo Pamphili (*Principe di Rossano*) on the birth of his heir. On this occasion, the Senate used emotional manipulation as its standard practice to consistently follow the private and public events of the Roman elite, showing the relationship as friendly and respectful, emphasising

<sup>78</sup> The Senate's letter to Mario Chigi in Rome, 14 July 1656. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 258Bv.

<sup>79</sup> The Senate's letter to Agostino Chigi in Rome, 14 July 1656. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 259v.

<sup>80</sup> The Senate's letter to Alexander VII, January 14, 1663. *Segretaria di Stato, Principi*, vol. 86, f. 13r, Vatican Apostolic Archive.

<sup>81</sup> The Senate's letter to Innocent X, August 23, 1648. *LP*, vol. 19, f. 188v.

that “this Republic has always participated in the happiest events of Your Excellency. Love, [which we feel] is proportional to Your Excellency’s desire for prosperity and infinite satisfaction.” The letter suggests inexpressible happiness because of such an extraordinary occasion when “His Divine Majesty was finally pleased to give offspring to Your Excellency and your heroic intentions, the happy birth of your firstborn, so much desired and anticipated.”<sup>82</sup> In addition to expressing congratulations to the members of the Pamphili family, the Senate, in its instructions to Antonio Diodati and Nicola Rossi, focused on resolving the issue of some looted Ragusan ships, about which they sent a more detailed letter to the pope. However, to make the mentioned elation the Republic wished to share with the pope’s family seem as convincing as possible, it was necessary to create an artificial time distance from the specific favour petitioned in Rome on August 23. Ragusan envoys presented both letters at the same time. However, the Senate told them that the letter of congratulations was deliberately predated and instructed them to hand it in as a belated letter, which was to be justified by the alleged absence of ship connection between Ragusa and Ancona.<sup>83</sup>

*Keeping up with betrothals, marriages, promotions and other happy occasions in papal Rome*

The relations between the Roman Curia and the Republic of Ragusa were prolific but, at the same time, very complex. That was why Ragusan envoys had to rely on most refined methods in gaining trust among high curial dignitaries, who would lobby for the interests of the Ragusan government or speed up the process until its realisation. In July 1653, the Senate sent a letter to its Roman envoy Diodati, expressing its astonishment in a reproachful tone that he had not yet succeeded in handing in their letters to the pope, related to obtaining a certain papal *placet*.<sup>84</sup> Apparently, on the verge of patience, the Senate decided to bring this matter to an end and wrote to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, “asking him to

<sup>82</sup> The Senate’s letter to Camillo Pamphili, August 23, 1648. *LP*, vol. 19, f. 189r.

<sup>83</sup> *Dobbiate iscusarne della tardanza di simili offitii con atribuirli alla distanza di loco et agli impedimenti occorsi a diversi vaselli che di qua le portavano per Ancona, perchè noi, come vedete nelle coppie di dette lettere che vi si mandano, havemmo fatto la data in esse li 25 di luglio passato.* The Senate’s letter to A. Diodati and N. Rossi, August 23, 1648. *LP*, vol. 19, f. 189v.

<sup>84</sup> *Ci maravigliamo che in tanto tempo non havete potuto presentare le nostre lettere per Sua Beatitudine, desiderando di vedere quanto prima l’essito del negotio comessovi...* The Senate’s letter to Antonio Diodati, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 8v.

cooperate and assist in this matter, as you [i.e., Ragusan envoy Diodati] can see from the copy of that letter, so you cannot do it occasionally, but you have to bring it to an end because it is unbelievable that in so much time, you have not been able to get an opportunity for an audience with His Holiness to present these letters of ours to him.”<sup>85</sup> So, at that very moment, as in many other similar situations, the mediation of the relevant curial trustees was needed. However, the continuation of this same letter from the Dubrovnik government testifies to another example of the occasional congratulations practice. It was an opportunity that the Senate simply could not miss. The same Senate’s letter to its envoy Diodati in Rome referred to a congratulations message to Carlo Barberini on his promotion to the rank of cardinal, as another letter was sent to the Marquis Giustiniani, congratulating the engagement of his daughter, pope’s great-niece, to Maffeo Barberini. Following the Ragusan diplomatic practice, the Senate instructed Diodati to obtain responses after presenting all the letters and send them to Ragusa as soon as possible.<sup>86</sup> The reference to the mentioned occasion testifies to the well-informed Ragusan Senate and its tendency to accompany the most important events of papal Rome (*come gl'altri Principi possono fare*)<sup>87</sup> by sending its goodwill letters. Each relationship that was considered respectful and friendly, included an obligation to mark significant events. One of them was the marriage between Maffeo Barberini and Olympia Giustiniani, mediated by Cardinal Mazarin. It was an occasion for the reconciliation between the Barberini and official Rome under Innocent X Pamphili. Soon after his accession to the papal throne, he accused Barberini of embezzlement during the reign of Urban VIII, his predecessor, which is why they exiled to France. Although Francesco Barberini returned to Rome in 1648, his brother and the rest of the family could return only after this marriage had been contracted. On that occasion, Carlo Barberini was appointed cardinal as a gesture of goodwill. The Senate congratulated him on his promotion to the College of Cardinals, expressing that “we feel the endless joy and happiness for Your Excellency’s acquiring this [cardinal] scarlet that will always be the heritage of your family. We also hope to see within it [i.e., the Barberini family] continuation towards the papal insignia.” In the same letter, the Republic also congratulated on this important marriage and close connection

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<sup>85</sup> The Senate’s letter to Antonio Diodati, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 8v.

<sup>86</sup> The Senate’s letter to Antonio Diodati, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 9r.

<sup>87</sup> The Senate’s letter to Antonio Diodati regarding the petition he made on behalf of the Republic in front of the newly elected pope Alexander VII, May 7, 1655. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 169r.

with such an honourable family, “hoping that the union of these two families of such great merits will provide you access to the exceptional honours.” Emphasising the protection of the Republic’s interests and the anticipated success and promotion, quite suggestive images “call for new titles and new glory, and always with increasing merits, whilst the Republic has new protectors and patrons along with new obligations.”<sup>88</sup>

In the letter sent to Andrea Marquis Giustiniani, the Republic congratulates “Your Excellency on gaining a son-in-law of the most eminent Barberini family. This Republic is so overwhelmed with great excitement about the increase of new and benevolent protectors, just as Your Excellency rejoices in getting a new relative of such great merit, which is why we are looking forward to it with all our hearts.” The union of two families is significant, since they gave the current and the previous pope, suggesting a high potential for the papacy and the Republic, who was a beneficiary of their protection. That is why “we are and must be most biased, having all the glory of two papal families united and hoping for even greater [glory].”<sup>89</sup> Worded in a traditionally friendly and eloquent style, the Senate sent Cardinal Protector Francesco Barberini a letter of congratulations on the engagement of his nephew, rejoicing in the prosperity of the Barberini but also wishing him his own prosperity: “This republic is most biased towards happiness, glory, and the eminence of Your Excellency’s most noble house. It will always enjoy even more than anyone else in increasing your grandeur.... with a united heart, we rejoice with Your Excellency in the new achievement of your nephew in unity with another family, which will facilitate you, as we hope, in the acquisition of the highest degree, to which your own merits would lead you.”<sup>90</sup>

The last letter referring to this great occasion is the one sent by the Senate to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, a month later than the previous ones, since he was the last Barberini to return to Rome from France. Referring to that occasion, the Republic expressed satisfaction “with the happiest return of Your Excellency to that city [Rome] with general enthusiasm. We are also delighted with the alliance made by the kinship established between the Most Excellent Sir Maffeo, Prince of Palestrina, your nephew and the Most Excellent Lady, Princess Olympia Giustiniani, niece of Our Lord, His Holiness. [That is why] we must rejoice in writing these letters and being together in all this with Your Excellency, asking

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<sup>88</sup> The Senate’s letter to Cardinal Carlo Barberini, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 9v.

<sup>89</sup> The Senate’s letter to Marquis Giustiniani, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 9r-v.

<sup>90</sup> The Senate’s letter to Francesco Barberini, July 18, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 9v-10r.



you to receive these most humble expressions as a testimony to our never-ending respect and devotion that will always accompany you in your happiness and contentment.”<sup>91</sup> Finally, it seems that Francesco Barberini himself took part in forwarding these courteous letters, which was referred to in a letter sent to Stjepan Gradić, who was to personally thank the Cardinal Protector on behalf of the Republic.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Francesco Barberini seriously took and carried out his mission of Protector of the Republic of Ragusa. Moreover, his engagement was certainly the result of many years of dealing with Ragusa through the same suggestive phraseology, which may seem redundant and inefficient but only at first sight.

### *Conclusion*

The Republic of Ragusa and the Holy See grounded their formal relations on mutual benefits to the complex policies of both sides. Their friendship, motivated by practical needs, implied day-to-day reciprocation of favour. Also, interpersonal contacts between the Ragusans and some curial dignitaries largely contributed to the mutual relations between the Republic and the papal Rome. They developed a deep friendship through interest-driven engagements. This article highlights the diplomatic practices that helped create and maintain a relevant network of curial contacts through diplomatic protocol. The Republic sought to cover all significant events in the personal lives of prominent curial individuals. Such consistent practice was binding on each participant in the relationship, whilst well-elaborated emotional strategies, as an essential diplomatic device, were designed to provoke specific emotions and thus achieve the desired goals. These examples also support the unique postulate of the Ragusan diplomatic practice by which every possible opportunity should be sought to maintain and deepen the existing relations. Since the style and rhetoric of diplomatic discourse were standardised, it was possible to connect several successive pontiffs through selected situations. The differences are evident only in the nuances related to the

<sup>91</sup> The Senate's letter to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, August 24, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, f. 14r.

<sup>92</sup> *Al medesimo [cardinal protettore] rescriviamo con l'ingionte ringratiando S. Em.za dell'ufficio che si è compiaciuta di passare con questa Rep.ca per il nuovo parentado del Sig.r Principe di Palestrina suo nepote secondo vederete dalla copia dell'istesse essendoci noi precedentemente seco rallegrati di simile acquisto con lettere trasmesse al Diodati che le saranno state presentate però le ricapitarete queste subito accompagnandole a voce con quei maggior ringratiamenti che giudicarete piu proprii.* The Senate's letter to its envoy Stjepan Gradić in Rome, August 24, 1653. *LP*, vol. 21, ff. 13v-14r.

context of the event that served as an occasion for correspondence. Therefore, this not only confirms the presence, form and discourse of the Ragusan diplomatic practice at the papal court, but equally so the excellent intelligence organisation of its government, which never missed an opportunity to take active part in all developments on that stage of European politics of the epoch. Even though Ragusan envoys accepted the ceremonial patterns of others, they also deployed the ceremony to convey an image of themselves and their identities. And what at one time was courteously sent to Rome, obliging the addressee to respond only politely on that occasion, would be demanding the next time and most often resulted in very concrete deeds.