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Original paper  
UDC: 929Robinson, W.  
94(497.584=111)"15/16"(093)  
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21857/moxpjh7v1m>  
Submitted: 6. 2. 2025.  
Accepted: 15. 5. 2025.

## WILLIAM ROBINSON (C. 1540-1613): A GUNNER IN THE SERVICE OF THE DUBROVNIK REPUBLIC, ENGLISH CONSUL AND MERCHANT

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*Abstract:* A pluriperspective and comparative analysis of the Ragusan segment of the life and work of William Robinson, a gunner in the service of the Dubrovnik Republic, merchant and English consul, has helped portray a well-integrated non-noble foreigner, and at the same time complemented the picture of the city in a pivotal period, end of the "Golden Age" and the beginning of one of the crises. Attention has been drawn to the remarkable research potential of the State Archives in Dubrovnik and its most diverse archival materials that have been extensively used in this article.

*Keywords:* Dubrovnik, England, 16th century, 17th century, William Robinson, gunner, *bombardiere*, English consul, Levant Company, confraternity of bombardiers

### Introduction

William Robinson, gunner in the service of the Dubrovnik Republic, trader and English consul in Dubrovnik from the later sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, is a figure both familiar and unfamiliar to historiography. Dragoljub Pavlović,<sup>1</sup> Vuk Vinaver and Veselin Kostić were familiar with this Englishman and his, mildly put, 'double career', in Dubrovnik. Vinaver, who focused on economic history, with emphasis on slave trade,

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<sup>1</sup> Dragoljub Pavlović, *Danica* I, 2 (15th October 1940), 13-14, cited from: Veselin Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, Beograd: SANU, 1975, 347.

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\* This research has been supported by Croatian Science Foundation within the project Plurality of actors in the Republic of Dubrovnik: politics and society, institutions and practice, PLURACTA, IP-2022-10-4560. This paper was originally published in Croatian as "William Robinson (oko 1540-1613), dubrovački državni topnik, engleski konzul i trgovac (robljem?)", *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 62 (2024), 45-76. Translated by Vesna Baće.

gave a cursory mention of Robinson's name.<sup>2</sup> Kostić, on the other hand, investigated the relations between England and Dubrovnik Republic, and his in-depth research also included this English consul in Dubrovnik and his primary duty as a bombardier mercenary in the service of the Dubrovnik Republic.

Information on the presence of an English consul in Dubrovnik in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century has remained largely neglected from the historiographic aspect. It is not mentioned in the classical work on consuls in the Dubrovnik Republic by Bogdan Krizman,<sup>3</sup> nor in the study published three decades later by Ilija Mitić, who, referring to the sources and literature, writes: "Of all the great European powers whose ships landed in the ports of the eastern Adriatic, England was the only one without consul".<sup>4</sup> Robinson's career as a gunner in the service of the Republic proved just as invisible to scholars.

This article aims to reassess, update, contextualise and deepen the knowledge about William Robinson, English consul and gunner in the service of Dubrovnik. A pluriperspective and comparative analysis of the Ragusan segment of Robinson's life and work, at the same time, through a number of details provides a much broader picture of Dubrovnik in a pivotal period, that is, the last years of its "Golden Age" and the beginning of a crisis, from the perspective of one of its residents of foreign origin. In addition to literature, the research is to a great degree based on diverse archival material, which, on this occasion too, displays an exceptional research potential and wealth of the State Archives in Dubrovnik.

The portrayal of Robinson initially called for the definition of the time frame of his Ragusan years. Outlined in the next chapter are the most important political, economic, health, climatological and demographic developments that marked the life in Dubrovnik of the time and their implications on Robinson's everyday activities. Further provided is a most thorough analysis of William Robinson from a professional aspect, primarily his career as a gunner in the state service, merchant and English consul. Finally discussed is Robinson's social role in the professional, religious and family environment.

### *Time frame*

The first known mention of William (Gulielmo) Robinson in the Ragusan sources dates from 2 September 1574, when, by decision of the Senate, he was officially hired

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<sup>2</sup> Vuk Vinaver, "Crno roblje u starom Dubrovniku", *Istorijski časopis* 5 (1954-1955), 440.

<sup>3</sup> Bogdan Krizman, *Diplomati i konzuli u Starom Dubrovniku*, Zagreb: IBI, poduzeće za izdavanje, prodaju i distribuciju knjiga, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Ilija Mitić, *Dubrovačka država u međunarodnoj zajednici (od 1358. do 1815.)*, Zagreb: JAZU; Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1988, 189.

as a gunner, *bombardiere*.<sup>5</sup> Testifying to the actual enforcement of this decision is the payment, dated two months later, for the gunner's typical duty of the procurement of artillery cleaning supplies.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of a Minor Council decision of 1601,<sup>7</sup> by which Robinson was released from night duty and manual work due to his advanced age (seventy), it may be assumed that he was employed as gunner around the age of thirty-five.

However, according to the decision of the Minor Council from 1610,<sup>8</sup> it appears that he was ten years older and that he arrived in Dubrovnik around the age of forty-five. Robinson's contemporary, English travel writer John Fox, servant in the entourage of Henry Cavendish, member of English Parliament, who en route to Constantinople visited Dubrovnik in 1589, was astonished by Robinson's high degree of integration in the Ragusan society. The travel writer observed that time had altered Robinson to such an extent that he had become a Slav in nature. This information led Veselin Kostić to the conclusion that Robinson must have arrived in Dubrovnik as a young man,<sup>9</sup> at an age when one is more susceptible to influences. Regardless of Robinson's age at his first encounter with Dubrovnik, a span of fifteen years in this eastern Adriatic republic left a discernible stamp on his manners and mentality, to such an extent that his compatriot experienced him as a foreigner of hybrid identity, Englishman by birth and "a Slav by nature".

Indeed, it is quite likely that Robinson had visited or even stayed in Dubrovnik well before 1574, yet no record has been found to confirm it. Had that been the case, it would imply that he did not require any notarial services, for instance, due to loans or debts, joint ventures contract, proxy or sales or purchase contract, that he did not hire

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<sup>5</sup> State Archives in Dubrovnik (hereafter cited as: SAD), ser. HR-DADU-3, *Acta Consili Rogatorum* (hereafter: *Cons. Rog.*), vol. 62, f. 271v.

<sup>6</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-47, *Guardie et armamento*, vol. 11, f. 28.

<sup>7</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-4, *Acta Consilii Minoris* (hereafter: *Cons. Min.*), vol. 65, f. 194v-195.

<sup>8</sup> *Cons. Min.* vol. 69, f. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Veselin Kostić, *Kulturne veze između jugoslovenskih zemalja i Engleske do 1700. godine*, Beograd: SANU, 1972, 283, 369; V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 347, 593; Veselin Kostić, "The English in Ragusa in the later Tudor and Stuart periods", in: *Dubrovnik's Relations with England: A Symposium April 1976*, ed. Rudolf Filipović and Monica Partridge, Zagreb: Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 1977, 188. Fox the travel writer wrote: "...tyme hathe so altherred the man that he ys becom a Slavonyan in natur" (*Mr. Harri Cavendish, his journey to and from Constantinople 1589 by Fox, his servant* [Camden Miscellany, vol. XVII. Camden Third Series, vol. LXIV], ed. Alfred C. Wood, London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1940, 13). Unlike Fox's travelogue, Robinson was not mentioned in Fynes Moryson's travel accounts of Dubrovnik, on his sea voyage to Constantinople in 1596, nor by the Scotsman William Lithgow, who arrived in Dubrovnik upon his return from Alexandria in the early seventeenth century (Jorjo Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, Dubrovnik: Izdanje Turističkog saveza u Dubrovniku, 1939, 303), nor by Henry Austell, who made a three-day stopover in Dubrovnik on his way from Venice in 1586. He was pleased with the reception and the contacts. Accompanied by six Ragusan merchants and Janissaries, he proceeded to Constantinople over the mainland (Rudolf Filipović, "Dubrovnik in early English literature", in: *Dubrovnik's Relations with England. A Symposium April 1976*, ed. Rudolf Filipović and Monica Partridge, Zagreb: Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 1977, 68-69).

aides or servants nor did he himself act in the capacity of aide or servant to another, nor accepted dowry, nor drafted the last will, nor appealed to the authorities, nor testified, sued or acted as defendant for an offence or crime, to mention but the most common types of documents in the Ragusan sources which could enable reconstruction of the activities of a person from the end of the sixteenth century, when parish registers had not yet been established in the Dubrovnik area. From the sources here listed, which have been consulted for the purpose of the research into Robinson's activities in Dubrovnik, one comes to realise that the majority of the Ragusans of the day were probably never recorded in them because their everyday life followed a fairly steady rhythm and routine, without the need to be regulated by legal norms and devoid of any conflict with the law or the need to seek justice at court.

Robinson can be traced in archival documents from 1574, though sporadically at first, and more frequently later. These thirty diverse records have helped reconstruct the Englishman's biography. Robinson's last personal trace in archival sources is his will, drafted on 7 June 1613, and executed six days later.<sup>10</sup> In line with the available archival evidence, the years 1574 and 1613 have been taken as pivotal regarding Robinson's life in Dubrovnik.

### *The portrait backdrop: Dubrovnik of Robinson's day*

A period of nearly forty years of the Englishman's life in Dubrovnik was marked by great changes in foreign policy and economy of the small Adriatic republic. Shortly after his arrival, Robinson was able to witness the vitality of Ragusan economy, as well as fairly stable social relations devoid of more serious internal dissent. There is reason to believe that these favourable circumstances might have prompted him to settle in Dubrovnik for good.

Ragusan economy by far exceeded the modest size and very limited political power and influence of the maritime state.<sup>11</sup> Political power of the Dubrovnik Republic relied on fair judgement in many important issues, such as where to seek allies, who ought to be kept at a distance and how, carefully and duly made choice of the prospective protectors among the current great powers, along with the perpetual evasion of direct conflicts and engagements which could jeopardise the proclaimed political neutrality,

<sup>10</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-12, *Testamenta Notariae* (hereafter: *Test. Not.*), vol. 54, f. 239v.

<sup>11</sup> For an estimate of the gross domestic product per capita on the territory of the Dubrovnik Republic, see: Vladimir Stipetić, "Population and Gross Domestic Product of Croatia (1500.-1913.) in the Light of Angus Maddison's Book *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*", *Dubrovnik Annals* 8 (2004), 162-168. For a brief survey of economic development, see: Oleh Havrylyshyn and Nora Srzentić, *Economy of Ragusa, 1300 – 1800. The Tiger of the Medieval Mediterranean*, Zagreb: Croatian National Bank, 2014.

which was of extreme benefit to Ragusan economy as well. On the other hand, economic power, and consequentially a rich double-bottom treasury which, if necessary, allowed withdrawal from the asset deposits made to religious and charity funds,<sup>12</sup> provided robust resilience against various kinds of political pressure and offered a possibility of "buying" freedom through gifts and bribe. Ragusan neutrality, from which everyone benefitted, was the most important "defensive weapon" of the Dubrovnik Republic.<sup>13</sup>

"War is a cost, a waste", while the possibility to make an autonomous choice between the state of war or peace is most commonly an attribute of the powerful, Braudel rightly emphasised.<sup>14</sup> While other states waged wars, with its neutrality Dubrovnik more or less managed to avoid war damage and unexpected costs, and was often able to take advantage of the situation. It is precisely in the unexpected and high war expenditures, uncoordinated with the state revenue inflow, that we should seek the reasons for over-indebtedness of the European states in the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Dubrovnik, however, stepped into the sixteenth century with a considerable surplus.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, political neutrality of Dubrovnik had a positive impact on the interior stability of the state by evading potential sources of public discontent, e.g. due to high taxes, confiscation of property or drafting for war purposes, which were known to take place elsewhere.<sup>17</sup>

In the second half of the sixteenth century Spain was the main ally and protector of the Republic of Dubrovnik. King Philip II of Spain used Ragusan ships for commercial purposes and war campaigns.<sup>18</sup> With the other, Austrian branch of the same Habsburg dynasty Dubrovnik maintained good relations, with occasional problems related mainly to Uskok raids.<sup>19</sup> The tiny Catholic state surrounded by the Ottoman Empire also relied on the Holy See, perpetuating in their relations the classical rhetoric on the Christian

<sup>12</sup> Kosto Vojnović, "Državni rizničari republike dubrovačke", *Rad JAZU* 127 (1896), 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Vesna Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija u Istambulu*, Zagreb - Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2003, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Sredozemlje i sredozemni svijet u doba Filipa II.*, vol. 2, trans. Mirna Cvitan Černelić and Jagoda Milinković, Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1998, 203.

<sup>15</sup> Antonio Di Vittorio, *Finanze e moneta a Ragusa nell'età delle crisi*, Napoli: Giannini, 1983, 117.

<sup>16</sup> See Rina Kralj-Brassard and Nella Lonza, "Rukopis Nikše Ragnine kao izvor podataka o proračunu Dubrovačke Republike u 16. stoljeću", *Povijesni prilozi* 59 (2020), 143-163.

<sup>17</sup> Lovro Kunčević, "O stabilnosti Dubrovačke Republike (14.-17. stoljeće): geopolitički i ekonomski faktori", *Analizavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 54/1 (2016), 26.

<sup>18</sup> Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808, drugi dio. Od 1526. do 1808* (hereafter: V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, II), Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1980, 42.

<sup>19</sup> For a succinct account on the relations between Ragusans and Uskoks, see: V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, II, 61-63.

frontier guard.<sup>20</sup> The popes were generally well disposed towards Dubrovnik, except in delicate issues of church jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup> Ottoman Empire acted as the Republic's official protector. Tribute (*haraç*) on the one hand was the price of peace, while on the other an admission ticket to the vast eastern trade market and a privilege for the strategically important Ottoman granaries.<sup>22</sup> The tributary status of the Dubrovnik Republic implied concrete Ottoman protection, and thus neutralised any military pretensions of Dubrovnik's major and traditional rival, the Republic of Venice.<sup>23</sup> The *Serenissima's* essential goal regarding Dubrovnik was to achieve full economic control over the eastern Adriatic. However, France was emerging as an increasingly aggressive rival to the Ragusan economic interests in the eastern Mediterranean, in an attempt to terminate the privileged status of the Dubrovnik Republic within the Ottoman Empire. The generally benevolent attitude of King Henry VIII towards Ragusans, who were allowed to amass wealth based on trade, England replaced with a pragmatic and firm position of Queen Elizabeth I, who expanded domestic shipping and maritime trade by laying the foundations of a future world power. She saw Ragusans as insignificant rivals, along with many others, whom she tried to squeeze out.<sup>24</sup>

Of all the mentioned challenges Ragusan foreign policy had to face, the most demanding and most delicate for the English subject in Dubrovnik was probably the conflict between the Ragusan main protector, Spain, and England, which most certainly put Robinson's loyalty at a test. The rumours that spread in 1587 – which

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<sup>20</sup> On the development, method and purpose of the use of the rhetoric of Dubrovnik as the bulwark of Christendom, see: Lovro Kunčević, "The Rhetoric of the Frontier of Christendom in the Diplomacy of Renaissance Ragusa (Dubrovnik)", *Dubrovnik Annals* 17 (2013), 37-68.

<sup>21</sup> On the allegations of the Ragusan archbishop Girolamo Matteucci, see: Josip Sopta, "Reformacija i Tridentski sabor u Dubrovniku", in: *Tisuću godina uspostave dubrovačke (nad)biskupije. Zbornik radova znanstvenoga skupa u povodu tisuću godina uspostave dubrovačke (nad)biskupije / metropolije (998.-1998.)*, Dubrovnik: Biskupijski ordinarijat Dubrovnik; Split: Crkva u svijetu, 2001, 393. For a detailed account on the state-church relations, see: Kosto Vojnović, "Crkva i država u dubrovačkoj republici", *Rad JAZU* 119 (1894), 32-142; "Crkva i država u dubrovačkoj republici: drugi dio", *Rad JAZU* 121 (1895), 1-91.

<sup>22</sup> On the development of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Dubrovnik, the role of tribute, its size, collection and the payment modalities, see: V. Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija u Istanbulu*, 9-21, 169-210 and the literature cited herein.

<sup>23</sup> Domagoj Madunić, "The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580-1620)", in: *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević, Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2013, 342.

<sup>24</sup> For a concise account of the relations between Dubrovnik Republic on the one and Spain, England and Venice on the other side in Robinson's time, i.e., from the end of the War of Cyprus to the first decades of the seventeenth century, see: V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, II, 64-71, 79-84. For an adeptly contextualised overview of the relations between France and Dubrovnik Republic exemplified by the conflict over the jurisdiction of French consulate in Alexandria, see: Nikša Varezić, "Dubrovačka Republika i Levant u 16. stoljeću: Aleksandrijski spor", *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu* 11 (2018), 91-110, notably 102-105.

one of the richest inhabitants of London at the time, Nikola Gozze, tried hard to refute, though unsuccessfully – concerned as many as 80 Ragusan ships and 4,000 mariners purportedly equipped to supply the Spanish king in his military campaign, had reached English authorities through unofficial channels, apparently from Florence.<sup>25</sup> Robinson, who socialised with the seamen, could have easily been accused of "spying activity", yet that did not happen as the information obviously leaked through other channels.<sup>26</sup>

When Robinson assumed the duty of bombardier soon after the end of the War of Cyprus,<sup>27</sup> Dubrovnik Republic was at the sunset of its "Golden Age". The capacity of the commercial fleet still continued to grow,<sup>28</sup> as well as the Ragusan capital investments abroad.<sup>29</sup> However, first signs of a long-term crisis as consequence of the new division of great powers spurred by geographical discoveries began to surface. This resulted in the shrinkage of the Ragusan fleet, withdrawal of Ragusan commercial shipping agencies from the Levant due to the mounting French, English and Dutch competition, pirate raids and the decline of Ragusan intermediary trade.<sup>30</sup> By the end of Robinson's life, Ragusan public finances mirrored new and unfavourable economic circumstances. The public balance of income and expenditure made for the purpose of cost-cutting and a more balanced budget for the period 1610-1619 showed a serious deficit.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> G. D. (George Daniel) Ramsay, "The city of London and the Republic of St. Blaise in the later sixteenth century", in: *Dubrovnik's Relations with England. A Symposium April 1976*, ed. Rudolf Filipović and Monica Partridge, Zagreb: Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 1977, 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> For a pluriperspective insight into the intelligence activity in Dubrovnik in Držić's day, see the collected papers: *Tajna diplomacija u Dubrovniku u XVI. stoljeću / Secret Diplomacy in the 16th Century Dubrovnik*, ed. Mirjana Polić Bobić, Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> For a brief account on the political position of Dubrovnik during the War of Cyprus, that is, the Fourth Ottoman-Venetian War, see: V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, II, 56-60.

<sup>28</sup> Between 1570 and 1585 Dubrovnik merchant fleet included nearly 200 sailing ships of the total capacity of 60,000 tons, equipped for voyage beyond the Adriatic. In the mid-sixteenth century, Dubrovnik Republic had more than 250 captains and around 5,000 seamen (Josip Luetić, *Brodari i pomorci Dubrovačke Republike*, Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1997, 41). Jorjo Tadić makes an estimate of 170 to 200 larger ships and around 4,000 mariners for the entire sixteenth century (Jorjo Tadić, "Dubrovačka Republika do početka XVII. stoljeća", in: *Historija naroda Jugoslavije II*, ed. Branislav Đurđević, Bogo Grafenauer and Jorjo Tadić, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1959, 223). The worth of the Ragusan fleet in the 1570s was estimated at approximately 700,000 ducats (Bernard Stulli, "Dubrovačka Republika u XV. i XVI. stoljeću", in: *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika, XV. i XVI. stoljeće*, ed. Vladimir Marković, Margarita Šimat and Ivana Čukman-Nikolić, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Muzej MTM, 1987, 20).

<sup>29</sup> Antonio Di Vittorio, "Dubrovačka novčana ulaganja u Italiji od 16. do 18. stoljeća", in: Antonio Di Vittorio, *Između mora i kopna. Gospodarsko-financijski aspekti Dubrovačke Republike u novom vijeku*, trans. Slavica Tomašević, Dubrovnik: PGM Ragusa d.d., 2002, 42-49, table chart 43.

<sup>30</sup> Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika, 1. Korijeni, struktura i razvoj dubrovačkog plemstva*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2011, 257-258.

<sup>31</sup> For more details, see: A. Di Vittorio, *Finanze e moneta a Ragusa nell'età delle crisi*, for analysis of the income and expenditure by year, 47-84. Briefly on the reasons behind Dubrovnik's economic decline at the end of the sixteenth and in the early seventeenth century, see: V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, II, 120.

Apparently, in Robinson's time Dubrovnik was spared of the earthquakes,<sup>32</sup> as well as larger epidemics. Yet, Robinson did witness only one outbreak of plague that reached the territory of the Dubrovnik Republic between 1585 and 1586 from the Ottoman hinterland, where it left countless victims over a longer period of time. Dubrovnik, however, was less affected by this epidemic,<sup>33</sup> but the widespread fear and uncertainty urged the Senate to establish a votive procession on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on 3 May,<sup>34</sup> which inspired the poet Didachus Pyrrhus.<sup>35</sup> The Englishman was in the position to observe and experience the implementation of Dubrovnik's developed anti-epidemic measures, and perhaps attended the first votive procession, because he must have been in Dubrovnik in July 1585,<sup>36</sup> as well as in early February and in late May 1586.<sup>37</sup>

In his advanced age Robinson witnessed the Rector's Palace being struck by lightning on 20 June 1610, which caused fire and explosion in the armoury. Although the arms in the central armoury were destroyed and the Senate chamber damaged, the fire did not spread further, which provided a good enough reason for the establishment of yet another solemn votive procession.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For the earthquakes in the Dubrovnik area before 1667, see: J(elenko) Mihailović, *Seizmički karakter i trusne katastrofe našeg južnog primorja od Stona do Ulcinja*, Beograd: SAN, 1947, 12-16, 18. Senate decision of July 1590, by which the crew of the Sokol Castle were allowed to spend the night outside the fortress, i.e., in the rampart due to the damage of the fortress caused by earthquake, implies that there may have been minor quakes outside the urban area (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 70, f. 232).

<sup>33</sup> Risto Jeremić and Jorjo Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, I, Beograd: Centralni higijenski zavod, 1938., 99; Nenad Vekarić, "Broj stanovnika Dubrovačke Republike u 15., 16. i 17. stoljeću", *Analitički Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 29 (1991), 19; N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1, 259.

<sup>34</sup> The Senate passed a decision on 11 March 1586. Besides the procession, the archbishop was to celebrate mass, which, on pain of fine, was to be attended by the rector and the members of the Minor Council (Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Prolegomena in Sacram metropolim Ragusinam: editio princeps*, ed. Relja Seferović, Zagreb - Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2008, 443; R. Jeremić and J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, I, 98). For more details on this votive procession, see: Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti. Cereemonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću*, Zagreb - Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2009, 288-291.

<sup>35</sup> The ode entitled "*De urbe Rhacusa pestilentia laborante / O gradu Dubrovniku koji se muči s kugom*" (On the city of Dubrovnik labouring against pestilence) Didachus dedicated to Jeronim Orsat Cerva, member of the Senate and health official combating plague in 1586 (Vesna Miović, *Dubrovački ples s kugom. Vrijeme lazareta na Pločama*, Zagreb - Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2022, 99).

<sup>36</sup> Entered in the margin of the Senate's decision is Robinson's return from his private journey to Italy (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 68, f. 167).

<sup>37</sup> He took a loan and paid it off duly. See SAD, ser. HR-DADU-10, *Debata Notariae* (hereafter: *Deb. Not.*), vol. 94, f. 19-19v.

<sup>38</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 82, f. 161-161v; N. Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 299-300.

The most severe natural catastrophe in Robinson's time was probably the famine from the early 1590s, which struck the whole of Europe and Anatolia.<sup>39</sup> Bad weather seasons resulted in large-scale crop failure due to wheat diseases, more specifically, wheat rust. According to Guido Alfani, the famine caused a "systematic shock" on the Apennine Peninsula, slightly less dramatic than the "Black Death". Consecutive harvests across vast land failed. All the usual commercial channels for grain supply were exhausted, both private and public granaries emptied, as well as the municipal treasuries.<sup>40</sup>

This great famine and its consequences, which we trace in the decisions of the Ragusan Senate, Robinson must have felt on his own skin.<sup>41</sup> Due to the general food crisis, he felt the shortage of three things which, according to the manual from the later period, each gunner had to be amply provided with: bread, wine and money.<sup>42</sup>

The Englishman was able to eyewitness how the eastern Adriatic republic coped with two great military and political threats on the domestic scene with long-term consequences: Lastovo crisis<sup>43</sup> and the Great Conspiracy.<sup>44</sup> Unlike these two detriments which primarily involved the ruling elite, the Uskoks represented a permanent foreign threat to the entire population of Dubrovnik and its property.<sup>45</sup> The Ragusans were also threatened by the pirates. Towards the end of Robinson's life he must have heard the news of the devastating raid of the island of Koločep and its inhabitants seized as slaves, to such a degree that the Senate even used the term "depopulation".<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, Andrea Seim, Dominik Collet, "Famines in medieval and early modern Europe - Connecting climate and society", *WIREs Climate Change* View, e-859 (August 2023). <https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/wcc.859> (accessed 27 November 2023).

<sup>40</sup> Guido Alfani, "The Famine of the 1590s in Northern Italy. An Analysis of the Greatest 'System Shock' of Sixteenth Century", *Histoire & Mesure*, 2011, 26/1, 18, 34. See also Fernand Braudel, *Sredozemlje i sredozemni svijet u doba Filipa*, vol. 1, prev. Đurđa Šinko-Depierris, Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1997, 635, 638, 640.

<sup>41</sup> Joint loan taken by four bombardiers, Robinson included, paid off in instalments as recorded in February 1590, might be related to the high cost of living and shortages (*Deb. Not.* vol. 94, f. 137).

<sup>42</sup> Lukša Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, Beograd: Vojni muzej JNA, 1960, 138. Beritić provides the translation of the gunnery manual written by Antun Vanini, *proto* bombardier in the service of the Republic, published in 1666: *L'esame che si fa in presenza degl'illustrissimi signori proveditori dell'aramento, e delle guardie, à quelli scolari, che concorrono allo stipendio de cannonieri al servizio della serenissima Republica di Ragusa ordinato d'Antonio Vanini da Santo Arcangelo di Rimini capo bombardiere di tutto lo stato della medema serenissima Republica, et a quella dedicato*. In Ferrara M.DC.LXVI. per Alfonso e Gio. Battista Maresti.

<sup>43</sup> On the political and social context of this rebellion, see: Nenad Vekarić, "Lastovski pobunjenici 1602. godine", *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 43 (2005), 43-73.

<sup>44</sup> For details, see: Stjepan Čosić i Nenad Vekarić, *Dubrovačka vlastela između roda i države: salamankezi i sorbonezi*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2005, 16-47.

<sup>45</sup> In 1605 Uskok threats escalated to such an extent that all men fit for military service in the Dubrovnik area were armed (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 80, f. 53).

<sup>46</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 83, f. 165v.

Upon his arrival in Dubrovnik, Robinson saw a bustling city and a state well populated. Economic development corresponded with the thriving population, yet the peak was soon followed by decline. At the turn of the century, the Republic of Dubrovnik lost approximately 10 per cent of the population in relation to the estimated maximum from around 1580.<sup>47</sup> The Englishman witnessed the gradual withdrawal of the nobility from direct economic activity in shipping and maritime trade, in which distinguished commoners tended to dominate.<sup>48</sup>

Some of Robinson's contemporaries were exceptionally able men who had earned fame during their lives. Being evidently a well integrated foreigner, the Englishman must have known many of the most prominent Ragusans of his time, nobles and citizens alike, at least "by sight". Some of his acquaintances may be traced in the written evidence. For instance, Augustin Matov Pozza<sup>49</sup> and the famous Nikola Vitov Gučetić<sup>50</sup> together with Robinson acted as executor after the death of his spouse Marija.<sup>51</sup> As executors of his own will drafted in 1613 Robinson designated the noblemen Miho Resti and Mato Orsatov Gondola, with whom he must have been close.<sup>52</sup> The fact that the latter was a merchant in London<sup>53</sup> may have contributed to their mutual English-based interest relationship.

### *Bombardier in the service of the Republic*

When Robinson applied for the gunner's post, Dubrovnik was by far the strongest fortification, albeit somewhat antiquated, in the eastern Adriatic, with the largest number of artillery pieces, with its own cannon foundry, immense reserves of various war supplies, developed local production and sufficient number of professional men

<sup>47</sup> N. Vekarić, "Broj stanovnika Dubrovačke Republike u 15., 16. i 17. stoljeću", 19.

<sup>48</sup> N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1, 259.

<sup>49</sup> Augustin Matov Pozza (1527-1608) held the office of rector in several terms. He was responsible for the imposition of fees on the revenues from foreign monetary investments (*gabela di monti*) in 1579, and was elected *procuratore* of the Jesuits ten years later (Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 8. *Genealogije (M-Z)*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2017, 223; *Cons. Rog.* vol. 65, f. 63-63v; vol. 70, f. 104v).

<sup>50</sup> Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549-1610), philosopher, recurrent holder of rector's office (Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 5. *Odabrane biografije (E-Pe)*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2014, 325-333). On Gučetić's social contacts, see: Ivana Skuhala Karasman, "Nikola Vitkov Gučetić i njegov kulturni krug", *Obnovljeni život* 78/1 (2023), 93-103.

<sup>51</sup> The will was drafted in 1590 (*Test. Not.* vol. 62, f. 150v).

<sup>52</sup> *Test. Not.* vol. 54, f. 239v.

<sup>53</sup> Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7. *Genealogije (A-L)*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2016, 386. Ivan Orsatov Gondola and brothers owned a ship which in 1597, for the voyage from Rodos to Ancona, was armed with the hired state falconet cannons. The ship was seized by Spanish galleys and sunk by the English. The deposit for the cannons was agreed at 500 ducats, but did not exceed 1,399 perpers, i.e., 420 ducats, which was below the full value of the cannons (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 75, f. 146-146v, 183v).

specialised in the maintenance of the defensive system.<sup>54</sup> Ragusan peculiarity in hiring professional soldiers, gunners included, was that it was done without "professional" agents. Unlike other early-modern states which chose an expert as employer who would then hire "his own" professional soldiers to serve under his direct subordination, Ragusan professional soldiers were hired exclusively by the Senate.<sup>55</sup>

*Barabanti*, mercenaries in the Ragusan service, had to satisfy specific territorial, language and religious criteria,<sup>56</sup> while the gunners were selected primarily on the basis of professional qualifications. A vast majority of gunners were foreigners,<sup>57</sup> Catholics without exception or seemed to have represented themselves as such. Robinson, together with other foreign gunners, his compatriots included,<sup>58</sup> was in a group of the invited, professional, and for the state "useful" foreigners.<sup>59</sup> To his last day Robinson maintained the status of foreigner with permanent residence in Dubrovnik, as opposed to some other professionals who, after official application, were granted Ragusan citizenship.<sup>60</sup>

The Senate employed Robinson in the state service at a much higher salary than usual, 5 *scudi* per month, and, apparently, without any prior test of his skills.<sup>61</sup> This could mean that his knowledge was unquestionable, either because the Senate was familiar with his high qualifications from an earlier though untraceable episode, or because he had come with a recommendation on his reliability and former experience, perhaps issued by one of the Ragusans who invested his capital in England.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>54</sup> D. Madunić, "The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580-1620)", 363-364, 367-368, 371-372. For an overview of older literature on Ragusan artillery, see: L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 13-14.

<sup>55</sup> D. Madunić, "The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580-1620)", 352.

<sup>56</sup> In a letter to envoy in Vienna in 1618, the Senate explicitly specified that the *barabanti* be "Hrvati, našeg jezika i katolici" (Croats, of our tongue and Catholics) (Vladimir Koščak, "Korespondencija dubrovačke vlade s Nikolom Frankopanom i Petrom Zrinskim", *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti HAZU* 1 (1954), 190).

<sup>57</sup> In the payroll from April 1559 the gunners are entered by name. The international gunners' crew included Italians, Frenchmen, Germans, persons from Bosnia and locals (SAD, ser. HR-DADU-29, *Detta* vol. 2, f. 6).

<sup>58</sup> Dionysus the Englishman was a gunner in 1576 (*Deb. Not.* vol. 92, f. 50).

<sup>59</sup> On the position of foreigners in Ragusan society, see: Zdenka Janeković Römer, "Stranac u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku: između prihvaćenosti i odbačenosti", *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 26 (1993), 27-38; Zdenka Janeković Römer, "Gradani stanovnici, podanici, stranci, inovjerci u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku", in: *Raukarov zbornik: zbornik u čast Tomislava Raukara*, ed. Neven Budak, Zagreb: FF press, 2005, 317-345.

<sup>60</sup> For instance, in 1607 Camilo Camilli, rector of the Dubrovnik Gymnasium, was granted Ragusan citizenship (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 81, f. 25v).

<sup>61</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 271v.

<sup>62</sup> See V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 578, 586; A. Di Vittorio, *Između mora i kopna. Gospodarsko-financijski aspekti Dubrovačke Republike u novom vijeku*, 30; Veselin Kostić, "The Ragusan colony in London in Shakespeare's day", in: *Dubrovnik's Relations with England. A Symposium April 1976*, ed. Rudolf Filipović and Monica Partridge, Zagreb: Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 1977, 261-263; G. D. Ramsay, "The city of London and the Republic of St. Blaise in the later sixteenth century", 41; SAD, ser. HR-DADU-9, *Diversa Notariae* (hereafter: *Div. Not.*), vol. 132, f. 47-52.

Several persons were admitted to the gunnery service in the course of 1570 and 1571 upon recommendation of Miho Marinov Menze, Ragusan envoy to Naples.<sup>63</sup> It appears that Robinson was not admitted to the post upon recommendation, because in other cases the data on the intervention were entered in the Senate's decision, which in the decision regarding Robinson's engagement is not emphasised.<sup>64</sup> For another experienced gunner Menze had the salary prenegotiated in Naples, while the Senate, purportedly, only confirmed the settled amount.<sup>65</sup> Naples was the main Ragusan supplier of arms.<sup>66</sup> It was in Naples that they would seek and find a military gunpowder expert when they needed one.<sup>67</sup> As proof of the excellent relations with the Kingdom of Naples is the fact that the largest Ragusan foreign investments were made in Naples itself, in a conservative and very safe way, as a form of state crediting guaranteed by state revenues from various taxes.<sup>68</sup> In the early seventeenth century, the Senate was in search of gunners through its confidants in Ancona.<sup>69</sup> Vienna was also a place where military experts were sought. In the second decade of the seventeenth century, through their envoy in Vienna, Lujo Radibrati, the Ragusans were in search of four gunners, though in vain, as all of them had been already engaged in war.<sup>70</sup>

The salary of a gunner hired by the Senate in 1574 ranged between two<sup>71</sup> and five *scudi* at the most per month, as negotiated in Robinson's case. Yet another gunner, Battista Neri from Ancona, received the same remuneration as Robinson that year.<sup>72</sup> As proof that Neri was an excellent and reliable gunner was the Senate's decision ten years later to promote him to the rank of vice chief gunner (*sotto capo*), as the chief gunner was no longer capable of performing his administrative duties.<sup>73</sup> Neri was held in high repute by the fellow gunners, who elected him as *gastaldo* of their confraternity.<sup>74</sup> He

<sup>63</sup> For biographical data, see N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 5., 246-247; *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 8., 61.

<sup>64</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 60, f. 10v, 15v.

<sup>65</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 60, f. 167v.

<sup>66</sup> When the armoury exploded in June 1610, a large amount of various arms, among which a thousand arquebuses, were ordered in Naples. Vicko Bune was in charge of the arms supply (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 82, f. 161v-162; N. Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 300, note 1149; Jozo Luetić, "Pomorac i diplomat Vice Bune", *Anal. Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 1 (1952), 262-263).

<sup>67</sup> In search of a gunpowder expert, in November 1611 the Senate addressed the Ragusan consul to Naples, Vicko Bune. At the end of March 1612, an unnamed candidate was offered a high salary of 10 ducats per month and paid accommodation (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 83, f. 39, 65).

<sup>68</sup> A. De Vittorio, "Dubrovačka novčana ulaganja u Italiji od 16. do 18. stoljeća", 47.

<sup>69</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 81, f. 196.

<sup>70</sup> V. Koščak, "Korespondencija dubrovačke vlade s Nikolom Frankopanom i Petrom Zrinskim", 191.

<sup>71</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 224.

<sup>72</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 251.

<sup>73</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 68, f. 13v-14.

<sup>74</sup> Dragan Roller, *Dubrovački zanati u XV. i XVI. stoljeću*, Zagreb: JAZU, 1951, 270.

repaired weapons,<sup>75</sup> and was also skilled in the preparation of gunpowder.<sup>76</sup> He was familiar with woodwork, too.<sup>77</sup> Another gunner of foreign origin, Niccolò from Ancona, had already been earning a monthly salary of somewhat less than 5 *scudi*. He applied for a raise and a workshop, which he was granted in December 1572. In his supplication he stated that he was skilled in making arms, and that he would maintain and inspect state arms.<sup>78</sup> He also produced gunpowder for the state needs.<sup>79</sup> His long-term labour gave fruit, as in 1595 he was assigned to the duty of chief gunner with a comparatively high monthly salary of 6 ducats.<sup>80</sup>

The gunner's monthly salary in Robinson's day, and somewhat earlier, approximated up to 3 ducats, that is, 4 *grossi* per day.<sup>81</sup> This standard monthly pay was also maintained in the second half of the eighteenth century, despite devaluation on account of inflation.<sup>82</sup> It appears likely that Robinson was among the thirty-seven gunners who received their November salary in advance by the end of October 1576. A part of the salary was occasionally received in grain,<sup>83</sup> which was customary with some other state services as well.<sup>84</sup> By decision of the Senate of November 1581, gunners received their remuneration from the hands of the overseer of arms,<sup>85</sup> as was formerly also decided for the *barabanti*.<sup>86</sup> Senate's decision, on the one side, implies a better, more direct money control and, on the other, makes it clear that the *bombardieri* and *barabanti* owe their loyalty to the state, that is, to the nobility, and not to their commander.

<sup>75</sup> *Guardie et armamento* vol. 22, f. 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Guardie et armamento* vol. 19, f. 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Guardie et armamento* vol. 19, f. 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 61, f. 174v-175.

<sup>79</sup> *Guardie et armamento* vol. 13b, f. 7v.

<sup>80</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 109.

<sup>81</sup> In May 1559, twenty-one gunners received a salary ranging from 1 ducat and 32 *grossi* to 4 ducats, earned by three gunners only, masters probably. The total salary amount paid to the gunners that month added to 62:26 ducats. The same amount was paid out in April (*Detta* vol. 2, f. 6, 14v-15). One Ragusan ducat was equivalent to 40 *grossi* (*denarii*), one *scudo* to 36 *grossi*, and one *perper* to 12 *grossi*. For a survey of the variety of Ragusan units of account, see: Milan Rešetar, *Dubrovačka numizmatika. 1. (historički) dio*, Sremski Karlovci: Srpska manastirska štamparija, 1924, 67-69. In the second decade of the seventeenth century, a gunner's salary, depending on experience, ranged between 3 and 5 *scudi* (D. Mađunić, "The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580-1620)", 353).

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, a series of applications for the gunner's post from the latter half of the eighteenth century (SAD, ser. HR-DADU-7.3.8, *Diplomata et acta*, 18th century, vol. 188, no. 3353, doc. 4, 18, 38, 45-47; vol. 189, no. 3354, doc. 139, 140).

<sup>83</sup> It usually amounted to three *cupelli* of grain (about 55.545 litres) per person. Sometimes even twice a year, for example, in March and December 1578 (*Cons. Min.* vol. 54, f. 52, 135v).

<sup>84</sup> For example, in April 1582 (*Cons. Min.* vol. 56, f. 50v).

<sup>85</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 66, f. 130.

<sup>86</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 66, f. 91v.

Admission of a gunner to state service in most cases was preceded by a test of the candidate's artillery skills. Decision on the test the Senate, most likely, based on the candidate's application for the state post. Unlike a relatively large number of applications from the eighteenth century in which the candidates either directly<sup>87</sup> or through intermediary<sup>88</sup> applied for gunners in the state service, the applications from the sixteenth century have not been preserved in the original but only in the Senate minutes.<sup>89</sup> Among others, extant is a copy of an application for state service of an exceptional gunner from which, as it is imbued with self-praise, one may learn of all the skills expected from a top performing *bombardier*.<sup>90</sup> Robinson's application may have been penned in a similar manner.

In January 1570, the Senate admitted Ivan Jeronimov (Grifone) from Lopud<sup>91</sup> to the post of chief gunner, at a salary of 6 *scudi* per month,<sup>92</sup> whereas two years later he received additional 30 perpers per year for the flat rent,<sup>93</sup> with an extra duty to train all those interested in becoming gunners. This informal training preceded the official artillery school, established by the Senate in 1655 upon proposal of Antun Vanini, master gunner.<sup>94</sup> Ivan Jeronimov Grifone returned to his homeland after long absence, as a mature man, wishing to spend the rest of his life there. In his application he failed to mention where and how he acquired his evidently great artillery experience. Being an islander, it is likely that, in his earlier years at least, he sailed aboard one of the Lopud

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<sup>87</sup> See, for instance, the application of barber Pavao Pavlov, who applied for the gunner's post in 1708 (*Diplomata et acta*, 18th century, vol. 187, no. 3352, doc. 26).

<sup>88</sup> Widow Marija Dešković applied for the gunner's post in 1796 on behalf of her son (*Diplomata et acta*, 18th century, vol. 194, no. 3359, doc. 132).

<sup>89</sup> Upon his third application for gunner's post, Matija Lukin was finally admitted in April 1596, despite a comparatively low salary of only two and a half *scudi* per month. To his application he added an element from his private life aimed to enhance his job prospects - the fact that he was married to one of the daughters of Stjepan the keykeeper, i.e., dungeon keeper (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 280v-281).

<sup>90</sup> Some important characteristics and skills of a gunner have been outlined in the printed gunnery exam handbook from the mid-seventeenth century written by Antun Vanini, chief gunner. Thus, an ideal gunner is described as a younger, physically fit person, preferably a craftsman who can read and write, a good Christian, devoted to St. Barbara, loyal to the ruler and subordinate to commanders, elegant, modest and diligent. In addition, a gunner must be well versed in three types of artillery, projectile types and their advantages and disadvantages. He must know how to operate the gunner's "squadra", an equipment used for aiming cannon, how to use the compass, and he must know the range of particular artillery types. He should be knowledgeable of the gun barrels in and out, as well as the alloy used for their casting. He is expected to operate the cannon carriage and wheels, and assess if they suit the barrels. He must be able to distinguish gunpowder and saltpeter (L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 136).

<sup>91</sup> I am indebted to Ivana Lazarević Vukovac for the data search on this Ragusan gunner in the Dubrovnik Population Database compiled by Nenad Vekarić. However, database search has produced no result regarding Ivan Jeronimov Grifone.

<sup>92</sup> L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 84.

<sup>93</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 61, f. 176.

<sup>94</sup> L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 133.

ships. In his application he stated that on account of his knowledge and experience he was qualified for a master gunner's post in the capacity as their *capo* and *proto*. He was engaged in artillery from his early youth, as his first profession, which explains why in his application he failed to mention any details about his knowledge of the operation of various types of cannons. He thus gave precedence to his other skills, typical of a best performing master gunner. The islander showed great skill in field artillery organisation and was able to make repairs if no engineer was available. He could measure the heights and distances, establish strong and weak spots, prepare gunpowder, respond to an attack by means of different projectiles. As his special skill, for which he was certain that non-professionals would describe as impossible, he emphasised the firing of a remote target projectile at a range resembling that from the City to Gruž, at an enemy sheltered behind a wall.<sup>95</sup> This confirms that sixteenth-century artillery equipment could shoot mortar-like projectiles.<sup>96</sup>

By order of the Senate, the gunners' skills were tested by the overseers of arms, who also tested the knowledge of the cannon casters.<sup>97</sup> Archival research shows that the persons who applied for the gunner's post were generally versed in the artillery skills. The reports of the arms overseers have not been recorded in the Senate minutes, yet tracing the Senate's decisions regarding primarily the testing and then the admission to state service one may conclude that the overseers of arms, and later also the Senate, were mainly satisfied with the candidates.<sup>98</sup> Apparently, it took around two or more weeks between the call for testing and the day of the admission to service,<sup>99</sup> or even more than one month,<sup>100</sup> but most frequently the term proved shorter.<sup>101</sup>

The gunner candidates may be roughly divided into two groups. The first group, into which Robinson falls, includes individuals who have probably been, more or less professionally, acquainted with artillery since their young age, as stated by the gunners' *proto*, Ivan from Lopud, in his application. The second group encompasses persons who were trained in some other skills or crafts, and who wished to "reskill" for a better

<sup>95</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 59, f. 201-201v.

<sup>96</sup> For a survey of older literature on Ragusan artillery, see: L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 13-14; for a short outline of the development of artillery in Europe, 15-23.

<sup>97</sup> Thus tested was *magister* Frano Antica from Lastovo in early 1578 (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 64, f. 171v-172; L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 85).

<sup>98</sup> Among the rare declined applications for the gunner's post was that of shoemaker Vicko Šimunov of 26 October 1595. Ultimately, the Senate changed its decision and admitted him two weeks later (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 160v, 168v).

<sup>99</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 67, f. 83v, 91.

<sup>100</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 224, 240; more than two months, usually during harvest when the government bodies rested (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 147, 149, 160, 161).

<sup>101</sup> For example, the admission procedure of the gunner Luka Ivanov from Zaton lasted only six days. The overseers of arms were authorised by the Senate to test his artillery skills on 20 May, and by 26 May 1569 he was already admitted to the post (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 59, f. 119, 124).

or additional gunner's duty which would bring them extra wages.<sup>102</sup> In this group, for example, we can find carpenters,<sup>103</sup> a mason,<sup>104</sup> blacksmith<sup>105</sup> and clockmaker.<sup>106</sup> The skills required for a gunner and clockmaker appeared to be similar, as evidenced by the gunners' applications for the extra duty of clockmaker<sup>107</sup> and the clockmaker's application to be admitted and additionally remunerated, besides his regular job, as a gunner.<sup>108</sup> Traced in the archives between 1574 and 1590 is the state clockmaker Gašpar performing explicit artillery duties, for example, preparation of gunpowder, sulphur powder and operational inspection of arquebuses.<sup>109</sup>

The career of Marin Kuzmin from Lastovo, Ragusan gunner and later state clockmaker, started in 1583 when the Ragusan gunner Nikola Stjepanov from Bar, apparently also master blacksmith, took him as apprentice to train as blacksmith.<sup>110</sup> Marin Kuzmin was admitted as gunner in state service in 1595.<sup>111</sup> His former knowledge as blacksmith helped him with his new duty, as he apparently advanced by becoming skilled in the knowledge of clockwork. In addition to the duty of master gunner and assistant clockmaker, in 1609 he applied for the post of master clockmaker. His application for

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<sup>102</sup> Petar Marinov, "djetić", assistant of master Nikola, *proto* gunner, boasted of his salary of 3 *scudi* per month in 1606 on the Placa in the vicinity of St. Francis in front of carpenter Marko Pavlov, whose mind was tickled by the very idea. Petar ridiculed him by alluding to some of his inabilities on account of which he could not qualify for a gunner. Evidently, Marko felt insulted and punched Petar in the face (SAD, ser. HR-DADU-20, *Lamenti de Criminale*, vol. 6, f. 194). According to Vanini's gunnery exam manual from the mid-seventeenth century, craftsmanship was looked upon as desirable basic knowledge for a future gunner, literacy being compulsory. Perhaps the offended carpenter was illiterate.

<sup>103</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 73, f. 207; vol. 75, f. 45.

<sup>104</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 77, f. 36v.

<sup>105</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 82, f. 77.

<sup>106</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 80, f. 248.

<sup>107</sup> Nikola, *proto* gunner, applied for the clockmaker's post in 1602 at an extra salary of 30 *scudi* per year, which was rejected by the Senate (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 78, f. 60). Marin Kuzmin from Lastovo, first hired as a gunner in 1595, in 1609 was also engaged as a clockmaker at a salary of 30 *scudi* per year (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 160v-161; vol. 82, f. 39, 58).

<sup>108</sup> Silvio Pieramati from Venice was first admitted in 1605 as state clockmaker at a salary of 80 *scudi* per year, paid flat and workshop. A year later he applied for the gunner's post at an extra 36 *scudi* per year, i.e., 3 *scudi* per month. In his application he stated that, if he were admitted as gunner, he would reveal the secret of how to protect the arms from rust (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 80, f. 248, 251, 273-273v).

<sup>109</sup> *Guardie et armamento*, vol. 11, f. 2-2v; vol. 20, f. 2, a tergo; vol. 13b, f. 4v.

<sup>110</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-15, *Diversa Cancellariae* (hereafter: *Div. Canc.*), vol. 171, a tergo, f. 52v. A gunner by the name of Nikola Stjepanov, no place of origin specified, with possible reference to two candidates, one from Ancona and the other from Bar, in 1586 employed Luka Ivanov Perić, apparently a minor because the contract was witnessed by the father, as apprentice at a term of eight and a half years, with an obligation to train him in the art of gunnery and blacksmithing (*Div. Canc.* vol. 174, a tergo, f. 71v). Santino Neri, gunner and woodworker, hired Stjepan Ivanov from Konavle as apprentice in early 1606 in woodwork and his other crafts for a term of eight years (*Div. Canc.* vol. 194, f. 125v).

<sup>111</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 160v-161.

the additionally salaried duty was first declined, though accepted eventually.<sup>112</sup> With time, he employed his own apprentices.<sup>113</sup> In 1607 Marin Kuzmin tried to find substitute for his gunner's post on the Fortress of St. Lawrence and elsewhere, offering training designed to guarantee the candidate's minimum skill for the admission to state service. The training fee was 10 ducats, on condition that the payment be made after the candidate's (*soldat's*) admission at St. Lawrence Fortress as gunner in state service.<sup>114</sup>

Traced in the mid-sixteenth century is a case of a gunner whose additional activity was bookbinding.<sup>115</sup> Accumulation of responsibilities as well as their occasional rotation was favoured by the state, especially if there was a lack of specifically qualified workforce.<sup>116</sup>

Robinson did not apply for the clockmaker's post and it seems that he did not train others in artillery skills either.<sup>117</sup> Regular duties, daily routine, as is often the case, are less visible in the sources. Given the range of his salary, it may well be assumed that the Englishman did not considerably lag behind *proto* Ivan in his knowledge of artillery skills, and that the bulk of what the islander stated in his application was equally true of Robinson.

The sources, however, reveal some special skills and jobs with which Robinson occupied himself. He was skilled in the cleaning of the artillery equipment known as *smiralj*.<sup>118</sup> He repaired the fence on the Bokar Tower.<sup>119</sup> Like Ivan from Lopud, Robinson also produced firework rockets.<sup>120</sup> Fireworks, among others, were usually used to mark the installation of new sultans.<sup>121</sup> It was also used for private purposes, as in 1589 the production of rockets and their firing during private celebrations was strictly banned on pain a 50 perper fine. If any of the gunners violated the decree, they were fined by

<sup>112</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 82, f. 19, 39, 58.

<sup>113</sup> In April 1610, for an apprenticeship of seven years he recruited the minor Martin Andrijin by permission of the latter's brother Ivan (*Div. Canc.* vol. 197, f. 53).

<sup>114</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 195, f. 116-116v.

<sup>115</sup> Relja Seferović, "Dubrovački knjižari 16. stoljeća u državnoj službi", *Arhivski vjesnik* 51 (2008), 385.

<sup>116</sup> By end of May 1610, the commander of guards in the loggia was temporarily relieved from the obligation of permanent station in the loggia so that he could engage in woodwork in the city, at Peskarija and the city ditch, as well as in Ston. He was to return to the loggia only upon the order of the overseer of guards (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 82, f. 151).

<sup>117</sup> Frano Radov, gunner of Ston, received an extra *scudo* per month on condition that he remained in Ston permanently and trained men in the artillery skills (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 60, f. 30).

<sup>118</sup> *Guardie et armamento*, vol. 11, f. 28.

<sup>119</sup> *Guardie et armamento*, vol. 24, f. 12v.

<sup>120</sup> All components were obtained from the state bookbinder Curcio (*Guardie et armamento*, vol. 11, f. 30). Later, for the same purpose of the preparation of fireworks rockets the necessary components were acquired from another state bookbinder, Curcio's pupil, Silvestro Barletta (*Guardie et armamento*, vol. 24, f. 3v). On state bookbinders Curcio Troiano and Silvestro Barletta, see: R. Seferović, "Dubrovački knjižari 16. stoljeća u državnoj službi", 386-389.

<sup>121</sup> The fireworks were organised in 1595 to celebrate the new sultan (Mehmed III) (*Guardie et armamento*, vol. 24, f. 4, a tergo).

the loss of salary and an extra 25 perpers.<sup>122</sup> Knowing how skilled he was in preparing fireworks, this ban may have directly concerned Robinson as well.

The gunners are occasionally recorded in the sources with the *magister* title, which implies a higher level of professional skill.<sup>123</sup> Their main duties included the maintenance of arms and production of components, production of gunpowder and cannon balls of various sizes, maintenance of the artillery on the fortifications across the entire Republic territory. Robinson appears to have served in Ston, but equally so in the Sokol Castle in Konavle, because by the end of February 1597 he was released from these unpleasant duties for reasons unknown.<sup>124</sup> Gunners also participated in the construction and repairs of the state armed ships - fuste<sup>125</sup> and frigates<sup>126</sup> - aboard which they sometimes sailed,<sup>127</sup> and for which they were additionally remunerated.<sup>128</sup> They built benches in the arsenal<sup>129</sup> and repaired fortification doors.<sup>130</sup> Cannons were built by a special professional, cannon caster, but when, on one occasion, this post became suddenly vacant due to caster's abandonment of duty, the duty was assumed by a gunner.<sup>131</sup> The fact that the gunners were well acquainted with ships and the use of various equipment is testified by their engagement in the haul of wrecked ships, upon permission of the Senate.<sup>132</sup> There was a considerable amount of arms in Dubrovnik since it was customary for the citizens of all strata to keep guard and defend the city if necessary.<sup>133</sup> These private weapons were maintained and repaired on the gunners' own account, some of whom had their own workshops.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Cons. Min.* vol. 60, f. 14-14v.

<sup>123</sup> For example, in a lawsuit from 1589 (SAD, ser. HR-DADU-21, *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 124, f. 258).

<sup>124</sup> *Cons. Min.* vol. 64, f. 68v.

<sup>125</sup> *Guardie et armamento* vol. 11, f. 34v, a tergo.

<sup>126</sup> See, for instance: *Guardie et armamento* vol. 12, f. 25; vol. 19, f. 6.

<sup>127</sup> For example, in May 1586 a gunner aboard an armed frigate of 14 benches was Vicko Vidov, and in August Ivan Feza (*Guardie et armamento* vol. 15, f. 16-16v).

<sup>128</sup> Gunner Andrija Fiamengo was paid 3 *grossi* per day for the service aboard a state frigate in June 1581 (*Guardie et armamento* vol. 18, f. 10).

<sup>129</sup> Gunner Battista Neri and his assistant were commissioned for this job in August 1585 (*Guardie et armamento* vol. 19, f. 9).

<sup>130</sup> Gunner Santino and his work companion repaired the door on the Minčeta Tower in March (*Guardie et armamento* vol. 24, f. 1v).

<sup>131</sup> In early 1588, gunner Luka replaced in the foundry the cannon caster Frano who had abandoned the post (*Guardie et armamento* vol. 20, f. 5v, a tergo). He might have had some earlier experience, because a certain bombardier Luka had worked in the foundry and abandoned it by order of the Senate in 1578 (*Cons. Min.* vol. 54, f. 85v).

<sup>132</sup> In December 1581, the Senate refused to issue permission to Ivan, *proto* gunner, who, accompanied by a few men, was to set out in a state boat to haul a sunken Venetian ship by using beams from the city arsenal. This salvage also included a deposit in case of state property damage (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 66, f. 153).

<sup>133</sup> In 1575 the state equipped *barabanti* with arquebuses, which they had to pay off in instalments, by subtraction from the state salary (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 337).

<sup>134</sup> Đuro Vlahov, bombardier, applied for a raise in salary in August 1594, supporting his petition with shortages and poor gains from his commercial property (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 73, f. 201v-202).

The state-employed bombardiers sailed regularly on Ragusan merchant ships which carried the state grain supplies from abroad, because local production could not meet the population needs. On these voyages, the gunners usually sailed on the ship's expenses and were not salaried by the state, but exceptions were known, when, during more perilous voyages, they still received a state salary as if they were stationed in Dubrovnik.<sup>135</sup> For such occasions merchant ships chartered by the state were equipped with arms hired from the state arsenal.<sup>136</sup>

The bombardiers were known to take a two-,<sup>137</sup> three-<sup>138</sup> or a several-month<sup>139</sup> leave of absence from Dubrovnik on account of private reasons, during which they received no salary from the state, although it appears that their gunner's post was "reserved" for them for at least some time. This explains the fluctuating number of salaried gunners by month.<sup>140</sup> A non-salaried gunner's leave was approved by the Senate.<sup>141</sup> The Senate's approval was not merely a formality because the leave, albeit rarely, was known to be rejected.<sup>142</sup> Permission for the departure abroad was submitted by the *barabanti* and other state officials, such as physician, *zdur*, chancellor.<sup>143</sup>

Robinson petitioned for absence and it was approved on several occasions. During these absences he may have served as gunner on merchant ships, traded on his own account or engaged in any other activity related to his main profession or not. Dated March 1580, is Robinson's travel destination during his six-month leave, which he

<sup>135</sup> Frano Radov and Pavao Nikolin, gunners aboard the vessel Beribaca which, in late July 1569, set sail for the Levant for the supply of grain for the commune, by decision of the Senate received a state salary (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 59, f. 143).

<sup>136</sup> Overseers of arms, by order of the Senate, armed the ship of Ivan Vickov which in 1581 sailed to Dürres for the state supply of grain. Ivan Vickov received one falcon, one falconet, ten arquebuses, ten hellebardes and two barrels of gunpowder, leaving a deposit of 300 ducats (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 66, f. 33v). For more examples on the deposit-paid equipment of private vessels with arms from the state arsenal in the course of the sixteenth century, see: L. Beritić, *Dubrovačka artiljerija*, 121-123.

<sup>137</sup> See, for instance: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 63, f. 263; vol. 77, f. 30.

<sup>138</sup> See, for instance: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 135-135v, 170v; vol. 63, f. 32v-33, 133v; vol. 68, f. 92; vol. 75, f. 109, 231.

<sup>139</sup> For an example of approved six-month leave of absence, see: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 65, f. 214; vol. 68, f. 306; vol. 74, f. 158-158v; for a ten-month absence: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 58, f. 168v; for a year's absence: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 64, f. 254; vol. 70, f. 254.

<sup>140</sup> Thus thirty-seven gunners received salary for November 1575, thirty-nine for December, and forty for February 1576 (*Detta* vol. 3, f. 6, 19, 29).

<sup>141</sup> Detected in the examined archival material is a case, recorded on 23 June 1588, in which the rector and the Minor Council, and not the Senate, approved of a non-salaried leave of absence to a gunner (*Cons. Min.* vol. 59, f. 161).

<sup>142</sup> On 15 July 1580 the Senate rejected the petition for a two-year non-salaried leave to the *proto* of the gunners' crew (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 65, f. 232).

<sup>143</sup> For examples, see *Cons. Rog.* vol. 58, f. 155, 224v; vol. 67, f. 117. Towards the end of March 1600, Year of Jubilee and before Easter, the Senate issued an exceptional permission to the captain of the guards (*zduri*) stationed at the Rector's Palace for his salaried three-month leave of absence due to the pilgrimage to Rome (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 77, f. 29v-30).

intended to spend in Italy.<sup>144</sup> Although he apparently failed to return by the expected date, the circumstances being justifiable, by the end of October 1583 the Senate formally re-admitted him to his former post at a salary he had previously earned,<sup>145</sup> yet a decision of this kind was not passed automatically.<sup>146</sup> When in early 1585 Robinson again petitioned for a four-month leave on account of some private business matter in Italy, which he was granted, entered in the margin is the exact date of his departure from Dubrovnik, 6 February, and his return, 24 July.<sup>147</sup> Apparently, the delay in Robinson's return had no serious consequences for his career.

Because of the importance of the gunners' duty for state security, their unauthorised absence from duty and travel abroad carried serious consequences. Insubordination and disregard of the Senate were drastically punished, as evidenced by a case of gunner Ivan Jeronimov Grifone from Lopud, who, for having wilfully abandoned the Republic territory while on state duty in 1595, was deprived of the salary, banished from the state under very strict terms of the provisions regarding rebels and murderers, promulgated in November 1590.<sup>148</sup> It remains open whether such a harsh sentence was also impacted by the destination, purpose of the trip, that is, owners of the ship the gunner had probably boarded when he left the state.

There is reason to believe that Robinson may have been involved in slave trade in Dubrovnik where that activity was legal. By the famous decree of 1416 slave trade was partly restricted but not suspended. In early July 1599, at a price of 60 Venetian gold sequins, Robinson sold two "black" slaves from "Barbary" to the French captain Francisco Vioni from Marseille to serve him on the ship.<sup>149</sup> In another document dated May 1603, for 60 Venetian gold sequins William Robinson sold a fifteen-year-old "black" girl, formerly owned by Captain Riciardo Dolphi, to Antonio Imberti.<sup>150</sup> In the first case there is no mention of the persons Robinson purchased the slaves from, yet in the second case it is clear that Robinson acts as a middleman between the seller, captain and Italian buyer. This business notwithstanding, it is possible that Robinson's intermediary role in slave trade was infrequent and a mere side activity.

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<sup>144</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 65, f. 177v.

<sup>145</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 67, f. 187.

<sup>146</sup> For example, gunner Rusko Petrov, first engaged in 1573, was not restored to his "old" post in 1588. The Senate repeatedly rejected his application to be hired to the same post in 1590 (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 62, f. 134; vol. 69, f. 283; vol. 70, f. 157).

<sup>147</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 68, f. 167.

<sup>148</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 74, f. 109. For the provisions concerning murderers and rebels, see: *Cons. Rog.* vol. 70, f. 278-279v.

<sup>149</sup> V. Vinaver, "Crno roblje u starom Dubrovniku", 440; *Div. Not.* vol. 129, f. 140.

<sup>150</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 191, f. 147v.

Documents from the State Archives in Dubrovnik fail to provide a clear answer as to whether bombardier Robinson was a seaman. Namely, in April 1602, Captain William Robinson, master of the English vessel "Lanareta",<sup>151</sup> appeared at the Ragusan chancery. Enquired by Jeronim Orsatov Cerva about the nature of his calling on the chancery, he stated that he had received a reward for the import of grain from the Levant on behalf of the absent Bernard Giorgio.<sup>152</sup> Data from May 1603 regarding the decision of the Minor Council to disburse all the remaining salaries to gunner Robinson<sup>153</sup> may lead to the conclusion that they were suspended for some reason, perhaps due to his absence from Dubrovnik. Was he sailing as captain of an English vessel? If not, then we might be dealing with two men by the name of William Robinson, a gunner and a captain, in which case the information about slave trade could be ascribed to the gunner's namesake.

Robinson's financial situation varied, as he petitioned and was granted protection from forcible collection of debt.<sup>154</sup> He was known to be in debt,<sup>155</sup> but at the same time gave loans, e.g., in his will he mentioned two debtors.<sup>156</sup> During his lifetime, it seems that he was not impoverished and managed to acquire modest property. He lived in a relatively comfortable home, where he received his compatriots en route to other destinations.<sup>157</sup> He had a single mast sailing boat with four oars, sufficient for coastal sail to Albania.<sup>158</sup> The accusation regarding the breaking and stealing of the contents from a chest of a deceased man from Mljet in late 1590 points to the fact that Robinson had some earlier business connections with Mljet.<sup>159</sup> By the end of 1592, when the shortage caused by unusual climate oscillations seemed to relax, Robinson bought a larger

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<sup>151</sup> The name of this ship is not known in the literature according to which two English ships, "The Royal Merchant" and "Phoenix", landed in the Dubrovnik port in 1602 (Josip Luetić, "English mariners and ships in seventeenth century Dubrovnik", in: *Dubrovnik's Relations with England. A Symposium April 1976.*, ed. Rudolf Filipović and Monica Partridge, Zagreb: Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 1977, 226-227). Both ships belonged to the Levant company (Mortimer Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd, 1908, 227).

<sup>152</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 190, f. 115.

<sup>153</sup> *Cons. Min.* vol. 66, f. 141.

<sup>154</sup> By decision of the Minor Council, in September 1609 Robinson was released from a debt obligation to private persons, but not from his debt to the state, to a term of fifteen days (*Cons. Min.* vol. 68, f. 251v).

<sup>155</sup> *Deb. Not.* vol. 94, f. 19-19v.

<sup>156</sup> *Test. Not.* vol. 54, f. 239v.

<sup>157</sup> V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze između jugoslovenskih zemalja i Engleske do 1700. godine*, 283; V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 347.

<sup>158</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 191, f. 93. Owner of a presumably even bigger vessel that could sail to Bari on the coast across the Adriatic was bombardier Santino Neri (*Div. Canc.* vol. 180, f. 121).

<sup>159</sup> *Lamenti de Criminale* vol. 5, f. 28.

quantity of wine, 40 *quinquia* (c. 800 litres), some of which was certainly intended for sale.<sup>160</sup> Three years later, the payment of the Mljet wine supplies met with difficulties.<sup>161</sup>

Gunner's duty did not deter him from engaging in other activities, notably trade. In addition, his business connections and good knowledge of the market qualified him for a person of confidence and a worthy representative of the English people in Dubrovnik.

### *English consul*

Robinson's position as English consul has been mentioned randomly as an additional argument for the grant of the concessions in the execution of gunner's duties on two occasions in the early seventeenth century. No data are available as to when and how Robinson assumed the post of English consul, but it must have taken place before 1601. It also remains open whether the title used by the authorities in official documents had the meaning of consul in the formal or practical sense. The latter is far more likely. Kostić argues that William Robinson was not appointed by the English government, but was titled as consul by the Ragusans or earned the title on the basis of a private contract with the Levant Company.<sup>162</sup> It seems that Robinson held the duty for life, as after his death in 1613 no other person bore the title of English consul in Dubrovnik.<sup>163</sup>

Apparently, no other person had held this office before Robinson either, most likely because there was no need for it. The bulk of English merchants appear in the Ragusan sources in the 1520s, after which they rarely visited Dubrovnik up until the last decades of the sixteenth century, when the Ragusans almost entirely controlled the export of English goods to Dubrovnik,<sup>164</sup> and further to the eastern markets. As for the Ragusans heading for England, it is known that during the reign of Henry VIII an average of two large Ragusan ships landed each year in Southampton or Margate.<sup>165</sup> During the conflict

<sup>160</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 183, a tergo, f. 77.

<sup>161</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-18, *Sententiae di Cancellaria*, vol. 160, f. 138.

<sup>162</sup> V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 381.

<sup>163</sup> Miho Krtica, a very wealthy Ragusan, shipowner and captain who started his career as a shipbuilder in the Gruž dockyard, was explicitly forbidden by the Senate in early 1804, on pain of capital punishment, to accept the title of English consul or even mediate in trade for the English. Yet, English government persisted on the idea of opening a consulate and ultimately decided to appoint an Englishman as consul. The Senate approved of the proposal with a single majority vote, and that the English consul be welcomed and accommodated in Dubrovnik on condition that his arrival be represented as private initiative of Miho Krtica. French occupation foiled their plan. Krtica maintained strong business ties with the English, and in Vlahović's opinion, he could have made these contacts in Dubrovnik, where English boats anchored, or in Albania, where the Ragusan and English merchants purchased timber for the building of ships (Josip Vlahović, "Pokušaj osnivanja britanskog konzulata u Dubrovniku za vrijeme Republike", *Naše more: znanstveni časopis za more i pomorstvo* 5/2 (1958), 114-115).

<sup>164</sup> V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 187.

<sup>165</sup> V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 578-579.

between Philip II and England in the 1570s, the goods from the Levant were carried to England by Ragusan boats.<sup>166</sup>

The need for an English consular representative in Dubrovnik due to the growing presence of Englishmen may be related to England's aspirations to expand trade in the eastern Mediterranean and its relations with the Ottoman Empire. For this purpose the Turkey Company was established in 1581 as well as the Venice Company in 1583. The two companies merged in the Levant Company in 1592.<sup>167</sup> The establishment of companies had a negative impact on the position of Ragusan merchants in London. In the 1580s the Ragusans experienced severe and disloyal local competition, because the mentioned companies enjoyed monopoly privileges.<sup>168</sup> The escalating competition impacted the final withdrawal of the Ragusans from that market. From 1605 the Levant Company had the monopoly on trade with Dubrovnik.<sup>169</sup> The monopoly concerned the whole territory of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>170</sup>

The Levant Company appointed English consuls to protect its interests and, as a rule, they were not diplomatic representatives of the Royal Crown.<sup>171</sup> Their main duty was to collect the 2 per cent tariff on the import and export of goods owned by English merchants. The provisions on the possible salary varied from case to case.<sup>172</sup> The consuls of the Levant Company were to be the Company members who resided in the place of their mission. They had judicial power to act in commercial disputes among all English traders, members of the Company and others alike.<sup>173</sup> Initially, age was among the principal qualifications required for the membership in the Levant Company, above 26 or one year upon the completion of apprenticeship at the earliest, and the payment of the admission fee.<sup>174</sup> In 1605 the Levant Company was granted formal royal permission to appoint consuls.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>166</sup> G. D. Ramsay, "The city of London and the Republic of St. Blaise in the later sixteenth century", 38-39.

<sup>167</sup> Listed in the first charter of the Levant company are the names of 53 merchants headed by governor Sir Richard Osborne (M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 36).

<sup>168</sup> G. D. Ramsay, "The city of London and the Republic of St. Blaise in the later sixteenth century", 39-40.

<sup>169</sup> G. D. Ramsay, "The city of London and the Republic of St. Blaise in the later sixteenth century", 41. Dubrovnik is on the list of ports added to the original privileges of the Levant company (M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 231).

<sup>170</sup> M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 64.

<sup>171</sup> Niels Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650", *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15/1-2 (1967), 34-36.

<sup>172</sup> M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 94-95.

<sup>173</sup> M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 63.

<sup>174</sup> M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 60.

<sup>175</sup> N. Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650", 50; M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 62.

The list of places with resident consuls preserved in the documents of the Levant Company makes no mention of Dubrovnik.<sup>176</sup> This may lead to the conclusion that it was not the Royal Crown that bestowed the consular title upon Robinson, nor the Levant Company, or that an official document certifying the act is not extant.

Kostić holds that Robinson was consul in 1589, when he hosted five travellers in his home, three of whom were servants.<sup>177</sup> The most distinguished among them was a venturing English nobleman in his thirties, and purportedly an able military commander, as his war skills were highly esteemed by the Spanish rivals, Henry Cavendish, Parliament Member and eldest son of William Cavendish and his third wife Elizabeth Hardwick, known as "Bess of Hardwick", with Royal Family ties. Godmother at Cavendish's baptism was the future queen, Elizabeth I. The second traveller, albeit of much lower rank and common descent, was Richard Mallory, merchant, who, on behalf of Walsingham, the Secretary of State, carried a letter for Edward Barton, English diplomatic representative to Constantinople. Barton was an English agent from 1588 to 1591 or 1593, and ambassador from 1591 or 1593 to 1597.<sup>178</sup>

Robinson's consular activity may be traced, for instance, in his procurement of accommodation for an ill Englishman and mediation in the settlement of his affairs in 1608. It was then that Dubrovnik saw the arrival of one of the largest ships of the Levant Company, "The Royal Exchange" (*Cambio Real*), aboard which were several English merchants. The most prominent among them was Henry Parvis, who chose Venice as the centre of his merchant ventures. Merchant Henry Belton fell ill, and at the house of the English consul William Robinson where he was accommodated, he issued instructions regarding the money and goods that were entrusted to him. Besides the ill merchant and Robinson, hosted at the latter's house were also Henry Parvis, Ralph Symes and Pavao Gondula, who interpreted from English into Italian.<sup>179</sup>

Apart from emergent, critical situations due to illness, in the capacity of English consul Robinson could lobby the Senate to accept the petitions of English merchants for a preferential treatment, e.g., petition submitted by Rudolph Inglsion, who in June 1603 brought a huge load of salted fish, harrings, tunas, etc. Inglsion petitioned to pay

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<sup>176</sup> M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 214-216.

<sup>177</sup> V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze između jugoslovenskih zemalja i Engleske do 1700. godine*, 283; V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 347.

<sup>178</sup> Alfred C. Wood, "Introduction", in: *Mr. Harri Cavendish, his journey to and from Constantinople 1589 by Fox, his servant* [Camden Miscellany, vol. XVII. Camden Third Series, vol. LXIV], ed. Alfred C. Wood. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1940, III-VI.

<sup>179</sup> V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 338. Mentioned among Belton's business partners are the Englishmen Henry Parvis and Richard Dick, Ivan Gleđević, along with the Ragusan Jews David Miranda and Isaac Jeshurun. Belton, among others, traded in textiles (*Div. Not.* vol. 132, f. 198v-199).

only the customs tariff of 2 per cent for the imported food commodities, and to be exempt from other dues.<sup>180</sup>

Similarly, Robinson may have intervened in 1607, regarding the petition of English merchants, evidently members of Levant Company, Richard Dick and Thomas Freeman, who aboard their ship "Saphire",<sup>181</sup> anchored off Lokrum, carried 50 bales of kersey. They petitioned for the payment of taxes on sold goods only.<sup>182</sup> Ralph Symes was formerly granted Senate's permission for the export of unsold goods exempt from transit customs tariff.<sup>183</sup> The same concession was petitioned for and granted, perhaps with Robinson's assistance, by English traders aboard the ship "The Royal Exchange" in 1608.<sup>184</sup> English merchants petitioned for exemption from transit tariffs later, too, for example, in 1612. By that time, it was already a customary procedure.<sup>185</sup>

The contacts with English traders opened new business opportunities, such as that in early 1603 when Robinson gave a short-term loan of 50 ducats to Englishman Peter Emerson, captain of the ship.<sup>186</sup> The connection with the Englishmen who arrived in Dubrovnik for the purpose of trade was likely to thrust Robinson into the witness role as well. Thus together with Abram Abeatar, Ragusan Jew, he testified in a dispute between three English merchants over the unload of goods from a ship in March 1604. The procedure was conducted in the English language, whereas the text was translated into Italian, maybe by Robinson himself.<sup>187</sup>

### *Confraternity member, husband, father*

Veneration of Saint Barbara, one of the fourteen holy helpers in need,<sup>188</sup> and the confraternity membership under the saint's protection according to Vanini's gunnery

<sup>180</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 78, f. 241-241v.

<sup>181</sup> The ship of the Levant Company (M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 224).

<sup>182</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 78, f. 107v-108.

<sup>183</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 78, f. 50-50v.

<sup>184</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 81, f. 171. "The Royal Exchange" was one of the biggest ships of the Levant company, capacity of 300 tons (M. Epstein, *The early history of the Levant company*, 225).

<sup>185</sup> *Cons. Rog.* vol. 83, f. 55.

<sup>186</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 191, f. 60v-61. The English were known to take loans from Ragusan Jews. In March 1605, Ragusan rector decided on the seizure of the goods of Englishman Nikola Perdi, who did not duly pay off his debt to the Ragusan Jews Daniel Abeatar and Moshe Maestro, in favour of the creditors. The Englishman's goods were stored with Vlaho Ilijin (*Div. Canc.* vol. 193, f. 165).

<sup>187</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 192, f. 122-126.

<sup>188</sup> For more on the patroness, veneration and practices, see: Ante Škrobonja, *Sveti od zdravlja. Ilustrirani leksikon svetaca zaštitnika*, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2004, 41-44; Marko Dragić, "Kult sv. Barbare u kršćanskoj tradiciji Hrvata", *Nova prisutnost* 13/2 (2015), 141-163.

manual were expected of every gunner,<sup>189</sup> Robinson included. On occasion, Robinson may have frequented the Church of St. Barbara<sup>190</sup> or the Church of St. Sebastian<sup>191</sup> to hear mass and participate in the confraternity activities.<sup>192</sup>

The original statute of the confraternity of St. Barbara has not been preserved, yet extant is the new statute in a copy from 1697. The duties of confraternity members cited in the New Statute considerably depart from their responsibilities stated in the early sixteenth century. Duties tend to multiply, monetary donations are higher, e.g., admission fee was 1 ducat (40 *grossi*), in addition to many other details.<sup>193</sup> For instance, twenty days prior to the Feast of St. Barbara the assembly was convened, on which three masters of ceremonies, *festanjuli*, were elected, whose duty was to prepare the celebration and decorate the church. Evasion of this duty was punished with a degree fine of 5 perpers or more, even imprisonment if the fine was not paid. The Feast of St. Barbara was celebrated with a chanted evening mass and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The chosen brethren collected alms on the first Lent Sunday. On the Feast

<sup>189</sup> Venetian confraternity of bombardiers was established by decision of the Council of Ten (*Consiglio dei Dieci*) in 1500 (Lovorka Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima, Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", *Povijesni prilozi* 44 (2013), 171; for reference on the literature and sources regarding this Venetian confraternity see 172, note 3).

<sup>190</sup> The church stood in Od Vare Street with the portal facing Božidarevićeva Street. It was destroyed in the 1667 earthquake. See Lukša Beritić, "Ubikacija nestalih građevinskih spomenika u Dubrovniku", *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 10 (1956), 50-51.

<sup>191</sup> By the end of 1518, the Senate permitted the bombardiers confraternity to install an altar of St. Barbara at the Church of St. Sebastian (*Cons. Rog.* vol. 35, f. 32).

<sup>192</sup> Cerva mentions that the confraternity of St. Barbara had its seat at the Church of St. Sebastian near the Dominican Monastery (Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Prolegomena in Sacram metropolim Ragusinam, editio princeps*, edited by Relja Seferović, Zagreb-Dubrovnik, Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2008, 435). The confraternity of Venetian bombardiers was a powerful and respected brotherhood with a sizeable membership in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century. From 1611 the confraternity was seated in a building next to S. Maria Formosa Church, which was consecrated by Angelo Baronio, bishop of Kotor, descendant of a Venetian patrician family. Standing in front of the building is a flagpole on which the confraternity flag (*confalon*) was raised (L. Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima. Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", 171, 178).

<sup>193</sup> For the sake of comparison, data related to the early-sixteenth-century confraternity of bombardiers of Ston can be useful. Admission fee was 2 *grossi*, and the same amount was paid for the annual membership fee on the Feast of St. Barbara. Absence and other offences were fined with 15 *follari*, i.e., half a *grosso*. The money was used for the support of confraternity's activities. The confraternity was obliged to celebrate at least five masses a year, one of which was a solemn mass commemorating the patron saint on 4 December. Commemoration mass was celebrated for a deceased member. Confraternity *gastaldo* was to encourage the brethren to attend the masses. The Ragusan confraternity under the same name probably had similar terms, but they are not stated in the provision on the establishment that was confirmed by the Minor Council (D. Roller, *Dubrovački zanati u XV. i XVI. stoljeću*, 260-261). Roller provides a transcript of the decisions of the Minor Council regarding the establishment of the confraternity of bombardiers in Ston (1508.) and Dubrovnik (1509.). As a local term for a gunner he quotes "lumbardar". In the Venetian confraternity of bombardiers discipline was often unsatisfactory, as they quarrelled with each other, delayed in or avoided the payment of annual membership fee (*benintrade, luminarie*) (L. Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima, Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", 171).

of Candlemas the brethren were to carry the confraternity flag in a procession from the church to the house of the chosen flagbearer.<sup>194</sup>

We cannot say with exactitude to what extent the original provisions of the early-sixteenth-century statute were altered and new ones added by Robinson's day. For instance, were the *festanjuli* in charge of the celebration of the Feast of St. Barbara elected in Robinson's time? If so, was he ever elected to that honour? In all likelihood, under the confraternity flag and with a burning candle in his hand Robinson may have taken part in the celebration of Candlemas, when the members of Ragusan confraternities, according to a strictly established order, entered the cathedral carrying candles and votive gifts, the size and quality of which were prescribed by the authorities.<sup>195</sup>

Robinson was not buried in the Church of St. Barbara, nor did he make any bequests to it.<sup>196</sup> His choice of churches for the decime and primicie in the will did not depart from the Ragusan traditional practice: St. Mary Major, St. Blaise and Our Lady of Danče. In the Church of St. Sebastian, or perhaps that of St. Barbara, the brethren, most likely, paid mass for the deceased Robinson, as it was an obligation stated in the statute.<sup>197</sup> He designated Dominican Church as his burial place and priest Toma to conduct the funeral service.<sup>198</sup> He was probably buried in one of the confraternity graves.<sup>199</sup>

Robinson's confraternity duties may have prompted his visits to the Church of St. Sebastian in the vicinity of the Dominican Monastery at least several times a year or to the Church of St. Barbara, where he attended public celebrations, religious and profane.

The bombardiers also gathered in front of the Church of the Friars Minor. Robinson and Ivan of Lopud, *proto* gunner, met one summer Saturday evening in front of the Franciscan church, where, upon invitation, gunner Vicko joined them. The meeting soon

<sup>194</sup> Tonko Marunčić, "Matrikula bratovštine dubrovačkih topnika (bombardijera) u prijepisu iz 1697. godine", *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 45 (2007), 287, 292-293, transcription of the statute 297-315.

<sup>195</sup> N. Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 363-364. Because of its military status, the Venetian confraternity of bombardiers enjoyed a series of privileges, e.g., distinguished position in processions and exemption from certain state tariffs, which gave rise to disputes and envy on behalf of the members of other confraternities (L. Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima. Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", 171).

<sup>196</sup> In his will of January 1577, gunner Frano Bocararo designated the Church of St. Barbara as his burial place, and in addition to the usual bequests to St. Mary Major (*Gospa Velika*) and Our Lady of Danče (*Gospa od Danača*), to the Church of St. Barbara he bequeathed 4 *grossi* (*Test. Not.* vol. 44, f. 185v). Venetian bombardiers who originated from the eastern Adriatic coast were known to designate in their wills the confraternity church as their burial place, leaving partial property bequests to the confraternity (L. Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima, Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", 175).

<sup>197</sup> T. Marunčić, "Matrikula bratovštine dubrovačkih topnika (bombardijera) u prijepisu iz 1697. godine", 294, 309.

<sup>198</sup> *Test. Not.* vol. 54, f. 239v.

<sup>199</sup> The statute of the confraternity of St. Barbara from the seventeenth century mentions that the confraternity graves were located with the Dominicans and Franciscans (T. Marunčić, "Matrikula bratovštine dubrovačkih topnika (bombardijera) u prijepisu iz 1697. godine", 294).

evolved into an incident recorded by the Criminal Court. The *proto* insulted and slapped gunner Vicko on account of his adverse reaction to the invitation and appearance.<sup>200</sup> The case points to a close relationship between Robinson and chief gunner, and at the same time indicates the existence of visible hierarchy signals and discipline among gunners even outside their immediate work environment.

The gunners used to pass their time in playing games. On the Feast of St. Joseph (19 March), three decades prior to Robinson's admission to the gunner's service, at Pile, where the game known as "na *naramzu*" was usually played, a serious incident occurred which involved the death of one of the players, gunner Robert the Englishman.<sup>201</sup> Details sketch the gunners' everyday life and testify to the relationships between mercenaries, military professionals in state service, then, as well as in Robinson's day, the majority of whom came from various European states.

The game was played in the ditch (*fossato*). It started as a competition of pairs, only to expand with one player on each side, gunner Luka from Lopud on the one, and upon his proposal, gunner Robert the Englishman on the other side. Both teams were "international", as they included Frenchmen, Germans, an Englishman and others. The spectators, too, were international. The game was watched by the gunners Rinaldo from Flanders and Leonardo from Germany. The conflict was sparked by the Frenchman's discontent with the show of his team and disagreement with the Englishman over the signs. It all started with an exchange of insults, to be followed by the drawn-out swords. Ultimately, the Englishman died due to the mortal wound inflicted by the Frenchman. The process, which lasted about two months and was concluded with the admission of guilt, was carried out before the rector and the Minor Council<sup>202</sup> with the use of torture and as many as seven jerks of the pulley. According to eyewitness accounts, the conflicting parties exchanged insults, each in his own mother tongue, and obviously understood each other well. The Frenchman offended the Englishman by calling him a Lutheran, while the Englishman slandered him by naming him a French dog and a *nuovo Turcho* (*poturica* or convert to Islam).<sup>203</sup>

<sup>200</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-21, *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris*, vol. 6, f. 145.

<sup>201</sup> The incident is mentioned by Kostić (V. Kostić, *Dubrovnik i Engleska 1300-1650*, 346-347). A year before, yet another Ragusan gunner faced the rector and the Minor Council on account of violent behaviour for having crushed bread with his feet and battered to bleeding a female bread seller who dared to sell fresh bread while he had not yet sold his old (SAD, ser. HR-DADU-19, *Lamenta politica*, vol. 4, f. 249).

<sup>202</sup> On judicial jurisdiction of the Minor Council, see: Nella Lonza, *Pod plaštem pravde. Kaznenopravni sustav Dubrovačke Republike u XVIII. stoljeću*, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1997, 65-68.

<sup>203</sup> *Lamenta politica* vol. 4, f. 289-294v. Religious intolerance reflects the spirit of the era. A year after the Englishman's murder, Dubrovnik saw the first investigation related to the Protestants, the purpose of which was to detect Lutheran publications. When the Ragusans welcomed the Huguenots who had fled from France after St. Bartholomew's massacre two years prior to Robinson's arrival, the government evidently had some other interests in mind, leaving aside the confessional issue (K. Vojnović, "Crkva i država u dubrovačkoj republici, drugi dio", 16, 56; J. Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, 254; J. Sopta, "Reformacija i Tridentski sabor u Dubrovniku", 383, 385).

There is no record of whether Robinson took part in the games, but we do know that he was the victim of insults in public space, because of which he pressed charges on at least two occasions.<sup>204</sup> The selection of verbal offences in the first complaint - *renegato ribaldo* (debaucherous scoundrel) and *inbringo mariolo* (thief, rogue) - most likely targeted Robinson's religious 'apostasy'. In a case from 1608, elderly Robinson sought justice in the protection of his wife who was publicly offended by being called names from the window, insulted as a Turkish prostitute and a Jewish pimp.<sup>205</sup> These were the most common slanders against women. The religious and ethnic identity of the alleged clients of the offended female person is also mentioned some fifteen years later, in an insult against a woman who procured Englishmen, Turks and Jews.<sup>206</sup> A countersuit was immediately launched against Robinson's wife and domestic, though abruptly suspended soon after,<sup>207</sup> which implies that the exchange of insults may have been mutual and that the lawsuits were resolved by settlement. The gunners' spouses were known to file claims against other women for verbal offences,<sup>208</sup> slaps even.<sup>209</sup> Disputes between women often evolved into physical fights and hair pulling.<sup>210</sup> In the analysed Criminal Court records in which the gunners or the members of their families are mentioned in the capacity of plaintiff or defendant rarely can we find the court ruling.<sup>211</sup> This, however, was a common judicial practice and without exception concerned all other inhabitants of Dubrovnik of that time.

Archival documents which could shed more light on Robinson's everyday life and his property status are scarce. We do not know, for instance, whether he owned any land in the outlying area, such as Nikola Stjepanov, gunner from Ancona, who owned

<sup>204</sup> *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 124, f. 258; *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 8, f. 261.

<sup>205</sup> *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 16, f. 188.

<sup>206</sup> Slavica Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjernice: Žene u svakodnevnici Dubrovnika (1600.-1815.)*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Prometej; Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2003, 280.

<sup>207</sup> *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 16, f. 190.

<sup>208</sup> *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 115, f. 231, 237; *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 6, f. 66v.

<sup>209</sup> *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 115, 248v.

<sup>210</sup> *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 6, f. 64.

<sup>211</sup> An interesting exception that sheds light on how delicate the issue of morality was dates from 1582, when besides the general allegation, by which the gunner's wife was accused of engaging in prostitution, a concrete information regarding the biological father of the gunner's son was added. The slanderess was sentenced to 15 days of labour at St. Lawrence Fortress (*Lamenta de Intus* vol. 116, f. 160v). Yet another relatively unique verdict dates from 1581, by which a twenty-year-old nobleman Dominik Ivanov Ragnina was sentenced to a 25-perper fine by reason of verbal abuse and violence against the son and wife of a bombardier (*Lamenta de Intus* vol. 116, f. 15). Marin Vlahov Držić was sentenced to a 20-perper fine for having appropriated some objects from the store held by a gunner's wife in Između polača (*Lamenta de Intus* vol. 117, f. 141). For assaulting a gunner in the Placa, Ilija Kotoranin was sentenced in 1584 to three months at the oar, in chains, on a state frigate. In case of his absence from the city when the frigate was at sea on an assignment, the prescribed sentence was three months of imprisonment (*Lamenta de Intus* vol. 117, f. 133).

a vineyard and a field of wheat in Šumet.<sup>212</sup> That estate may have earlier been the property of Nikola's late father-in-law. In 1573 Nikola married Marija, daughter of the late Pavao Lukin, mariner from Šumet. A dowry valued at a total of 250 *scudi*, of which 50 *scudi* in clothing, was to be disbursed by canon Ivan Resti.<sup>213</sup> The ties between the receiver and disburser of dowry ("dota") were maintained well after, as in 1586 the gunner acted as executor of canon Ivan (Benediktov) Resti's will.<sup>214</sup> From a procedure involving a theft from Nikola's house, we learn that sixty ducats in various coins were stolen, eight silver forks and two silver spoons.<sup>215</sup> Nikola was an ambitious and able man, and as such appointed as chief bombardier, who chose a commoner, with some noble ties and a considerable dowry for spouse. He became established in terms of property, and like the Venetian bombardiers who drew their roots from the eastern Adriatic coast, he may have fallen in the group of middling, well-integrated citizens who acquired their status through marriage.<sup>216</sup>

Dowry size and the social capital to be shared with the future in-laws most certainly impacted the choice of the spouse, which was clearly the case with other gunners too. Robinson's compatriot, gunner Thomas, probably followed the same pattern, when in 1582 he married Marija, illegitimate daughter of Dominik Mihov Cerva. He received a dowry of 150 *scudi* in cash, plus around 110 ducats in gold and clothes.<sup>217</sup> Gunner Santino Neri from Ancona, having married Jeluša, daughter of Nikola from Primorje, in 1583, received a dowry in gold, silver, clothing and decorations. The dowry was valued at 450 *scudi*.<sup>218</sup> Ivan Jeronimov Grifoni from Lopud, chief bombardier, provided their daughters with a more substantial dowry. According to a record from 1590, Deša, in keeping with the island custom, was given clothes, while the son-in-law was given the right to a house with a garden in the Gruž shipyard, which he could return to his father-in-law in exchange for 400 *scudi*.<sup>219</sup> Two years later, the gunner's second daughter, Marija, by marriage to Ivan Jeronimov received a dowry of 100 *scudi*, a house on the Island of Lopud, at Igalac, and land.<sup>220</sup> Frano Ivanov Grifoni, perhaps the son or kin of

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<sup>212</sup> *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 119, f. 155, 184, 197; *Lamenti de Criminale* vol. 5, f. 101v; *Lamenta de Intus et de Foris* vol. 13, f. 74 and further.

<sup>213</sup> SAD, ser. HR-DADU-13, *Pacta matrimonialia* vol. 9, f. 181.

<sup>214</sup> In that capacity he sold one hundred *quinqua* of wine (around two thousand litres), among others, to cover the funeral costs and other expenses (*Div. Not.* vol. 123; *Test. Not.* vol. 47, f. 64v-65; N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 8., 281).

<sup>215</sup> *Lamenta de Intus* vol. 125, f. 7.

<sup>216</sup> L. Čoralić, "Hrvatski useljenici u Mlecima, Bratovština topnika i kotorski biskup Angelo Baronio", 173.

<sup>217</sup> SAD, HR-DADU-13.1, *Libri dotium notariae*, vol. 15, f. 67.

<sup>218</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 171, a tergo, f. 11-11v.

<sup>219</sup> *Pacta matrimonialia* vol. 10, f. 187-188.

<sup>220</sup> *Pacta matrimonialia* vol. 10, f. 206v-207.

the mentioned Ivan Grifoni, married Anica, daughter of Grgur Ivanov Parapugna, having received a dowry of as many as one thousand *scudi*.<sup>221</sup>

The size of the dowry that Robinson received is not known, nor the date of marriage, yet it was certainly before 1590, when he is mentioned in his wife's will. Robinson had no daughters. Had that been the case, their dowries and the choice of grooms may have enabled an estimate of the property status of Robinson's family. Judging by the will contents, he could hardly compare with the Florentine consul Rafaele Naldini, whose list of property and belongings, among others, included extravagant clothes and gemstone jewellery.<sup>222</sup> In the modest will, which Robinson drafted in his advanced age and poor health, listed are his one-perper bequests for decime and primicie to St. Mary Major, Our Lady of Danče and St. Blaise, and equal donations to the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries. As universal heir he designated his wife Marija, daughter of Maroje Boškov,<sup>223</sup> whose bequests were far more generous. She designated 10 perpers for Gregorian masses for her soul, 1 perper to each of the female convents and 6 *grossi* to each hospice within the city walls. Her will was drafted two decades prior to that of Robinson. In that will Marija designated her husband, Robinson the Englishman, as universal heir and one of executors, yet she survived her husband for more than two decades.<sup>224</sup> By the terms of Robinson's will, his illegitimate son Antun, upon Marija's death, was to be recognised as legitimate and was to inherit all the goods. Robinson's small household also included Marica the maid, whom Robinson recommended to his wife.

Antun, Robinson's illegitimate son, grew up in Dubrovnik, where he was probably born. In terms of his career, he did not follow in his father's footsteps, although the "English connection" most likely influenced the choice of his profession. Six years after his father's death, Antun Robinson, as servant, joined the crew of the English captain Henry Beal (Bell). The service was contracted for a term of three years at an appropriate salary of one Venetian sequin per month.<sup>225</sup> Under Captain Henry Beal (Bell), the type of English ship known as berton had previously sailed into Ragusan port with a cargo of salt for the Dubrovnik state.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> *Pacta matrimonialia* vol. 9, f. 250.

<sup>222</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 181, f. 32v-36, 38-43v.

<sup>223</sup> *Test. Not.* vol. 54, f. 239v.

<sup>224</sup> *Test. Not.* vol. 62, f. 150v.

<sup>225</sup> *Div. Canc.* vol. 200, f. 40v.

<sup>226</sup> J. Luetić, "English mariners and ships in seventeenth century Dubrovnik", 228; Josip Luetić, "Engleski pomorci i njihovi jedrenjaci u Dubrovniku XVII stoljeća", *Naše more* 5-6 (1985), 257.

## Conclusion

A pluriperspective and comparative analysis of the Ragusan segment of the life and work of William Robinson, a bombardier in the service of the Republic, English consul and merchant, has helped portray a well-integrated non-noble foreigner, and at the same time complemented the picture of the city in a pivotal period, the end of the "Golden Age" and the beginning of one of the crises.

Englishman William Robinson first appears in Ragusan sources in 1574, when the Senate hired him as a bombardier, offering him an above average salary, in accordance with the skills of a master gunner. His bombardier's career, including intermissions due to business travels, lasted at least until 1610, and most probably until his death in 1613. He joined a group of military experts gathered in a confraternity under the protection of St. Barbara, in which, as a rule, the foreigners were a majority, many of whom, like Robinson, were well-integrated in the Ragusan society through kin, friendship and professional ties. Before 1590 he married Marija, a local, with whom he had no children. He had an illegitimate son named Antun, who pursued a career in seafaring, having joined a crew of an English captain.

Apart from gunnery, Robinson was also engaged in trade. Apparently, in two cases his name is recorded as an agent in "black slave" trade.

In the decisions of the Minor Council of 1601 and 1610 regarding bombardier Robinson, he is titled as English consul, although he was not an official diplomatic representative of the English Crown nor is he mentioned in the hitherto known documents of the Levant Company, which appointed its men as agents and consuls to the places of commercial relevance. According to archival evidence, Robinson intermediated and provided assistance to the English, therefore, performed practical consular duties. Although familiar to a part of historiography of Dubrovnik, data on the presence of an English consul in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century, recognised in such a capacity by the Ragusan government, has not been mentioned in the classical works dealing with Ragusan international relations.

Robinson acquired modest property. In his will, he made bequests to three churches in Dubrovnik. His wife was designated as universal heir, and after her his illegitimate son. For his final resting place he designated the Dominican church in Dubrovnik, where he is believed to have been buried in one of the fraternity graves.

A telling testament to the high degree of Robinson's integration into Ragusan social environment has been provided by his compatriot, Fox. The latter observed a curious change in the behaviour of the Ragusan Englishman, "a man of many words but slo in performing, for tyme hathe so altered the man that he ys becom a Slavonyan in natur, but a veary kynd fellow in hys facyon".<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> *Mr. Harri Cavendish his journey to and from Constantinople 1589 by Fox, his servant*, 13.