

Reviews

Benedetto Ligorio, *L'interesse commune nel Rinascimento: I network dei sefarditi della Repubblica di Ragusa tra Italia e Balcani*. Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2024. Pages 280.

The book of the Italian historian Benedetto Ligorio is an extended and revised version of his doctoral dissertation, dealing with social, family and economic networks of the Sephardic Jews of Dubrovnik in the Adriatic and the Balkans in the period between the establishment of the ghetto in 1546 and the Great Earthquake of 1667. Ligorio has presented the results of his research in four chapters, each covering a different, though intertwined themes— residential patterns in and outside the ghetto, Sephardic Jews in Adriatic and Balkan trade, Jewish debtors, and family alliances—generously supplemented with graphic illustrations.

Ragusan Jews lived in and outside the ghetto. By investigating the rental market, the author has established that in the transition of the commercial properties and flats from Christian hands into those of the Jewish leaseholders no discriminating factors were at work, clearly testifying to the pragmatism which permeated all economic segments of the Dubrovnik Republic. Apart from Ragusan economic pragmatism, of equal importance for Jews was the security provided by the neutral Ragusan state: unstable markets in the Ottoman Empire, Venice and the Papal States due to continuous war conflicts, prompted Sephardic merchants to migrate to Dubrovnik. In this chapter the author draws an interesting parallel between Venetian provisions regulating the setting up of the ghetto in Venice in 1516, Ragusan decrees on the establishment of the ghetto in Dubrovnik in 1546, and the decrees regarding the Roman ghetto in the Bull issued by Pope Paul IV *Cum nimis absurdum* in 1555.

The section devoted to trade and intermediary activities of the Ragusan Jews is based on the research of the *Naula et securitas* series of the State Archives in Dubrovnik, as well as the trade ledgers of the Ragusan merchants — Martol Giorgi in Venice (1580-1583) and Benedikt Resti in Sofia (1590-1605). The analysis has shown that, among other things, the Jews played a significant role as intermediators and business partners of Ragusan patricians, especially in the trade of hides and skins from the Balkan hinterland. Having detected a dominant position of Jewish traders along the routes between Ancona and Venice, as well as Sofia and Valona, the author provides a business turnover breakdown for each of the mentioned four ports. In order to protect and maximise trade, Dubrovnik Republic itself decided to engage Jews: for almost a century, the members of the Coduto Jewish family acted as Ragusan consuls to Valona, a very important commercial centre.

According to Ligorio's research results, Jewish trade networks were particularly active in the periods 1590-1600 and 1613-1620, and the export to Venice in 1589, 1591, 1599,

1607, 1619, 1626 and 1646 exceeded export to Ancona. Therefore, the development of the Split harbour in the late sixteenth century did not affect the trade ventures of the Ragusan Jews. Conversely the author argues, it was then that the Jews came to occupy a prominent place in Ragusan trade. Through this powerful trade network, they imported skins and textiles from the Ottoman hinterland, and traded in spices, wax, pigments, carpets, jewellery, grain. Women were also part of this network, and for the purpose of trade they used agents from their own community.

The first trade crisis took place between 1603 and 1612, and after a short recovery, a systematic decline followed from 1627, which shows that the network operated in keeping with the economic fluctuations of the host state.

Reconstruction of the commercial credit markets in Dubrovnik in the period 1560-1614 is based on the study of the *Debita Notariae* archival series. The author comes forward with a significant conclusion according to which, between 1560 and 1614, the Jews who were indebted to the Christians, notably to Ragusan noblemen, largely outnumbered the Christians indebted to the Jews. The case of Dubrovnik, therefore, refutes the entrenched stereotypes of Jews as usurers, and proves that commercial loan was an important source of Jewish trade financing. The data, particularly regarding the two decades of the greatest expansion of the Jewish commercial loans, show the following: in the period 1595-1604, the value of Christian loans to Jews amounted to 21,119 ducats, while the value of Jewish loans to Christians was seven times smaller, and amounted to 2,796 ducats. Between 1605 and 1614, from Ragusan Christians the Jews loaned 31,262 ducats, while the Christians from Jews 20,782 ducats.

Indeed, as with the insurance market, after 1620 a rapid decline of the Ragusan credit system followed. In this chapter, as much as archival sources allowed, the author also analysed the Jewish internal loan network. In addition, he reconstructed the credit networks of some prominent Jewish merchants. In all the cases mentioned, analysis has shown constant mutual ties between Christians and Jews, in which the Jews tended to dominate as debtors.

The "marriage market" of the Jews in Dubrovnik is a topic addressed in the last chapter, with an introduction discussing the characteristics of a Jewish family, betrothal, marriage and divorce, along with the structure of the marriage contract. The author has analysed the data derived from 91 Jewish marriage contracts, which he compared with 258 unpublished Christian marriage contracts dating from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. The results of the analysis point to the maintenance of Sephardic customs, but also to the wellbeing of Jews in Dubrovnik. The dowries of Ragusan Jewish women resembled those of the wealthiest citizen families, and exceeded considerably those of the daughters of Ragusan merchants and craftsmen. The traditional addition of the groom to the dowry, *tosefet*, in Dubrovnik was usually

50 per cent of the dowry value, higher than in Rome and Ancona, yet similar to the practice in Livorno.

Various types of endogamy have been traced in the marriage practice, exemplified by the powerful Oef and Cohen merchant and rabbi families. Clearly, such patterns were guided by economic logic and served to strengthen business ties and partnerships, as well as the establishment of positions in the Adriatic and Balkan trade. Through inmarriage, the Oef and Cohen families controlled the export market which via Dubrovnik connected Sofia and other Balkan cities with Ancona. Similar strategies were employed by the Danon and Maestro families, as well as the Cohen de Herrera family.

The book of Benedetto Ligorio is a valuable contribution to the knowledge that the Jews of Dubrovnik, thanks to the pragmatism of the Ragusan authorities and the Republic's neutrality, represented a dynamic and venturing minority community of the Dubrovnik Republic and played a key role in the preservation of commercial connections between the East and West, especially between Venice and Ancona, and the Ottoman Empire.

Vesna Miović

CASA, Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik

Nicolaus Viti Gozzius, *Breve compendium in duo prima capita tertii De Anima Aristotelis. A critical edition with introduction and indices*, ed. Šime Demo and Pavel Gregorić. Turnhout: Brepols, 2024. Pages iv+134.

Published as a new result of the research project "Croatian Renaissance Aristotelianism: A New Era in Thinking the Past", conducted from 2018 to 2023 at the Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb and supported by the Croatian Science Foundation, is a manuscript of Nikola Vitov Gozze containing a treatise on the fourth chapter of Book Three of Aristotle's "On the Soul". The difference in relation to the original title, which in translation reads "A brief compendium of the first two chapters of Aristotle's third [book] on the soul", is interpreted by a different structure of Aristotle's work: the traditional, Averroistic arrangement, largely adhered by Gozze, has been replaced with a newer, standardised one, originating on the basis of the contemporary editions of all Aristotle's works. This dualism in the exterior approach to the text also anticipates the dualism in its interpretation, which, besides the endeavour of publishing the manuscript, proves to be the greatest value of this book. Through comparative analyses of various approaches

to Aristotle, from the day of his renowned medieval interpreters, St Thomas Aquinas and Averroes, to Gozze's contemporaries involved in the debates over the immortality of the soul, the editors offer a welcome insight into the disquieting everyday life and various challenges of the Renaissance intellectuals.

Latinist Šime Demo, full professor at the Department of Croatian Latinism, Faculty of the Croatian Studies, University in Zagreb, and philosopher Pavel Gregorić, scientific advisor with tenure at the Institute of Philosophy, made a joint effort to introduce to the public Gozze's thoughts on a rather controversial and to a large extent anti-Christian Aristotle's work. The publisher is a reputable Belgian house "Brepols", on whose website Nikola Vitov Gozze (1549-1610) is described as a distinguished statesman and scholar of the Dubrovnik Republic, author of theological and philosophical treatises, dialogues in the Platonic spirit and erudite commentaries on the texts from Aristotelian tradition, a prolific writer who has earned the membership of several academies and honorary titles of Doctor of Theology and Philosophy, awarded to him by Pope Clement VIII.

This edition further contributes to the contemporary research into Gozze's work. It appears that out of all Croatian Renaissance thinkers, Gozze's works have drawn particular attention of the publishers, especially over the last thirty years, as evidenced by the catalogue of the National and University Library in Zagreb. In the abovementioned research project of the Institute of Philosophy, Nikola Vitov Gozze was given priority along with his two contemporaries, compatriot Antun Medo, merchant and philosopher under strong influence of the Paduan philosophical school, and the Franciscan Conventual Matija Frkić from Krk, Scotist philosopher dedicated to peripatetic philosophical problems. Therefore, within the same project, published in the same year was a new edition of his commentaries of the first book of Aristotle's "Rhetoric" (Nicolaus Viti Gozzius, *In primum librum Artis Rhetoricorum Aristotelis commentaria. Uses of Aristotle's Rhetoric in the Late Renaissance*, ed. Gorana Stepanić and Pavel Gregorić. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2024). In both cases, the publishers are prestigious international houses, "Brill" and "Brepols", which speaks in favour of the high editorial quality of the Croatian editors, and equally so of the increasing international interest in Croatian philosophers, prompting national publishers to seriously reconsider the publishing of Gozze's *opera omnia*.

Generally outlined in the short foreword (pages iii-iv) is the distribution of editorial work between the two editors. While preparing the edition, Demo was responsible for the transcription, and he wrote parts of the introduction regarding biographical, linguistic, textual and general editorial issues, whereas Gregorić identified the sources and prepared the *apparatus fontium*, wrote parts of the introduction pertaining to historical and philosophical topics and wrote the synopsis. In the absence of a translation from the Latin original, this very useful element acts as a kind of substitute and provides a detailed thematic insight into all the presented topics. Appended to the synopsis are as many as four separate indices: index of works and their authors cited in Gozze's text

(*index locorum*), subject index and a double author index, from the introductory study and from the text itself. It should be noted that the first version of the transcript is the result of the collaboration with a group of students of the Faculty of Croatian Studies in Zagreb, and the manuscript itself is accessible in digitised form on the Vatican Library website. Testifying to its legibility and clarity, thanks to the skilled hand of the experienced scribe in the service of the Dubrovnik Republic with whom Gozze shared a long collaboration, are the two photographs published at the end of the introduction, showing also the author's marginal annotations.

Similar to the previously published commentaries dedicated to only one part of Aristotle's "Rhetoric", here Gozze deals with a fragment from Aristotle's work, writing a treatise on the rational part of the soul, that is, intellect (*nous*). He justifies his choice in the first passage, as he desired to escape from the city bustle and "arm himself against every trial of fate", stressing naturally his beloved estate in Trsteno, where he retreated to write it in solitude. Solitude was also in partial agreement with the topic of the treatise: Gozze was more than familiar with the currently popular debates on the immortality of the soul, in which Pietro Pomponazzi, author of *De immortalitate animae* written in 1516, engaged with other notable philosophers, and who paid a price for his commitment by being excommunicated by the bishop of his native Mantua, and had his works burnt in public. Gozze was eager to join this debate and submit his own opinion, but given that, on the other hand, he also wished to justify the reputation of a good Catholic, for reason either of the persistent Ragusan state interests in the loyalty to the Holy See, or for reason of his personal ambitions, ultimately, due to these interests, he sacrificed the quest for scientific truth. Finally, he abandoned the idea to publish the text which could undermine his ambitions for achieving a high papal honour, to him of even more relevance because he had not trodden the then usual academic path in his youth. This truly explains why this treatise has remained in manuscript until today.

This is one of the objective and well-argued thoughts submitted by the editors in an excellently written Introduction on pp. 1-54, composed of five parts, starting gradually from the basic details of the author's life and work, across a concise and accurate analysis of these commentaries, to the origin, appearance and journey of the manuscript itself, along with the closing, separate overviews of the author's bibliography and the synopsis of the work. In the biographical note on the author, the editors have given reasons for choosing the standard Croatian version Gučetić as his surname, over which there is some controversy. Considering that he has not left a single work in the language he personally refers to as "Illyrian", how he pronounced his own name remains obscure. That is why the editors opted for the Gučetić version as a form most frequently encountered in the treatises written in Croatian, although featuring on the covers of this book is the Latin form Gozzius. Author's concise biography is supplemented with a survey of his works, nine of which were published during his life, three in Latin and

six in Italian. Also included are the seventeen manuscripts preserved in six codices, five of which are dedicated to Francesco Maria II della Rovere, the last Duke of Urbino before the duchy became part of the Papal State, and one to the second duke's wife, Livia della Rovere.

The central part of the introduction, entitled "On *Breve compendium*" (pp. 10-28), outlines how the debate on the immortality of the soul developed into a most important philosophical question in the Renaissance. It heralded the new natural philosophy of Galileo Galilei and René Descartes with a final shift away from the dominant interpretations of Aristotle's legacy through a theological lens. Gozze did not follow that path, yet methodologically remained within the frameworks of the typical Scholastic debate. The editors account for this conclusion from the philosophical aspect by the fact that, in the majority of chapters, Gozze simply puts forward an argument as a thesis which he later refutes, and also offer a certain philological argumentation, proving that he is not interested in the philological or linguistic issues surrounding the text, nor in the historical context of the work he addresses, nor in its influence in various epochs. Although Renaissance elements have been observed in the text, such as autobiographical remarks and for Scholasticism a rather atypical flamboyant rhetoric style, the editors rightly argue that in terms of content and style Gozze's commentaries belong to the late fifteenth rather than the late sixteenth century, when the text was written. This alone offers causes for serious consideration into a point in the history of the Dubrovnik Republic, because if Nikola Vitov Gozze, as a reputed jurist and politician who was then in the highest government ranks and did not engage in scientific work as a secluded hermit or member of a church order, has been proven lagging behind the leading intellectual centres such as Padua or Bologna, this casts a shadow over the Ragusan social culture in general.

With a likely aim to circumvent similar dilemmas and issues on behalf of the future readers of his work, Gozze preferred succinct discussion, but not to the disadvantage of determination. Namely, Gozze defended his Averroistic views in Rome in a public debate with the master of the Sacred Apostolic Palace (*magister Sacri Palatii*), official theologian of the Pontifical Household, Dominican Paolo Costabili, whom he could never forgive "for regarding us Dalmatians as barbarians" (str. 19).

The text is of a comparatively small length. Among the cited works, he includes a host of medieval authors, as opposed to a modest number of Gozze's contemporaries (among whom is the eminent Averroist Marcantonio Zimara with the text *Theoremata seu memorabilium propositionum limitationes*, printed in Venice in 1564), along with the edition of Aristotle's texts with Averroes' commentaries published in the printing house of the Giunti family in Venice between 1550 and 1552 as a primary source. This helped the editors in a more precise dating of the manuscript, assuming that he might have started writing his commentaries in the 1580s and had them completed by 1591.

Interesting and useful is the reconstruction of the journey of the manuscript, from the moment when it was gifted to Duke Francesco Maria II della Rovere until its final storage in the Vatican Library. Noteworthy is a small intervention of the papal librarian Stjepan Gradi, who, in honour of the memory of the long gone compatriot, on the title page, beside the author's name, added *Ragusini*, stressing thus his origin at a time when Gozze's work was on the verge of oblivion, because the great earthquakes of the mid- and late seventeenth century tended to silence the echo of the once serene academic discussions.

While preparing the critical edition, the editors have divided the original into chapters and smaller parts (sections), justifying this intervention by their own understanding of Gozze's text. The script is adapted to the original, while the use of punctuation marks has been conveniently modernised. In the modest critical apparatus the editors draw attention to the alterations subsequently made by the author and the scribe respectively. A clear-cut and elegant appearance of Gozze's commentaries owes mostly to the editorial labour, as well as the technical achievements through the use of the currently standard programme package for the preparation of critical editions, *Reledmac*, under public licence of the *LaTeX* project.

This book would adorn the shelves of every devotee of the Renaissance thought, Ragusan spiritual heritage and Latin linguistic culture. Perhaps, in addition to the historical survey of the various approaches to Aristotle's views of the immortality of the soul from medieval times to the Renaissance, here we would also like to find a name or two of the Byzantine authorities (despite the fact that the development of philosophy in the Byzantium greatly departed from the West-European Scholasticism), while to a historian of the Ragusan society the topic itself renders yet another association with the understanding of the "transmigration of the souls" (*metempsychosis*), which as heresy was suppressed by the state theologians of the Dubrovnik Republic in the eighteenth century. However, they both go to prove that the controversies over the immortality of the soul continue to draw attention and may become the topics of future research, to which this work certainly is a welcome encouragement. For the time being, a quote from the end of Gozze's commentary will suffice: *De his hactenus. Finis* ("On this as much. The end.").

Relja Seferović

CASA, Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik

Irena Benyovsky Latin, *Socijalna topografija srednjovjekovnoga Dubrovnika. Transformacija predgrađa u središte grada u mletačkom razdoblju (1205. – 1358.)* [Social Topography of Medieval Dubrovnik. Transformation of the Suburbs into the City Nucleus in the Venetian Period (1205 – 1358)]. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2024. Pages 386.

The book *Social Topography of Medieval Dubrovnik. Transformation of the Suburbs into the City Nucleus in the Venetian Period (1205 – 1358)*, written by Irena Benyovsky Latin, is a remarkably valuable contribution to the knowledge of spatial and urban development of medieval Dubrovnik in the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century, that is, during Venetian rule, offering a much broader insight into the problem of spatial and social development from its earliest days to the full realisation of the medieval city in the fourteenth century. Dubrovnik remained under Venetian rule for as long as 153 years, a period often underestimated in the historiography. In the course of this period the city witnessed some of the key processes in terms of the political and social shaping of the commune, marked by the arguably most salient political event – the closing of the patrician council in 1332. Though less visibly, at least to the modern observer, during that time the city also underwent a physical transformation, controlled growth, and planned development.

The question of the first Ragusan nucleus and the integration of the new inhabited areas – although touched upon by many researchers in the studies of various architectural and urban complexes – has still not been systematically examined through the critical use of all the types of sources. The most important step in that direction was made by Lukša Beritić back in 1958, who, however, relied mainly on the written sources. The pioneering contributions to the topic, primarily that of Milan Prelog, and partially of Lukša Beritić, were focused on the essential role of the two provisions codified in the Statute of Dubrovnik (that from 1272 related to the planned development of the suburb, along with that from 1296, designed to regulate the renovation of the later *sexterium* of St Nicholas/Prijeko after the fire), whereas the period of urban development that directly preceded these recorded regulations remained neglected by scholarly research.

Historiography of the spatial development of Dubrovnik, with respect to the high level of control on behalf of the relevant administrative bodies, was characterised by a tenacious assumption that the planned form of the city mirrored its ordered social system. The methodological approach of the study by Irena Benyovsky Latin uses this hypothesis as the foundation for considerations of spatial development. The title alone suggests that the focus rests on the social context of spatial development, while the subtitle points to the important context of political governance. Insights into the early poleogenesis of Dubrovnik, dispersed in numerous publications, often led to contradictory conclusions. Many authors, aware of insufficient research (archaeological as well as comparative) into the early history of Dubrovnik, merely published the findings of archaeological excavations or individual source analyses, and by so doing probably

contributed more than the premature syntheses did. This book falls among the rare studies of early Dubrovnik whose indiscriminatory approach takes into consideration all the available sources, approaching the subject without the previously formulated conclusions, and thereby providing solid foundations for further research.

Apart from referring to all the previous (and often contradictory) hypotheses, this study makes a significant methodological step forward by applying combined methods of social topography and urban morphology. The methods of social topography, that is, the analysis of the distribution of activities and property ownership of social groups in the urban space, the author has already applied in the cases of several medieval Dalmatian cities (notably Trogir), so that the aggregation of her previous studies on Dubrovnik represents a much-awaited mature urban historical insight. The intertwinement of social topography with the methods of urban morphology (identification of spatial patterns in urban fabric), along with the implementation of the key method of spatial syntax as their connection, adds to the complexity of this investigation, providing a specific methodological pattern for the study of medieval urban development. This kind of approach largely relies on the analysis of the social agency in the city's expansion (families and social groups from 'below', as well as the city authorities in various formations from 'above'), which is detailed in the second part of the book. Essential for understanding of the applied research approach is the introductory chapter, which outlines the mentioned methodological patterns, tracing their introduction to the study of Dubrovnik urban planning in older historiography.

Regardless of the fact that the book focuses on the suburbs, that is, the spaces shaped north of the oldest urban nucleus and of their closest extensions, the city is viewed as a whole, of which the suburbs are an organic part. Here, it should be noted that the very differentiation of the first extensions of the *urbs* (as dependent agglomerations along the perimeter of the earliest city fortifications) from the suburbs (as nuclei from which the new city quarters developed, and which generated a planned expansion of the city), is an immeasurable contribution to the conceptualisation of the early urban development.

The first part of the book, titled "Transformacija predgrađa u središte grada od pretkomunalnoga doba do kraja mletačke vlasti" [Transformation of the Suburbs into the City Nucleus from the Pre-Communal Period to the End of Venetian Rule], is devoted to the analysis of the suburbs through the method of urban morphology, which is interwoven with numerous references to the previous insights into the development of Dubrovnik from the earliest settlement to that of the pre-communal and early communal period, that is, before and after the two pivotal urban regulations. By analysing the orientations in the street network preserved in the current urban fabric, in collaboration with architect Ivana Haničar Buljan, the author identifies the streets of identical directions, revealing thus the contours of several successive stages of the

settlement's early development, exhibited in a synthetic map with designated street directions and spans. Through precise analysis, the author correlates written sources (mainly contemporary notarial documents, along with the narrative sources of later date) with the results of the archaeological research conducted over the last couple of decades, as well as with the results of the spatial analysis of the preserved urban fabric, and thus identifies the directions and spans of the streets in the area of the earliest urban extensions (close to the city walls) and the extensions created and regulated during the thirteenth century (suburbs). Based precisely on comparative analysis of the direction and span of the early street network, the reconstruction of the phases of urban development is suggested: the results of street direction analysis revealed congruences, which may be grouped into the development phases of the earliest extensions and later suburbs, while the results of the street span analysis, that is, (dis)continuity in their stretching, show a plausible succession of agglomerations of several suburban nuclei. This interdisciplinary method has helped identify the regularities which testify to ordered orthogonal planning which considerably preceded the well-known regulation from the Statute of 1272, i.e., already in the stage of joining the fort on Laus (Kaštio) with the castrum in the port, but also (and even more importantly!) in the later, pre-communal development of the city.

The methodological approach which combines the fields of urban history, archaeology, and spatial analysis of urban complexes has proved crucial for making such an important step forward in the understanding of the earliest spatial development of the city of Dubrovnik, while some of the unsolved issues remain to be elucidated by further interdisciplinary collaborations. Yet what represents a reliable foundation for further research, as well as other research into the medieval history of Dubrovnik, is the correlation of the spatial expansion of the city with the social and political processes. Lastly, yet another important methodological step forward deserves to be underlined: instead of the chronologically-determined study of the "development" of later forms from the former, this approach enables a far more natural perspective for the study of urban forms which have virtually vanished, that is, which have been preserved only in the remains (such as the "layout" of the street network). Applied perspective is here reversed: earlier forms are sought in the older, relying on the knowledge on social processes which led to respective spatial transformations. Therefore, this study provides a missing link for a more comprehensive and in-depth approach to the research of the city's early communal stage, and eventually the earliest poleogenesis of Dubrovnik, i.e., its Byzantine origins. The second part, entitled "Socijalna topografija predgrađa" [Social Topography of the Suburbs], provides a meticulous analysis of the spatial location of several patrician blocks in the suburban area south of the Placa, but also in the area north of the Placa, as the analysis extends to the church and communal estates formed on that location in the mentioned period. The analysis of the suburban

area includes a selection of fourteen estates of the most prominent Ragusan families: spatial organisation of these estates, based on the sources which describe merely the immediate block boundaries, has been determined only relatively, with a tentatively established absolute location on a somewhat less detailed level. Crystallised in this chapter is the combined approach of the spatial and social analysis, where through continuities (and discontinuities), facilitated by the tolerant attitude of the Venetian authorities towards Ragusan nobility, the location and transformation of the patrician blocks is traced. Through a closely knit data network on selected individuals and buildings, the author recognises the reflections of the neighbourly (spatial) relations in the family and business (social) ties. Further study of this material should lead to the alignment of the contoured block situations to the basic grid of urban development (delineated in the first part of the book), whereupon the early patrician blocks would be given their absolute location.

The third part of the book, titled "Izvori za socijalnu topografiju srednjovjekovnoga Dubrovnika" [Sources for the Social Topography of Medieval Dubrovnik], offers an extensive overview of the genre-diversified written and visual sources, which include the publishing of several hitherto unknown representations of Dubrovnik from the European archives. In addition to the overview, the author brings a historiographic and methodological reflection: narrative sources (mainly annals and chronicles) are compared, with an aim of establishing a reliable methodology for their use, while a detailed insight into the archival series of the city administration and notary office reveals their relevance in the study of the aspects of social topography. Seen from that angle, these sources do not only represent a pool of more or less reliable data, but also a kind of a scene, a "backdrop idea" of the city in its past and present, against which medieval Ragusans developed their city. Such an image, regardless of the "historical accuracy" of the data it is built upon, provides a vivid image of the city as viewed and created by its citizens and their contemporaries, that is, offers a more precise picture of the city's social and not only physical space.

Ana Marinković

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Niko Kapetanić, *Politička povijest Konavala od VIII. do kraja XV. stoljeća/Political History of Konavle from the 8th until the End of the 15th Century*. Dubrovnik: Društvo prijatelja dubrovačke starine, 2024. Pages 110.

In his research of the equilibrium between the mountain crust and its underlying mantle Ruđer Bošković envisioned this relationship as "the Earth that breathes". The principles of Bošković's isostasy may be applied to the study of early historical periods in which, apart from written sources, we lean on archaeology, and in more recent times on genetics as well. As a true connoisseur of Konavle and its past, Niko Kapetanić has produced yet another challenging scientific monograph of this area. In his numerous books and articles—which deal with diverse topics, extending geographically from the Church of St Blaise on the island of Sušac to the border at Prevlaka—the focus of his attention rests mainly on the Konavle themes, reaching from the antiquity to the modern period. It was not until he had rounded off his studies on Konavle's localities, forts, lineages, and borders that he embarked on medieval Konavle, for he knew well that the surface crust could not be understood without the underlying mantle upon which it stands. His restorational and archaeological experience has prepared him for the writing of this book, because without supplemental knowledge of archaeological material, to which he has devoted himself from his scientific beginnings, the study of the earliest history of Konavle is impossible.

Konavle has long been neglected in historiography, or rather ignored, as Kapetanić puts it, but thanks to his endeavours this has changed to the better. Therefore, in the form of this monograph we finally have a genuine synthesis of medieval Konavle. Published bilingually in an appealing graphic layout and font, with illustrative maps which adorn all his books, is the only and foundational monograph on pre-modern Konavle. The writing of this synthesis combines the author's comparative archaeological, historical and restorational knowledge acquired both in the field and in the archives. Similar to his previous books and contributions, Kapetanić draws all his insights from the analysis of the historical material sources, starting from Ranke's fundamental principle *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

The author has divided the book into eight sections, guided by the principle of the central government that ruled over Konavle. Yet that is merely a timeframe, since this political framework is not crucial in the history of Konavle, for in this fertile valley overlooked by the mountains life developed in the rhythm of its own "longue durée" and under its own elite. Therefore, Kapetanić's book evolves around the local people of Konavle and not their formal, distant lords. The book starts with the thesis that as a historical-political entity Konavle consistently preserves its political and economic character regardless of the historical transformations, that the continuity of space and population is transmitted through generations, and that radical historical changes do not exist; simply put, demographic processes notwithstanding, the Konavlians have

always been Konavlians. Outlined in the introduction is the geographical description of the area, abounding in water and fertile land, favourable conditions for livestock farming, and the strategical importance of the region situated in the vicinity of Rhizon, seat of the Illyrian state, and later, in the Middle Ages, between two strong urban centres—Dubrovnik and Kotor. In historical records they appear alongside the ancient Epidaurum, which the Romans raised to the status of colony and whose ager they expanded as far as Trebinje (*Asanum*); the landscape was dotted with agricultural estates (*villae rusticae*), roads, fields, and mills, in which the sixteen-mile-long aqueduct from today's Vodovađa to Cavtat represented the backbone of the entire space, and after which the whole area was named (Konavle from Latin *canalis*). Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus was the first to record the name Kanali (*Καναλή*) in the tenth century—reminiscent of *konal* or *kono*, the term still used in the region today—as the name of the entire archontia, thus confirming the continuity of Roman heritage in the region.

Kapetanić dedicates a whole chapter to this emperor and his historiographical circle. By doing so, he demystifies the mythology of the Byzantine court which ascribes the arrival of the Croats and Serbs to Emperor Heraclius (610 – 641), in whose time, however, we know with certainty today, the Avars were at the height of power, while the mentioned Croats and Serbs were still well behind the Carpathians. The author clearly demonstrates the importance of the works of the Byzantine imperial circle (Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*, along with *Vita Basilii* and *De Cerimoniis*) for the political history of the Adriatic and wider coastal Sclavinias—including Konavle and Konavlians which the emperor used synonymously for archontia and for the people—and on the other hand, also reveals how misleading they can be regarding their ethnic history. Porphyrogenitus rightly states that Epidaurum was destroyed by the Avars, from which its citizens fled to Dubrovnik and Durrës, yet Kapetanić convincingly argues that, given the circumstances, we cannot speak of the old population vanishing nor of the arrival of newcomers. After the destruction in the early seventh century, the Avars soon withdrew to Pannonia, the only area that could provide enough food for them, which is why their remains cannot be traced south of the Sava River. Despite losing the urban centre, Konavlians continued with their lives; in the book the author shows that their history is endogenous, self-referential and focused on the old, original crystal core which was to be strengthened by the Slavic newcomers. A histogenesis of this kind must have witnessed a decline; rural elite replaced that of the city; powerful and self-conscious nobility assumed responsibility. This culturally lagging Roman-Illyrian space was subject to slow yet massive Slavicisation a century and a half prior to the organised arrival and settlement of the Croats and Serbs, which began in the late eighth century when the Croats conquered the ring of the Avars in Pannonia, after which they migrated southwards upon Frankish initiative.

While writing about ninth-century events that had taken place after the mentioned migrations, Porphyrogenitus positions the Konavle archontia in the same rank as the other six political entities: Croatia, Pagania, Zahumlje, Travunija, Dioclea and Serbia. Constituting the nucleus of Konavle is the dominant county (*župa*) of the same name, which under the protection of Byzantine authority expanded to the neighbouring counties from Žrnovnica in the west to Dračevica in the east; Konavle makes its entry into written history with a stretched out border from Ombla to Kotor, and as the author vividly shows, in terms of territory and significance it was equal to the other Adriatic Sclavinias. Kapetanić emphasises Porphyrogenitus' crucial information according to which, during the reign of the powerful Basilius I of Macedonia in 870/871, the Konavlians together with Croats, Serbs, people of Zahumlje and Travunija took part in the siege of the Saracen city of Bari, in which, apart from the imperial fleet, ally forces of the Frankish emperor Ludwig II and Pope Adrian II also participated. While writing about Konavle, Porphyrogenitus cites five of its "inhabited cities", whereby Travunija/Trebinje and Vrm are unquestionably on the territory of Travunija, whereas Risan as constituent part of the Dračevica county belongs to the Konavle archontia. Kapetanić reads Porphyrogenitus' Lukavete (Λουκάβεται) as Zastolje, below Dunave, geographical and political centre of Konavle, where in the early fifteenth century a location known as Lukanj dol (Lukan dol, Lukavi dol) has been recorded, while Zetlivi (Ζετλήβη), according to Kapetanić, is on the site or in the vicinity of the ruins of the Roman Epidaurum (Cvetlivi, Cetlivi *ergo* Captat).

In the next chapters the author traces "Konavle as part of Travunija (after 950 until 1042/43)" and later Dioclea from 1042/43 to around 1150. That is the time of the Priest of Dioclea, who in his Chronicle (*Ljetopis*) mentions three counties of Konavle: Konavle, Žrnovnica and Dračevica, placing the entire space from Herzegovina to Durrës, with Konavle in the middle, within Red Croatia. After the fall of Dioclea, from around 1150 till after 1180, Konavle was again under Byzantine rule, more precisely under Manuel I Comnenus, who was the last of all Byzantine emperors to play an integrative role, though only on the territory of the south Adriatic Sclavinias, from Zahumlje to the east. Emerging in this period is the great name of Konavle's history, Devesije (Deveš), first ruler whom we know by name, and who as count restored "the second Konavle archontia", and who in his grant from 1164 titles himself as *dominus* of Konavle and Žrnovnica. After the emperor's death in 1180, Rascia ruled over Konavle until 1373, which the author divides into two periods: until the death of Tsar Dušan in 1355, and after him, when his state disintegrated into separate parts, in which the local lords came to exercise true authority, thus also ruling over Konavle until the mentioned 1373. Yet Rascian rulers were far from the Adriatic, and according to the author, they tended to appear as "second-instance" administration while the Konavlians governed their county independently. Testifying to this is the case of Count Čnomir of Konavle, ruling the territory between Dubrovnik and Molunat, wedged between the Ragusans and Rascian king Uroš I, who in

the war waged from 1252 to 1254 raided Dubrovnik twice, pillaging and plundering it. Kapetanić analyses Črnomir's letter to the count of Dubrovnik, from which we learn that the Ragusans fought back and seized seven Konavlians, that Črnomir was determined to improve the relations and avoid further abductions, which the author interprets as a high level of Konavle's autonomy because the resolution of the dispute was sought locally, in the field and without the king's arbitration. The first half of the fourteenth century was marked by a new governor of Konavle, *župan* Poznan Purčić (*Poznanus de Purchia*), who, between 1306 and 1344, in the conflicts between Croatian magnates, Bosnian *ban*, and Serbian kings, changed sides four times, which is an eloquent testimony of the instability of medieval Konavle and the fact that such a situation could not have lasted indefinitely.

Despite the varying historical relationships of the Konavle counts with the central authorities, all of these proved marginal when compared to the interplay between Konavle and Dubrovnik, which, in author's opinion, were destined to each other from the very beginning. Fully aware of the economic, strategic and symbolic potential of Konavle, where their ancient Epidaurum lies—their *Civitas Vetus*, *Ragusa Vecchia* or Cavtat—in its approach to Konavle, Dubrovnik implemented, as the author states, a patient, "creeping" tactic. With Konavlians the Ragusans agreed on growing perennial cultures, primarily vineyards; they sowed wheat, kept livestock, pigs, oxen and bees, and registered leased land as their property, implementing a strategy that has already proved successful—by mid-fourteenth century in such a way they appropriated from the Konavlians the whole of Breno, today's Župa dubrovačka.

After Dušan's death, his successor Emperor Stefan Uroš V the Weak (1355 – 1371) granted Konavle as a fief to Vojislav Vojinović, count of Hum, and thus opened a new chapter in Konavle's history characterised by two local lords: the mentioned Vojinović and Nikola Altomanović. Đurđe I Balšić (1362 – 1378), restorer of old Dioclea under the name of Zeta, took advantage of the declining Rascian rule and from 1373 to 1377 governed Konavle through Radić, kephale of both Konavle and Dračevica county. The author surveys the dynamic historical developments of the end of the fourteenth century, which strengthened the consolidated Angevin Dubrovnik. The death of Bosnian King Tvrtko I in 1391 was followed by a period of instability, during which the Bosnian nobility divided Konavle among themselves: Radinovići imposed themselves as the lords of the western part with Cavtat, and Sandalj Hranić of the eastern one. In 1419, heirless and in an open war with Radinovići, Sandalj sold to the Ragusans his eastern part from Popovići to Point Oštro for 36,000 perpers or 12,000 ducats. In 1426, from Radoslav Pavlović Radinović the Ragusans purchased the remaining western part, under the same terms as the eastern.

Having acquired Konavle, the Ragusans returned home, while Konavle through the powerful and developed, and most importantly, independent Dubrovnik, joined the Western, Catholic civilisational circle. On the other hand, through the acquisition of Konavle, the Ragusans consolidated their Republic at a point when, having purchased

Dalmatia in 1409, Venice was approaching from the west, and the Ottomans from the east. Although the book provides a clear insight into the fact that the Konavlians, from the beginning of the archontia, persistently preserved and eventually succeeded in the preservation of their character and autonomy, the shadow of the weakened, decaying Byzantium and its historical and church derivatives contributed to political instability, short-term changes of political governors, and the cultural and spiritual poverty on the periphery of the Christendom, threatened by the heresy of *bogumili* and paganism.

The author dedicates the closing chapter to the organisation of *Knežija* (county) under Ragusan authority which proclaimed Konavle its feudal possession. *Župan* was replaced by a Ragusan count (*conte*) seated in Pridvorje, who was to remain there until the fall of the Republic in 1808. Consistent in the implementation of its colonial model, Ragusan government first decided in 1419 to deprive the Konavlians in the eastern part of land and status, turning them into serfs. After a fierce revolt in 1423, the government made a concession by allowing 66 petty nobles (*vlasteličići*) to keep their houses and cattle pens, and to continue to work the land they had formerly cultivated, whereas the land of their serfs was expropriated. Fertile land in this part the Ragusans divided into 37 "tenths", each consisting of ten parts, and each part consisting of four quarters. Having bought Pavlović's part in 1427, the Ragusans smoothly established their possession and divided it into 38 "tenths", leaving nothing to the local petty nobility. This major privatisation shift, to which the author dedicated an entire book titled *Konavle u XV. stoljeću (Konavle in the Fifteenth Century, Gruda, 2011)*, left an abundance of documentary material and suddenly "illuminated Knežija with a thousand spotlights", as the author vividly observes. The land division, clearly presented in the appended maps in both books, thus provides an insight into their owners and, equally important, into more than 3,300 toponyms in the historical sources. From that period until the end of the Republic, historical material regarding Konavle is overflowing, awaiting to be tackled by other researchers as well.

In the book the author stresses that the majority of present-day municipalities in the Republic of Croatia have a history and name that date back to a couple of centuries, whereas that of Konavle dates to the Roman times. This book is extraordinarily important since it brings a study of a developed archontia or Sclavinia which has preserved a part of its original features to the present day, while the syntheses of Pagania, later Marania, Zahumlje and Travunia are yet to be completed. Unlike the mentioned territories, Konavle is a unique ideally-typed historical model of archontia or Sclavinia which has survived through historical change. Therefore, this book serves as a step forward and an exemplary approach to the research of medieval eastern Adriatic, with the ultimate goal of providing a broad insight into our presence in the region through similar comprehensive monographs.

Josip Vrandečić

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split