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WHAT DID THE MERCHANT'S SON FRANCIS OF ASSISI SAY TO THOMAS, A STUDENT FROM SPLIT? PROTONATIONALISM IN EARLY-MODERN VENETIAN DALMATIA (1420-1797) *

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ABSTRACT

Early-modern Dalmatians harboured various protonational identities. In this paper I present the development of their municipal consciousness and its relation to the broader ideologies of the Dalmatian regionalism and Croat and Slavic reciprocity. I suggest that this transition followed the European pattern of Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment. Venice initiated the integration of the Dalmatian medieval communes on the pattern of the supranational (non Italian) Venetian state. Administrative, economic and military changes integrated the province and replaced the old pro-Habsburg elite with a new one, devoted to Venice. This process privileged Dalmatian peculiarities at the expense of Croatian national feelings. Although the Croatian vernacular was still used in liturgy, the political, anti-Venetian overtones of the sixteenth century disappeared.

During the eighteenth century pro-Croatian political stimuli came from outside the city walls initiated by Franciscans like Kačić, Grabovac and Dorotić. In the nineteenth century, in order to hamper the process of the unification of Dalmatia with northern Croatia, Austrian centralists, Dalmatian autonomists and Italian irredentists sought to revive the anti-integralist heritage of municipalism.

Key words: Venetian Republic, Dalmatia, regionalism, protonationalism

QUELLO CHE FRANCESCO D'ASSISI, FIGLIO DI MERCANTI, DISSE ALLO STUDENTE SPALATINO TOMMASO. IL PROTONAZIONALISMO NELLA DALMAZIA VENETA ALL'INIZIO DELL'ETÀ MODERNA (1420-1797)

SINTESI

All'inizio dell'età moderna, in Dalmazia, erano presenti numerose identità protonazionali. Nell'articolo l'autore descrive lo sviluppo delle loro coscienze cittadine, le loro connessioni con le ideologie del regionalismo dalmata e la reciprocità croata e slava. L'autore è dell'opinione che questa transizione seguì il modello europeo del rinascimento, del barocco e dell'illuminismo. Venezia unì i comuni dalmati medievali sul modello dello stato veneto sovrano nazionale (non italiano). Mutamenti amministrativi, economici e militari che collegarono la provincia e sostituirono la vecchia élite filo asburgica con una nuova, fedele a Venezia. Un processo che favorì le specificità dalmate, a scapito dei sentimenti nazionali croati. Nella liturgia rimase ancora in uso la lingua croata, ma sparirono i toni politici anti-veneziani del Cinquecento.

Nel Settecento, le idee politiche filo croate arrivarono da fuori le mura cittadine, portate dai frati francescani, come Kačić, Grabovec e Dorotić. Nell'Ottocento i centralisti austriaci, gli autonomisti dalmati e gli irredentisti italiani cercarono di far rivivere l'eredità del municipalismo, con l'intenzione di bloccare l'unione fra la Dalmazia e la Croazia settentrionale.

Parole chiave: Repubblica veneta, Dalmazia, regionalismo, protonazionalismo

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According to the paranoid account that Split's rector sent to the Venetian Senate on 23 April 1574 regarding the delivering of poor relief to the exhausted citizens of the Dalmatian town following the Cyprus war, one blind local ex-soldier received a biscuit of aid, and began singing a well known song about the legendary, anti-Turkish nobleman Prince Marko. He was joined by his fellow-citizens "in their *schivone*" language (Solitro, 1989, 225).

How did this song fit in with the ceremonies celebrating the "boundless mercy of Venice"? At that time, singing about Venetian victors from Lepanto would have been out of place. The cult of great Venetian soldiers was quite unknown and undesirable in republican Venice, and it was not until the Candian war (1645-1669) that the Dalmatian commander-in-chief Loredano Foscolo would be sculpted in the somewhat old-fashioned baroque style of the province (Difnik, 1986, 15). Moreover, despite the fact that volleys from 101 cannons on the walls of Zadar (Zara) welcomed the victorious galleys returning from Lepanto to Venice, the great suffering of the Dalmatians during Lepanto transformed the victory into a black legend, which the suffering of oarsmen in the Venetian galley fleet perpetuated.

On the other hand, the singing of folk songs about Philip of Hungary, Janos Hunyadi, King Matthias, *Zmajognjn Vuk* and Ban Dojčin¹ might have been seen by the Venetians as an ungrateful royalist manifestation, inappropriate given the poor relief delivered by Venice. By and large, it seems that the blind man and his fellow-citizens made a wise choice to sing about Prince Marko which fit appropriately into an anti-Ottoman ceremony.

This story tells us much about the protonational ideology in Venetian Dalmatia. Prince Marko was part of Croat anti-Ottoman ideology from renaissance humanist elegies until Kačić's epic written in the eighteenth century. And the struggle against the Turks was one of the great themes of the two principal ideologies of the period in Venetian Dalmatia: the ideology of municipalism and the broader ideology of Croat or Slavic unity or reciprocity (Kurelac, 1994, 51).²

Municipalism and broader identities did not contradict each other; rather these themes were parallel. In the

books of the Šibenik humanist Juraj Šižgorić, both Šibenik (Sebenico) and Illyria are the writer's homeland; a Hvar patrician Vinko Pribojević depicted his birthplace of Hvar as a part of Slavdom and Lucius wrote a history of Trogir (Traù) but extended it to the other Dalmatian towns. The consciousness of belonging to a town community in the works of other Dalmatian historians and writers also extended toward the larger ethnic (*narod iliricki ili rvacki, Slovinskog naroda ...*), linguistic (*jezik horvatski, slovinski, Illyrica, Slava lingua ...*) or geographical complex (*Slavenske deželje, Illyrium hodiernum, Croatia, Dalmatia, Schiavonia, Sclavonia ...*).³

Although municipalism developed into an uniting group consciousness antagonistically directed against Venice and the Turks, the urban focus was stressed to the exclusion of province-wide Dalmatian sentiments. An attempt at provincial integration would come later, in the nineteenth century through the ideology of Dalmatian autonomism (Ganza-Aras, 1987). Despite the fact that both these ideologies had their source in the towns of Dalmatia, they have to be distinguished in several respects. Contrary to the liberal program of Dalmatian regionalism as expressed by the eighteenth and nineteenth century circle of Dalmatian tradesmen and intelligentsia, municipalism was conservative: it was an unwritten program of the politically and economically declining Dalmatian nobility who were threatened by the Ottomans as well as by Venetian centralization. Contrary to Dalmatian autonomism, municipalism never tried to cross the walls of the Dalmatian town nor to claim territory outside (except for municipal districts outside the cities). It perceived the extramural world as a threat. An unbridgeable gap between the hinterland and the towns, a reaction to the phenomenon of rising Venetian centralization and an external military threat are the three main factors which rendered the municipalist ideology disintegralist, and even anti-Dalmatian, with respect to the Venetian administrative, commercial, and cultural integration of Dalmatia.

In this regard, Immanuel Wallerstein's thesis concerning the distribution of the different zones of the European economy from the sixteenth century onwards, running from the core of Europe toward the periphery,

1 Šibenik humanist Juraj Šižgorić collected folk poems of his native town and translated them into Latin (Klaić, 1973, 59).

2 There are no political programs written for both of them. Despite the fact that multinational Venice had to allow expressions of national identity books by Ivan Lucius were none the less put on the Venetian index and burned, Dinko Zavorović was expelled from Šibenik for expressing his inclination toward the Hungaro-Croatian king, and Franciscan Filip Grabovac died in prison in Venice for his strong pro-Croat sentiment.

Still, despite his authoritative arguments for the delineating of the borders of Illyricum in the *Officio de Propaganda Fide* in 1665, the rationalist historiographer Ivan Lucius stated in "*Vita di S. Giovanni Vescovo traguriense*" that "his birthplace of Trogir might expect a better position in future, being fortified by strong walls for its defense from the great army of the neighboring Turks, and because of the protection of its Patron Saint."

3 Croatian appellation is used by Marulić, Lucius, Zoranić, Karnarutić, Baraković, Hektorović, Kozičić Benja), Slavic name is used by Marulić, Hektorović, Budinić, M. Alberti and Baraković, Illyrian appellation is used by Croatian Latinist adding Dalmata, Croata, Schiavone, Sclavus, Illyricus. For more see Franičević, 1983.

should be, in the case of Dalmatia, supplemented with a new element: two ideological zones coinciding first with Venetian and Ottoman borders, and then after Venice's victories over the Turks, with Venetian old, "*Aquisto vecchio and nuovo*", and newly acquired "*Aquisto nuovissimo*" territory. Despite the fact that after the treaties of Srijemski Karlovci (1699) and Požarevac (1718) Venice extended the borders of Dalmatia deep into former Croatian territory up to the Dinara Range, it integrated the peasant society of the hinterland on the basis of legal, social, and cultural principles that were different from those of the city communes of the coast and the islands. Moreover, significant misunderstandings between the society of free peasant-soldiers on state land in the hinterland and the urban society of the "old acquisition" still existed (Gross, 1993, 275). During the rebellion of the Orthodox priest Petar Jagodić-Kuridža, provoked by the merciless abuse by Venetian tax collectors in 1704, 7,000 armed Orthodox settlers appeared in front of the walls of Zadar to complain about the abuses to the General provider Marin Zane (Antoljak, 1956, 56-61). He fled to Split not daring to address them.

How much did the ideology of municipalism contribute to the broadening of this misunderstanding between the "two Dalmatias" in the early-modern Dalmatia? How much did the both modern Dalmatian ideologies of Croat nationalism and Dalmatian autonomism respectively bridge the gap? Is it a contradiction of the nineteenth-century Dalmatian autonomism that it tried to resist integration into the Croatian provinces because of the cultural peculiarities of Dalmatia, but that the same time, it tried to integrate the Croaticised Dalmatian hinterland? Is it a contradiction that despite the different programs of the autonomists and annexionists, both claimed the moribund heritage of Dalmatian municipalism?

SYMBOLISM AND MYTHS OF QUASI INDEPENDENT POST-MEDIEVAL DALMATIAN MUNICIPALISM

At the moment when "the Venetians took over our's and the King's homeland" (Jerolim Kavanjin) because "a wolf snarled outside" (Juraj Baraković), the theme of the city entered the Dalmatian intellectual tradition.

An overwhelming feeling of isolation is characteristic of municipal life in medieval Europe. The Dalmatian town within the merchant and communal world of the Venetian Mediterranean is in this respect typical. At the time when "*continue oppressioni della nostra misera Provincia*" (Ivan Lucius) there was not a single road in Dalmatia, and separate permission needed to be asked by Venetian authorities for each trading, travelling and milling operation to enter neighboring town. The noblemen were not allowed to take a seat in another town's council, and a member of one community could not be accepted in another. Following Šibenik's capture by Venice in 1412, its citizens requested Venetian cit-

zenship, but Venice granted only limited citizenship "*de intus*". The process of further closing (instead of opening) the door to the hinterland, however, makes Dalmatian municipalism a phenomenon which, if not entirely unique, was at least, atypical of common European early modern practice.

The process of integrating of the Croatian lands, the unification of law (The Zadar land-register), the codification of statutes (Statutes of Novigrad and Vrana), the rise of population, and economic expansion all began in the late middle ages (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans abruptly aborted this process by settling in the hinterland of the Dalmatian towns Orthodox Christians, whose social structure was based on the "unwritten culture" of tribal society. This Ottoman conquest postponed the integration of the Croatian provinces for centuries. Venice, by conducting a policy of mercantilist capitalism and centralization of trade and politics, became the only force to resist the Ottoman threat. This process diverted the Dalmatian towns from their Balkan hinterland, as well as from Croatia proper, and bound them to Venice. Lewis Mumford said in another context that "power came into the hands of those who controlled armies, trade routes, and great accumulations of capital. Whoever could finance the army was capable of becoming master of the city" (Mumford, 1961, 361). In such conditions, municipalism in Dalmatia gained new vigor, albeit in the "Indian summer" of urban particularism.

Dalmatian municipalism had many themes typical of Mediterranean municipalism. It emphasized ties to antiquity, spiritual unity within the commune, the independence of the commune based on treaties with the outside centers of power, and cultural superiority over the outside world.

Unbroken descent from antiquity, the first of those motifs, was buttressed by the continuity of population of population (in the Dalmatian case even older than in the Venetian), the self-government of the commune and its equal footing in the negotiation of political relations with the outside world.

Tales of the old urban settlements is a common theme in the works of the Dalmatian historians. In his book "*Trattato sopra le cose di Sebenico*" Dalmatian humanist Dinko Zavorović traced the origins of Šibenik from pre-Roman and Roman times according to the misinterpretation of Pliny and Ptolomy. And Matija Nižetić (Niseteo) 1664-1739, a nobleman of Brač, in his manuscript "*Memoria della Antichità dell'Isola Brazza*" identified Bol as mythical *Urbs Bracensis* (Antoljak, 1992, 67).

Yet, despite seeking roots in antiquity, municipalism did not emphasize the organic continuation of supernatural Roman imperial power. It stressed, rather, the break from Rome and the start of its new life as an autonomous political organism. In Pavle Andreis's story

about "*agonia a'Dalmatini*" seven Dalmatian towns Osor, Krk, Rab, Zadar, Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik continued to exist as single units, although under the protection of the Eastern Empire (Andreis, 1908, 5-6).

In the Dalmatian humanist texts the destruction of the ancient towns: Salona, Scardona and Epidaurus are always accompanied by harassment of their inhabitants by Saracens, Slavs, Neretvans, Bosnians and "other Barbarians". Although Thomas the Archdeacon, Ivan Lucius and Pavle Andreis lamented the steady mixture of Roman population with the newcomers (always after their acceptance of Christianity), only later would the conception of supranational multicultural Dalmatian society become a cornerstone of a liberal autonomist ideology which defended the non-Croat character of Dalmatia (Ganza-Aras, 1987, 435).⁴

In typical accounts the inception of a new town is supported by the myth of gathering the most skilled, the most adventurous, the most upstanding - and thus, the most intelligent survivors. When the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetus wrote about how "survivors from Pitaur founded Dubrovnik" and Thomas Archdeacon wrote about survivors from Salona headed by Magnus Severus who inhabited the deserted Palace of Diocletian, they both underlined the courage of the refugees whose resettlement was a precondition for the founding new towns. Moreover the refugees were helping the citizens of Trogir and Zadar to withstand the Slavic onslaught (Lucius, Andreis) as well (Lucius, 1977, 289). In this way the criticism of the "purity of holy and noble Salonitan blood" expressed by eighteenth century Dalmatian rationalist Julije Bajamonti confirms rather than challenges the conservative consciousness of the descent of the Split's citizens from the Salonian nobility, a tale which was presented in eighteenth century Split as an unchallenged truth (Bajamonti, 1975, 122). Nevertheless, the myth of Dalmatian municipalism needed more. If the tracing of nobility from Antiquity might characterize municipalism as an elitist and exclusivist nostalgia for bygone traditions, the cult of Dalmatian saints made the feeling of belonging to their own community widespread among all the town-dwellers.

*"Parce mihi domine
quia Dalmata sum"*

"Forgive me Lord for
I am a Dalmatian"

Saint Jerome

In Mediterranean urban ideology the cult of the patron saint served as one of the chief symbolic expressions of mutual loyalty and unity on the part of the town's citizens. Nevertheless, the Dalmatians found themselves with a deficiency of relics during the wave of Christian temple-building. In 614, Pope John from Dalmatia sent the priest Martinus to release prisoners from Slavic captivity and collected the holy relics of saints in Dalmatia and Istria. For this reason, the relics of the saints became precious in the Dalmatian towns and the fear of losing them became part of legends. When in 1172 Venetians stole an arm of Saint John of Trogir only 6 out of their 30 galleys found their way to Venice. According to the legend angels took it back to Trogir, followed by a star that illuminated all Dalmatia up to Istria.⁵

Dalmatian patron saints had played many other roles. With claims to the apostolic origin of the Salonitan episcopacy, Split became an ecclesiastical administrative center in the tenth century by inheriting the status Salona held as an early Christian metropolitanate. The prestige of Peter's supposed disciple Domnius was decisive. The other Dalmatinians could make no such claims.

In keeping with the fifteenth-century čakavian codex in the Mediceo-Laurenziane library in Florence which states that "Jerome is our Dalmatian, he is the ideal, honesty, glory, and light of the Croatian language" (Franičević, 1983, 126). Lucius insisted on the cult of Saint John from Trogir as a rare symbol of integration among Dalmatian cities. The manifest of Saint John in 1681 was attended by the delegations of Zadar, Split, Brač, Hvar, Korčula, Kotor, Nin, Šibenik, Rab, Omiš, Dubrovnik, Piran etc. On this occasion the pilgrims sang in "*... Illyrica, siue Slaua lingua..*" (Kurelac, 1994, 37). Could one say that patrons of the Dalmatian towns were chosen on the basis of the political role they played in the protection of the towns from extramural threats? Unlike Saint Jerome, who became an intellectual symbol, John solved the political problems for the towns of Dalmatia. According to legend, the citizens of Zadar begged Saint John to negotiate with King Koloman. After achieving favorable conditions for the surrender of the town, he followed the king to neighboring Šibenik where the king in quite Biblical style saw a dove above him. Instead of spilling Christian blood, he had found the way to peace among the leaders of the Latin world. At the time of the reformist struggle within the Catholic church, Saint John eventually eliminated "*Imperatoris Orientalis nomine*", decisively moving the Dalmatians toward Rome.

4 Nikola Tommaseo sought to prove that no nation living in Dalmatia could claim Dalmatia for itself.

5 Moreover the Franciscans from Zadar tried to hide the body of Saint Simeon stolen by a merchant from Venice who had found a shelter in their monastery, pretending that they had carried away the body of his brother (Badurina, 1990, 557).

Overriding the entrenched cults of Donatus or Anastasia, the citizens of Zadar come to find in

Chrysogonus the visible symbol of Zadar's municipalism. The political role of bishop Donatus of Zadar and his position in the early ninth-century negotiations between Charlemagne and the Venetian Doge had been decisive in giving rise to his cult among his fellow-citizens. No wonder that he entered Koloman's dream, directing him away from the path of war (Badurina, 1990, 207).

Yet, Chrysogonus, a Roman knight from the third century, emerged as the city's main protector. Certain iconography depicted him either as a priest with the cross or a knight-in-armour. In the symbolism of Zadar his warrior image was strengthened with horse, spear, sword, flag and the walls of the town behind him. In such competition over the municipal symbol, an image of Saint Anastasia with the palm and cup with ointment for anointing the bodies of martyrs had less chance of acceptance.

*"Dalmatas etiam antiquis temporibus
politicis moribus studuisse."*

"From ancient times Dalmatians
liked to live in communes."

Vinko Pribojević

At the time when the new theorists of law, as Otto Friedrich von Gierke pointed out, "were driven to deny that local communities and corporate bodies had an existence of their own," (Gierke, 1987) the Dalmatian towns accepted an ascending theory of law. According to this theory, lawmaking and similar political powers resided in the community and could be handed over by it to those whom it designated (Mumford, 1961, 355). It based Dalmatian municipalism on the historical tradition of the self-governing commune as an independent political subject led by the local nobility.

In the time when "power, privilege and ancient custom, had made the political map of Europe a crazy quilt of conflicting jurisdictions, divergent allegiances, and meaningless particularism" (Mumford, 1961, 339), the Dalmatians also had a consciousness of being split between two mighty worlds. They accepted both Venetian "*Dominium Mare Adriatici*" and the lordship of the Croatian crown in the hinterland, viewing their own towns as between the two. However, the most voluminous of the Dalmatian historiographers' books (Lucius and Andreis) reflect a feeling of political insecurity by emphasizing all the treaties negotiated by commune. In his book "*De Regno Dalmatiae at Croatiae*", Lucius underlined that Trogir was surrendered to the Venetians. On the other hand, Pavle Andreis resented Lucius' theory about its surrender and claimed that Trogir had never been overrun by force but had deliberately changed its master (Kurelac, 1994, 150).

In the interplay between Empire and the Pope, the constant struggle among the towns (Trogir *versus* Split and Šibenik), and the struggle of the towns against the Croatian feudals, Hungarian kings and Venice, Dalmatian towns had to underline their municipal rights based on the privileges negotiated with the outside center of power. Privileges accorded to Trogir (*imunitatis, libertatis privilegium*) served as a model - of Dalmatian *magna carta libertatem*. According to this Code, King Koloman and his descendents were to be granted only 2/3 of the port tax in return for promising the independence of communal elections and age-old privileges.

In practice, however, it was different. The Croat-Hungarian kings imposed their own archbishop in Split and significantly meddled in the church and government matters of other Dalmatian towns (Dusa, 1991, 47). Venice, instead, banned free imports, imposed a monopoly on salt, chose an episcopacy and town rectors, and interfered with the aggregation of members of the new nobility into the municipal councils. It was at a time when most Dalmatian statutes dating from medieval times were printed with a lengthy supplementation of Venetian *reformationes*. That is why Vinko Pribojević defeatedly thought that having a Senate granted power to elect all municipal authorities except the rectors, as well as having autonomous finances (which the commune of Hvar achieved in the treaty with Venice in 1420) were preconditions for "everlasting peace" (Pribojević, 1991).

In spite of the fact that Venice and the Hungarian kings had to negotiate with each commune independently, the nineteenth century autonomist Nikola Tomaseo extended the liberty of Trogir to all of Dalmatia. It would be easier to achieve in theory than in practice and easier on the political than on the cultural level. How to integrate this part of the Dalmatian towns with the new Venetian and Habsburg acquisitions in the hinterland has been an overriding question of recent Croatian history.

"persone estranee.."

The town council of Zadar

During his studies in Bologna, Thomas, a student from Split, attended a speech where the merchant's son Francis of Assisi pointed out that life, instead of being encased in buildings and walls, had to be a "song of the open road". This lesson signified the need to replace the walls of power-driven, wealth-encrusted ego with emancipation and true and complete etherialization (Mumford, 1961, 319). According to legend, Thomas was impressed. After returning to his native Split, however, he engaged in a struggle for power, writing the history of the Church of Split as a reaction against those who threatened its sovereignty from inside and outside.

Revulsion towards the "out-groups" had cultural, religious and - from the nineteenth century onward - an increasingly national component. "None should dare go to Turkey nor send a letter to the Turks" proclaimed the rector of Split, Nicolò Corer, on December 21, 1580. He concluded "if one received a letter from a Turk one should bring it to the rector's office and show it to him." Moreover, his successor Marco Barbarigo, on 24 May 1584 announced that nobody from the neighbouring villages of Kaštela should dare to work on Turkish land or to speak or trade with Turks. The threat of punishment in galley service or exile for anyone who jeopardized the peace on the border show the rector's desire to avoid misunderstandings (ZA. SA).

The rift between the Eastern and Western churches could strain difficulties on the border still further. During the sixteenth century, Venetian rectors stated that the Ottoman newsletters across the Venetian-Turkish border were of the Serbian faith, but "because they practice their religion but little, and receive little instruction in it, and because of their lack of priests, their faith is rapidly weakening" (Novak, 1964, 44). This is why the *Grande consilio* in neighbouring Venetian Zadar complained on 2 February 1546 that churches on Ottoman territory were in a state of misery because of "*eser ocupati da for-esteri, et persone estranee*" (LC). During the mid-eighteenth century, the Archbishop of Zadar Karaman noticed that the Orthodox had gradually overtaken the Catholic churches in the hinterland of Dalmatia and converted them to their own faith.

The sixteenth century drove a wedge between the town and the hinterland creating a feeling of cultural superiority as well as frustration within the walls of the towns of Dalmatia. In 1553, a Venetian official painted a vivid picture. "The inhabitants are all called Morlachs and have an appearance more feral than human. They are coarse and dirty, and of a heretical faith - Serbian" (Bracewell, 1992, 30).

When the Bosnian Turks tried to smuggle goods into Dalmatia, Bajamonti stressed their primitiveness rather than the town's economic interests. According to him, the extramural world was a region of constant religious war, where Vlachs harassed Muslims treating them in any manner of bestial ways (Bajamonti, 1975, 227).

Faced with Venice within and the Ottomans without, the conservative, desintegralist, inward-looking ideology of municipalism was a reaction of the Dalmatian urban oligarchy, who were stripped of their political rights. However, originally an anti-Ottoman and anti-Venetian ideology, Dalmatian municipalism would be hijacked by autonomists and irredentists in the nineteenth century and transformed into an anti-Croatian ideology. Despite the numerical superiority of the Slavs in the hinterland, the difference in cultural levels between the Dalmatian towns and the country would become the balancing factor in the anti-Croatian ideology. How to integrate the

extramural world? This question would be central for at least two centuries of Croatia's history.

FROM THE PRO-HABSBURG NOSTALGIA OF THE POSTMEDIEVAL COMMUNES OF DALMATIA TO THE SUPRANATIONAL ELITE OF THE INTEGRATED PROVINCE

If the citizens of the towns of Dalmatia were unable to destroy the walls but rebuilt them according to the style of the modern military revolution "*tracce italiane*", the walls could not prevent the expression of their intellectual integration with the broader Croatian and Slavic worlds. Seventeen years after the Turks "overpowered the Croatian language on the huge valley of Krbava" (priest Martinac) Marko Marulić a nobleman from Split, translated from Croatian into Latin the *Cronicon* of Grgur from Bar (presumably bishop) on behalf of all who were eager to familiarize themselves with the history of the Dalmatian and Croatian kings. According to Marulić's letter, sent to Juraj Šižgorić (one of his numerous Dalmatian friends) he believed in the "*jazik harvacki*" (Croatian language) and "*slovinjska slova*" (Slav letters) which would last "until the very end of the world" (Črnja, 1992, 219). Besides, Marulić in "our language tells" a history of Judith. If one assumes that the story, in which Judith killed Holofernes and liberated the land of Israel from great danger carries a message for the Croatian situation as well, it might be asked whether Marulić's optimism was right in the case of sixteenth century Dalmatia.

The conception of belonging to the wider world of Croatia or Slavdom manifested itself in two regards in the Dalmatian towns: the ethnolinguistic, as a consciousness of identity connected with linguistic, customary and historical reciprocity with the Slavs, and the political, as a pro-Habsburg orientation based on the historical rights of the Croatian crown over Dalmatia. A weakening of the "Croatian renaissance" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based on the use of the Croatian vernacular and pro-Croatian themes in historiography and literature in connected with the lack of evidence of political pro-Habsburg displays in the towns of Dalmatia.

The problem of identity was not questionable within Dalmatian society during the Venetian period. Despite the fact that Dalmatian writers expressed themselves as Slavs, Dalmatians, Illyrians or Croats is unofficial expression of their identity, the feeling of Croatian awareness prevailed. In his correspondence with sancak Hasانبeg, Antun Vrančić mentioned that their common Croatian origin ("*nationis Croatae*") divided the Bosnian Muslims from their Turkish conquerors as well (Franičević, 1983, 108). Ivan Zanotti Tanzliger (1651-1732), a historian from Zadar, claimed that in his town they were all Croats. Even the families coming from Italy such as the Cavagnins, Capogrosso and Marchi were submerged in

the overwhelmingly Croatian population and Croatized during the first or second generation.⁶

Besides an identity based on protonational ethnolinguistic consciousness, there were political pro-Habsburg manifestations during the sixteenth century on the issue of the Croatian historical right over the towns of Dalmatia. Although in 1537 the Habsburgs had lost Klis, their last town in Dalmatia, they never give up their right over the province.⁷ Moreover, at the end of the sixteenth century the Knight of Jerusalem from Hvar Franjo Bartučević organized with Pope Klement VII, Emperor Rudolf and the vice-king of Naples the liberation of the Balkan Christians which was to start at the Adriatic sea, choosing Klis, Herceg-Novi, Ulcinj and Shkodër as bridgeheads for further operations. Despite a brief occupation of Klis by the Uskoks and part of the nobility of Split at the beginning of April 1596, this project was discontinued because of Venetian opposition, which preferred the fortress to be in Ottoman rather than in Habsburg hands.

It would be dangerous to overlook the religious and social background of pro-Habsburg sentiments. According to Catherine Wendy Bracewell, Venice viewed this sentiment as a nostalgia of the nobility for the more rigidly feudal society of the Croatian-Hungarian Kingdom, in which they had more power (Bracewell, 1992, 27). Unquestionably the movement was political and was led by only part of the inner and emigre Dalmatian elite, but it received a broader circle of support on a religious and cultural basis. In his diary, a teacher from Split noticed in 1535 that "our magnificent Emperor entered Tunis". Moreover, in writing about the Battle of Sisak in "*Cronache di Zara*", a local historian from Zadar, Šimun Cedulin, did not reveal his own political stand, but nevertheless noticed the victory of the Christians, in distinction to accounts by Venetian representatives in Dalmatia, who kept silent regarding the Croatian victory on the Kupa River in 1593.⁸ He also explained in detail the temporary capture of Ottoman Klis in 1596 by the pro-Habsburg nobility of Split as well. Whether he was

motivated to do so by his own hopes or by the fact that the bells of the Dalmatian churches invited people to celebrate victory over Klis, we will never know.

Opposition to Venice was also based on the cultural and legal autochtony of the Dalmatian communes. In his poems to Dubrovnik, Lucius emphasized that it succeeded in donning the Golden garb of Croatian language (Franičević, 1983, 178). In Petar Zoranić's poem the Ottomans threatened the state but not the language. Quoting his fellow-citizen, Daniel Divnić, Zavorović stated that the Turks had pillaged the countryside and the foreign race, Venice, had pillaged the law. According to Zavorović, only faith remained because everything else was plundered. Baraković wrote about the abandonment of the Slavic language for Roman, caused by education. Jerolim Cavagnin criticized the Venetian possession of Dalmatia under the wing of the Venetian lion, perceiving the province as his own homeland and the King's crownland as well.

In this context, there is a parallel between the "Croatian renaissance" in Dalmatia and the Cretan case, which was a shelter for the Hellenistic tradition after the fall of Constantinople. Most of the petty nobility who were from the crumbling Croatian hinterland belonged to the "twelve tribes" of medieval Croatia. Zadar poets Juraj Baraković and Petar Zoranić did not belong to this group, but they invented the story according to which their great-grandfathers received the villages in the hinterland of Zadar from the Croatian kings for allegedly distinguishing themselves in combat with the Tartars in Lika. They assumed responsibility for sheltering the Croatian language, customs and tradition. In a similar way, Marulić's Judith parallels the Cretan Hellenistic Erotokritos, Erofile, The Shepherdess, King Rhodolino, Zeno and other anti-Ottoman myths.

Slowly but steadily baroque integration weakened municipalism in Dalmatia, and forged a new elite devoted to Venice. From then on Dalmatian society would share the European pattern of baroque and enlighten

6 Despite the fact that the Venetian vernacular started to displace Latin as the administrative language in Dalmatia from the 1520's, Jerolim Cavagnin wrote that women from Split did not understand languages other than Croatian and had a very limited knowledge of Italian. The religious education was taught only in Croatian in the suburbs of Split and in Croatian and Italian in the urban core of Split. The State offices in the Dalmatian communes had Croatian translators. During the subscription of the items in the house of the nobleman Capogrosso in 1710, the priest Matii Domgnanovich, one of the eye-witnesses, signed his name in Croatian. In the convent of Saint Mary from Taurello, the text of the regulations was translated into Croatian to be better understood by the daughters of the noble family Gaudenti-Radovčić, which gave several high official church representatives, in which Italian was partly understood. According to an estimate in 1822, only one quarter of the population in the district of Split was familiar with Italian. All other used the "Slavo-Dalmatian" language (Božić-Bužančić, 1982, 19-21).

7 "I believe that Your Serenity (Venice) is patron of the city (Šibenik), not to say of the entire province, to the extent that the Crown of Hungary lies distant; for there are many subjects who view that kingdom in their hearts as their natural ruler, and they feel the rule of Your Serenity to be a thing which they have chosen though election only". See account of the rector of Šibenik Vettorino in 1597 (Novak, 1977, 223).

8 Šimun Cedulin wrote about Sisak in detail, in the same chronological fashion mentioning for example the brawl between Zadar and Venetian nobles in the Church of Saint Catherine, as well as shooting stars, floods and witchcrafts (CZ).

ment, as well as the Venetian prosperity in the seventeenth century and the decadence of the eighteenth century. Whereas in Western countries the vernacular became the language of power and an integrative element in forging the nation, in the Dalmatian case it stopped being the language of the intelligentsia and upper class. Lucić's early sixteenth century "*Jur ni jedna na svit vila*" is written in more advanced Croatian than Cavagnin's late seventeenth century "*Bogatstvo i uboštvo*". The process of integration of the Dalmatian communes into the Venetian Empire prevented the speakers of the weakened Croatian language from anticipating the national revival in the nineteenth century and put the Croatian language in the same position as the language of population in the other Eastern European countries. However, it survived within the overwhelming Croat-speaking population of the province, and as the language of the masses it assumed a religious as well as a cultural role, and brought Dalmatian society into the broader, "civilized world" of European Baroque and Enlightenment.

"BAROQUE REVOLUTION" IN DALMATIA REPLACEMENT OF THE ELITE, MEDIEVAL IMAGE OF COMMUNES AND FUNCTION OF THE CROATIAN LANGUAGE

Despite the fact that the Habsburgs continued to claim their right to Dalmatia after settling the Uskok question (1617), as seventeenth century unfolded, Venice strengthened its position in the province. When Petar Zoranić complained about "the massing of strangers in the province and disunity of the Dalmatians who felt deep down that they were not able defend their rights," (Franičević, 1983, 109) he noticed the rise of the "*nouveau riche*" coming from Italy (Cavagnin, Capogrosso) and the creation of a military elite (Babić, Janković). Both groups were exposed to strong acculturation from the overwhelmingly Croat base of the Dalmatian towns, but they remained politically devoted to Venice. The "baroque revolution" integrated the world of the disunited post-medieval communes in Dalmatia on a supranational or anational base of the early capitalist Venetian Empire. Politically, economically and culturally the Dalmatians turned to Venice.⁹

The Balkans-Italian trade route ran through Split, and the General-provider became a symbol of the adminis-

trative integration of province. The thousands of mercenaries taking part in the long lasting Candian and Vienna wars changed the image of Dalmatia. A Venetian account from 1590 pointed out that the amount of trade running through Split attracted tradesmen from India, Persia, and Armenia, and represented the "golden ring" between the Orient and Venice. This is why the rector Leonardo Bollani, unlike his colleagues from the sixteenth century, was able on 3 April 1600 to brief the Venetian government about the political conformism of the Dalmatians with the following words: "Your town of Split is in very good condition, enjoying under your sovereignty the two most important things: abundance in living standard and peace on the border" (Novak, 1977, 123). Moreover, unlike previous conflicts, the wars of the seventeenth century in Dalmatia (Candian, Vienna), affected all areas of human life, and brought Balkan refugees and mercenaries to Dalmatia as well.¹⁰

The counter-reformatory tendencies of Baroque age fanned a new ideology of Slavism. It broke with the pro-Habsburg political sympathies based on the historical right of the Croatian kings, and oriented the Dalmatian intelligentsia toward the nebulous idea of Slavdom based on the mistaken presupposition of the Slavs' derivation from Illyrians. To what degree was intellectual Slavdom comprehensible to the lower strata of the population, which had never even heard of Pribojević, Orbin, and Gundulić, is open to debate.

The church took advantage to this situation. During the entire fifteenth and part of sixteenth century, the citizens of Split begged Venetian authorities to send elected bishops to Dalmatia to assume their bishoprics instead of only collecting the benefits. Nevertheless, during the seventeenth century the archbishop Cosmi put the great hope in the activity of the Illyrian Academy. A delegation from Varoš, a suburb of Split, begged him to use the Croatian language in the Cathedral. On Christmas 1709, his successor Cupilli held a sermon in the Croatian language. Archbishop Ivan Luka Garanjin, whose family originated from Venice, wrote in Croatian as well as in Italian. In his letter of 17 May 1777 Cupilli wrote that the priest Bareza spoke in the Croatian language in the cathedrals (Božić-Bužančić, 1982, 21). And the Archbishop of Zadar, Karaman, accepted the "Slavic literary language" (on the basis of grammar of Milentije Smotricki) hoping to attract the Orthodox "schismatics" to the Catholic faith.

9 The rector of Split briefed the Venetian authorities on 22 April 1574 about the new ideas of Vicko and Antun Rosalić who studied in Padua and travelled to Oxford and Rotterdam on the grounds that they had been informing city-fellows about the law and customs of other nations. The rector suggested that they receive some position in Venice in order "to remove them far away from the fire" (Solitto, 1989, 214).

10 In 1602, the providor of the navy Filip Pasqualigo used Italian, Corsican and French crews against the Uskoks. In 1647, 800 papal and 120 German troops defended Šibenik. In 1649, when general Foscolo tried to stir up an anti-Ottoman rebellion in Montenegro, Dalmatia was defended by only 1,000 Swiss troops. In 1647, in the attack on Skradin the Venetians lost 200 highly trained troops from northern Italy and Europe (Difnik, 1987, 125).

According to the Croat scholar Ivan Pederin, the vernacular also assumed a cultural role in addition to its liturgical role. In 1748 the Bishop of Hvar, Dinko Stratico, wrote to his friend Radoš Ante Michieli Vitturi that God made him the spiritual leader of the people despite the fact that he spoke only Croatian. According to Stratico, the work of Ardelio della Bella on the Croatian grammar had to be continued. The goal was to create a standardized language (*koine*) on the basis of the štokavian dialect of Dubrovnik. The Croatian language would be as worthy as the language of Horace, Cicero, and Voltaire. According to Stratico, the main goal of the language's standardization was to introduce Dalmatians to the main streams of European civilization (Pederin, 1984, 338).

As a manifestation of political animosity toward Venice the Croatian language was channeled into the religious and cultural mission of Baroque and Enlightenment. The Dalmatian urban elite would not accept the Croatian ideology until well into the nineteenth century. The paradox is that Dalmatia, though the birth-place of Slavic reciprocity, had to receive the same ideology either through Croatian (Ljudevit Gaj) or Serbian sources (Matija Ban, Ilija Garašanin) in the nineteenth century. Municipalism prevented the towns of Dalmatia from orienting themselves toward the Croatian hinterland.

"Nevirnici sad te gaze,
što si bila to ne paze."

"Unbelievers now tread upon you (Dalmatia)
what you were, they do not care."

Filip Grabovac

Observing the degeneration of the eighteenth century towns of Venetian Dalmatia, the natives Bajamonti and Lovrić and the Italian Fortis reacted in an Enlightenment utopian style reminiscent of Rousseau. They looked toward the "barbaric", natural world of the Dalmatian hinterland to seek vanished antiquity. The anti-Morlakism of the Jesuit baroque was transformed into the pro-Morlachism of the rationalists and enlightenment think-

ers. The decadent and anational Dalmatian towns lost their moral superiority to the wild hinterland of Dalmatia.

The protonational Croat reactions which came from the Dalmatian hinterland in the eighteenth century would pose mortal blow for Dalmatian municipalism as the next century unfolded. If the Pan-Slavic ideology of Andrija Kačić was still primarily anti-Ottoman, Pan-Slavism in the texts of the Dalmatian Franciscans Filip Grabovac and Andrija Dorotić, became openly pro-Croatian (Pederin, 1970, 139-146). According to Ivan Pederin, the "Slavic idea" of Gundulić, Pribojević and Orbin which was not easily understood by the lower strata, was replaced by Grabovac's Croat idea. As a priest and soldier in a Croatian unit during the first part of the eighteenth century, Filip Grabovac opposed the Italian urban and ecclesiastical spirit with Croatian patriotism, poetry and folk costumes. He went even further. War against the Turks was for Venice and the Morlak tribal chiefs a question of extension of territory. For Grabovac it was the liberation of Croatia. Instead of the bookish and academic patriotism of Pribojević, Orbin and Gundulić, Grabovac's works heralded militant Croatian patriotism of the nineteenth century (Pederin, 1970, 144-145). His Franciscan descendent, Andrija Dorotić, would in 1797 welcome entering Austrian troops in Dalmatia with such an ideology, calling in vain for the Habsburgs to unify Dalmatia and Croatia proper. He pointed out that Croat noblemen had handed over the Crown of the Tri-une Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia to the Habsburg king Ferdinand in 1527 in order to check the Ottoman assaults. But as the nineteenth century unfolded, the Habsburgs nevertheless gave preference to the Dalmatian autonomists rather than Croat nationalists. The conservative, anational, yet multicultural ideology of Dalmatian municipalism now overtaken by the Dalmatian autonomists, better fit the Habsburg identification with classical, imperial Rome than the dangerous modern nationalism. Only later with the break-up of the Monarchy in 1918, would the Croat national principle seal its victory over the expiring Dalmatian municipalism.

KAJ JE TRGOVČEV SIN FRANČIŠEK ASIŠKI REKEL TOMAŽU, ŠTUDENTU IZ SPLITA. PROTONACIONALIZEM V ZGODNJI NOVOVEŠKI BENEŠKI DALMACIJI (1420-1797)

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POVZETEK

V zgodnji novoveški Dalmaciji in njenih prebivalcih so se skrivale različne protonacionalne identitete. V pričujočem članku avtor opisuje razvoj njihove mestne zavesti in njene povezave s širšimi ideologijami dalmatinskega regionalizma ter hrvaško in slovansko vzajemnostjo. Avtor meni, da je ta tranzicija sledila evropskemu vzorcu

renesanse, baroka in razsvetljenstva. Benetke so začele povezovati dalmatinske srednjeveške komune po vzoru su-pranacionalne (ne italijanske) beneške države. Administrativne, gospodarske in vojaške spremembe so povezale provinco in nadomestile staro prohabsburško elito z novo, zvesto Benetkam. Ta proces je dal prednost dalmatinskim posebnostim na račun hrvaških nacionalnih čustev. Čeprav je bil med cerkvenimi obredi še vedno v rabi domači hrvaški jezik, so izginili politični protibeneški prizvoki šestnajstega stoletja.

V osemnajstem stoletju so prohrvaške politične spodbude prihajale iz krajev zunaj mestnega obzidja, in sicer s strani frančiškanov, na primer Kačića, Grabovca in Dorotića. V devetnajstem stoletju pa so si avstrijski centralisti, dalmatinski avtonomisti in italijanski iredentisti prizadevali oživiti protizdruževalno dediščino municipalizma, in sicer z namenom, da zaustavijo proces združitve Dalmacije s severno Hrvaško.

Ključne besede: Beneška republika, Dalmacija, regionalizem, protonacionalizem

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