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Title: Coercion, Persuasion and Resistance: Negotiating Foreign Dominion in the Middle Ages

First, thanks to Syracuse University, especially to the History Department and the organizers of this conference, Junko Takeda and Laurie Marhoefer, for inviting me to talk. Today's conference has been a wonderful opportunity to learn about some of the exciting ways in which young scholars, graduate students, are exploring the tensions between power and powerlessness, authority, submission and resistance in fields of cultural, social, political and economic history. Although it is broad, or because it is broad, this topic provides the opportunity for discussion not only across geographic and chronological boundaries within the field of history, but also across sub-disciplines.

Let me start with a story. In 1227, the count and archbishop of Zadar orchestrated an assault on the heart of their own city, situated on the north-east coast of the Adriatic—not a military onslaught, but an attack on the civic rituals that defined the community. The count went personally in procession to the city's monasteries and churches and demanded to be blessed by the head of each of them. The abbess of the convent of Sveta Marija gave this damning testimony:

He asked me for new honors, that I should invite and summon him to the feast of my convent. I was to receive him at the entrance with holy water, incense, crucifix, chrism and the other ecclesiastical festive apparatus. When I said no, he said, 'Now I demand and desire the honor that this be done for me at the monastery of St. Chrysogonus and all the monasteries and all the churches of Zadar that are able to do it. Our lord archbishop ordered this be done.'¹

The abbot of Sveti Krsevan (Chrysogonus) would later complain to the papal curia that this act constituted these acts to be “perverse customs to be abolished.” He added the further opinion that this deed was only a means to an end; by demanding that he, as ruler of the city, be included in

¹ T. Smičiklas, ed. *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae* (Zagreb: Dioničke Tiskare, 1905), vol. III, 280-281.

the rituals of the city's churches Dandolo and Gardiaca subjected them to “the yoke of servitude.”²

What did Abbot Damianus mean by that? This was not just a simple case of church versus state; the fact that the archbishop sided with the count against the monasteries tells us that. To answer that we need to look at the identities of accused aggressors. Neither Count Marino Dandolo nor Archbishop Johannes Gardiaca were from Zadar themselves; they were Venetian. They represented (officially for Dandolo and unofficially for Gardiaca) the republic of Venice, and enforced the subordination of Zadar to its richer and more powerful neighbor across the Adriatic. Only a generation before, Venice had bargained the knights of the Fourth Crusade into seizing Zadar (Zara) for them; this had been the first step in what many historians consider a crusade gone awry—one in which the Christian empire of Constantinople became the target of Crusader conquest, rather than the Islamic enemy in Egypt and the Levant.³ For the Zaratines, it was a grievous error in and of itself. Zadar still seethed resentfully against Venetian dominion; less than two decades later it would erupt once more in rebellion.⁴

Still, despite the characterization by the complaining clergy of the act as an attack, the attempt to create a new religious and civic ritual was not intrinsically destructive or malicious. Instead, from the point of view of Gardiaca and Dandolo, this was an innovative means by which to integrate the Venetian governor of the city into the fabric of its civic life. They meant to take an existing set of rituals (the special feast days of the ecclesiastical patrons) and adapt them to

² Smičiklas, III, 277.

³ For the standard account of the Fourth Crusade, see Donald Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: the conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 2nd Ed.

⁴ For the Dalmatian and Croatian perspective of the Fourth Crusade, see Giuseppe Praga, *History of Dalmatia* (Pisa: Giardini, 1993), trans. Edward Steinberg, 95-101; and Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko Srednjovjekovlje: prostor, ljudi, ideje* (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1997), 71.

the new reality of Venetian sovereignty. In this way they hoped to direct Zaratine loyalties towards at very least Venetian governors and archbishops, and hopefully to Venice itself.

This tale of subjugation and resistance in which the Venetians attempted to articulate their authority over Zadar operates through several different levels of communication: through cultural ritual, through religious dogma, through legislation and administration and through coercive threat of violence. In this talk, I will examine the different forums through which aspirants to dominance and potential submissive (tops and bottoms, to borrow the language of pornography discussed by Quin Shakra) debated the terms of their relationship. The trick is in finding a language that both sides understand.

Although authority figures tend to portray dominion in terms of the successful and conclusive use of coercive power (conquest, revolution, battle, etc.), the imposition of authority depends just as much upon the continual persuasion of subjects to acknowledge as legitimate the powers that be. Thus, any articulation of power can open dialogue between elite and subaltern; even the traditional narratives of conquest and rebellion can be subsumed within this larger negotiation, as per the old adage by von Clausewitz that “war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means” or Foucault’s epigrammatic “power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere.”⁵ The variety of ways people conceive of and communicate authority to others is subject of our symposium. It has deeply shaped my own research on Venetian empire in the medieval Adriatic, as it has all of the papers presented today at our conference. I hope my treatment of Venice’s on-going attempts to rule over the east Adriatic will help spark further discussion of contested sovereignty, community, identity and culture.

⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Alfred J. Knopf, 1993) ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, 77; Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Volume One: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) trans. Robert Hurley, 122.

Theories of Community, Authority and Empire

Before we begin, it's worth it to have a discussion of the theories of power, hierarchy and community drawn from social scientific disciplines, particularly from sociology and anthropology, and humanities, philosophy and cultural criticism. As I mentioned earlier, we now understand the creation and maintenance of comprehensive hierarchical systems is rarely as straightforward as a single, simple imposition of authority (conquest, charter or purchase). We owe much to Emile Durkheim and Max Weber for their analyses the origins of social norms and forms of authority. They form the foundation upon which later scholarship, including our own today, rest. Weber's taxonomy of authority stressed the social bases upon which power was accepted as legitimate: legal-bureaucratic, traditional and charismatic.⁶ He asserted that no regime represented a pure embodiment of any of these forms and therefore all regimes utilize a blend of these authorities. This not only generates an expansive and inclusive formula in which allows for the individuality of diverse societies, but it also stresses the necessity of communicating power on multiple levels—cultural, legal, militaristic or communal—in order for any authority to exist. Clifford Geertz developed this line of thought further by emphasizing the power of performance and ritual, not as symbolic, but potent in their ability to shape realities.⁷ The participation of the Balinese in the exaltation of their political order makes it real, just as the followers of Weber's charismatic leader generate his/her charisma through their belief.⁸ The expression of authority can be quite formal and institutionalized, as Daniel Pearson, Kara Pierce and Brian Trenor have shown us in their papers on bureaucracy in pre- and post-revolutionary America and in the Cold War. Or seemingly informal, as in James Fenimore Cooper's "The

⁶ Max Weber, *The Theory of Economic and Social Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1997), trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, 324-406.

⁷ Clifford Geertz, "The Politics of Meaning," *The Interpretations of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 311-326.

⁸ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1980).

Lunch' examined by Jonathan Wilson. Or they can be very physical. These structures of power can write themselves on the body in the form of fashion, as we have seen in Alexandra Elias' paper earlier today, or can be mapped out in architecture and geography, as in Tom Guiler's paper on the Oneida colony, Shane Avery & Sravani Biswas' paper on the Blodgett Primary School or Anders Bjornberg's presentation on the Indian-East Pakistani border.

If Weber examines the problem from the perspective of the authorities, Durkheim provides the other side of the story: the role of individuals in community formation.⁹ In this, he is the direct intellectual ancestor of Michel Foucault. Durkheim's insistence upon the duality of human identity—the individual impulses that bespeak human self-interest versus the urge to belong to a community—allowed him to understand social norms to be a continual conversation of persuasion to keep the individual within the community. Whether or not we believe in his division of modernity and pre-modernity into rational, organic community versus coercive, religious community, the inclusiveness of his theory of all forms of human endeavor, including labor, belief and government, demonstrates the interconnectivity of assertions of authority in political, cultural, economic and social spheres. Michel Foucault would expand upon Durkheim's view by emphasizing the agency, and even complicity of the individual in setting up the power structures that constrain it, thus giving a voice to the subaltern, whether it resisted or acquiesced to authority.¹⁰ Today, papers by Jason Newton, Warren Hinson, Paul Arras and Aaron Hiltner has all shown the fraught nature of the dialogue between the individual and the regimes in power.

⁹ Emile Durkheim, *On Morality and Society* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), ed. Robert N. Bellah.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, op. cit. See also, Idem, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd Ed; Idem, *Madness and Civilization: A History Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

The conversation about the composition of authority has found particularly fertile ground in the discussions of nationalism, imperialism and colonialism. These issues offer the opportunity to examine the creation of comprehensive political, cultural and economic systems. Although there are differences between them, the creation of a nation, or a colony, or an empire, requires the imposition of a systematizing identities vis-à-vis the newly imposed authorities. If, as Benedict Anderson argued, nations are formed over time by intense social and cultural conditioning of formerly provincially identified populations, then only time and propaganda separates nations from empires.¹¹ In fact, the influential set of articles collected in *The Invention of Tradition* (Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger) demonstrates the similarity of techniques used in colonial settings and in the heart of empire, in the African colonies and the Scottish Highlands.¹² We might say that a loose guideline for the difference between empire-building and nation-building is not in the institutional, economic or cultural methods that bind diverse groups into notional communities, but in the sense that those communities are sovereign or subservient.

In the Middle Ages, the line between nations and empires is particularly blurry. James Muldoon has observed that when applying modern definitions of empire to the medieval world “it becomes clear that institutionally medieval Europe was a period in which virtually all attempts at large scale governments were imperial in nature... even if the term empire was not employed to describe them.”¹³ Many studies of how peripheral areas were co-opted by the metropolises seem too conscious of the eventual outcome of these efforts: whether the Languedoc became southern France or the Holy Land reverted to Muslim control. The study of Norman-

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

¹² Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid: Cambridge UP, 1983).

¹³ James Muldoon, *Empire and order: the concept of empire, 800-1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 59-63.

Angevin Britain has yielded two important studies that tackle this issue. R. R. Davies adopted just this argument in his study of Britain under Norman and Angevin rule.¹⁴ According to Davies, the seeds of English nationalism lies in the attempts of the Plantagenets and their supporters to unify and justify their rule through cultural indoctrination; he used the term “first English empire” to describe this rule. Gradually, this imperialism yielded the nation of Great Britain. James Given has examined the process of state building in Wales and southern France and has reached quite a different conclusion. He also presented a center-periphery relationship between England/Gwynedd and France/Languedoc; however, Given remained unconvinced that his examples revealed any trace of nationalism. He refrained from labeling the systematic administrative and political domination by a more powerful metropole of a culturally, socially and geographically discrete population; however, the situation he described still fits fairly well into models of empire, if not nation-building.¹⁵

Coercion: Threatening Violence and Following through on it

As with most empires, battles and wars (the old lifeblood of traditional political histories) speckle the history of the Venetian maritime empire. Although we have started to look beyond this annalistic vision of history, we must examine conquest as a part of the conversation articulating power. In fact, in the beginning the Venetian empire relied almost solely upon the actions of its fleet to communicate its authority over the Adriatic, or as it was then known, the Gulf of Venice. Venetians themselves dated their sovereignty over Dalmatia to the year 1000, when the doge Pietro II Orseolo sailed to the rescue of Dalmatian coastal cities beset by violent

¹⁴ R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ James Given, *State and society in medieval Europe: Gwynedd and Languedoc under foreign rule* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

Slavic pirates.¹⁶ In gratitude, the cities offered themselves in subjugation to Venetian rule, or so the story goes. Whatever the citizens of Zadar, Rab, Osor, Biograd, Split, Sibenik and Dubrovnik really thought, the Venetians thought this gave them an empire.

Yet this claim was all-talk and no-walk, as they say. During the eleventh century, Venice continued to do what it had been doing during the 9th and 10th centuries: intermittently policing the waters of the Adriatic with occasional naval campaigns to scare off Slavic, Norman and Arab pirates. It collected tribute in the form of marten skins from the Kvarner Islands, and in the form of oil and cash from the towns of the Istrian peninsula. Native counts and priors governed the Istrian and Dalmatian cities in conjunction with councils whose members were drawn from the local elite. Naval expeditions, often led by doges or their sons, were only an occasional occurrence, and offered the doges the chance to raise their prestige as military heroes. In fact, Venetians generally got more out of their dominion than they had to put in. As a part of the agreement for the protection against pirates offered by Venice, the towns of Dalmatia had to contribute at least one ship to Venetian naval expeditions within the Adriatic. Ostensibly, the Dalmatian ships were only required to serve in campaigns within the upper Adriatic; however, that did not stop Doge Domenico Michiel from levying ships and sailors from Zadar and Dubrovnik in his belated expedition to join the Second Crusade.¹⁷ It was only when the Hungarian kings began to claim the area and sent in effective military challenges to Venetian claims, that the Venetians turned to administration to enforce their claims of power.¹⁸

¹⁶ Giovanni Diacono, *Istoria Veneticorum* (Bologna: Zanichelli Editore, 1999), ed. Luigi Andrea Bertò, 190-202.

¹⁷ Andrea Dandolo, *Andreae Danduli Ducis Venetiarum Chronica per extensum descripta: aa 46-1280 d.C* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1938-1958), ed. Ester Pastorello, ser. *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XII.1.251; Smičiklas, II, 135.

¹⁸ Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnosajih Izmedju Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*. Ser. *Monumenta spectantia historiam slavorum meridionalium* (Zagreb: Fr. Župan [Albrecht et Fiedler], 1868), vol. I, 5-6. The document names Zadar, Split and Rab specifically as accepting Koloman's sovereignty, but also notes, "...*ibique de Dalmatie liberate integra perpertuaque servanda communiter tractantes...*"

Nevertheless, the threat of violence (and its follow-through) continued to be an important part of Venice's props for communicating power.

By the fourteenth century, Venice would hit upon an expensive but effective means of using the threat of violence to express their power. Just as did the Romans discussed by Charles Goldberg and the early Americans discussed by Andrew Fagal, the Venetians used a standing military to embody the promise and threat of violence for and by the state. Venice responded with a new experiment: the establishment of a permanent military presence by way of garrisons established in strategic positions along the frontier of contested authority. The first were created in the Istrian mountain fortress of Lovrečica and in the ambitious and rebellious coastal city of Koper, the former to protect Venetian-controlled lands from raids by partisans of the patriarch of Aquileia and the latter to prevent the rebellion of the city itself.¹⁹ The rectors of the rest of Istrian coastal towns were required to send men and horses to support the garrison of Lovrečica, and the commander of the garrison was given the title of "captain" to indicate his martial, rather than governmental, status. The rector of Koper held the title of both "podesta" and "captain." When a permanent garrison of Italian troops was established in Zadar (after the rebellion of 1310-1312), the count of Zadar also took on the title and duties of captain.²⁰ When the Venetians captured the mountain fortress of Skradin in 1355, they established a garrison for southern Dalmatian, and headed it with a captain whose duty it was to guard the frontier with Serbia.²¹ The Venetian and Italian troops stationed in the garrisons greatly expanded the visibility Venetian presence in these areas from the small cohorts that had accompanied the rectors in the salad days of the late

¹⁹ Archivio di Stato Venezia (hereafter ASV), Collegio, *Commissioni Formulari*, reg. 1, ff. 67r, 71r, 80r; ASV, Collegio, *Commissioni ai Rettori*, b. 1, fil. 11, f. 1r.

²⁰ Ljubić, I, 266-271.

²¹ Roberto Cessi and Fanny Bennato, eds., *Venetiarum historia vulgo Petro Iustiniano Iustiniani. filio adiudicata*. (Venice: Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, 1964) Ser. Monumenti storici pubblicati della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie. Vol. XVIII.247-8.

thirteenth century. The composition and positioning of the garrisons communicated as much about Venetian ideas of the nature of their empire as the threat of violence in and of itself.

Legislation, Administration and Judgment

It's easy to see the standing armies of garrisons as a bridge between military and administration. The appointment of rectors who served both as heads of garrison and colonial governors attests to this, just does as the dual role of the American president as chief executive and commander in chief. Yet, the imposition of government goes far beyond a simple threat of violence. The creation, enforcement and assessment of laws has an impact as concrete as the use of force.

In my work, I argue that when Venice succeeded in maintaining and expanding its presence in Dalmatia, it did so by becoming increasingly and more consistently involved in the civil society of the harbor towns. It managed this by sending officials who performed the executive and judicial duties as head of the subject communes. Each important town was assigned a Venetian count to serve both as the Venetian representative in the area and as the head of state of the subject commune with supreme executive and judicial authority. In short, in order to keep its claim to sovereignty, Venice had to begin to rule. It failed to gain much traction among the rural nobility of coastal and inland Croatia for the same reason; immersed in the process of building its own civic culture, the Venetians failed to connect with the interests and norms of a feudal elite (not that it tried very hard—the harbor towns were the real targets of control).

The Venetian state injected itself into the government of its subject cities in Dalmatia and Istria most conspicuously in the sphere of administration. The Venetians hoped that the dual role

served by the rectors, as representatives of the most Serene Republic of Venice and as the heads of state of each subject city, would force a similar synonymy of interests between the towns of Dalmatia and Istria, and Venice. By the thirteenth century, the Venetians had already begun to tap into the nascent communal movement in the east Adriatic towns. They began to figure the counts as public servants rather than feudal vassals. Like Italian podestà, they worked hand and hand with the municipal council and in accordance with the law. Since this followed the same reforms that Venice was instituting for itself in this period, we see a parallel development of communal government on both sides of the Adriatic throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A telling example of the attempt to code the dual duty of rectors was salary; half was paid by the Venetian camera, and the other half by the subject city.²² Deceptively equitable, this arrangement presented a far greater burden on the subject cities than on Venice. In 1216, Dubrovnik had to impose a special tariff on its own traders in Venice in order to pay for the salary of their patrician Venetian count; the Venetian state, supported by the vigorous commercial economy built by empire, had no need to impose any such emergency tax.²³

These rectors were not just leaders of their communes, they were also representatives of the Venetian state, beholden to Venice's laws and policy above their obligation to the Dalmatian towns. Venetian legislation intruded infrequently in Dalmatian and Istria governance, but when it did, it took precedence over any local law. Technically, the rectors were beholden only to the doge, but in practice, Venice's legislative bodies cultivated and pruned the colonies as they did the metropole. The Maggior Consiglio (the basic legislative body), the Senato (a smaller but higher committee that looked after matters of foreign policy, including the empire) and the Council of Ten (extraordinary powers to protect the Venetian state) sent the rectors off with

²² ASV, Collegio, *Commissioni Formulari*, reg. 1, passim.

²³ Smičiklas, III, 125; Josip Barbarić and Jasna Marković, eds. *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae: supplementa* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1998), vol. I, 73.

commissions detailing the Venetian laws they were to enforce while in office.²⁴ The laws ranged from enforcing sentences of exile from throughout Venice empire, to suppressing gambling to direct trade through the selective use of trade privileges. Further policy could, of course, be sent to supplement the commissions at any time and in doing so trumped local legislation. In 1276, the Maggior Consiglio ordered the Venetian podestà of Istria to prevent their communes from imposing duties on Venetian merchants and from confiscating their goods.²⁵ Although it did not restrict the ability of the commune to impose duties on their own citizens or other foreigners, this statute confined the Istrian communes' ability to control any trade save the regional Istrian market, especially in conjunction with the trade treaties that disallowed trade outside of the Gulf and restricted the Istrian citizens' access to the marketplace in Venice. This may look familiar to those of us who heard the papers by Kara Pierce and Daniel Pearson on the struggles to enforce federalism in the early decades of the United States.

As it did with legislation, Venice positioned itself as the supreme court of appeals for its colonies, from Crete to the Terra Ferma to its trade colonies (funduqs) in Muslim and Byzantine lands.²⁶ This tack was considerably popular than its administrative and legislative integration into local government. As in the city-states of Italy, the townspeople of Dalmatia and Istria fought contentiously and persistently with their fellow citizens and with those of neighboring communes. The colonial administration also provided a means for judicial dispute settlement, as the rectors and also Venice's own magistracies provided a forum for litigation rather than

²⁴ ASV, Collegio, *Commissioni Formulari*, reg. 1-2; ASV, Collegio, *Commissioni Cariche ai Rettori*, b. 1.

²⁵ Roberto Cessi, ed. *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio Consiglio di Venezia* (Bologna: Forni Editore, 1970-1), vol. II, 328. “*non permittant fieri per comune suum aliquam novitatem super possessione et bonis omnibus... hominum Veneciarum, nec mercimoniis et rebus suis omnibus, nec aliquod dacium imponi super eis.*”

²⁶ Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2009); Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

warfare as a method for dispute settlement. The judicial forum of Venice provided a relative unpartisan forum in which to decide disputes.

Thus, in the 1330s, when the towns of Nin and Zadar were engaged in an ongoing legal battle, the Venetian state was able to step in to settle the disputes, and prevent descent into war. The counts of Zadar, Šibenik and Trogir were ordered to come together, examine the evidence and give sentences for each case.²⁷ The Senato anticipated partisanship on the part of the rectors of Zadar and Šibenik. The count of Trogir served as a tie-breaker between the two, since Venice stipulated that a majority of the counts was sufficient to pass a sentence. The count of Trogir's role as an arbitrator is confirmed by the Senato's injunction that his expenses for travel and maintenance were to be paid by both Nin and Zadar.

The success of the Venetian articulation of its power through the provision of judicial forum is most dramatically illustrated by its fourteenth-century acquisition of central Dalmatia. Until their integration into Venetian dominions in the 1320s, the towns of Trogir, Sebenik and Split wrestled each other in constant rotation in rivalry over land, piracy, trade and just plain factional hatred. Sibenik, Trogir and Split were famous even within the already contention-riddled Dalmatian coast for the ferocity and frequency of their conflicts with each other.²⁸ The Venetian state preemptively addressed this issue by creating a confederation between the three communes, which linked them together in matters of war and diplomacy and provided for a forum of dispute-settlement for the inevitable cases that would come up.²⁹ This confederation was run cooperatively by the three Venetian rectors of the towns. This system proved so successful that it actually outlived Venetian sovereignty in the area.

²⁷ Smičiklas, IX, 194.

²⁸ Martino da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise: Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1972), ed. Alberto Limentani, 366; Smičiklas, VI, p. 118-119, 165-166, 169, 204-205, 435; *Ibid.*, VII, pp. 17-18; *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 408, 421-422, 462.

²⁹ ASV, *Miscellanea Atti Diplomatici e Privati*, b. 12, no. 437.

The availability of appellate justice in Venice itself presented the opportunity for true dialogue to take place in the articulation of power. The authority of the Venetian state over both the rectors and the subject cities gave room for negotiation of the terms of submission, without recourse to rebellion. This occurred notably in Rab, where from 1319 to 1320, the commune struggled with its Venetian count, Niccolò Sanudo. Rab contended that the count had been elected illegally, without the consent of the commune, and furthermore, had ruled corruptly.³⁰ In the end, Venice rendered a judgment not only on the legitimacy of Sanudo's rule, recalling the count, but also on the definitive form of the communal statutes.³¹ The ducal curia then enshrined these statutes, along with the corrections added by the doge and his councilors and their approbation by the commune of Rab, in the official state *Commemoriali* of Venice.³² The incorporation of the statutes of a subject commune in the official state archives highlights the trend towards direct involvement by the Venetian state in the government of Dalmatia and Istria. This type of intervention into internal civic government represented an imposition on both the autonomy of the subject commune and on the office of rectors.

Thus in its penetration into all aspects of law and order in Dalmatia and Istria, the Venetian state communicated its authority to its subject in those places. But we have also seen that in every space they could find, especially within the judicial sphere, the people of these towns talked back to Venetian authority, and in this negotiation, made their own mark upon the terms of power.

³⁰ Ljubić, I, 304-307

³¹ Ljubić, I, 315-318.

³² R. Predelli, *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti* (Venice, 1876), I, 219-220. Further evidence of the event's importance was the inclusion of the "original" grant of rights to comital election from the doge to Rab in Andrea Dandolo's *Chronica Extensa* (p. 248).

Official Culture: Producing Justifications of Power

The official and formal forum of governance was only one of the ways in which Venice told the Dalmatians and Istrians of their dominion. The Venetians also expressed their authority in words, rituals and images, in other words in the creation of the officially sanctioned production of power. Even now, one can track Venetian empire in the Italian peninsula through the Adriatic and east Mediterranean by the sporelike scattering of winged Lions of St. Mark in the architecture of Iraklion, Coron and Modon, Corfu and Verona.³³

The Venetians attempted to seed devotion to Saint Mark in a similar way through penetration of local ritual. The anecdote with which I began this talk is but one extreme example of the many attempts, some successful and some not, that the Venetians made to get the citizens of Zadar, Dubrovnik and the other towns of Dalmatia to internalize their subordination to Venetian sovereignty.

In 1204, the Venetians managed to get the Zaratines to repopulate the city that the Crusaders had captured in 1202. In the treaty of submission that followed the reentry of the Zaratines to the city, Venice penetrated the rhythm of Zadar's civic rituals as well. The Zaratine clerics were required to sing lauds for the doge, the patriarch of Grado, the archbishop of Zadar and the count every Christmas and Easter.³⁴ Given this situation, the story with which I began this talk, that of Marino Dandolo and Johannes Gardiaca's attempt to impose their presence on the city's monastic festivals, seems less of an aberrant attack and more of an extension of a trend.

The Venetians further developed this use of civic ritual when the southern Dalmatian town of Dubrovnik entered its dominion. After a rocky start and a rebellion in 1231, Venice

³³ Maria Georgopoulou, *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP: 2001)

³⁴ Gottlieb Tafel and Georg, M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig, mit besonderer Beziehung auf Byzanz und die Levante. Vom neunten bis zum Ausgang des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: laiserlich-Königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1856-71), vol. I, 421-424.

imposed the same conditions on Dubrovnik as it had on Zadar, only more deeply entrenching Venetian dominion within the civic life of the city. The clergy had to sing lauds to the doge, patriarch of Grado, bishop of Dubrovnik and count not only on Easter and Christmas, but also on the feast of St. Blaise (Vlahe), its patron saint. The treaty also created a completely new civic ritual. From this point, all men thirteen years old and above had to swear fidelity to the doge and the population renewed their oath every ten years.³⁵ Whether this truly deepened Dubrovnikan loyalty to Venice or not is debatable. However, it certainly would have reminded them of their obligations to their Venetian overlords.

Proving one's authority to subjects was one matter, proving it to oneself is another. Over and over again, the Venetians sought to tell themselves that their empire was legitimate. They started with the title of the doge, their leader and emblem of the serene republic. The official title of the doge from 1204 to 1358 was "Duke of the Venetians, of Dalmatia and Croatia, and of one quarter and one eighth of the Roman empire." It read like a resume of Venetian acquisition of the empire, with the colonies just as important to the identity of the doge as the home city. In fact, one of the most humiliating moments of Venetian imperial experience was the cession of their claim to Dalmatia to the crown of Hungary in 1358. This loss of empire was reflected in the dogal title, which they truncated to "Duke of the Venetians, et cetera" until such a time (the early 15th century) when they could recover their losses.³⁶

The Venetians were equally self-aware about the lack of a classical precedent for their empire. Stuck between the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, they were hardly able to paint themselves as the successors to the Caesars. Instead of using classical precedent then, the Venetians used the language of the divine. In the teleological narratives of chronicles and the

³⁵ Tafel and Thomas, II, 308.

³⁶ *Venetiarum historia*, 254.

florid formulations of diplomata, Venice created myths of protection, consent and divine order for their empire. The Venetian state always hoped and wished for Dalmatia to exist in a state of eager subjection, and the Dalmatians were willing, when it suited their purposes, to take on Venice as their protector. Because the Venetians wished to believe their regime as just and divinely sanctioned, the Dalmatians, as their potential subjects, were placed in a role equivalent to that of the human soul. On one side, rebelliousness sired by arrogance led them astray, away from union with their rightful lords. On the other side, hardship caused by this recalcitrance prompted a penitence that eventually led the Dalmatians willingly back to Venetian rule. Just as human souls would constantly fall from and then reach for a state of grace until the second coming, the tale of Dalmatian submission to Venice repeated itself cyclically. It took on a certain reliability: the Dalmatians would always rebel, but then they would always be brought back to the fold.

In the 1313 submission treaty of Zadar, the Zaratines once more begged humbly to subject themselves to the doge and commune of Venice. The treaty embellished the theme of voluntary petition by an extended metaphor that made Venice the father and Zadar the long-awaited prodigal son. The reconciliation of Zadar with Venice was portrayed thusly in the document:

The father, full of mercy, grace and truth, knows of the fiction and the fragility of the human condition, both of which deviate away from law and justice at the suggestion of the one who polluted the earliest order with the poisoned apple. He does not wish the death of the sinner. So that the sinner be converted and live, the father recalls him mercifully to the path of truth.³⁷

Filial and parental loves were presented as a reciprocal obligation; affection, rather than chastisement, characterized this purported familial bond between Venice and Zadar. Like the prodigal son, when the Zaratines were deserted by their Hungarian allies, they “relied upon the

³⁷ Ljubić, I, 266.

habitual grace of the Venetians and freely gave over the city of Zadar to the Venetian captain.”³⁸ This insistence on willing consent almost converged on the absurd; just as the salary of rectors gave the illusion of equality even as it imposed hardship in reality, the Venetian forced the cities they conquered (especially the ones who had rebelled) to give their “free consent” to join Venetian dominion. For instance, the *Historia Venetiarum* tells us that after the 1347 siege of Zadar, the Venetian forces received the city’s ambassadors, who were crawling on their knees , begging for mercy. The ambassadors then “freely” placed Zadar and all of its jurisdictions under dogal dominion.³⁹

Yet once again, the Venetian need to believe in free consent gave their subject some room to negotiate. This free consent protected the Dalmatian and Istrian communes to a certain extent as well as assuring the Venetian state of the legality of its acquisition, for it gave at least lip service to Dalmatian agency. The fact that dominion depended upon treaties and diplomata meant that consent could be revoked. And it was.

Talking Back: The Subaltern and Rebellion

Despite the constancy of its efforts to communicate its sovereignty over the east Adriatic, some portion of Dalmatia and Istria rebelled with clockwork timing every decade or so. In doing so, they did not necessarily seek to total revolution and overthrow of the regimes that sought to control them, but to re-open negotiations. Because Venice required treaties of submission and contracts to construct its empire, the act of rebellion negated the previous contract and opened the possibility for new terms.

³⁸ Ljubić, I, 265.

³⁹ *Venetiarum historia*, 229.

In the early years of its rule in Dalmatia, the Venetians attempted to impose feudal style rectors who held almost unlimited power over their regimes. This imposition of self-important and exploitative counts pleased the Dalmatian cities not at all—especially the town of Zadar. Like Venice, they partook in the growing movement towards the creation of civic communities, especially communes. The oppressive actions of Domenico Morosini as the count of Zadar, and Ruggiero Morosini as count of Osor led to a large-scale rebellion that successfully freed northern Dalmatia (save the island of Rab) from Venetian control for twenty years, until the time of the Fourth Crusade. Clearly the mimicry of feudal lordships was an unsuccessful model—a failed experiment as it were. When the Venetians finally recaptured the city with the help of the knights of the Fourth Crusade, they had to try new terms. They did so by creating a treaty of submission in which both sides had both duties and rights. The Zaratines were given the right to select their own count—as long as he was Venetian. They were likewise required to select a Venetian archbishop. Thus the two most important civic leaders would be Venetians. This did not please the Zaratines too much better, for they rebelled again in 1242 and had to be persuaded with force (!) to rejoin Venetian dominions. Afterward, it received a new concession: rectors who served only two-year terms, rather than holding the office for a life term. This prevented any single Venetian from gaining too much power and forced the counts to rely upon the local elite much more for their expertise. The Zaratines had gotten this idea from their neighbors to the south and comrades in Venetian dominion, the Dubrovnikans. After their rebellion in 1231, Dubrovnik had been granted the concession of two-year term counts. Furthermore, from this point, the Venetian counts swore oaths to serve the commune of Dubrovnik, as well as the doge.⁴⁰ These oaths were preserved in the Dubrovnik archives as official records of the commune.

⁴⁰ Smičiklas, IV, 32. Giovanni Tiepolo was the first Venetian count to swear the oath to protect the customs of Dubrovnik.

In other less violent ways as well, the people of Dalmatia and Istria made the Venetian colonial endeavor a dialogue rather than a soliloquy. The communal statutes of Piran, Dubrovnik and Zadar demonstrate that the cities sought to carve out their own municipal authority, free from interference, if not oversight from Venetian authority. They sought to limit the actions of the rector's retinue, if not the rector himself. For instance, the *Maggior Consiglio* of Rab decreed that the count's bodyguard should not be allowed to serve as the night watch, nor leave the confines of the comital palace after dark.⁴¹

Their willingness to litigate against the corruption of Venetian officials in ecclesiastical and secular courts also spoke to their agency, and the acceptance by Venetians of these charges as potentially valid demonstrates that they too took seriously the articulation of power as a negotiation. My earlier story of Rab's extensive effort to get rid of Count Niccolo Sanudo provides a perfect example of this. In fact, sometimes charges of rectorial corruption were brought up as defense in cases of rebellion, with mixed results. After several noblemen and ranking communal officials of Izola were charged with attacking and attempting to murder Podestà Marco Zorzi and his household, they brought charges to the *Avogaria di Comun* that Zorzi had been acting against the honor of Venice and the terms of his commission. After investigation, the *Maggior Consiglio* ruled that Zorzi was indeed guilty of corruption. However, his only punishment was a fine of 300 lira. On the other hand, his attackers were subject to lifelong banishment from Izola and all Venetian dominions; their accomplices were stripped of office and disqualified from election for four years as well as suffering yearlong terms of exile from Izola.⁴² Obviously, the peaceful approach of the Rabans proved more successful than the

⁴¹ Ljubić, I, 316. This was the sixth statute.

⁴² ASV, *Avogari di Comun*, *Raspe*, r. 3642, sec. I, f. 20v (13 nov. 1341).

case of Izola, but both show that the Dalmatians and Istrians judged for themselves the legitimacy of the authority imposed on them by Venice.

Conclusion

Medieval Venetian rule in the east Adriatic is only one case among the many that demonstrate that the imposition of authority was not a forceful and extended monologue but an attempt by parties unequal in resources but not in agency to find a language in which to communicate. Through ritual and rebellion, law and literature, gold and guilt, the articulation of power required negotiation and participation between all involved.