

## Orders of Society in Ragusan Narrative Sources: The Case of *Cittadini Ragusei*\*

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“The inhabitants of Dubrovnik are divided into three orders: the nobility, the citizens called *popolani* and the plebeians.”  
(... *Sono gl’habitatori di Raugia distinti in tre ordini, cioè in gentil’huomini, in cittadini, da loro popolani detti, et in plebei*).<sup>1</sup>

Medieval societies, including Dubrovnik, were divided in various ways and according to different criteria.<sup>2</sup> Many of the terms used at the time to denote social stratification, such as *ordo*, *genus*, *status*, or *conditio* are often not easy to render in modern language, and the same is especially valid vice versa, when it comes to the term “class”, since some of its implications do not apply to the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, throughout the medieval period people were deeply convinced that order and hierarchy were essential for the community’s survival, that they had been established by the divine Providence itself, modelled upon the celestial order, and that the community could never last were it not maintained by the universal order (*magnus ordo*) based on diversity (*differentia*), as Gratian’s *Decretum* formulated it as early as 595.<sup>4</sup>

The supreme importance of order and hierarchy in the operation of medieval society is also evident in case of Dubrovnik. Its society was firmly hierarchical, with a social structure that persisted and was guarded for centuries as one of the key pillars

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<sup>1</sup> Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Raugia: scritta nuouamente in tre libri* (Lucca: Busdraghi, 1595), 125; Serafino Razzi, *Povijest Dubrovnika* [History of Dubrovnik] (Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, Ogranak Dubrovnik, 2011), 150.

<sup>2</sup> On the multiplicity of criteria based on which medieval societies were stratified, see e.g. Giles Constable, “The Orders of Society,” in: *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought: The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, the Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, the Orders of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 252; Stephen Rigby, “Approaches to Pre-Industrial Social Structure,” in: *Orders And Hierarchies In Late Medieval And Renaissance Europe*, ed. Jeffrey Denton (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1999), 18.

<sup>3</sup> Constable, *The Orders of Society*, 252; Giles Constable, “Was There a Medieval Middle Class? Mediocres (mediani, medii) in the Middle Ages,” in: *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living: Essays in Memory of David Herlihy*, ed. Samuel K. Cohn and Steven A. Epstein (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1996), 301-302.

<sup>4</sup> Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

supporting the myth on Dubrovnik's harmony and stability.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, owing to its fundamental importance in understanding the history of medieval Dubrovnik, the issue of social hierarchy and order has always been of interest to the researchers of Dubrovnik's history, as well as – comparatively – the history of towns and cities in the Eastern Adriatic.<sup>6</sup> This paper builds upon their results, but also takes the issue a step further, asking specifically the following questions: How did the society of Dubrovnik look like in the narrative image of the city? Do the narrative sources correspond to the others when presenting the social structure? And lastly, how was the notion of citizenship, not as a legal category, but as one of social stratification, articulated in the narration of late medieval and early modern times? These are the main points in the present research, whereby I will focus on the group that, paraphrasing Razzi, may be called *ordo di cittadini*. This group slowly emerged in the archival sources from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and if we search for comparative examples, analogies with Venice and the intermediary social group of *cittadini originarii* seem plausible.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On the construction of this “Dubrovnik myth” and its element, see the excellent study by Lovro Kunčević *Mit o Dubrovniku: Diskursi o identitetu renesansnoga grada* [The Myth of Ragusa: Discourses on the identity of a Renaissance city] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015). On the factors that made up the celebrated stability of Dubrovnik, see idem, “O stabilnosti Dubrovačke Republike (14.-17. stoljeće): geopolitički i ekonomski faktori” [On the stability of the Republic of Dubrovnik (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries: Geopolitical and economic factors), *Analiza Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 54/1 (2016): 1-38; idem, “O stabilnosti Dubrovačke Republike: patricijat i njegovi podanici (14.-17. stoljeće)” [On the stability of the Republic of Dubrovnik: The patriciate and its subjects (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)] (to be published). I would also like to thank Lovro Kunčević for having allowed me to use the manuscript.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example: Franjo Rački, “Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske prije XII. stoljeća, I. dio” [The internal arrangement of Croatia before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Part I], *Rad JAZU* 7 (1884)153-190; Grga Novak. “*Nobiles, populus i cives*, komuna i *universitas* u Splitu 1525.-1797.” [*Nobiles, populus, and cives*: The commune and the *universitas* in Split, 1525-1797], *Rad JAZU* 286 (1952): 5-40; Jorjo Tadić, “O društvenoj strukturi Dalmacije i Dubrovnika u vreme renesanse” [On the social structure of Dalmatia and Dubrovnik during the Renaissance], *Zgodovinski časopis* 6-7 (1952-1953): 552-565; Maja Novak-Sambrailo. “Plemići, građani i pučani u Zadru (XV.-XVII. st.)” [Noblemen, commoners, and plebeians in Zadar (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.)], *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 19 (1972): 167-186; Tomislav Raukar. “*Cives, habitatores, forenses* u srednjovjekovnim dalmatinskim gradovima” [*Cives, habitatores, forenses* in medieval Dalmatian cities], *Historijski zbornik* 29-30 (1976-1977): 139-149; Josip Lučić, “Komunalno uređenje dalmatinskih gradova u XI. stoljeću” [Communal order in Dalmatian cities (11<sup>th</sup> c.)], *Zbornik Zavoda za povijesne znanosti istraživačkog centra JAZU* 10 (1980): 209-233; Josip Lučić, “Društveni odnosi u Dubrovačkoj Republici od 16. do 19. stoljeća” [Social relations in the Republic of Dubrovnik (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c.)], in: *Društveni razvoj u Hrvatskoj od 16. stoljeća do početka 20. stoljeća*, ed. Mirjana Gross (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1981), 153-174; Zdenka Janeković Römer, “Staleška uvjetovanost vlasti u Dubrovačkoj Republici” [The role of estates in the government of the Dubrovnik Republic], *Acta Histriae* 7 (1999): 215-232; eadem, “Građani, stanovnici, podanici, stranci, inovjerci u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku” [Citizens, inhabitants, foreigners, and heretics in medieval Dubrovnik], in: *Raukarov zbornik: zbornik u čast Tomislava Raukara*, ed. Neven Budak (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF Press, 2005), 317-345.

<sup>7</sup> On the Venetian *cittadini originarii*, see: Matteo Casini, “La cittadinanza originaria a Venezia tra i secoli XV e XVI. Una linea interpretativa,” in: *Studi veneti offerti a Gaetano Cozzi* (Venice: Il cardo, 1992), 133-150; Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originarii*

Same as in Venice, a new, “second” urban elite emerged in Dubrovnik, consisting of wealthy citizens who remained outside of the highest, ruling layer of nobility after the institutional closure of Dubrovnik’s patriciate in 1332.<sup>8</sup> Driven by the numerous opportunities of the flourishing late medieval Dubrovnik, many entrepreneuring men settled in the city and quite quickly gained respectable wealth and social prestige. This group of wealthy commoners consisted mostly of merchants, chancellors, notaries, lawyers, and physicians, but also of illegitimate descendants of Ragusan nobility. They acted very like their patrician counterparts, emulating their marital strategies, family structure, and even some forms of political life<sup>9</sup> in the internal organizations of the confraternities associated with them – the confraternity of St Anthony (the *Antunini*), established in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, and that of St Lazarus (the *Lazarini*), established in 1531.<sup>10</sup>

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(*sec. XVI-XVIII*) (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere ed arti, 1993); Anna Bellavitis, “Per cittadini metterete...? La stratificazione della società veneziana cinquecentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale,” *Quaderni storici* 89 (1995): 359-383; James S. Grubb, “Elite Citizens,” in: *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797*, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore, MD and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 339-364; Anna Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité sociale: citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVIe siècle* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2001); Monika Schmitter, “‘Virtuous Riches’: The Bricolage of Cittadini Identities in Early-Sixteenth-Century Venice,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 57/3 (2004): 908-969; Andrea Zannini, “La seconda corona della nobiltà. I cittadini originari veneziani nel XVII e XVIII secolo,” in: *Le aristocrazie cittadine. Evoluzione dei ceti dirigenti urbani nei secoli XV – XVIII*, ed. Marino Zorzi, Marcello Fracanzani, and Italo Quadrio (Venice: La Musa Talia, 2009), 31-51.

<sup>8</sup> On the formation of Dubrovnik’s nobility and the closure of the Major Council, see in detail: Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom: The Nobility of Dubrovnik Between the Middle Ages and Humanism* (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015), 101-110; Vekarić, “The Proportion,” 7-22; Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika. Svezak 1: Korijeni, struktura i razvoj dubrovačkog plemstva* [The nobility of Dubrovnik, vol. 1: The roots, structure, and development of Dubrovnik’s nobility] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2011), 21-23; Zdenka Janeković Römer, “Zatvaranje dubrovačkog plemstva i vijeća u političkom i društvenom kontekstu 13. i 14. stoljeća” [The closure of Dubrovnik’s nobility and the council in the political and social context of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 56 (2018), in print.

<sup>9</sup> However, here I would like to draw the attention to the line of argument of Monica Schmitter, who has questioned the established hypothesis that the Venetian citizens were “mere emulators of the collecting and patronage patterns of the ruling nobility,” giving examples in her articles that suggest some of the *cittadini* “were at the forefront of new developments and that they had an unrecognized impact on the style and content of Venetian art in the ‘Golden Age.’” Schmitter, “Virtuous Riches,” *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> On the confraternities of St Anthony, see Zrinka Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti. Dubrovački antunini u kasnom srednjem vijeku* [On the threshold of power: The Antunini of Dubrovnik in the late Middle Ages] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku and Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012); on the Confraternity of St Lazarus, see: Štefica Curić Lenert and Nella Lonza, “Bratovština Sv. Lazara u Dubrovniku (1531-1808): osnutak, ustroj, članstvo” [Confraternity of St Lazarus in Dubrovnik (1531-1808): Foundation, organization, membership], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 54/1 (2016): 39-113.

Nevertheless, as with the Venetian *cittadini*, the process of formalization and recognition of the *cittadini Ragusei* as a separate social group was complex and prolonged, and is difficult to follow in the sources. Much like in Venice, it may seem at first that the stratification of the society should be clear as one of the basic points in almost all written sources, but actually the citizens (*cittadini Ragusei*) prove to be an “extremely permeable and hard to define class,” using the words of Monica Schmitter, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the aim of this analysis is to see whether the narrative sources are any more revealing in this respect and how they understood the *cittadini Ragusei*.

Of course, regarding the relatively large number of narrative sources from Dubrovnik, this paper cannot take all of them into consideration. Therefore, I have opted here for a selection of various types of narratives: annals and chronicles, laudations and eulogies, some treatises and even epistles (which are not narratives in stricto sensu) – asking, as Giles Constable did, whether one can find a sort of “emergence of the modern idea of the middle class” in them, with all the reserves needed when using the term “class”.<sup>12</sup>

*“The fine division between Dubrovnik’s government and its citizens”*

In his laudatory oration held in February 1438 before the Rector and the distinguished senators of Dubrovnik on the occasion of King Albert’s coronation, Philippus de Diversi, an erudite humanist and teacher from Lucca, emphasized the importance of concord and peace among the “government, citizens, and all people,” obviously referring to the society of Dubrovnik.<sup>13</sup> His approval of this image of social order, which he most certainly shared with his noble listeners, is confirmed in the title of a chapter in his work *Situs aedificiorum, politiae et laudabilium consuetudinum inclitae civitatis Ragusii* (1440), where he praises the “fine division” when describing the political system in the city.<sup>14</sup> These few Diversi’s words reveal his notion of the tripartite division of the society, which in Dubrovnik included the “government, citizens, and all people,” and of the benefits that such a hierarchy, orderly, harmonious, and peaceful, brings to the city that guards it.

<sup>11</sup> Schmitter, “Virtuous Riches,” 961.

<sup>12</sup> Constable, “Was There a Medieval Middle Class?,” passim.

<sup>13</sup> “...nam durante pace et concordia communis est principum, civium et omnium incolarum consensus idem velle.” Filip De Diversis, *Dubrovački govori u slavu ugarskih kraljeva Sigismunda i Alberta* [Dubrovnik speeches celebrating the Hungarian kings Sigismund and Albert], ed. Zdenka Janeković Römer (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2001), 122. On Filip de Diversis, see eadem, “Grad trgovaca koji nose naziv plemića: Filip de Diversis i njegova pohvala Dubrovniku” [The city of merchants with the title of noblemen: Filip de Diversis and his laudation of Dubrovnik], in: *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, trans. Zdenka Janeković Römer (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2004), 9-17.

<sup>14</sup> “*Distinctio pulchra principatum et incolarum Ragusinorum*”. De Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 62 and 155.

The tripartite division endorsed by Diversi was not the only kind of social order in the medieval period: there were also bipartite and other types. Besides the professional criterion, the stratification could be based on the financial one, where the texts speak of *dives*, *mediocre*, and *pauperes*, or on the social status, yielding a division into *nobiles*, *mediocres*, and *viles*, and various others.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the tripartite scheme was the preferred one, as it largely corresponded to the Christian worldview, the Holy Trinity and the symbolism of number three, the most famous type of such divisions being the one into *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*.<sup>16</sup>

In case of Dubrovnik, the tripartite division was also present in other authors writing from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and Dubrovnik's chroniclers and authors of the earliest historiographies liked to project the concept back onto the ancient times. Thus, the first social stratification found in the annals of an anonymous author, compiled at the end of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is linked to the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the tradition on the foundation of Dubrovnik. In the story about the arrival of the wealthy family of Pecorario, the ancestors of the noble clan of Goče in 743 or 744, the anonymous annals state that the society was divided into three estates (*gentilhomini*, *populi*, and *servidori*) according to their property.<sup>17</sup> The same narrative on the tripartite social stratification at the very beginnings of the city is found in Nikola Ragnina (1494-1582), nobleman and Rector with several mandates, who wrote his chronicle of Dubrovnik around 1552. According to him, the division was there in 743 and was based on the property criterion, in which he agrees with the anonymous annals: "... *A Ragusa forno divisi li gentilhomeni delli altri popolani et artificii, et cominciorono magistrati et officii, perche fino al presente anno stettero come una plebe et commun populazzo nelle ville. Et quelli che erano richi, erano capi et governatori della città.... Quali catunari feceno spartire lo popolo in tre parte: la prima li nobili, l'altra li popolani, e la terza li villani et artigiani...*"<sup>18</sup>

Only a few decades after Ragnina, the Dominican friar Serafino Razzi (1531-1611), staying in Dubrovnik in 1588 and 1589 as the general vicar and visitator of Dubrovnik's Dominican congregation, was inspired to write a history of the city. Under the influence of the previous narratives, his *History of Dubrovnik* (1595) repeats the story of the tripartite division of the population in the 8<sup>th</sup> century: "*Dell'anno 744 fu diviso il popolo di Ragusa in tre parti. Nella prima delle quali posero i Nobili, et à*

<sup>15</sup> Constable, "The Orders of Society," 289-323.

<sup>16</sup> DUBY, *The Three Orders*, 3ff; Constable, "The Orders of Society," 279-304.

<sup>17</sup> "744... *spartir lo populacio in tre parte, in una parte gentilhomeni, in altra populi, in terza servidori.*" "Li Annali della nobilissima republica di Ragusa," in *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. Speratus Nodilo, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium 14 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1883), 8-9. For additional details on the arrival of the Pecorario clan and its genealogy, see the article of Nenad Vekarić in this volume and Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 77-79 and 88-89.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolò Ragnina, "Annali di Ragusa," in *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. Speratus Nodilo, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium 14 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1883), 180-181.

*loro fu dato il governo della Città. Nella seconda collocarono coloro i qualli erano di mediocri sostanze, e quasi ministri de i Nobili: e gl'addimandarono popolani. E nella terza parte rimasero i plebei, ò vero artigiani.*<sup>19</sup>

Thus, from the perspective of authors writing in the middle and late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the tripartite division had been present from the very beginnings of the city in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century. Its crucial distinctive criterion, according to these chronicles, was property and the groups thus formed originated from a formerly unified population, which was then diversified into the *nobili*, *populani*, and *popolo minuto*,<sup>20</sup> or *villani et artisani*, or *plebs*, depending on the author.

Based on these sources alone, an image of the hierarchical city occurs in which the three orders existed from its earliest history; but if one consults the preserved documentary sources, especially those from the communal period, a different image of the society and its hierarchy emerges. There the Roman division of urban populations into *clerus* and *populus* was inherited,<sup>21</sup> one of the most famous mentions of this collocation being the privilege issued by the Hungarian king Koloman to the cities of Dalmatia in 1107, in which he promised to respect their rights and confirm the counts elected by the clergy and the people.<sup>22</sup>

This division is perpetuated in a series of documents from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, in all Dalmatian cities including Dubrovnik.<sup>23</sup> From the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and especially with the development of the communal order, the central political body was the popular assembly.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Statute of Dubrovnik, the city's fundamental document passed in 1272, states in its preamble that it was confirmed and empowered by the Minor and Major Councils "with the approval of all people" summoned, as was the custom, by sounding the bell.<sup>25</sup> According to Zdenka Janeković

<sup>19</sup> Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 11; Razzi, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ragnina, "Annali di Ragusa", 228.

<sup>21</sup> Franjo Rački, "Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske prije XII. stoljeća, II. dio" [The internal arrangement of Croatia before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Part II], *Rad JAZU* 13 (1886): 116; Josip Lučić, "Komunalno uređenje dalmatinskih gradova u XI. stoljeću," [The communal system of Dalmatian cities in the 11<sup>th</sup> century], *Zbornik Zavoda za povijesne znanosti istraživačkog centra JAZU* 10 (1980): 212-216; Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 93-94.

<sup>22</sup> *Diplomatički zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije (Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae)* (hereafter: CD), vol. 2, ed. T. Smičiklas (Zagreb: JAZU, 1904), 19, doc. 16. Grga Novak, "Comes, potestas, prior, consul, rector, capitaneus i miles grada Splita" [Comes, potestas, prior, consul, rector, capitaneus, and miles in the city of Split], *Vijesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* 50 (1928/29): 228. Cf. Rački, "Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske I," 181.

<sup>23</sup> See examples in Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 93-94.

<sup>24</sup> On the popular assembly in Dubrovnik, see Lučić, "Komunalno uređenje," 219; Janeković Römer, "Građani, stanovnici, podanici," 319; Nenad Vekarić, "The Proportion of the Ragusan Nobility at the Closing of the Major Council in 1332," *Dubrovnik Annals* 16 (2012): 10; Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 97-100.

<sup>25</sup> "... confirmatum et corroboratum tam per Parvum quam per Magnum Consilium, quam etiam per laudacionem tocius populi more solito ad campanarum sonitum congregati." *Statut grada Dubrovnika: sastavljen godine 1272* [The Statute of Dubrovnik, compiled in 1272], trans. A. Šoljić, Z. Šundrica, and I. Veselić (Dubrovnik: Državni arhiv, 2002), 80.

Römer, a number of documents from the 13<sup>th</sup> century mention the decisions being made “*per consensum et laudamentum populi Ragusii*”; “*populus Ragusii... confessus est*”; “*statutum est ab ipso populo*”; and so on.<sup>26</sup> The *populus*, gathered in the assembly, was the carrier of political sovereignty, a legally and politically defined group that included all free inhabitants of the city.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, one can agree with the conclusion of Claire Judde de Larivière and Rosa Salzberg that “the medieval commune was governed by the *populus*, a political entity that, from its origin, was distinct from the group of the *popolani*” or *popolari* as they are known from the later sources.<sup>28</sup>

During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Dubrovnik’s documents started mentioning the division between the *nobiles* and the *populus*.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, these categories still formed a community that made political decisions, which is illustrated by an example given by Thomas the Archdeacon (1200-1268) in his *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*. In his famous story on the establishment of the *podestà*’s power in Split, the “entire populace, nobles as well as commoners” (*universa multitudo tam nobilium quam popularium*) swore obedience to the new *podestà* Gargano.<sup>30</sup> Same as Dubrovnik’s division between the *nobiles* and the *populus*, this example from Split shows the beginnings of stratification in a body that comprised the entire community and was politically represented in the popular assembly. From the 16<sup>th</sup>-century perspective, this is observed by Nikola Ragnina when describing the division of the newly acquired land on the Pelješac peninsula in 1334. He mentioned the noblemen and the “citizens” (*tutti nobili et cittadini*) as the groups that obtained the land,<sup>31</sup> and a similar pattern was followed in other distributions of the acquired territory during the 14<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup>

Stratification takes place when prominent individuals emerge among the citizens as a political entity: judges and councillors, distinguished and wealthy members of the community. They already consider themselves as *nobiles*, a term that is found in the sources before it acquired an exclusive meaning as an estate.<sup>33</sup> During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their families *de facto* secured the monopoly over political authority and power. Modelled upon Venice, their office-holding and exclusivity on that basis, the

<sup>26</sup> Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 99.

<sup>27</sup> Claire Judde de Larivière and Rosa M. Salzberg, “The People Are the City: The Idea of the *popolo* and the Condition of the *popolani* in Renaissance Venice,” *Annales (English ed.)* 68/4 (2017): 778.

<sup>28</sup> Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, “The People Are the City,” 778. Cf. Janeković Römer, “Građani, stanovnici,” 320.

<sup>29</sup> Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 81, with examples.

<sup>30</sup> Thomae Archidiaconi Spalatensis / Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum / History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*. Latin text by Olga Perić, ed., trans. and annotated by Damir Karbić, Mirjana Matijević-Sokol, and James Ross Sweeney (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2006), ch. 33, 226-227.

<sup>31</sup> Ragnina, “Annali di Ragusa,” 226.

<sup>32</sup> Vekarić, “The Proportion,” 16-17.

<sup>33</sup> Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 80-81.

creation of myths on their family origins, as well as their financial power, played the crucial role in the articulation of the leading aristocratic elite. Same as in the Venetian *serrata*, the codification of the right to sit on the governing councils of the city, which was finalized in Dubrovnik by closing the Major Council in 1332, marked the final separation of the leading noble estate from the rest of the population, setting a reference point for the social hierarchy mentioned in the narrative sources.<sup>34</sup>

Coming back to the narratives, the Venetian ones, when describing their society, likewise oscillated between the bipartite and tripartite divisions. Older authors (Sabellico, Contarini, Bracciolini, Paruta, Machiavelli) mostly emphasized the bipartite division between the nobility and the commoners. Only some opted for the tripartite one: Marino Sanudo, who described the Venetian society in 1493 as consisting of three layers: the noblemen (*zenthomeni*), the citizens (*cittadini*), and the artisans or “lesser populace” (*popolo menudo*); the Florentine Donato Giannotti, who saw the Venetian society around 1520 as consisting of the plebeians (*popolari* or *plebei*), who engaged in “the lowest trades and had no position whatsoever in the society,” the citizens (*cittadini*), who engaged in dignified trades and had achieved a certain level of esteem and standing in the society, and the noblemen (*gentilhuomeni*), who ruled over the city and the entire state, on land and sea alike; and Antonio Milledonne, who likewise saw the Venetian society in 1580 as consisting of three estates: the noblemen, the citizens, and the plebeians.<sup>35</sup> However, it should be added that Gasparo Contarini, in his monumental work *De magistratibus et republicâ Venetorum* (1543), despite his bipartite division of the society into the noblemen and the “people” (*popolo*), admitted that within that there was a division among the “people” (*popolo*), with a “worthier” kind of people, and a group “of the lowest of the plebeians”.<sup>36</sup>

### “Cittadini da loro popolani detti...”

The terminological formation and classification of the orders that made up the society of Dubrovnik is not something that the readers of narrative sources will often

<sup>34</sup> On the link between the creation of the narrative on the origin of the nobility and the narrative on the legitimacy of noble authority, see in detail: Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 21-64; Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku*. 51-67.

<sup>35</sup> Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 99; Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI-XVIII)* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere ed arti, 1993), 51 and 55; Brian Pullan, “Three Orders of Inhabitants’: Social Hierarchies in the Republic of Venice,” in: *Orders and Hierarchies In Late Medieval And Renaissance Europe*, ed. Jeffrey Denton (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1999), 153;; James S. Grubb, “Elite Citizens,” in: *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297-1797*, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore, MD and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 340.

<sup>36</sup> “Tutto'l popolo e diviso in due maniere, percioche certi ne sono di piu honorato genere altri della bassa plebe.” Quoted from: Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, “The People Are the City,” 779, n. 38.



encounter. However, when it comes to the leading noble estate, the development of its content and terminology was doubtlessly more concrete and precise than that of the other social layers. The process of distinction of the most influential aristocratic families was underway well before its formalization in the closing of the council in the 1330s, when the term *nobiles* was conventionally defined<sup>37</sup> and linked to the hereditary right to sit on the Major Council. With the now formal and firm boundary between the estates, based on the criterion of council membership, the unsurpassable distinction between this order and the others was built upon a whole series of “origin stories” linked to the very beginnings of Dubrovnik in the context of “producing the city’s past” and as such becoming the crucial feature of its identity as an estate. The boundary was also emphasized through the already existing status (such as the council membership),<sup>38</sup> intended to secure legitimacy to the appropriation of power and governance. All that was additionally “garnished” by the obvious financial power, which was – along with the origin myths, the status, and the offices – crucial in justifying social and political primacy. This was inscribed in the image of the nobility in all sources, including the narrative ones, which all transmitted the same message.<sup>39</sup>

The nobility was thus created and self-referenced through a decade-long process, in which it built the formal boundaries that make it so clearly distinguishable in the sources. But what about the commoners? The terminological crystallization of the term “nobleman” undoubtedly led to an altered notion of the citizen (*civis*). According to the traditional definition where the true citizen was only someone with political power,<sup>40</sup> the full-fledged *cives* of Dubrovnik were only those sitting on the council. These were the *nobiles cives* or *nobiles homines*, *nobiles de civitate*, *nobili cittadini*, *cives de consilio*, and eventually they were simply called *nobiles*.<sup>41</sup> Thus, as the term *nobilis* was clearly defined in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this necessarily led to the refinement of the term “citizen” or “commoner” (*civis*, *cittadino*).

<sup>37</sup> Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika 1*, 21-23; idem, “The Proportion,” 18-21; Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 101-110. Cf. Gerhard Rösch, “The *Serrata* of the Great Council and Venetian Society, 1286-1323,” in: *Venice Reconsidered*, 68; Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, “The People Are the City,” 778.

<sup>38</sup> On the frequent use of the term *cives de consilio*, which was *de facto* linked and identified with the notion of nobility before the closing of the council, see Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 100.

<sup>39</sup> Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku*, 51-67; Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 65-92.

<sup>40</sup> The axis of theoretical interpretation was in the inexhaustible Aristotelian opus, adapted to the medieval context. Aristotle’s interpretation that nothing defines the status and right of a citizen than his ability to participate in the magistrates became the essence of the medieval idea of citizenship. Pietro Costa, *Civitas: storia della cittadinanza in Europa I* (Rome: Laterza, 1999): 24.

<sup>41</sup> Examples for the said terminology can be found in: CD 12, ed. Tadija Smičklas (Zagreb: JAZU, 1914), 587-588, doc. 441 (1359); 605-606, doc. 454 (1359); 618, doc. 466 (1359); 619-620, doc. 467 (1359); CD 13, coll. Tadija Smičklas, ed. M. Kostrenčić and E. pl. Laszowski (Zagreb: JAZU, 1915), 41, doc. 28 (1360); *Monumenta Ragusina. Libri reformationum* (hereafter: *Libri reformationum*), vol. 1, ed. Josephus Gelcich [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium, vol. 10] (Zagreb: JAZU, 1897), 158, 164, 164, 174, 201, and 273; *Libri reformationum* vol. 2, 51, 76, and 77. Cf. Janeković Römer, “Građani, stanovnici,” 320; Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika 1*, 20.

But the term also contained particular nuances, the meaning and scope of which was changing with time.<sup>42</sup> It also implied possessing a legal right ( *cittadinancia, civilitas*) as well as belonging to a specific social group (*cives, cittadini*). All legally acknowledged citizens could call themselves Ragusans and thus identify their citizenship with the city's name. The terms *civis Ragusii* and *Raguseus* were used interchangeably.<sup>43</sup> In the communal era, all members of the commune who enjoyed political rights were called *cives Ragusini*. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, when Nikola Ragnina wrote on the events from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries in his *Annals*, he used the term *cittadini* for all citizens alike.<sup>44</sup> Of course, medieval citizenship included far more than political activity and exclusivism based on the criterion of political participation in government and the magistrates. But who were those whom the sources call *cives* or *cittadini* and who completely usurped that term towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century?

From the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, administrative documents increasingly used the term *cives de popolo*. This is evident, for example, in the decision of 1348, by which the Major Council ordered all Ragusans to return to the city because of the plague epidemic, whereby the order was explicitly addressing both the *nobiles* and the *cives populares*.<sup>45</sup> Apparently, the patricians of Dubrovnik, following the formal closure of their estate, also created a terminological distinction for themselves as the "true" *cives* (*nobiles cives*). Thus, the legal discourse now included the term that is also found in the Venetian documents of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>46</sup> Also, these official sources indicate the possible birth of a social group that was first delimited and set apart from the others by using this term.<sup>47</sup>

Despite that, the terms *civis* and *cittadino* were not unambiguous either in chronicles or in administrative sources. In other words, they reflected, on the one hand, their complex and broad juridical meaning, and on the other their increasing importance in social recognition. This was also observed by Philippus de Diversi in his *Description of the Glorious City of Dubrovnik*. When praising, as stated before, the "fine division between Dubrovnik's government and its citizens," he mentioned that all inhabitants of Dubrovnik were classified as either "newcomers or citizens"

<sup>42</sup> Diego Quaglioni, "The Legal Definition of Citizenship in the Late Middle Ages," in: *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, ed. Anthony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emlen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 155-167.

<sup>43</sup> Lovro Kunčević, "Civic and Ethnic Discourses of Identity in a City-State Context: The Case of Renaissance Ragusa," in: *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 155-158.

<sup>44</sup> Ragnina, "Annali di Ragusa", 222, 223, 224, and 228.

<sup>45</sup> *Libri reformationum* vol. 2, 20 and 27.

<sup>46</sup> Pullan, "Three Orders of Inhabitants," 160.

<sup>47</sup> The situation was similar in Venice, where both the patricians and the commoners were called *gentilhuomo, nobel homo, vir nobilis, fidel nostro, cittadino nostro, or cives venetis*. Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, "The People Are the City," 782.

(*advenas et cives*). However, aware of the composite meaning of the term “citizen”, in the very next sentence he added that this division understood the term “broadly” (*summendo civem largo modo*), explaining that “literally, only those can be called citizens who have the right to participate in conciliar and judicial power,”<sup>48</sup> obviously relying on the established theoretical base according to which citizenship was defined by the right of political activity and participation in the magistrates. Apparently, by the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century the notion of citizen had surpassed the exclusive legal framework and thus Diversi was inclined to use it in this new, broader sense.

Diversi’s need to explain and clarify the category of citizen and citizenship is the best proof that it was a rather fluid identity in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, apparently a subject of debates and still in the process of definition. This is confirmed by the words of Benedikt Kotrulj (ca. 1416-1469), a prominent merchant of Dubrovnik and author of several works, the most renowned being his *Book on the Art of Trade* (1458). He does not offer a closer definition of the estate to which he also belonged, and the closest he comes to the problem of terminology and the understanding of citizenry is in his critique of clothing. Namely, he comments rather bitterly that in his time “people tend to abuse and pervert all elegance and dignity, and thus a plebeian can no longer be distinguished from a nobleman or a merchant from a gentleman” (*...che non si discerne intra plebeio et gentilomo, intra mercante et signore...*). In his opinion, a merchant and citizen (*mercando o cittadino*) should be dressed correctly and modestly instead of wearing ornamented brocade or velvet, since those materials, especially purple ones, were reserved for rulers and noblemen.<sup>49</sup>

Here Kotrulj also introduced an element that would gradually become prominent in the attempts at defining the *cittadini* of Dubrovnik: identification of the merchant with the citizen. In this way, he summarized the genesis of the estate he belonged to. Of course, it was not a qualification exclusively linked to the citizens, since Diversi used almost the same expression for Dubrovnik’s noblemen some fifteen years before Kotrulj when referring to them as “merchants who call themselves noblemen.”<sup>50</sup> Undoubtedly, trade was a source of livelihood both for the city of Dubrovnik and for all its orders and inhabitants.<sup>51</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that both authors associated it with both orders, noblemen as well as commoners. Nevertheless, the order of citizens (*cittadini*) indeed was an estate of merchants and gathered around the Confraternity of St Anthony the Abbot, which is in the sources also called *scuola delli mercadanti*. Therefore, the link between the *cittadini Ragusei* and the art of

<sup>48</sup> De Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 63 and 155.

<sup>49</sup> Benedikt Kotrulj, *Libro del arte dela mercatura = Knjiga o vještini trgovanja*, trans. Zdenka Janeković Römer (Dubrovnik and Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku and Hrvatski računovođa, 2009), 476-477.

<sup>50</sup> De Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 64-65 and 156-157.

<sup>51</sup> Zdenka Janeković Römer, “Dubrovačko 15. stoljeće: vrijeme rada i bogaćenja” [Dubrovnik’s 15<sup>th</sup> century: The time of work and wealth accumulation], in: *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 18-31.

trade (to borrow the title of Kotrulj's book) was especially close and, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, shaped this emerging social order in terms of its status.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, just as the foundation of the *Antunini* confraternity marked, in a way, the first emergence of this social layer, thus the *serrata* of these confraternities (the *Antunini* in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the *Lazarini* at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) – which made it almost impossible for any new members to join it – undoubtedly contributed to the consolidating image of its specificity and social distinction.<sup>53</sup>

Nikola Vitov Gozze (1549-1610), author of a work called *Dello stato delle Repubbliche* (1591), which brings the key concepts of Dubrovnik's political system and is thus a sort of counterpart to Contarini's famous *De magistratibus et republica venetorum*, probably tried more than any other author to define who, in fact, were Dubrovnik's citizens. Following Aristotle's principle that the true citizen of any city is the one who is born for, and capable of holding offices and participate in governance, who can counsel, judge, and rule, and continuing in a way Diversi's explanation, he stated that in his city there were "true citizens", i.e. noblemen who participated in power, but also those citizens who were "born of free citizens" but were called by that name "only occasionally."<sup>54</sup> He also referred to the aforementioned genesis of the commoner estate, saying that merchants had become "citizens by accumulating great wealth."<sup>55</sup>

The terms *cittadino* and *popolano* were employed with great variety in Dubrovnik during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is attested not only in their various uses in chronicles, but also in the aforementioned words of Diversi, Gozze, and Razzi. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the term *cives*, besides its legal content, undoubtedly also had social connotations, referring to a specific social layer. However, Razzi's note on the social stratification of Dubrovnik is also interesting in another context: he seems almost amazed at the ambiguity and interchangeability of the terms "citizen" and "popolano" in Dubrovnik (*cittadini da loro popolani detti...*). Razzi's need to draw attention to that fact should probably be seen in a broader context in which the terms were then used in discourses on the society, its structure, and the entities of which it was composed. Like Gasparo Contarini, who also used the term *popolo* when describing the social group that undoubtedly enjoyed a certain social standing and that various other theoreticians referred to as *cittadini*,<sup>56</sup> the Ragusans did the same during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which Razzi noticed.

<sup>52</sup> On the Confraternity of St Anthony as the institutional centre of Dubrovnik's wealthy merchants, see Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti*, 15-31;66-70. On the *Antunini* as a confraternity of merchants, cf. DAD (State Archive of Dubrovnik), Testamenta Notariae (TN), vol. 11, f. 58; DAD, TN, 15, f. 130.

<sup>53</sup> On the "closure" of these two confraternities, see: Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti*, 66-70; Curić Lenert and Lonza, "Bratovština Sv. Lazara," 62.

<sup>54</sup> Nikola Vidov Gučetić, *O ustroju država* [On the structure of states], trans. Snježana Husić and Natka Badurina (Zagreb: Goden marketing and Narodne novine, 2000), 192.

<sup>55</sup> Gučetić, *O ustroju država*, 200.

<sup>56</sup> Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, "The People Are the City," 779.

*Popolo* and *populares* were in Dubrovnik, at least on the semantic level, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries not on the level of “the majority of population, which had no privileges whatsoever,”<sup>57</sup> as described for Venice by the Florentine Donato Giannotti in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup>

This meaning of the multitude of plebeians with no privileges was expressed in that period and in the Dubrovnik setting by the terms *plebs*, *artigiani*, and *popolo minuto*. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, when Nikola Ragnina classified those who had died of plague in 1348 as *gentilhomini*, *populani*, and *popolo minuto*,<sup>59</sup> his *populani* were not the people who, according to Giannotti, “*non hanno acquistato nella Città grado alcuno*,” but rather fitted Razzi’s category of citizens (*cittadini da loro popolani detti*). By the same token, Ragnina’s *popolo minuto* (whose multitude he symbolically rendered by using the number “10 *migliaria*”) was a layer that fitted Giannotti’s category of people without a status, i.e. Razzi’s *plebei* or *artigiani*.

This claim is supported by the words of Marin Držić, the greatest Croatian Renaissance writer, who himself belonged to the layer of Dubrovnik’s citizens “whom they call *popolani*” (in Razzi’s wording). In his famous political epistles addressed to the Florentine rulers Cosimo I Medici and his son Francesco, written in Summer 1566,<sup>60</sup> in which he called for their help in organizing a coup d’état in Dubrovnik,

<sup>57</sup> Dennis Romano, *Patricians and Popolani: the Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 29; Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, “The People Are the City,” 782.

<sup>58</sup> In his work *Il Libro della reppublica de’ Viniziani*, Donato offered the most precise definition of the layer that the sources commonly refer to as the *popolari*, and for whom he suggests that they could also be called *plebei*: “*Per popolari io intendo quelli che altramente possiamo chiamare plebei; e sono quelli i quali esercitano arti vilissime per sostenere la vita loro, e nella Città non hanno grado alcuno*”; “*I plebei, o vogliamo dire popolari, sono una moltitudine grandissima, compista di più maniere d’abitatori: sì come sono forestieri i quali ci vengono ad abitare, tratti dalla cupidità del guadagno.... In questa medesimo corpo de’ popolari entrano infiniti artigiani minuti; i quali, per non avere mai superato la bassezza della fortuna loro, non hanno acquistati nella Città grado alcuno. Abbiamo ancora un’altra moltitudine di popolari, i quali sono come nostri servidori: sì come sono i barcheroli, el altri simili*.” Quoted from: Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, “The People Are the City,” 776, n. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Ragnina, “Annali di Ragusa”, 228.

<sup>60</sup> The question of Držić’s letters to the Medici and the “conspiracy” goes beyond the scope of this paper and has been extensively discussed, as well as Držić’s possible motives behind his call for the change of power in his hometown. Therefore, I will here only indicate some relevant studies: Bernard Stulli, “Okolitičkih planova Marina Držića – Vidre” [Concerning the political plans of Marin Držić – Vidra], in: *Studije iz povijesti Dubrovnika* (Zagreb: Konzor, 2001); Vinko Foretić, “O Marinu Držiću” [On Marin Držić], *Rad JAZU* 338 (1965): 49-110; Frano Čale, “O životu i djelu Marina Držića” [On the life and work of Marin Držić], in: *Djela* (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1979), 19-40; Josip Pupačić, “Pjesnik urotnik (o političkim planovima Marina Držića)” [The conspiring poet (on the political plans of Marin Držić)], in: *Zbornik radova o Marinu Držiću*, ed. Jakša Ravlić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1969), 166-206; Nenad Vekarić, “Držićeva firentinska urotnička epizoda: Dio plana Bobaljevićeva klana da razvlasti Gundulićev klan” [Držić’s Florentine conspiracy episode: Plans of the Bobaljić clan to overthrow the Gundulić clan], in: *Putovima kanonizacije. Zbornik radova o Marinu Držiću (1508-2008)*, ed. Nikola Batušić and Dunja Fališevac (Zagreb: HAZU, 2008), 5-16; Zdenka Janeković Römer, “Autoritet ljubavi: samotnička misija Marina Držića za ljude

Držić suggested that the future government should include both the nobility (*i nobili*) and the people (*il popolo*).

That this *popolo* from Držić's words is none other than the layer of people that would be called *cittadini* later on is evident from the context of the letter. Držić, namely, introduced a third category: the others (*gli altri*), for whom he stated that they would play no greater part in governance than the nobility and the *popolo*,<sup>61</sup> thus implying that his envisioned transformation of governance was not some sort of popular revolution.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the social structure presented in Držić's letters was tripartite and consisted of noblemen (*nobili*), the *popolo*, and "the others" (*gli altri*).

Neither the *popolo* nor the *cittadini* were in Dubrovnik defined by some sort of legal regulation that might help us define them as sociological categories. Neither the Ragusans nor the Venetians or any other early modern societies possessed any fundamental legislative documents that would specify and legally determine their estates. This was left to the domain of custom, what the estates were or were not, or the prerogatives they had or did not have.<sup>63</sup> The norms that people lived by were primarily determined by customs or sometimes by ad-hoc laws. This is indirectly attested by the aforementioned conspiracy letters written by Marin Držić. When telling Cosimo I about some happenings at the Franciscan convent, where dissension arose among the members of the monastic community, he wrote that, as a consequence, four *fratri popolani di case onorate* were unjustly expelled from the convent.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the term *popolo* in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Dubrovnik could for Držić be associated with two qualities – being *denarioso*<sup>65</sup> and being *honorato*. Thereby he almost followed the description that Philippus de Diversis had used to define the same social layer in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, as he also associated wealth with these people and called them literary "rich plebeian citizens" (*cives plebeis divites*).<sup>66</sup>

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nazbilj]" [The authority of love: Marin Držić's solitary mission for the true people], *Kolo* 2 (2006): 205-210; Lovro Kunčević, "Ipak nije na odmet sve čuti": Medičejski pogled na urotničke namjere Marina Držića" ["No harm in hearing it all": Medicean attitude to the conspiracy of Marin Držić], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 45 (2007): 9-46; Slobodan Prosperov Novak, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti: Od humanističkih početala do Kašićeve ilirske gramatike 1604*. [History of Croatian literature: From the humanist beginnings to Kašić's Illyrian grammar (1604)], vol. 2 (Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1997), 414-417; Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti*, 185-188; Lovro Kunčević, "Urota" [Conspiracy], in: *Leksikon Marina Držića*, ed. Milovan Tatarin, Slobodan Prosperov Novak, Mirjana Mataija, and Leo Rafolt (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2009), 837-846.

<sup>61</sup> "Il popolo e gli altri nessuna cosa non goderebbero più che quella cosa di signori in palazzo..." Marin Držić, *Djela* [Works], ed. Frano Čale (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1979), 885.

<sup>62</sup> This interpretation of the term *popolo* in Držić's letters has already been suggested by Vinko Foretić and Frano Čale, indicating its multilayered meaning. Foretić, "O Marinu Držiću," 83-87; Čale, "O životu i djelu Marina Držića," 24.

<sup>63</sup> Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, "The People Are the City," 782.

<sup>64</sup> Držić, *Djela*, 887.

<sup>65</sup> Držić, *Djela*, 885.

<sup>66</sup> De Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 198.

Obviously, the foreign observers of Dubrovnik's social reality, such as Razzi, considered it necessary to clarify the perhaps unusual use of the term *popolani* as these should have been called *cittadini* judging from their status. In an attempt at offering some definitions concerning Dubrovnik's estates, Razzi wrote based on the terminology that he knew from the Italian urban communities. And the definition of the terms *popolo* and *popolani* is by no means simple and considerably changed with time. As Claire Judde de Larivière and Rosa M. Salzberg have shown, it is an exceptionally multilayered and conceptually variegated term in medieval Italian cities. Eventually, it was crucially defined by the transition from understanding the *popolo* as the embodiment of the common good embedded in the very fundamentals of the commune to that of *popolo* as a group of people with no status and no privileges.<sup>67</sup> This transition also took place in the Dubrovnik setting, with some terminological divergence, primarily concerning the use of the term for people without a status. Namely, the concept of plebs (*la plebe* or *artifices*) in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ragusan sources remains reserved for the lowest social layer. From the middle or the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, one can sense the negative connotations in the discourse of narrative sources. Perhaps this is most evident in the words of Giacomo Luccari, who in his *Copioso Ristretto degli Annali di Rausa, libri quattro* (1605) wrote about the conspiracy of 1400.<sup>68</sup> Unlike the earlier notices in the anonymous annals or in Nikola Ragnina, Luccari added some juicy sentences to his account on the "greed and roguery of the plebes (*plebe*), and their innate hatred towards the nobility."<sup>69</sup> Thus, at least for Luccari, the term *la plebe* (but not *popolani*) acquired, from the noble perspective, the meaning of the lowest social layer and the natural opponent of the ruling nobility.

*"Ordo primus post patricios": From cittadini to an order*

With time, the term *cittadino* was clearly established and was less often used as a synonym of the *popolano*. In 1602, when Jeronim Darsa, a member of the *cittadini* estate, compiled a genealogy of his family, he called it *Origine et descendenza della famiglia di Darsa che al presente sono cittadini di Raugia*.<sup>70</sup> And that the term was

<sup>67</sup> Judde de Larivière and Salzberg, "The People Are the City," 769-796.

<sup>68</sup> It was a conspiracy of several Ragusan noblemen to overthrow the government of Dubrovnik, which was thwarted. Even though there are no preserved documentary sources on the conspiracy and present knowledge is based on the Ragusan chronicles from the later times, it acquired an almost canonical place in the construction of the myth on Dubrovnik's love of freedom and harmony, and was built into the symbolism of the city. Cf. Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 49-54.

<sup>69</sup> "E sostendo con bugie, che la plebe per la cupidigia di rubbare, et per odio naturale, che suole simil gete portare alli Gentil'huomini, suscitarà pericoloso tumulto." Jakov Petrov Luccari, *Copioso ristretto degli annali di Rausa* (Venice: Antonio Leonardi, 1605), 76; cf. Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 52. Of course, the motive behind Luccari's vitriolic attitude towards the plebs must also be sought in the broader context and the balance of political powers in the city. Cf. Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 52.

<sup>70</sup> Milovan Tatarin, "Genealogija Jeronima Držića" [The genealogy of Jeronim Držić], in: *Leksikon Marina Držića*, 245-247.

established as a clear identifier of the *cittadini* estate is quite evident from a series of decisions made at the time when a number of new families joined the Ragusan nobility in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when after more than 300 years it opened the gates of its firmly locked Great Council hall to new members. Dubrovnik's nobility knew very well whom it wanted to accept in its ranks and to which order these newcomers belonged. In all its decisions, those were *cives honorabiles*<sup>71</sup> or *nostri cittadini honorati*,<sup>72</sup> that is, practically the same expression used a hundred years earlier by Marin Držić, with the difference that he used the term *popolo* instead of *cives* for the same group of people. In 1666, when after 200 years of relentless estate-bound endogamy<sup>73</sup> this barrier fell, Dubrovnik's patricians (although with barely a majority) allowed their young men to marry daughters of "honourable men, citizens of this city, whose fathers never engaged in any sort of manual labour."<sup>74</sup>

These legal regulations and council decisions from the middle and late 17<sup>th</sup> century clearly show that the once fluid definition of individual estates was now a thing of the past, and so was the identification of the "middle" order by the common term *popolo*, which still amazed Razzi in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Eventually, let us turn to Serafin-Marija Cerva (Crijević) (1686-1759), a nobleman of Dubrovnik and a Dominican friar, perhaps the best representative of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Ragusan historiography, who described the public administration of the Dubrovnik Republic in his *Prolegomena to the Holy Metropolitan See of Dubrovnik*, where he wrote that "there are three orders in the city of Dubrovnik, same as in Venice: the noblemen or patricians, the citizens or commoners, and artisans" (*Constat Ragusina civitas Venetae ad instar triplici ordine nobilium, sive patriciorum, civium, sive popularium, et artificum*).<sup>75</sup> However, in Cerva's time there was no longer any doubt about who were

<sup>71</sup> DAD, *Acta consilii maioris*, vol. 39, f. 31 (November 15, 1645). This first initiative to accept five new families among the nobility was not backed by the majority in the Major Council and was thus postponed to 1666, a year before the cataclysm caused by the Great Earthquake of 1667 and the major demographic loss in the noble estate. On the aggregation of new nobility, see Dragoljub Pavlović, "O krizi vlasteoskog staleža u Dubrovniku XVII. veka" [On the crisis of the noble estate of Dubrovnik in the 17<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Starija jugoslovenska književnost* (Belgrade: Univerzitet u Beogradu, 1971), 185-195; Stjepan Ćosić and Nenad Vekarić, *Dubrovačka vlastela između roda i države: salamankezi i sorbonezi* [Dubrovnik's nobility between clan and the state: the *salamanchesi* and the *sorbonnesi*] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2005), 64-68; Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika 1*, 274-278.

<sup>72</sup> DAD, *Acta consilii maioris*, vol. 43, f. 63.

<sup>73</sup> Noble endogamy, that is, the prohibition of marriage between noble men and non-noble women, was ratified by the Major Council in 1462. *Liber croceus*, ed. Branislav M. Nedeljković, *Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, book 24 (Belgrade: SANU, 1997), ch. 18; cf. Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 111-117; Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika 1*, 149-151.

<sup>74</sup> "Che similmente li detti nobili nostri, fin che altrimenti sarà terminato con altro provvedimento, possono contratar matrimonii con le figliuole di persone honorate e civili di questa città, li cui padri non hanno esercitato alcun arte mecanica." DAD, *Acta consilii maioris*, vol. 44, f. 115; Pavlović, "O krizi vlasteoskog staleža" 193, n. 24; Ćosić and Vekarić, *Dubrovačka vlastela između roda i države*, 67.

<sup>75</sup> Serafin Marija Cerva (Seraphinus Maria Cerva), *Prolegomena in sacram metropolim Ragusinam*, ed. Relja Seferović (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2008), 73.



the citizens of Dubrovnik, although he also referred to them by alternative terms (*cives sive populares*). Both terms had clear social and order-related connotations. They included people who were not noblemen, but had Ragusan citizenship and were thus legally defined, and who were not artisans or involved in manual labour. Cerva also wrote about the question of their participation in public governance, saying that “this last group [artisans, author’s remark] does not participate in the governance of the Republic at all,” whereas “the citizens can take part in it by serving as public notaries, nevertheless appointed by the nobility.”<sup>76</sup>

This division Cerva also used in his encyclopaedic work *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, where he included biographies of distinguished writers from Dubrovnik. When writing on the Dominican Augustino Nale from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Cerva added that he was born in the middle order between the patricians and the plebeians (*civium ordinem... qui inter patritios plebemque medii clarum in ea urbe civium ordinem constituunt*). When writing on genealogist Bjeloslav Tiburtinić, active in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, he stated that Bjeloslav had established the genealogies of “all citizen families, which were the first after the noble ones” (*...omnium civium familiarum quae post patritias primum locum tenent Ragusii a divo Antonio nuncupatarum*).<sup>77</sup> And when mentioning Toma Aldoardi, a distinguished citizen and physician from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Cerva wrote that he belonged to the citizenry, “the first estate after the nobility” (*primi post patricos ordinis*),<sup>78</sup> again identifying that order with the membership in the Confraternity of St Anthony.<sup>79</sup> He used a similar terminology when describing the confraternities and churches of Dubrovnik. In his list of the confraternities, the third place is occupied by the “confraternity of first-order citizens” that carried the name of St Anthony and had occupied the same church since 1348, and immediately afterwards the “confraternities of second-order citizens” with St Lazarus as their patron saint, located at the church of the same name since 1531.<sup>80</sup> And when describing the church of St Anthony the Abbot, located in the area of Ploče, he repeated that it belonged to the “confraternity of the citizens, the first after the patrician estate” (*civium primi post patricos ordinis*),<sup>81</sup> adding that the church of St Lazarus was

<sup>76</sup> Cerva, *Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju* [Prolegomena to the holy Metropolitan Church of Dubrovnik], 327.

<sup>77</sup> Serafin Marija Crijević, *Bibliotheca Ragusina in qua Ragusini scriptores eorumque gesta et scripta recensentur*, ed. Stjepan Krasić, vol. I (Zagreb: JAZU, 1975), 129 and 191.

<sup>78</sup> Serafin Marija Crijević, *Bibliotheca Ragusina in qua Ragusini scriptores eorumque gesta et scripta recensentur*, ed. Stjepan Krasić, vol. II (Zagreb: JAZU, 1977), 131.

<sup>79</sup> On the Confraternity of St Anthony as the main institution of the Ragusan commoners, see Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti*, passim.

<sup>80</sup> “... *Civium primi ordinis sub sancti Antonii abbatis invocatione in eiusdem sancta aede ab anno MCCCXLVIII*”; “... *Civium alterius ordinis sub sancti Lazari patrocino in eiusdem ecclesia ab anno MDXXXI*.” Cerva, *Prolegomena in sacram metropolim Ragusinam*, 436; Cerva, *Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju*, 456.

<sup>81</sup> “... *Ex parte orientali sacra divi Antonii abbatis aedes in qua civium primi post patricos ordinis sodalium et mantellatae*.” Cerva, *Prolegomena in sacram metropolim Ragusinam*, 430; Cerva, *Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju*, 451.

also there, housing “another citizen confraternity”.<sup>82</sup> Thus, not only were these two confraternities clearly linked to their order-related place in the social stratification of the city, but also hierarchically positioned with regard to each other.

Držić's and Luccari's notes also send a message on certain conflict points, and so does an anonymous 17<sup>th</sup>-century description of Dubrovnik analyzed by Lovro Kunčević, which reflects the ironical attitude of the plebeians concerning the haughtiness of the nobility, voiced by an unknown observer: “... among the nobility, one can notice a sort of pomposity and innate arrogance, by which they show how little they care for others, especially for their subjects, even if these are also distinguished individuals from good families. These, again, find it rather displeasing, if not disgusting, and that is why the citizens and plebeians of that state say among themselves that the noblemen's blood is white rather than red, just like the blood of the Trojans.”<sup>83</sup>

Such conflict points were occasionally a trigger for implementing the rather rarely used legal regulation defining the relations between social orders, which included their definitions. One of them was the legal regulation of 1535 that prohibited marriage among blood relatives up to the third degree, which mentioned the difference between the three social estates: *nobili*, *populari*, and *plebei*. Noblemen who violated the regulation were threatened with the loss of all offices and benefices in the state. The *populari* were to pay a high fine of 500 ducats to the state treasury and sit for an entire year in one of the three city prisons. And if the violator was a *persona plebea*, he was punished far more leniently, with 100 perper and a year in prison. A similar classification, only with milder punishments, applied to the intermediaries arranging such marriages.<sup>84</sup> In the later periods, such cases became more numerous and it was not unusual that individuals from different orders were punished differently for the same deed.<sup>85</sup> The legal regulation from 1535 also shows how the authorities of Dubrovnik perceived the society and how they defined the orders it consisted of in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. In a way, these differences in penal practice also showed the fundamental features of each of them: power and authority for the patricians, wealth for the citizens, and poverty for the lowest plebs.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> “... *Item sancti Lazari, in qua alterius civium ordinis sodalitas, cum mantellatis.*” Cerva, *Prolegomena in sacram metropolim Ragusinam*, 430; Cerva, *Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju*, 451.

<sup>83</sup> Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku*, 152-153.

<sup>84</sup> *Liber croceus*, 252.

<sup>85</sup> Nella Lonza brings 18<sup>th</sup>-century examples showing that the subsidiary punishments for carrying firearms were the following: for a nobleman, a year and a half of prison and a three-year deprivation of offices and honours; for a commoner, two years in prison; and for a plebeian, four stretches on a pulley. If the person refused to hand in his dagger to the authorities, he risked the following punishments: a nobleman to lose his noble status forever; a commoner to spend six months in prison and pay a fine of 200 ducats; and a plebeian to endure four stretches on a pulley. Nella Lonza, *Pod plaštem pravde* [Under the mantle of justice] (Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijene znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1997), 282-283.

<sup>86</sup> The Venetians were somewhat more precise in their definitions of social orders, even though their laws did not define their social boundaries either. Thus, the tax list of 1607 defined that lawyers,

This journey through Dubrovnik's narrative sources shows the transition of the term *civis*, which in the variety *cittadino* started to denote the estate identity of the new social layer. The earlier medieval meaning of the term "citizen" as the inhabitant of the city of Dubrovnik with specific rights, benefits, and obligations was now taken over by the term "subject" (*soddito, sudito, podloscnik*), which became especially obvious during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>87</sup> However, the narrative sources reveal the social image of the city in various other ways, without the clear definitions of estates. Social differences, boundaries between the orders, and the position of various social groups are probably most clearly manifested in the depictions of public rituals and ceremonies.<sup>88</sup> As Nella Lonza has emphasized, "every procession was a walking constitution and a perfectly clear image of the society."<sup>89</sup> As early as the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, de Diversi described the funerary customs among the nobility, mentioning that the Rector and all noblemen walked at the head of the procession, followed by the citizens and plebeian merchants and the artisans.<sup>90</sup> Thus, Diversi's words, without too many theories and discussions, bring perhaps the most obvious image of the orders in Dubrovnik's society.

The extent to which this image was petrified, in accordance with the famous Ragusan dedication to preserving the traditions and structures untouched for centuries, is manifest in the words of Serafin Cerva, who wrote several centuries after Diversi. Likewise describing the funerary customs of his time, he described a mourning procession that started from the house of the deceased on the third day after the funeral in the following way: "the noblemen went straight to the church of Saint Blaise and the others to the church in which the deceased person was buried." Differences were also visible at the Holy Mass: the commoners had to stand, as Cerva noticed, while listening "to both Gospels, and when the reading was over, they greeted each other while the peasants remained on their knees. At the words of the second Gospel "And the Word became flesh," these were to touch the ground with

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physicians, notaries and other public servants, as well as non-noble priests if they were heads of a house, should be entered as *cittadini*. Cf. Bellavitis, "Per cittadini metterete..." 376-377; Pullan, "Three Orders of Inhabitants," 161.

<sup>87</sup> Lovro Kunčević, "Etnički i politički identitet predmodernog Dubrovnika (14-17. stoljeće)" [Ethnic and political identity of pre-modern Dubrovnik (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 55 (2017): 72, n. 18.

<sup>88</sup> Nella Lonza, "Državni pogrebi u Dubrovniku (17.-18. stoljeće)" [State funerals in Dubrovnik (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 42 (2004): 137; Janeković Römer, *The Frame of Freedom*, 443-446 and 458-459; Zdenka Janeković Römer, "Public Rituals in the Political Discourse of Humanist Dubrovnik," *Dubrovnik Annals* 6 (2002): 7-43.

<sup>89</sup> Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti: ceremonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću* [The theatre of power: The ceremonial and public holidays in the Republic of Dubrovnik (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2009), 432.

<sup>90</sup> "Cadaver Ragusinum nobilis viri vel mulieris non pestiferum (nam id a paucis sociatur) et destitutos mares socios veneratur dominus rector dum fere omnibus nobilibus, quos prosequuntur cives et mercatores plebei, et plurimi artifices." De Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, 126 and 197.

their hand and cross themselves.” And further: “On Great Saturday, when the ringing of bells and the firing of cannons gave a joyful sign to praise the Lord, the peasants and the lowest plebeians hurried to the fountains to wash themselves,” which Cerva as a friar remarked to be rather “close to superstition.”<sup>91</sup> An illustrative example comes from the official ceremonial of the Dubrovnik Republic when referring to the funeral of the state secretary, a post held by a Ragusan *cittadino* as the highest one that a non-nobleman could obtain. After his death, the government organized a very lavish ceremonial funeral in the presence of the Rector and the Minor Council. Family members were placed next to the Minor Council, in the same row with the councillors’ benches. However, the status differences in the “walking constitution”, be it a procession or a funeral, had to be visible. Therefore, the secretary’s family, even though sitting in the first row next to the public authorities, had benches that, unlike the noblemen’s ones, had no kneelers.<sup>92</sup>

To conclude: What was the image that the narrative sources analyzed here transmit on the orders of Ragusan society and the position of its citizens within it? The shortest and simplest answer would be that, when it comes to this type of sources, the author’s point of view and the intention of writing are essential. If we limited our research to the corpus that we might call “Ragusan old historiography,” the answer would, of course, be rather clear: it served to legitimize and justify the existing hierarchy, with the nobility at its head, the *popolo/cittadini* in the middle, and the artisans in the third place. In such an image of the city, this hierarchy is ideal just like the government and its representatives. As early as the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, the sources projected an ideal tripartite classification, which consciously and intentionally included the terms *nobiles*, *populares*, *plebeians*, *peasants*, or *artisans*, with their firm places in the said hierarchy and emitting the message on social harmony, consensus and peace, realized under the wise guidance of the Ragusan nobility and without any conflicts between the estates. Of course, this was the primary function of such sources, since they were more than any others part of the justification and legitimation of the established social hierarchy, which participated in the construction and maintenance of Dubrovnik’s “mythology”. Nevertheless, one should distinguish between the “Ragusan historiography” and other preserved narrative and literary works, which sometimes voiced harsh critique of the society, such as the aforementioned letters of Držić or the satirical poem of nobleman Marojica Caboga from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, in the “canonical” narratives of Dubrovnik’s history, rare episodes that questioned the ideal image of society were mostly denigrated as acts of treason, often motivated by external factors.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Cerva, *Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju*, 556-557.

<sup>92</sup> Lonza, “Državni pogrebi u Dubrovniku,” 139-140.

<sup>93</sup> Vekarić, *Nevidljive pukotine: dubrovački vlasteoski klanovi* [Invisible cracks: The noble clans of Dubrovnik] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2009), 109.

<sup>94</sup> For a chronology of the focal points of innerpolitical conflicts in Dubrovnik, see *ibidem*, *passim*.

The notion of the *cittadini* Ragusei as a separate order (*ordo*) evolved in the narrative sources gradually, as the estate itself was developing. From the late 16<sup>th</sup> and especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the sources speak of the *cittadini* (as in Razzi's quotation from the beginning of this text) or the *ordo civium* (as termed by Cerva), referring to an estate that on the social ladder came "first after the patriciate" (Cerva). It is this very expression that reflects the development of Dubrovnik's citizenry and its completion, from the ambiguity and fluidity in the overlapping of the terms *popolo* and *cittadini* to a defined social estate. It was closely linked to two elite confraternities, primarily the Antunini and then the Lazarini, since with time only their members came to be considered as *cittadini*. Cerva confirmed this when he described the confraternities of Dubrovnik as being of the "first" and the "second" order, whereby he not only directly linked these two confraternities with the *cittadini* estate, but also established a hierarchy between them, clearly ranking the Antunini before the Lazarini.

And whereas in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, be it in normative or in narrative sources, it is still difficult to find a precise definition of the *cittadini* as a distinct social group (although this terminological deficiency did not stand in the way of very clear distinctions between the estates as something that every citizen of Dubrovnik was well aware of, regardless whether it was about the processions or about punishments), with time these "fluidities" in definition vanished. The social order and the position of citizen within it were firmly determined. The narrative image of the city shows a peaceful and harmonious, ideal tripartite society, "finely divided" as Diversi would say, consisting of noblemen, citizens, and plebeians, in which each member knew his place, and which as such, especially with the *cittadini* as the "first after the nobility", guaranteed safety, stability, and prosperity to this "peaceful Dubrava" at the foot of Mount Srđ.