

leži odgovor na pitanje zašto Justinijan nije jednakog uspjeha imao u Italiji ili sjevernoj Africi.¹³ Napokon, zaključak svojeg istraživanja Sarantis završava opaskom koja pripada u sferu virtualne ili kontrafaktičke historije, ističući kako bi kasnija povijest cijele ove regije izgledala svakako bitno drukčije da su Justinijanovi nasljednici nastavili njegovu politiku, zacementirali rimsko-bizantsku moć na tom području u ranom srednjem vijeku i omogućili apsorpciju i romanizaciju Avara, Slavena i Bugara, kao što je to prethodno bilo ostvareno s Gotima, Hunima i Herulima (str. 406).¹⁴ Koliko god bile zavodljivo razmišljati u okvirima „što bi bilo kad bi bilo“, teško da je tome mjesto u ozbiljnoj znanstvenoj literaturi. Na krajevu krajeva, upravo su Huni, Goti, ali i Gepidi i Langobardi pokazali kako Carstvu nije moguće samo uspješno parirati nego ga i zamijeniti, makar privremeno, vlastitom političkom strukturom. Justinijanova bavljenja na donjemu Dunavu prije učvršćuju dojam da se Carstvo na sve ravnopravnijoj osnovi moralo nositi s protivnicima kadrima oblikovati i slijediti vlastite političke planove.

Hrvoje Gračanin

Three recent books on Venice and the Adriatic in the Early Middle Ages

Sauro Gelichi and Stefano Gaspari (eds), Venice and its Neighbours From the 8th to 11th Century. Through Renovation and Continuity, Leiden: Brill 2018, 189 pp; Stefano Gaspari and Sauro Gelichi (eds), The Age of Affirmation. Venice, the Adriatic and the Hinterland Between the 9th and 10th Centuries, Turnhout: Brepols 2017, 400 pp; Sauro Gelichi and Claudio Negrelli (eds), Adriatico altomedievale (VI-XI secolo). Scambi, porti, produzioni, Venice: Ca' Foscari 2017, 390 pp.

Three recently published volumes on early Venetian history shed new light and offer some original interpretations on the history not only of the settlement on the lagoons, but also of the Adriatic and especially of what is known as the Northern Adriatic Arc. This maritime region spanned from Ravenna in the west to Istria in the east and was more closely tied to the eastern Adriatic coast (Dalmatia) than to the littoral south of Ravenna. The most recent of these volumes, edited by Sauro Gelichi and Stefano Gaspari, is *Venice and its Neighbours from the 8th to 11th Century. Through Renovation and Continuity* (189 pages).

It contains seven articles by historians and archaeologists who mostly work at the Ca' Foscari University: besides the editors themselves, Annamaria Paziienza ("Archival Documents as

¹³ KALDELLIS 2017: 895; WHATELY 2018: 1568.

¹⁴ Kontrafaktičnost opaske zamijetio je i GANDILA 2016: 554. Neutralno je bilježi SWAIN 2017.

Narrative: The Sources of the *Istoria Veneticorum* and the Plea of Rižana”), Francesco Borri (“The Waterfront of Istria: Sea and Identity in the post-Roman Adriatic”), Chiara Provesi (“Disputes and Connections: Venice’s Affairs in the *Regnum Italiae*”), Silvia Cadamuro, Alessandra Cianciosi, Claudio Negrelli (“The *Insula Equilus*: A Lagoon Community in the Early Middle Ages”), Elisa Corrà, Cecilia Moine and Sandra Primon (“Setting the Scene: The Role of Sant’Illario Monastery in Early Medieval Venice in the Light of Recent Landscape Studies”). Stefano Gaspari wrote about “The First Dukes and the Origins of Venice”, and Sauro Gelichi on “Comacchio: A Liminal Community in a Nodal Point during the Early Middle Ages”. Both editors jointly composed the “Introduction” and the “Conclusion”. The volume contains a bibliography and an index, as well as several maps and illustrations.

This book can be observed from different perspectives: from a methodological standpoint, from the standpoint of different disciplines, such as history, archaeology or environmental studies, but also from the standpoint of local historians dealing with the Northern Adriatic Arc, as well as those interested in broader Adriatic and Mediterranean history.

Those who approach the history of Venice and its neighbours primarily through written sources are faced, as we well know, with a dramatic lack of documentation for the entire early medieval period, but especially for the 7th and 8th centuries. This, of course, is a problem not only for Venetian history, but also for the history of the rest of the Adriatic area. On the one hand, this forces medievalists to join forces and apply not only methodologies from a single discipline, but also to combine them with those from other fields of research. On the other hand, historians have to be as critical as possible in analysing their sources, which means that they often have to deconstruct existing and prevailing narratives in order to construct new, more acceptable ones. A very good example of such an approach can be found in Stefano Gaspari’s article on the first dukes of Venice, in which he, among other things, clearly showed that *dux* Paulicius, mentioned by John the Deacon as the first elected Venetian duke, was in fact a Lombard duke, maybe of the Treviso duchy.

This example is interesting also because it shows how the burden of traditional interpretations can blur the view of historians involved in discussions on national or local history: for an outsider who is for the first time facing John the Deacon’s story on Paulicius, it is rather evident that he must have been a Lombard duke and in no way a Venetian one. But nineteenth-century narratives deeply rooted in “common knowledge”, even that of professional historians, are an inheritance which is difficult to question or reject.

Written sources, as shown by Gaspari, can also support the thesis that Venice, before becoming a mercantile power, had already risen as a political factor with its own institutions: an assembly, solid ducal power and a political elite consisting of ecclesiastical and secular officials.

As already mentioned, the scarcity of written sources presents a serious obstacle to research into the earliest history of Venice. But even those sources which are at our disposal have to be analysed repeatedly in order to distinguish clearly which information is reliable and which is the result of more or less intentional misinterpretations by their authors, with John the Deacon as the most important and almost only one. Although his work has been scrutinized by many historians, it is still necessary to uncover his sources and come to a new interpretation of *Istoria Veneticorum*, as Annamaria Piacenza has shown in her article.

Although it is sometimes possible to detect John’s sources and show that he had access to the city’s archives, in most cases there are no alternative sources that could either confirm or refute his interpretations. As all medieval histories, *Istoria Veneticorum* had a political agenda, interpreted, at least to some extent, as the attitude of the author to con-

firm the long-lasting independence of Venice from Constantinople. However, as Piacenza points out, we still are not certain about the target readership of John's *Istoria*, which might otherwise shed some light on his interpretations. But that, of course, is a problem with many medieval texts.

As with the interpretation of historical sources, we are faced with the problem of interpreting archaeological discoveries as well. The editors claim in the Introduction: "The Venetian lagoon is one of the most investigated areas of the past twenty years, yet it is also the least known". The reason for this is, according again to the editors, the lack of an overarching project which would facilitate problem-oriented research instead of individual excavations of certain sites. Neither the lack of such projects, nor the fact that many excavations remain unpublished and that archaeological material is often treated as the private property of its excavators are specific problems confronted by Venetian archaeologists.

A good example of a successful overarching project, combining different methods of research from different disciplines, is the Equilus-Jesolo project, which started in 2011. Its goal is to investigate the development of a settlement on the fringes of the lagoons by better understanding the history of the environment within which Equilus-Jesolo developed. Such an eco-historical approach was in fact crucial for interpreting urban processes otherwise poorly documented by written sources and visible mainly through archaeological and art-historical evidence. Geomorphological studies were vital to ascertaining the existence of old river systems and waterways, and the changes which transpired in this respect throughout Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. In this way, it could be established that Jesolo was originally a lagoon settlement, situated on an island. Archaeological evidence clearly shows not only changes in the settlement's development, but also that the economy of Jesolo was bound to both the land and the sea.

As in the case of Jesolo, geomorphological research and landscape studies were important to an understanding of the role played by the St Ilario Abbey, an early Venetian outpost on the mainland. For many decades now, primarily under the influence of the French *Annales* school, historians have been aware of the importance of the environment for insight into human actions and historical processes. Many general histories include introductory chapters on the landscape and climatic characteristics of the region in question. However, it is my impression that very often such descriptions are superficial, based purely on descriptions of the current situation or available data from written sources. What we really need is investigations into landscapes in the past. Considerable progress in this respect has been made by bioarchaeological and geological investigations, but much more has to be done if we want to understand the actions of people and their living conditions. Written sources, obviously, do not provide sufficient information, and neither does traditional archaeology.

The case of the St Ilario Abbey shows how important landscape research is to an understanding of the fate of this outpost, which was much more than a religious institution. From today's vantage point, it is fascinating to read how the surroundings of the monastery were covered with forests which spread over a rather brief period, after the classical Roman era, but disappeared just as rapidly. Human interventions in the form of hydraulic works, as well as natural development, such as the changing of river beds, were crucial to the existence and lifestyle of both small communities, like a monastery, or larger settlements. The relationship between water and land, which influenced agriculture, traffic and trade, was pivotal everywhere, but especially in the lagoons where changes were more frequent and more intense than in most other environments.

One of the goals of this book was to observe the early history of Venice in a broader perspective, extending the view as far as Commachio on the one side, and Istria on the other. Commachio, where more recent archaeological research has been conducted since 2007, is an excellent comparative case for Venice because it developed under similar environmental conditions and within a similar political framework. However, as we well know, after a period of success, the town turned into an insignificant local community.

Commachio was a settlement without a Roman tradition, situated in an environment suited almost exclusively to salt production and fishing. However, as Sauro Gelichi points out, its position on a nodal point between maritime and inland routes was decisive for its short-lived success. The gradual construction of a more complex society was followed by economic growth and diversification. The impulse for that was provided by the Arab conquest of North Africa and the growing interest of the Empire in a trade route connecting its central regions to the Adriatic. This enabled Commachio to transform into a trading outpost, like the emporia of northern Europe. The absence of ecclesiastical or secular central powers enabled the development of a local political identity, although there was an obvious interest by the Commachians in participation in an umbrella Roman identity, as would be the case with Istrians and Dalmatians soon thereafter (discussed in Francesco Borri's article). As in some other cases also mentioned in this book, the investments in infrastructure, revealed through archaeological research, clearly testify to the importance of trade and traffic for this town that built its growth on intermediary trade with goods coming from the East, such as spices and locally produced wares which also might have been luxurious. Although successful, Commachio could not have competed with Venice, whose development was similar in many aspects.

I would say that this volume has fully met the expectations of its authors, who wanted to show, using several case studies, how various lagoon societies developed under different influences, but primarily under the influence of the physical environment, seen as a driving force rather than simply a framework. They also wanted to chart the development of these settlements "from spaces based on the exploitation of natural resources to commercial nodal points and then to central places." Furthermore, thanks to new reading of the meagre written sources at our disposal, they wanted to present a new interpretation of early Venetian and Lagoon history. One of the intriguing new theories is that political organization preceded economic development, whereas usually this process is seen as vice-versa. Finally, by understanding relations between different communities (like in the article by Chiara Provesi), as well as their relationship to the sea, they rightfully concluded that the Adriatic was "the true home of the Istrians, Dalmatians, and Venetians who spent so much of their lives here engaged in long, arduous, and often dangerous coastal navigation."

At the very end, allow me to add that in some future volume of this kind, I would like to see the Croats included in this list of peoples inhabiting the Adriatic coasts. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his *De administrando imperio*, wrote the following: "For this reason neither the galleys nor the cutters of these Croats ever go against anyone to make war, unless of course he has come upon them. But in these vessels go those of the Croats who wish to engage in commerce, travelling from city to city, in Paganian and the gulf of Dalmatia and as far as Venice." According to Constantine, in the first half of the 10th century Croats had 80 galleys (saginas) carrying 40 men each, and 100 cutters (conduras) carrying 10 or 20 men. Even though these numbers are most likely exaggerated, it is obvious that the Adriatic was home to them as well. Furthermore, the term "Gulf of Dalmatia" indicates

the relative importance of the eastern Adriatic coast in Constantine's times, as opposed to the just growing power of Venice.

But many more parallels could be drawn between developments on the eastern Adriatic coast and its northern arc. This volume, therefore, not only fulfilled its aims, but also opened new perspectives for cooperation between researchers dealing with the history of the common Adriatic space.

The second book, *The Age of Affirmation. Venice, the Adriatic and the Hinterland Between the 9th and 10th Centuries*, consists of an "Introduction" written by the two editors, followed by twelve articles: Francesco Borri, "Captains and Pirates: Ninth Century Dalmatia and its Rulers"; Stéphane Gioanni, "Venise et les missions pontificales vers le *ducatus* et le *regnum* de Dalmatie-Croatie (IX^e-XI^e siècle)"; Maddalena Betti, "Affari di frontier. Politica e comercio in Europa centrale tra VII e fine IX secolo"; Sauro Gelichi, Margherita Ferri, Cecilia Moine, "Venezia e la laguna tra IX e X secolo: strutture materiali, insediamenti, economie"; Carlo Beltrame, "On the Origin of Ship Construction in Venice"; Annamaria Paziienza, "Venice beyond Venice. Commercial Agreements and the *Pacta* from the Origins to Pietro II Orseolo"; Chiara Provesi, "Il conflitto tra Coloprini e Morosini: una storia di fiumi, di terre e di persone"; Francesco Veronese, "*In Venetiarum partibus reliquias adportatas*. Reichenau e la costruzione di una rappresentazione agiografica delle *Venezie* (IX-X secolo)"; Veronica West-Harling, "Personal Names and Saints' Cults in Venice, the Adriatic and the entroterra in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries"; Stefano Riccioni, "I mosaici altomedievali di Venezia e il monastero di S. Ilario. Orditi 'venetico-carolingi' di una *koine* alto Adriatica"; Flavia de Rubeis, "Scrittura longobarda, bizantina o carolingia? Retaggi, modelli e imitazioni tra Ravenna, Venezia e l'Istria nei secoli VIII-X"; Alessandra Molinari, "La Sicilia e le trasformazioni delle reti di scambio mediterranee. Secoli IX-X". The volume contains also a number of colour plates and an index of names.

The book is the result of a conference held in 2015 at Ca' Foscari. It considers the period after the earliest history of Venice and thus is, in a way, a continuation of the subject of the Brill volume and likewise accords considerable attention to the palaeo-environmental reconstruction of the archipelago and the material culture, without neglecting new interpretations of written sources.

Francesco Borri covered changes in 9th and 10th century Dalmatia/Croatia, following the model of transformation rather than discontinuity. He follows the early domestic elites who, from roughly 800 AD onward, were both the rulers of ethnically-based polities and representatives of the Carolingian authorities. With the development of trade in the Adriatic, they took their share of wealth and became wealthy aristocrats who also controlled the overland route to Bulgaria. Besides trade, piracy was another means of acquiring this wealth. The article contains several interesting observations and interpretations, but also some claims that can hardly be supported by known sources. The reason for this might be that the author quotes no literature written either in Croatian or any other South Slavic language, but relies only on local historians published in Western languages.

Unfortunately, this ignorance of local contributions and source editions is much more prevalent in Stéphane Gioanni's article. Unlike Borri, Gioanni does not even mention the relevant literature produced in Western languages, but reveals a non-existent new edition of the seventeen volumes of *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, allegedly from 1967 (whereas in reality only one volume was published in that year, and

not as a new edition). He draws conclusions on sources which do not exist (such as “numerous chronicles and inscriptions” which mention the arrival of Pope Alexander III in Zadar) and misleads the reader with statements like the one that this visit was an illustration of the privileged relations between the Roman church and Dalmatia which existed since the latter half of the 11th century. In reality, the pope’s visit to Zadar was the result of bad weather which forced his ships to seek a safe harbour. The “privileged relations” in the latter half of the 11th century were the result of Croatian King Zvonimir becoming a vassal to Gregory VII in 1075. Dalmatia was neither at that time, nor in 1177, a separate political entity from Croatia, and the titles of the Croatian and later Arpad kings were “King of Croatia and Dalmatia” or “King of Dalmatia and Croatia”. Another example is the author’s claim that the Byzantine Empire exercised religious authority over Dalmatia from the fall of the Ostrogothic kingdom to the 12th century. Ignoring the rich literature on the question of ecclesiastical authority in Dalmatia (and Croatia), Gioanni is not aware that Constantinople controlled the Dalmatian bishops only during a brief period at the time of the Photian Schism. Regardless of political and cultural influences, Dalmatian dioceses were almost continuously subordinate to Rome.

Gioanni misinterprets the 1075 treaty between Venice and certain Dalmatian towns as a sign of the reinforcement of relations between Venice and the Croatian Kingdom, as well as a kind of alliance of the former with the Dalmatian towns. The reason for this is that he fails to mention the expedition of Norman Duke Amico, which transpired in the previous year and had resulted in the capture of the Croatian king. The treaty was not an alliance, but the imposition of Venetian policy over certain Dalmatian towns that had good relations with Amico, but not necessarily with all Normans in southern Italy. There is no sign of papal involvement in forging the 1075 agreement.

Maddalena Betti’s contribution has a broader perspective, showing the importance of long distance routes connecting large areas of Central and Eastern Europe. She convincingly shows that Moravia, the important 9th century polity, played a central role on the crossroads connecting the two empires as well as the Baltic with Venice. Its elites were involved not only in the slave trade (which was a matter of debate between Michael McCormick and Florin Curta, who claims that slave trade through Venice became important only in the 10th century thanks to the Bohemian Přemyslides), but also – and especially – in salt from Transylvania.

Another paper with a broader perspective is by Alessandra Molinari and deals with Sicily. Mainly on the basis of archaeological evidence, she convincingly presents the complex economy of the island in the period of Islamic rule in the 10th century, which had no parallel in the rest of Italy. Her interests also include the consequences of long-term war on the economy, as well as settlement patterns.

In the central contribution in this volume, Sauro Gelichi and his two collaborators reinterpret the history of Venice before and after its political centre moved to Rialto and Olivolo became seat of a new diocese. As in the previously discussed book, the approach to the topic is again a combination of palaeo-geological research and new interpretations of archaeological and written sources. Facing the lack of sources, the authors underscore the peril of superimposing knowledge of economic activities in the later Middle Ages onto this early period without any actual evidence.

The settlement pattern depended on environmental conditions, and they changed over the centuries. One important difference in the communication system of the lagoons today

and in the early Middle Ages is the number of passages from the lagoons into the open sea. While today there is only one such navigable passage, in Antiquity there were three. This influenced the placement of settlements which had been more dispersed, unlike their later concentration in the central part of the lagoon. Geomorphological data allows us to follow the changes in sea levels during the past two millennia. For the general subject of this volume it is interesting to know that during the 5th and 6th centuries the sea level rose, submerging large parts of the lagoon islands. Evidence of the first efforts at land reclamation, a feature so vital to the later development of Venice, date to this period. Reclaiming land was not only meant to secure existing inhabited areas, but also to gain significant new surfaces. However, the 9th century was a period when the sea temporarily withdrew.

Combining archaeological and geo-pedological data, the authors came to the conclusion that the choice of early settlement was not exclusively tied to the stability of inhabitable lands, but rather followed a different logic. During the 9th century, churches were concentrated in St Mark's basin, but it was not until the 10th century that they appeared on both banks of the Canal Grande close to Rialto. However, the Canal Grande over its entire length did not become the city's focal point prior to the 11th century. On the other hand, evidence such as coins or seals testify to the importance of Olivolo in the 7th century, and to the fact that at the same time there were other places (Torcello, Cittanova, Altino, and Equilo) whence officials were in direct contact with Constantinople.

The authors also discuss the question of early Venetian identity, for which they make use of material culture. Already on the basis of kitchen utensils, it is possible to demonstrate the difference between the Venetian and Byzantine styles of preparing meals and dining. Typically Venetian are the wellheads, but it is difficult to date them more precisely. However, fourteen of them can be dated to the time before the year 1000. A specific problem with wellheads derives from the 19th and 20th century antiquarian practice of reshaping or forging such objects. That is not the case with sarcophagi, an expression of elite identity, but the dating of which relies on the interpretation of decorative motifs and few inscriptions. Only one sarcophagus, from Torcello, bears a precise date, the year 980. Gelichi is right in supposing that even if they had no inscriptions, sarcophagi were placed so that they could be seen and observers knew whose bodies they contained. We may speculate about the possibility that epitaphs were painted on the walls above the sarcophagi.

Inscriptions are the subject of Flavia de Rubeis' article in which she discusses the development of epigraphs in the northern Adriatic arc, from Ravenna to Dalmatia/Croatia. She compares the frequency of the appearance of inscriptions, styles of writing and their purpose. In the period to which this volume is dedicated, the number of inscriptions in Venice rose significantly (unlike in Ravenna), as an expression of self-awareness of the emerging secular elite, although this was not followed by a unified style of writing. Influences from the mainland Lombard territories are obvious. In her opinion, the Croatian case follows much the same pattern, as a result of the consolidation of ducal power. It should be added that de Rubeis used Vedrana Delonga's excellent catalogue of Latin inscriptions from Croatia, but could not get systematic insight into Latin inscriptions from Byzantine Dalmatia. These epigraphs, written in a more corrupt Latin, precede those from Croatia by about a half-century (the earliest are from the last quarter of the 8th century) and testify to the earlier emergence of the local Dalmatian elite.

The question of Venetian identity and its relation to Byzantium is in itself interesting and can be discussed from different points of view. Similar to epigraphy, the material

remains of the St Ilario Abbey, as shown by Stefano Riccioni, reveal Carolingian influences and parallels with what can be seen in Croatia, but mosaics, specifically, also show traces of both Byzantine and Arab models. According to Francesco Veronese, firm ties between Venice and the broader hinterland can also be traced through the spreading of cults common to the lagoon and *terraferma* areas, as well as to the famous monastery of Reichenau. A special role was accorded to the cult of St Mark.

A slightly different picture is provided by Veronica West-Harling's analysis of the cults and names of the most popular saints in Venice. While Ravenna and the territory of the Exarchate, followed by the northern Adriatic hinterland, had the greatest impact on the choice of cults venerated in Venice, its citizens satisfied themselves with a limited and conservative pool of names which possibly had a Byzantine origin, but belonged to a common tradition in Late Antiquity. Interestingly enough, it was rather unusual to choose Frankish names, unlike in the rest of northern Italy and Istria. A comparison to Croatia/Dalmatia might be interesting in order to understand the patterns and practices in the broader North Adriatic Arc.

The early usage of family names was a distinct feature of Venetian society. However, as Chiara Provesi argues, that does not mean that all individuals with the same family name adhered to the same interests and politics. Conflicts over possessions and influences on the *terraferma* arising in the last quarter of the 10th century resulted in alliances which did not always follow kinship divisions. They also show that Venetians, even though their interests were mainly directed toward the sea, at the same time simultaneously were eager to expand onto the mainland. Once again, the author warns that, in order to understand the writing of John the Deacon, we should keep in mind who his audience was and what the purpose of his work was.

Another article based mainly on written evidence is by Annamaria Piazenza. She discusses the series known as *pacta veneta*, as well as agreements between Venice and centres in modern day Veneto, Friuli and Istria (Koper). While the first series begins with the *Pactum Lotharii* from 840, the earliest document from the other series dates to 880 (Aquileia), while the latest one is from 1001 (Ceneda, today Vittorio Veneto). Piazenza argues that two elements were of uniform importance to the development of Venice: its mercantile role and the existence of a military elite. The naval strength of Venice enabled its elite to negotiate more favourable terms for mercantile activities. From the limited number of preserved private and ducal acts from the 9th to the 11th centuries, the author concludes that the prevalence of ducal acts prior to 1000 suggests a more active role by the central authority in "setting the stage for the explosive rise of the city" that would start at around 1050. We may, of course, speculate as to whether this is not simply the result of more careful preservation of ducal acts as opposed to private documents, but that would be just one more hypothesis among many formulated about early Venetian history due to the lack of sources. After a very long hiatus of over seventy years, the next ducal act regarding another community was the one concerning Split, Trogir, Biograd and Zadar from 1075/6 (Piazenza mentions only Split, where Doge Domenico Selvo also received representatives of other Dalmatian and Croatian towns). The doge, assuming the title of *dux Dalmatiae*, made the citizens of these towns pledge to never again invite Normans to Dalmatia – a consequence of the recent invasion staged by Norman Count Amico. It is interesting to note that the prior of Biograd, a Croatian royal town, was named Dominicus Iustus Veneticus. Piazenza also refers to the expedition of Peter II Orseolo to Dalmatia.

She claims that this expedition was meant as aid to Dalmatian towns against Bulgarian pressure and was agreed upon with Constantinople. This plausible explanation of an important naval undertaking is again an example of the two historiographies, Croatian and Italian, discussing the same problem without taking into account each other's writings.

In order to pursue both its mercantile and military activities, Venice had to develop a large fleet of ships with different purposes. It seems that the impulse came from the Byzantine sphere, especially when Constantinople sent a patrician and presumably expert in shipbuilding to Venice in 840 in order to raise a fleet which would help Taranto against a Saracen siege. Carlo Beltrame discusses the development of Venetian shipbuilding and naval skills from the very beginning to the 13th century. Thanks to the ships found in the harbour of Yenikapi, it is possible to compare warships with those built for mercantile use. Warships were built of higher-quality timber and were technologically more advanced. Venice's advantage in shipbuilding was large forests on the mainland, as well as the possibility of a timber supply from Istria. It seems that Byzantium also influenced the organization of shipbuilding in Venice, so that the early shipyards were placed along the Canal Grande.

The third book on Venice consists of the following articles: Sauro Gelichi, "Mari chiusi, economie aperte? L'Adriatico nell'alto medioevo attraverso l'archeologia" (the same introduction is also published in English); Sauro Gelichi, Claudio Negrelli, Margherita Ferri, Silvia Cadamuro, Alessandra Cianciosi and Elena Grandi, "Importare, produrre e consumare nella laguna di Venezia dal IV al XII secolo. Anfore, vetri e ceramiche"; Chiara Guarnieri, Giovanna Montevecchi, Claudio Negrelli, "Ravenna, una città in declino? Contesti altomedievali di ambito urbano"; Monica Salvini, Luigi Palermo, "Le attività nel porto romano di Ancona tra V e VIII secolo d.C."; Paul Arthur, "A Hoard of Byzantine Ironwork from Supersano (Apulia, South Italy) and Its Global Connections"; Richard Hodges, "Butrint. Never a 'Non-place'"; Igor Miholjek, Vesna Zmaić, Margherita Ferri, "The Byzantine Shipwreck of Cape Stoba (Mljet, Croatia)"; Claudio Negrelli, "Le anfore medievali in Dalmazia. Una prospettiva mediterranea"; Joanita Vroom, "The Byzantine Web. Pottery and Connectivity Between the Southern Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean"; Etleva Nallbani, "Early Medieval North Albania: New Discoveries, Remodeling Connections. The Case of Medieval Komani"; Bruno Callegher, "Moneta e scambi nell'Adriatico altomedievale. La costa dalmata nell'area monetaria bizantina" and Claudio Negrelli, "Conclusioni. Dati e temi di ricerca a confronto" (again also in an English translation).

The volume contains papers presented at a conference held at Ca' Foscari in 2017, the aim of which was – in the words of the editor – "to discuss the Adriatic from a different chronological perspective while focussing on more specific areas of interest (exchanges, ports, production) and using archaeology as the main means of analysis". Venice was, thus, not the main topic of the volume, but it is of course impossible to discuss the early medieval Adriatic without reference to the area of the lagoons. Therefore, while the commencement date (6th century) was chosen as the time of disintegration of the Western Roman Empire, the 11th century marks the time when Venice grew to become an international political and economic factor. In this way, the volume provides some sort of a framework for the first two books.

From an archaeological standpoint, there are three key elements to understanding economic development in the region extending from Ancona through Venice, Istria and

Dalmatia to Albania: production, exchange and ports. Gelichi stresses the necessity of revisiting existing paradigms on the collapse and decline of the Roman world in the Adriatic in the 7th century, because new archaeological finds, as well as new interpretations offer enough data for us to begin seeing development in the region with different eyes. Among other things, amphorae found on both sides of the Adriatic suggest that the economies of the 7th and 8th centuries were not autarkic, but rather were part of a Mediterranean network. What is important is a new approach to archaeological sources. In Gelichi's words: "Our primary task as archaeologists is to create a virtuous pathway by identifying, analysing, taking things apart then putting them back together – that is, joining processes in cohesive wholes – and, finally, comparing them. In practice though, comparisons are nearly always carried out on irregular wholes that are often intrinsically weak in qualitative terms, or extremely worn out archaeological sources are also subject to wear and tear that is not always physical). This is what I believe has happened, and is still happening in the study of ceramics, the key document in our analyses. The aphasia affecting these studies is not only present in the analysis of the single categories of artefacts but also as regards the unwillingness of researchers to observe the intrinsic characteristics of the wholes and of their associations."

Gelichi and his collaborators analysed imports, consumption and production in the lagoon area over the long period from the 4th to 12th centuries on the basis of finds of amphorae, ceramics and glass. Following a detailed analysis of different types of vessels, the authors offered several conclusions. While imports of different wares from Africa and the East are well documented in the initial period (4th-7th century), the next phase (8th-10th century), in which lagoon settlements were consolidated around Torcello and Olivolo/Rialto, saw a decline in imports. This was a time of burgeoning economic relations with the Po Valley and Carolingian/Ottonian Europe and the concurrent move away from Byzantine cultural practices. Slow changes in imports, even after 1000, were not so much a matter of economics, as they were of the tastes and preferences of the Venetian elite. Regarding production, the most can be said about glassware with Torcello as the centre, probably as of the 9th century.

The article on Ravenna in the period from the 7th to the 10th centuries is based on an analysis of unpublished archaeological research at several sites in the city. As the authors stress, it is not yet possible to propose a complete picture of the city's development, especially not its transformation from an exarchic to a Carolingian and post-Carolingian centre. Therefore, the aim of the article is to shed some more light on the urban development of Ravenna and thus contribute to ongoing discussions about it.

The other important Adriatic centre on the western coast, Ancona, acquired complex port structures in the Roman period which remained in function into the 6th century, to be upgraded in the Byzantine period and finally abandoned sometime in the late 8th or first half of the 9th century. The reasons for this decay were not only the Lombard conquest of the town, or the Saracen raids in 841 and 850, but also earthquakes in 801 and 847. For a very long time, until the 12th century, Ancona remained in a state of decay, with very limited use of what was left of its port infrastructure.

A comparative example is offered by Richard Hodges and his reflexion on the history of Butrint. Extant excavations revealed four stages of settlement there. After the flourishing Roman settlement, at around 700 Butrint was only a Byzantine castle. Surprisingly, its centre was not on the acropolis, but in the two towers of the western fortifications. After

their destruction in roughly 800, the settlement moved to the unfortified suburb, which is again difficult to explain. Newly adapted Roman structures housed the archon of Butrint, while in around 900 a part inside the former walls was also inhabited, the two centres performing both administrative and economic functions. Finally, early in the 11th century, the revival of the old Roman town proceeded with – among other things – the re-dedication of churches. Following Marc Augé's definition of places and non-places, and questioning concepts of continuity and discontinuity, Hodges tries to answer the question: in which periods were the inhabitants of Butrint aware of the mythic past of their town, ascribed by Virgil to Aeneas, Troy and Rome? The answer to this question defines a settlement as a place (aware of its tradition) or a non-place used for temporary activities. Needless to say, the answer to this question can only be speculative due to the lack of written evidence and a reliance on archaeological finds alone.

The article on the Mljet shipwreck (Igor Miholjek, Vesna Zmaić, Margherita Ferri) provides information on the cargo transported somewhere from a region under Byzantine control to ports in the eastern or northern Adriatic. Based on the types of amphorae and glassware, the shipwreck can be dated to the first half of the 11th century, thus documenting the trade route along the eastern Adriatic coast as well as the custom of using clay vessels within the economic area connected to Constantinople. Closely related to this article is the contribution by Claudio Negrèlli on medieval amphorae found in Dalmatia. He points to the prevalence of imports from southern Italy, most of all wine, over those from the East, and to the growing volume of trade since the late 9th century, especially since the 11th century. This growth of trade is connected to the development of local commercial centres along the eastern Adriatic coast, but also in the interior, as the case of today's Montenegro shows. Amphorae from Butrint and southern Italy are analysed by Joanita Vroom in order to reconstruct commercial networks which linked the southern Adriatic with other parts of the Mediterranean. Her painstaking classification of different types of vessels allowed her to suggest more precise chronologies and trading connections, but it is a pity that she did not take into account the eastern Adriatic coast. Although it is not so easy to access data from this region, the previous article by Negrèlli shows that it is not impossible.

Etleva Nalbani provides an interesting overview of the excavations of Komani/Dalmace, conducted since the end of the 19th century and resumed by a French-Albanian project in 2009. The hilltop site, eponymous with a number of localities in the western Balkans, is an example of a complex settlement dating to Late Antiquity with continuity through the 'Dark Ages'. Extraordinarily rich grave goods reflect a complex society, as do the traces of ecclesiastical and secular architecture. This case also shows that Christianity did not necessarily extinguish the habit of placing goods with the deceased, because in Komani it was the case until the 12th century. The analysis of grave goods, as well as ceramics and other finds, reveal the network of social and economic relations of the inhabitants, which was much broader than initially thought.

Bruno Callegger discusses the finds of different coins along the eastern Adriatic coast, especially in Dalmatia, coming to the conclusion that the evidence from the 6th through 12th centuries clearly shows the incorporation of Dalmatia (and Venice) into the Byzantine monetary system. It could be worthwhile mentioning that recently a solidus of Constantine V was found at the Bojna site, southeast of Siscia/Sisak, in a 9th century grave. This shows that the widespread solidus of Constantine V was also used in the far north of Dalmatia/Croatia, not necessarily as currency, but certainly as a status symbol.

The volume closes with a comprehensive summary by Claudio Negrelli of all articles. Rather than just summarizing their contents, Negrelli underlines the methods used and combined, as well as the more or less common periodization of the early medieval history of the Adriatic. This periodization is based on an analysis of different products, amphorae, coins and sites connected to ports and commercial routes. The first period begins after the Gothic war and ends in the late 7th century. The next covers the 8th and most of the 9th century, followed by the third period which ends with the 11th century.

Although this volume is not directly dedicated to Venice, the mention of the lagoon settlements was unavoidable in all of the articles. In a way, the book on exchanges, ports and production offers a framework for understanding the history of Venice as part of the Adriatic region.

All three volumes, even though certain articles may be subjected to greater criticism, summarize our knowledge of the early medieval history of Venice and the Adriatic, offer analyses of recently discovered or less known archaeological materials and new interpretations of written sources. Above all, they foster new methodological paradigms for researching the region and testify to the necessity of combining approaches from different disciplines.

Neven Budak

Splitsko komunalno društvo u srednjem vijeku

*Tonija Andrić, Život u srednjovjekovnom Splitu, Svakodnevnic
obrnika u 14. i 15. stoljeću, Zagreb-Split: Hrvatski institut za povijest,
Odsjek za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu, 2018, 329 str.*

Monografski prviijenac Tonije Andrić raduje iz više razloga. Najnoviji je to naslov koji u maniri velikih ostvarenja hrvatske historiografije stručnoj i široj javnosti tematizira dalmatinsko srednjovjekovlje. Nadalje, knjiga je doista vrijedan doprinos rasvjetljavanju kompleksnog procesa društveno-institucionalnog sazrijevanja dalmatinskih komunalnih društava. Imajući na umu kako svako urbano dalmatinsko društvo pokazuje svoje mikroregionalne specifičnosti, uvjetovane ekonomijama koje proizlaze iz zadatosti komunalnog prostora, studija rasvjetljava iskustvo splitskog komunalnog društva promatrano posredstvom raznovrsne građe splitskog notarijata. Razvojni ciklus srednjovjekovnih dalmatinskih društava odvijao se kroz čitavo srednjovjekovlje – počevši od raslojavanja prvih društvenih grupa tijekom ranoga srednjeg vijeka pa do konačnog formiranja staleški strogo podijeljenog društva tijekom kasnog srednjovjekovlja.

Povezanost društvenog i ekonomskog razvoja autorica prati na primjeru ekonomske aktivnosti splitskih pučana, odnosno jednog njihovog dijela. S obzirom na to da se proces društvene stratifikacije očitovao, među ostalim, i na način da se poduzetniji i bogatiji sloj trgovaca i obrtnika prometnuo u građanski stalež, dok je određeni dio nastavio egzistirati kao običan puk, dotle autorica ovom monografijom istraživački interes posvećuje isključivo splitskim obrtnicima.

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