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INFORMAL POWER STRUCTURES AND GODPARENT NETWORKS OF THE RAGUSAN NOBILITY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the impact of clan division within the Ragusan noble rank on the choice of godparents in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The here established clan affiliation of the baptised children and godparents elucidates as to what extent informal social divisions manifested through the institution of godparenthood, and to what point, if any, clan affiliation spilt from the political domain over into that of inter-family relations based on godparenthood.

Keywords: Dubrovnik, 18th century, nobility, clan, baptism, godparents, social networks

Introduction

Institutional order of the Dubrovnik Republic, according to which all political power rested in the hands of the nobility, was founded on class exclusiveness. For centuries, however, the seemingly homogenous formal political structure

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was marked by factions and clan schism.¹ This rigid clan division between the members of the Ragusan noble families has provided the frame and key question of this study: did clan divisions reflect in the institution of godparenthood, or rather, to what degree was the choice of godparents determined by strict clan policy?

The institution of godparenthood within a specific social group (Ragusan nobility) is studied in the 1751-1800 time frame. A sample of 294 baptisms recorded in the parish registers² is analysed not only to show whether and to what degree godparenthood was used for creating new and extending previously established social ties within the community, but also whether and how the strict clan division, an extremely powerful constraining factor in all realms of social and personal life, influenced the institution of godparenthood.

Godparents to the nobility-born children in the second half of the eighteenth century

In the period 1751-1800, a total of 5,723 children were born in the City Parish,³ out of which 294 were of noble birth (5.14%).⁴ A very low proportion of the nobility such as this in the overall population of Dubrovnik in the second

¹ For an authoritative account of clan division, history of factions and power struggle within the noble circle see: Stjepan Ćosić and Nenad Vekarić, »Raskol dubrovačkog patricijata«. *Analni Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 39 (2001): pp. 305-379; Stjepan Ćosić and Nenad Vekarić, *Dubrovačka vlastela između roda i države. Salamankezi i sorbonezi*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2005; Nenad Vekarić, *Nevidljive pukotine: Dubrovački vlasteoski klanovi*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2009.

² *Matične knjige krštenih župe Grad: G9K (1729-1758), G10K (1758-1798) and G11K (1799-1812)*. Parish registers are housed in the Diocesan Archive of Dubrovnik, yet for the purpose of this research digitised records from the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb have been used.

³ The number of births has been obtained on the basis of the preliminary tables calculated by Nenad Vekarić, to whom we are grateful.

⁴ Baptismal parish registers often contain data on baptisms in case of an emergency, which due to the infant's imminent death were performed immediately upon birth, most commonly by a midwife, and without the usual ceremony. Also, the midwife was known to attend the subsequently performed official ceremony (Miroslav Bertoša, *Izazovi povijesnog zanata. Lokalna povijest i sveopći modeli*. Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 2002: p. 327; Kristina Puljizević, *U ženskim rukama. Primalje i porođaj u Dubrovniku (1815-1918)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2016: pp. 47, 64). A portion of 30.61% emergency baptisms (90 out of 294 baptisms) is considerable, and indicates that in the second half of the eighteenth century the anxiety over the infant's chances of survival was still widespread.

half of the eighteenth century is a certain indicator of its massive demographic decline (Graph 1).⁵ It is noteworthy, however, that the political power and social influence of the ruling elite showed more virility than the actual demographic potentials, clearly evidenced by the fact that in 1770 commoners tended to choose noblemen as godparents to their children rather than the members of the secondary non-noble elite (*Antunini*), whose wealth at the time often exceeded that of their noble counterparts.⁶ Social prestige of the Republic's highest rank is a crucial element for the study of the vertical mobility of the lower ranks, yet the focus of this analysis remains confined to one rank, and the issue of horizontal mobility needs to be addressed through the study of clan relations.

Graph 1. Estimate of the nobility size, 1300-1800



Source: N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 1: p. 145.

⁵ The problems that the nobility faced in this period were manifold, the worst being that of demographic nature. Their depletion may be clearly observed through the diminishing size of their rank over the centuries. Thus in 1800, the noble circle dropped to merely 314 members as opposed to 2,000 (30%) in the total city population back in 1500. According to the 1817 census, they participated with only 4.06% in the overall population of the City of Dubrovnik (Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 1 - *Korijeni, struktura i razvoj dubrovačkog plemstva*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2011: pp. 142-146, 219, 248, 288-291; Ivana Lazarević, *Vlasteoske kuće u gradu Dubrovniku 1817. godine*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2014: pp. 239-240).

⁶ Vedran Stojanović and Nella Lonza, »Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik: Children, Parents and Godparents as Knots of Social Networks«. *Dubrovnik Annals* 19 (2015): p. 84.

Table 1. Number and gender structure of godparents in the City Parish, 1751-1800

Baptised children	Number of births	Number of godparents	Godfathers	Godmothers	Proportion of females (%)	Average number of godparents per child
Male	151	302	151	151	50	2
Female	141	282	141	141	50	2
<i>Total</i>	292	584	292	292	50	2

Anno Domini 1756, die 17 Augusti
 Natus est M^r Marinus Maximij filius M^r Domini Dominici
 de Zlatarij fr^{at}ris M^r Antonij Zlatarij
 Stephani de Zlatarij die 17 Octobris anni
 1756, fuit Dominica, hora 5 noctis, quia
 maritus imminens mortis periculo, nec domi baptizavit
 Pater M^r Nicolaus Zlatarij, pater D. Sufarj
 de Zlatarij frater ad Jectis ~~de Zlatarij~~, cui ego Sufarj
 Gregorij Sufarj ex maritis, et paterj Sufarj, et
 mater Maximij imminens. Matroni Catharina
 frater Marko Tonkov, et Ana Marojeva
 de Sanderetto

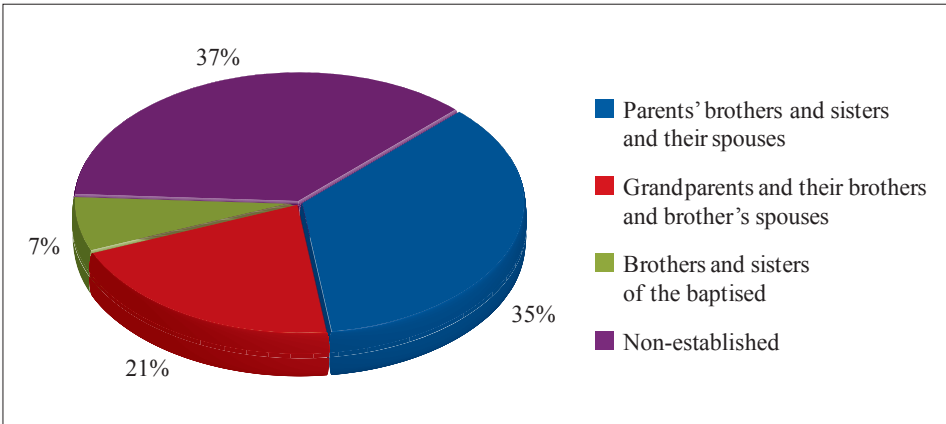
Figure 1. Baptism entry of Marin Dominikov Zlatarić with godparents Marko Tonkov and Ana Marojeva, commoners from Šumet.

In compliance with the decrees of the Tridentine Council concerning the number of godparents, which in Dubrovnik were applied without much delay,⁷

⁷ Canones super reformatione circa matrimonium, Caput II: ...*unus tantum sive vir sive mulier iuxta sacrorum canonum instituta vel ad summum unus et una baptizatum de baptismo suscipiant...* (www.internetsv.info/Archive/CTridentinum.pdf; accessed: October 2016). Only a few sources from the pre-Tridentine period are extant in Dubrovnik. Best known is the note in the *Lectionary* of the chronicler Nikša Marinov Ragnina, in which he listed the godparents of his seven children born between 1532 and 1540, and of the three children of his son Šimun, born in the 1570s. The fact that the Council of Trent was held between these two sets of entries explains the change in the number of godparents. In the pre-Tridentine period it ranged from four to six. Each godchild had one godmother, while among the remaining godfathers, one or two were commoners. Close kin were among the godparents, and curiously, not a single grandfather or grandmother. After the Council of Trent, according to the Council decrees, Šimun's children had two godfathers each, chosen among their own noble rank. Therefore, the decrees were not fully observed, since it was recommended for the godparents to be of different sex. For more on godparents before the Tridentine Council see: Vedran Stojanović and Nella Lonza, »Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik«: p. 78.

Table and Graph 2. Kin-based godparenthoods in the City Parish, 1751-1800

Kin relationship	Godparents	
	Number	Proportion (%)
Parents' brothers and sisters and their spouses	207	35
Grandparents and their brothers and brothers' spouses	122	21
Brothers and sisters of the baptised	41	7
Non-established	214	37
<i>Total</i>	584	100



in the period under analysis all nobility-born children, without exception, had two godparents. It should be noted that two baptism entries do not contain the names of godparents, hence the total number of godparents in our sample being 584. For the analysis of the relationship between godchildren, godchildren's parents and godparents we shall use a sample of 292 baptisms. Our sample displays a perfect symmetry in terms of male and female godparenthood (Table 1), which may be explained by a tendency to follow the model of natural parenthood.

In terms of rank, our sample is highly homogenous. Exception is the case of Marin Zlatarić, son of Dominik and Julijana Natali, whose godparents were not drawn from the nobility (Figure 1).⁸

⁸ Marin Zlatarić was born on 14 October 1753, and had an emergency baptism two days later. Full ceremony was held on 21 August 1756, his godparents being Marko Tonkov and Ana Marojeva from Šumet.

Of the total number of godparents, some 63% were related by kin to the godchild. It is noteworthy that the mentioned percentage may have been even higher, because not every kin relationship could be established with exactitude. Considering that spiritual kinship between godparent and godchild implied marriage impediments, Ragusan nobility would therefore choose godparents among the kin, and avoid godparenthood bonds with new families in order not to narrow down the already limited choice of marriage. The analysis of kin relations between godchildren and godparents fully confirms our assumption. Godparents were most commonly selected among the parents' brothers and sisters and their spouses, less frequently among grandparents, whereas the brothers and sisters of the baptised children were very rarely chosen as godparents (Table 2, Graph 2).

With regard to the nobility-born children in the period 1751-1800, the ratio of the paternal to maternal line in the choice of godparents was 54:46 (Table 3, Graph 3). A similar ratio was established by Vedran Stojanović and Nella Lonza, who analysed the entire population of the City Parish in 1770, and ascertained a ratio of 55:45 between the paternal and maternal line.⁹

Given the fact that each godchild had a godfather and godmother, this may lead to an assumption that in both cases godfathers were drawn from the paternal line, and godmothers from that of the mother. In their research of godparenthood in Dubrovnik in 1770, Lonza and Stojanović have established that in two-thirds of the cases godfathers were chosen by paternal and godmothers by maternal line. However, their analysis was based on a very small sample size of noble population (4% of the overall number of baptisms in 1770), as it was impossible to establish the kin ties for the whole sample.¹⁰ The results obtained by the analysis of godparenthood of the nobility-born children in the City Parish in the period 1751-1800 are somewhat different, and exhibit a mild tendency towards paternal line in the choice of godfathers, and a slightly higher tendency towards maternal line in the choice of godmothers (Table 3, Graph3).

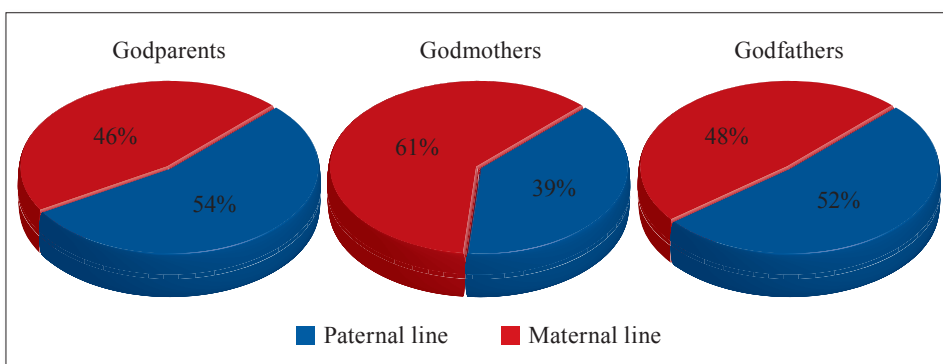
Several persons have been traced as repeated godparents, such as Eleonora Bona (c. 1738-1787) and Ana Zamagna, wife of Ivan Bona (1732-1806), who acted as godmothers at nine baptisms. They are followed by Antun-Vlaho

⁹ V. Stojanović and N. Lonza, »Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik«: pp. 87-88.

¹⁰ V. Stojanović and N. Lonza, »Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik«: p. 89.

Table and Graph 3. Kinship line in the selection of godparents among the nobility in the City Parish, 1751-1800

Kinship line	Godparents		Godfathers		Godmothers	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
Paternal line	200	54	96	52	72	39
Maternal line	170	46	89	48	113	61
<i>Total</i>	370	100	185	100	185	100



Note on Table 3 and Graph 3: calculation is based on 63% of the baptisms of nobility-born children who have been established to be related by kin to the godparents.

Marinov Sorgo (1727-1810),¹¹ Marin Matov Zamagna (1737-1808) and Ana Zamagna, wife of Marko-Antun Ivanov Sorgo (1722-1808) with eight godparenthoods each. The bulk of these repeated godparenthoods was chosen from the family circle, and therefore we can speak of the consolidation of family solidarity rather than the expansion of influential alliances. Interestingly, godparenthood ties reveal that Eleonora Bona (maiden name de Strasoldo), second wife of Luka-Dominik Mihov Bona (1708-1778),¹² was perfectly welcomed in the ranks of Ragusan nobility and highly esteemed despite her foreign background.

¹¹ For more details on Antun-Vlaho Marinov Sorgo see: Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 6 - *Odabrane biografije (Pi-Z)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015: pp. 201-203.

¹² For more on Luka-Dominik Mihov Bona see: Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 4 - *Odabrane biografije (A-D)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2013: pp. 179-182.

Average age of godparents to the children of nobility

Average age of godparents in the sample under analysis (Table 4) shows that they were well established individuals in their prime—that is, people of younger age were rare, with some exceptions. The Church considered puberty as the earliest age at which one could assume the role of godparent.¹³ As the *Rituale Romanum* fail to specify the puberty age, it was probably twelve for girls and fourteen for boys, as ordained by the Roman law.¹⁴ In our case, as many as seventeen boys and girls acted as godparents at an age under fourteen. Marija Menze, daughter of Klement Ivanov, was the godmother at the baptism of her brother Đuro when she was only five years old. Klement Vlahov Menze was only eight when he embarked upon his godfather “career” at the baptism of his brother Ivan, and by 1800 he acted on five occasions as godfather to the children of his sister Marija Caboga and his granddaughter Marija Ivanova Ghetaldi. Klement Menze best exemplifies how in less than fifty years one person became related to his godchildren through kin and affinal ties. A large number of very young godfathers points to an increasingly narrow selection within the noble rank limited not only by marriage, but also by clan endogamy¹⁵ and reduced demographic potential. The selection of very young godparents may have been avoided by means of multi-godparenthood on more frequent basis, leading us to assume that choosing minor brothers and sisters as godparents was a common social practice among the nobility, though not in full accord with canon law. On the other hand, godfathers were sometimes chosen among the elderly in their twilight years. Recorded as the oldest godmother was Uršula Menze, widow of Petar Marinov, born on 8 April 1704, who at the baptism of Petar-Ignacije-Nikola Sorgo, son of Ivan Petrov Sorgo, performed on 25 June 1793, was eighty-nine. The oldest godfather was Ivan Nikolin Sorgo (nicknamed Debo), born on 1 January 1709, who was eighty-six at the baptism of his niece Marina (daughter of his brother Sigismund), held on 14 September 1795.¹⁶

¹³ *Rituale Romanum Pauli V. P. M. iussu editum*. Antverpiae: Officina Plantiniana, 1617: p. 9 (http://books.google.hr/books?id=u6lHAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=hr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, accessed in October 2016).

¹⁴ In 1817, forty-seven children were baptised at the Ragusan foundling home. Nine of them are established to have lived in the immediate vicinity of the foundling home at Pile. Of the nine godfathers, the majority was under twenty, the youngest being twelve years old (Rina Kralj-Brassard, Ivana Lazarević and Irena Ipšić, »Godparents Network of the Dubrovnik Foundlings 17th-19th centuries«. *Annales de démographie historique* 130/2 (2015): pp. 161-185).

¹⁵ For more detailed discussion on endogamy among the nobility, see: N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1: pp. 149-151 *et passim*.

¹⁶ We are grateful to Nenad Vekarić for the data related to the godparents' dates of birth.

Table 4. Age of godparents in the City Parish, 1751-1800

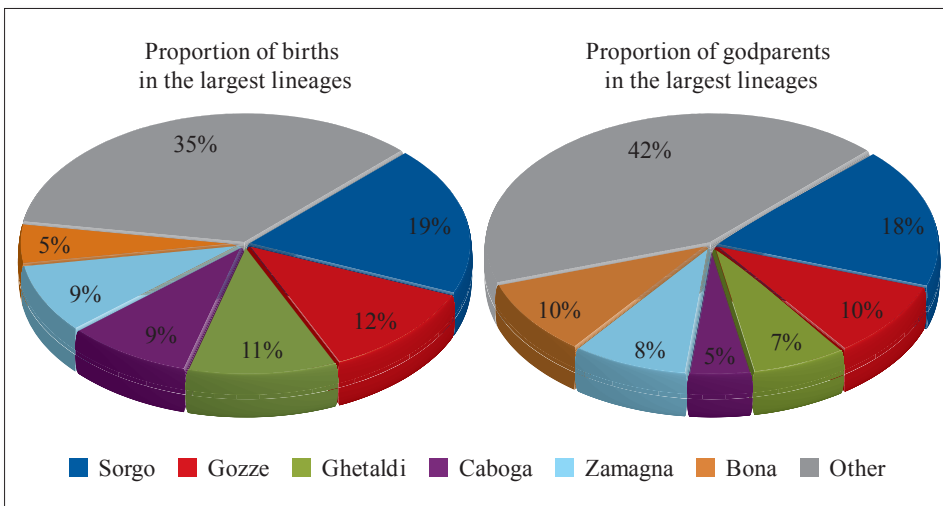
Age	Number of godparents			Proportion (%)		
	Total	Godfathers	Godmothers	Total	Godfathers	Godmothers
Total	584	292	292	100	100	100
5-9	17	7	10	2.97	2.44	3.51
10-14	29	11	18	5.07	3.83	6.32
15-19	26	15	11	4.55	5.23	3.86
20-24	26	16	10	4.55	5.57	3.51
25-29	39	17	22	6.82	5.92	7.72
30-34	45	26	19	7.87	9.06	6.67
35-39	43	20	23	7.52	6.97	8.07
40-44	49	28	21	8.57	9.76	7.37
45-49	59	24	35	10.31	8.36	12.28
50-54	55	25	30	9.62	8.71	10.53
55-59	45	22	23	7.87	7.67	8.07
60-64	44	17	27	7.69	5.92	9.47
65-69	42	24	18	7.34	8.36	6.32
70-74	26	19	7	4.55	6.62	2.46
75-79	13	9	4	2.27	3.14	1.40
80-84	9	4	5	1.57	1.39	1.75
85-89	5	3	2	0.87	1.05	0.70
Unknown	12	5	7			
Average age	43.51	44.48	42.53			

The highest birth rate has been established in the most vital lineages of Sorgo and Gozze, along with the Ghetaldi, Caboga and Zamagna (Table 5, Graph 4). Apparently, these lineages participated with a similar percentage in the role of godparents, except for the godparents from the Gozze lineage who are listed after those of the Ghetaldi and Zamagna. The members of the Gondula lineage, which died out in the latter half of the eighteenth century,¹⁷ acted as godparents on eleven occasions (for instance, the Sorgo assumed this role on a hundred and four baptisms), more often than the members of the Natali, Gradi, Resti and others. Although in the period under study seven children were born in their family, the members of the Pozza-Sorgo were not chosen as godparents.

¹⁷ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1: p. 291.

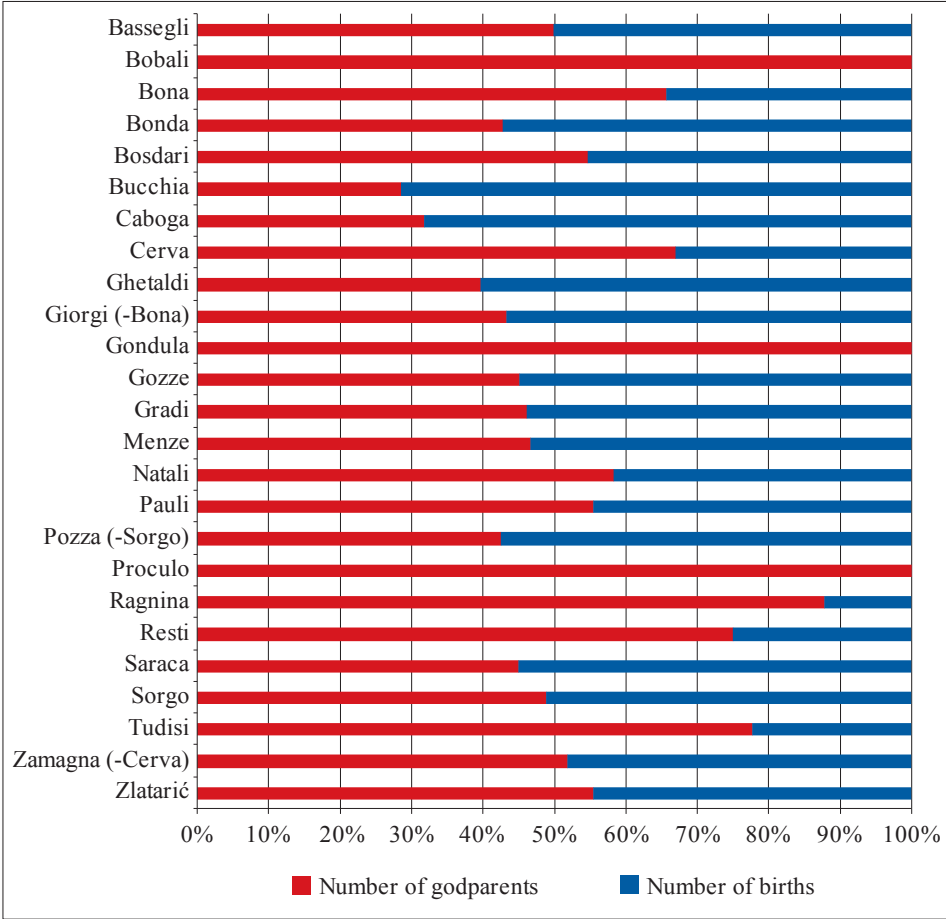
Table 5 and Graph 4. Proportion of births and godparents in the largest noble lineages in the City Parish, 1751-1800

Lineage	Births		Godparents	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
Sorgo	55	19	104	18
Gozze	35	12	57	10
Ghetaldi	32	11	41	7
Caboga	27	9	27	5
Zamagna	26	9	50	8
Bona	15	5	57	10
Other	102	35	248	42
<i>Total</i>	292	100	584	100



By comparing the demographic potential with that of godparenthood of all the members of the noble lineages in the given time frame, one may conclude that the godparenthood potential does not follow the declining demographic trend (Graph 5). More vital lineages represent the largest godparenthood pool, yet with some lineages on the verge of extinction, such as the Gondula or Ragnina and Resti, godparenthood exceeded their demographic potential.

Graph 5. Proportion of births and godparents from the largest noble lineages in the City Parish, 1751-1800



Godparenthood and clans

Before presenting the data on clan affiliation of the baptised children and their godparents, we shall address the issue of clan division within Ragusan nobility. Nenad Vekarić defined clan as “a group of affiliated *casate* with a distinct political orientation, founded and maintained on the principles of strong family tradition”.¹⁸ In modern terms, they may be said to resemble political parties to a certain point, yet are marked by a strong kinship component and

¹⁸ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1: p. 159.

absence of formal structure. Archival sources provide no explicit written evidence on clans, and the latter have been established solely on the basis of indirect sources. In addition, clan names have no official bearing, and they have been introduced for the sake of the research into this phenomenon. Vekarić named the clans after their apical lineages—Juda clan (Gundulić), Gučetić and Bobaljević. Gučetić clan was a fraction of the Gundulić and acted as third option for some time, yet by the close of the fifteenth century, it joined the Bobaljević clan. From this point onwards, until the fall of the Republic, there existed only two polarised clans—Gundulić and Bobaljević. Probably by the start of the seventeenth century the former were also known as *Sorbonezi*, and the latter as *Salamankezi*, as evidenced by the account of an anonymous reporter of Empress Maria Theresa, who visited Dalmatia and Dubrovnik in 1774 and 1775. These terms, however, have no other written proof but this.¹⁹ Therefore, the names are informal, but the rigid clan division left a deep mark on all domains of the nobility's life.

Most noble lineages remained loyal to their clan position, and they rarely changed sides, usually due to family feud or marriage alliance. Conversions were known to take place if a *casata* had no male issue and if the son-in-law married into his wife's household. Descendants of such a couple would follow the clan orientation of the mother's *casata*, yet retained the surname of the father's *casata*. When in the eighteenth century clan division spilt over onto the biological level and when ban on marriage between the opposing sides was introduced (because *Salamankezi* adopted the idea of "pure blood"), marriage remained a unique reason for conversion within the clans. As such, the conversion was not a two-way process, since a *Salamankez* could convert to a *Sorbonez*, but a *Sorbonez* could not become a *Salamankez*, unlike in the previous centuries when conversion developed both ways.²⁰

By observing the godparents of Nikša Marinov Ragnina's children of the pre-Tridentine period,²¹ we cannot say that clan affiliation played a crucial role in the choice of noble godparents and godparenthoods developed along all routes in terms of rank and clan. Of twenty-seven godparents from the noble ranks, ten came from the Gundulić clan, and seventeen from the Bobaljević, to which Nikša Marinov Ragnina was affiliated.²² One may conclude that in the pre-Tridentine period, characterised by a multi-godfather model, godparenthood was used as a specific instrument for sealing inter-clan trust, although loyalty to one's own clan was already significant. Additionally, the choice of marriage partners

¹⁹ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1: pp. 159-204.

²⁰ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 1: pp. 162-194.

²¹ V. Stojanović and N. Lonza, »Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik«: p. 75.

²² For these data we are indebted to Nenad Vekarić.

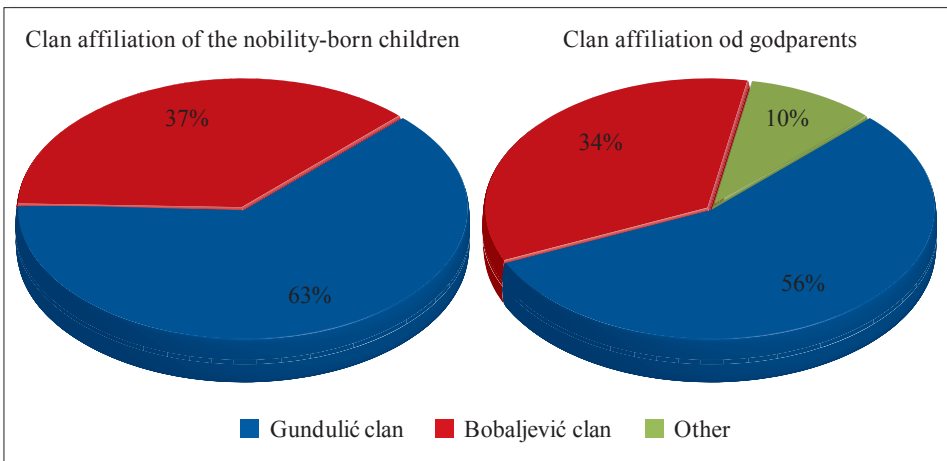
in this period was less exclusive—that is, clan divisions remained confined to the political sphere rather than that of the family and social life. On the other hand, the Tridentine restriction of the number of godparents marked an end to inter-clan godparenthoods. This is clearly evidenced by the choice of godfathers that Nikša made for his son, Šimun, since he, without exception, selected them from his own clan—the Bobaljević. Therefore, limited number of godparents led to a dissolution of godparenthood networks between clans, and clan affiliation from the hitherto political sphere entered that of private life, too.

According to Nenad Vekarić, in the latter half of the eighteenth century the Gundulić clan dominated in size as reconfirmed by our sample, by which 185 children were born in the Gundulić clan (63%) and 109 children in the Bobaljević (37%) in the period 1751-1800 (Table 6, Graph 6).

Clan affiliation reflected in the choice of godparents in 90% of the cases. This implies that in 266 baptisms (of the total 294) the parents, child and godparents came from the same clan. With the remaining 28 cases or 56

Table and Graph 6. Clan affiliation of the nobility-born children, 1751-1800

Clan affiliation	Births		Godparents	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
Gundulić clan	184	63	326	56
Bobaljević clan	108	37	202	34
Other	/	/	56	10
<i>Total</i>	292	100	584	100



godparents (10%) the situation varies, in that at least one godparent came from the rival clan (Graph 6). However, the results of inter-clan godparenthood analysis are truly revealing. Apart from one case, in which we ascribed the inter-clan alliance to the neighbourly relations,²³ the remaining cases involve godparenthood relationships based on various family ties, which persisted in spite of the clan conversion of one of the actors. Thus for instance, by marrying Ana Bona (1745-1818), Nikola Pavlov Gozze (1727-1799) changed his clan status having converted from the Bobaljević to that of Gundulić,²⁴ yet in the selection of his children's godparents he remained partly loyal to his original clan—the Bobaljević. In the majority of cases (6), Antun-Vlaho Marinov Sorgo (1727-1810) was the godfather, his brother-in-law.²⁵ Also, Gozze's sister-in-law, Nika Bona (1747-1810),²⁶ retained her clan status. Antun-Vlaho Sorgo and Nika Bona also tended to choose their godparents from the rival Gundulić pool, brother-in-law Nikola Pavlov Gozze being the most frequent choice. This example clearly shows that in the case of conversion, family ties, for at least some time, had a stronger influence than any clan division.

Providing that we have a very similar pattern of godparenthood in the latter half of the sixteenth century (after the Council of Trent) and in the latter half of the eighteenth century, we may conclude that clan division reflected in the kin-based godparenthood from as early as the close of the sixteenth century until the fall of the Republic. Equally, this analysis is yet another solid proof of clan division within the Ragusan noble rank which manifested beyond the political sphere and left a permanent mark on family and kinship relations.

The Gondula case

Within the given time frame, the Gondula witnessed no births in their family. In the second half of the eighteenth century Sigismund-Dominik Sigismund-Matov

²³ Magdalena Ghetaldi, daughter of Nikola Matov, a *Sorbonez*, and Marija Saraca, was born on 23 February 1762. Her godfather was Božo-Dominik Nikola-Mihov Saraca, grandfather by her mother's side and a *Sobonez*, and godmother was Mara Pozza, a *Salamankez* and widow of Ivan Markov Sorgo. The palace of Božo Saraca stood at 5-9 Nikola Božidarević Street, while Mara Sorgo lived in the palace located at 5-11 Miho Pracat Street, less than 50 metres apart from each other (I. Lazarević, *Vlasteoske kuće u gradu Dubrovniku 1817. godine*: pp. 153-154, 159-160).

²⁴ S. Ćosić and N. Vekarić, *Dubrovačka vlastela između vlastela između roda i države*: p. 170; N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: 566.

²⁵ Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 7 - *Genealogije (A-L)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 2016: pp. 154, 766.

²⁶ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: pp. 154, 766.

Gondula (1712-1800)²⁷ acted as godfather on as many as four occasions. Sigismund's sister, Uršula (Ora) (1715-1809),²⁸ acted as godmother on three occasions, their mother, Uršula (Ora) Ghetaldi (1690-1776),²⁹ was godmother twice, while their father, Sigismund-Mato Sigismundov (1682-1758),³⁰ and their aunt, Lukrecija Bona (1677-1774), were godparents once.³¹

The members of the Gondula lineage most often acted as godparents to the children of the Ghetaldi (on four occasions). The two families were closely linked: Sigismund-Dominik's mother, Uršula (1650-1719), was the daughter of Frano Šimunov Ghetaldi (1650-1719), whereas Sigismund-Dominik's sister, Kata (1709-1787), was married to Mato Franov Ghetaldi (1705-1776). Family disputes³² probably account for the fact that the members of the Gondula acted as godparents only once together with another member of their family, at the baptism (1796) of Sigismund Frano-Augustinov Ghetaldi (1743-1798). On that occasion godparents were elderly Sigismund-Dominik and his sister Uršula (1715-1809).

On 21 February 1752, Uršula (1690-1776) was the godmother at the baptism of her grandson Sigismund-Dominik Matov Ghetaldi (1752-1797), together with Frano-Augustin Matov Ghetaldi (1743-1798), the godchild's brother. Considering that it was the last *casata* of the Gondula and without male offspring, the institution of godparenthood helped reaffirm the relationship with the Ghetaldi, who ultimately adopted the Ghetaldi-Gondula surname.

The here cited example shows that even the families on the verge of biological survival resorted to godparenthood as a medium for creating ties aimed at benefit and social position.

Conclusion

On the basis of our analysis of godparenthood of the nobility-born children in Dubrovnik from 1751 to 1800, we have established the following:

²⁷ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: p. 392

²⁸ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: p. 392.

²⁹ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: p. 392.

³⁰ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: p. 392.

³¹ N. Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, 7: pp. 149, 387.

³² On his father's death, Sigismund-Dominik Gondola lost the suit against his mother Uršula Ghetaldi and his sister Uršula concerning the inheritance. For more on this see: Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 2 - *Vlasteoski rodovi (A-L)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2012: p. 311.

1. In this period 294 children were born to nobility, or 5.14% of the total births in the City Parish.

2. Without exception, a couple-godparent model prevailed at all baptisms, godparents being of different sex.

3. Virtually all godparents were the godchildren's equals in terms of rank (99.66%). This confirms the nobility's extremely closed system in the selection of godparents, void of vertical social relationships.

4. Most godparents (over 63%) were kin-related to the godchild. This percentage is probably higher, since we were unable to establish every single relationship in the nobility's mutually entangled kinship network. The parents' brothers and sisters and their spouses were most commonly chosen as godparents.

5. The ratio between the choice of godparents on the father's and mother's side was 54% to 46%. In addition, a mild tendency towards choosing godfather from the paternal line has been observed, and godmother from the maternal line.

6. Several persons feature in repeated godparenthoods: Eleonora Bona and Ana Zamagna were godmothers on nine occasions, followed by Antun-Vlaho Marinov Sorgo, Marin Matov Zamagna and Ana Sorgo, who acted as godparents at eight baptisms.

7. Two most vital lineages of this period witnessed the highest number of births and godparenthoods: Gozze and Sorgo. Although nearing extinction, the members of the Gondula lineage were godparents at as many as 11 baptisms.

8. With regard to clan affiliation, a proportion of 63% of the baptised children came from the Gundulić clan, and 37% from that of the Bobaljević, which correlates with Vekarić's assertion that the Gundulić clan dominated in size in this period.

9. Clan affiliation reflected in the choice of godparents in 90% of the cases, which proves that clan policy played an important role in family and private life. With the remaining 10% cases at least one godparent came from the rival clan, which can always be explained by clan conversion. Therefore, in case of conversion, family relations, at least for some time, tended to outweigh clan divisions.

10. Clan division is traceable in the sphere of kin-based godparenthoods from as early as the close of the sixteenth century to the Republic's fall. Further, this analysis is yet another well-grounded proof that the clan rift within Ragusan nobility stepped out of the political realm and permeated all aspects of family life and relationships.

Translated by Vesna Baće