

PUBLICACIONS
DE LA PRESIDÈNCIA

Sèrie Major, 6

CIUTATS MEDITERRÀNIES: L'ESPAI I EL TERRITORI

MEDITERRANEAN TOWNS: SPACE AND TERRITORY

Flocel Sabaté (ed.)



Institut
d'Estudis
Catalans

Ciutats mediterrànies: l'espai i el territori

Mediterranean towns: space and territory

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Seminari Internacional “Ciutats Mediterrànies: l’Espai i el Territori” (2016 : Barcelona, Catalunya), autor

Ciutats mediterrànies: l’espai i el territori = Mediterranean towns: space and territory. — Primera edició. —
(Publicacions de la Presidència. Sèrie major ; 6/2020)

Ponències i conferències presentades al Seminari Internacional “Ciutats Mediterrànies: l’Espai i el Territori” celebrat a Barcelona
l’any 2016. — Textos en català, castellà, francès, portuguès, italià i anglès

ISBN 9788499655055

I. Sabaté, Flocel, 1962- editor literari II. Union académique internationale III. Institut d’Estudis Catalans

IV. Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània V. Títol VI. Col·lecció: Publicacions de la Presidència. Sèrie major ; 6

1. Ciutats — Mediterrània, Regió — Història — Congressos 2. Cultura mediterrània — Història — Congressos

911.375(4-13+6-17)(091)(063)

008(4-13+6-17)(091)(063)

Els textos han estat sotmesos a un procés d’avaluació externa revisat pel consell científic del projecte de recerca *Les villes méditerranéennes: les facteurs de développement. Analyse diachronique, transversale et multidisciplinaire*, de la Union Académique Internationale (UAI-85).

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Carrer del Carme, 47. 08001 Barcelona

Primera edició: maig de 2020

Aquesta edició ha estat coordinada pel Gabinet de la Presidència de l’IEC

Textos en català revisats lingüísticament per la Unitat de Correcció del Servei Editorial de l’IEC

Disseny de la coberta: Azcunce | Ventura

Il·lustració de la coberta: Joan-Albert Ros i Torres

Compost per Pleca Digital, SLU

Imprès a Open Print, SL

ISBN: 978-84-9965-505-5

Dipòsit Legal: B 12814-2020

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SUB UMBRA PROTECTIONE ET FAUORE NOSTRO: URBAN INCLUSION IN THE EASTERN ADRIATIC THROUGH VENETIAN CONCESSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP, NOBILITY AND SALVUS CONDUCTUS (14TH-15TH C.)¹

NADA ZEČEVIĆ
Goldsmiths University of London

This paper explores honorary citizenship concessions and other grants issued by the Venetian Republic to the feudal lords of the Balkan Peninsula during the 14th and the 15th centuries, the time when Venice was establishing its second rule over the Eastern Adriatic.² In some aspects of their structure and content, these grants are similar to the citizenships with which the Republic integrated foreign commoners. However, their elaborate forms and elevated terminology suggest that they were mere ceremonial acts, bearing no major significance to the lords' reception in Venice and its society.³ In order

to understand this ambiguity, I summarize the results of a comparative examination of the forms and content of these grants in their historical context.

For more than a century, the relations between the Venetian Republic and its foreign inhabitants during the Middle Ages have generated a substantially focused attention of scholarship.⁴ Analysing the settler's numbers, places of their origin, arrival dynamics, as well as the motives behind their citizenships, scholars drew a profile of a typical 'new' Venetian citizen as a male émigré (with or without a family) from the Eastern Adriatic (most frequently, Bocca di Cattaro and Kvarner Gulf) or Greece, of substantial wealth and common social

1. This paper is the part of the project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska Curie grant agreement No 747 857. The abbreviated sources used in the present paper are:

AAV: Joseph VALENTINI (ed.), *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV*, Palermo, Centro Internazionale di Studi Albanesi, 1967-1975.

Ljubić, Listine, MSHSM, vol. IV: Šime LJUBIĆ, «Listine o odnošajih između južnog slavenstva i Mletačke republike», in *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, vol. IV, Zagreb, Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU), 1874.

Ljubić, MSHSM, vol. IX: Šime LJUBIĆ, «Listine o odnošajih između južnog slavenstva i Mletačke republike», in *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, vol. IX, Zagreb, JAZU, 1878.

2. Marko ŠUNJIĆ, *Venecija i Dalmacija u XV stoljeću* (Venice and Dalmatia in the 15th c.), Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1967, p. 44-71; Gherardo ORTALLI and Oliver Jens SCHMITT (ed.), *Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra tredicesimo e diciottesimo secolo / Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaum und Venedig (13.-18. Jahrhundert)*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009.

3. The first scholarly annotation of this ambiguity comes from: Giuseppe VALENTINI, «Dell'amministrazione Veneta in Albania», in Agostino PERTUSI (ed.), *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, vol. 1, Florence, Olschi, 1973, p. 843, 849, n. 5. See also: James GRUBB, «Elite Citizens», in John MARTIN JEFFREYS and Dennis ROMANO (ed.), *Venice Reconsidered*, Baltimore-London, John Hopkins University Press, 2000, p. 339-340, 343, and 358, n. 21. A more detailed focus on the Venetian honorary citizenships and other privileges issued to the Byzantine Greeks can be found in: Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510*, Rome, Veltro, 1997, p. 65. The general accounts of the regional history such as Ruža ČUK, *Srbija i Venecija u XIII i XIV veku* (Serbia and Venice in the 13th and 14th c.), Belgrade, Prosveta, 1985; or Marko ŠUNJIĆ, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)* (Bosnia and Venice [the relations in the 14th and 15th c.]), Sarajevo, HKD Napredak, 1996, —otherwise great resources for studying the relations of the Venetian Republic and the Balkan inlands— remained largely uninterested in analysing these grants in a wider comparative context of the lords' urban integration. On the presence of Slavs from the Adriatic hinterland in the Eastern Adriatic (towns such as Dubrovnik, Split, Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir),

see: Tomislav RAUKAR, «Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u XIV st.», *Historijski Zbornik* (Zagreb), vol. 33-34 (1980-1981), p. 109-209; Damir KARBIĆ, «Marginalne grupe u hrvatskim srednjovjekovnim društvima od druge polovine XIII do početka XVI stoljeća (Marginal groups in Croatian medieval societies from the second half of the 13th c. until the beginning of the 16th c.)», *Historijski Zbornik* (Zagreb), vol. 44 (1991), p. 43-76; Zdenka JANEKOVIĆ-RÖMER, «Stranac u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku: između prihvaćenosti i odbacivosti (A foreigner in medieval Dubrovnik: between acceptance and rejection)», *Radovi Zavoda za Hrvatsku povjest* (Zagreb), vol. 26 (1993), p. 27-38; Zdenka JANEKOVIĆ-RÖMER, *Okvir slobode* (The frame of freedom), Zagreb-Dubrovnik, Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 1999, p. 225-249; Lovorka ČORALIĆ, «Prisutnost doseljenika s istočnojadranske obale u Veneciji od XIII do XVIII stoljeća (The presence of settlers from the Eastern Adriatic coast in Venice)», *Radovi Zavoda za Hrvatsku povjest* (Zagreb), vol. 26 (1993), p. 39-78; and, respectively until 1996, her other insights into some specific communities (Senj, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Split), for a more detailed list of her works, see: Ante BIRIN, «Pravni položaj stranaca u statutima dalmatinskih komuna (Legal status of foreigners in the statutes of Dalmanian communes)», *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* (Zagreb), vol. 20 (2003), p. 84-85.

4. Marco FERRO, *Dizionario del Diritto comune e Veneto*, Venice, Santini e figlio, 1845, p. 395-397; G. M THOMAS, «Cittadinanza accordata a forestieri», *Archivio Veneto* (Venice), vol. 8 (1874), p. 154-156; Dina BIZZARRI, *Ricerche sul diritto di cittadinanza nella costituzione comunale*, Turin, Bocca, 1916; Pierre RACINE, «La citoyenneté en Italie au Moyen Âge», *Le Moyen Âge* (Liège), vol. 115, num. 1 (2009), p. 87-108; Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510*, 1997, p. 259-262; Reinhold C. MUELLER, «Veneti facti privilegio: stranieri naturalizzati a Venezia tra XIV e XVI secolo», in Donatella CALABI and Paola LENARA (eds.), *La città italiana e i luoghi di stranieri*, Bari, Laterza, 1998, p. 41-51; Reinhold C. MUELLER, *Immigrazione e cittadinanza nella Venezia medievale*, Rome, Viella, 2010; Paolo GRILL, «Da diritto a privilegio: la cittadinanza nell'età comunale», in Beatrice DEL BO (ed.), *Cittadinanza e mestieri, radicamento urbano e integrazione nelle città basomedievali (secc. XIII-XIV)*, Rome, Viella, 2014, p. 25-47.

status, involved in maritime trade or ship transportation.⁵ In the 14th century, one would usually become the citizen of Venice through a grant *per privilegium*, most commonly in the aftermath of a wider crisis when the Republic's need for additional human resources increased. The foreigners had to demonstrate that they merited citizenship through a long sojourn in Venice (8-25 years), good economic standing, individual reputation, and extensive links within the local society. The granting procedure took time, but it implied an 'equal' treatment for all applicants, uniformly conceding to the new citizens the right to do business on the entire Venetian territory (*de intus et extra*), or a more limiting right to operate just within Venice (*de intus*).⁶

Foreigners of a high-elevated rank had a somewhat different treatment. Their citizenships, although formally requested by each individual lord in a similar procedure as done with the commoners, were qualified as grace (*cittadinanza per gratiam*), and they were usually given in the form of a *donatio simplex et pura* (e.g. AAV 2: 6, p. 73-76, no. 1582 [August 8, 1410]), which is why these concessions immediately appear as purely honorific donations that required the completion of a specific status or sojourn condition.⁷ The ceremonial nature of these grants is additionally highlighted with selected expressions of the Republic's affection and respect towards the grantees (e.g. *brachis amplexantes ili ipsumque sincere or benevolencie brachiis amplectantes, sincere benevolencie brachiis amplectantes et firmiter statuentes*), the statements of their acceptance through the consensus of all instances of the Republic's power (most commonly, these terms referred to joy and benevolence, for example, *gaudent prefati dominus...et sui filij et heredes, in Venecijs et extra vbique gaudeant, plenissime et vtantur; In venetijs et extra libere gaudeat decetero et utatur; privilegio congauderent*), and the

5. James GRUBB, «Elite Citizens», p. 344, listed 208 families as immigrating to Venice from the Adriatic's coastal towns by 1536, whom the Venetians saw as the Republic's 'cadet' nobility. An example of a citizenship grant that conferred the Venetian citizenship to all local nobles ('patricians') of Zadar, can be found in AAV2: 5, p. 273-274, no. 1466 (September 5, 1409).

6. Most importantly, they had to reside in Venice *in perpetuo*, which originally meant being 'permanently' settled in the city prior to the conferment of the citizenship grant for at least 15 years (*de intus*) or 25 years (*de intus et extra*). In the 15th century, this was shortened to 8 years (*de intus*) / 15 years (*de intus et extra*). See: Anna BELAVITIS, «Per cittadini metterete'... La stratificazione della società Veneziana Cinquentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale», *Quaderni storici* (Bologna), series nova, vol. 30, num. 89 (August, 1995), p. 359-383.

7. In this work, I shall refer mostly to these documents' critical editions published by Valentini in AAV, and Ljubić's multivolumed *Listine* in MSHSM. For the few ones that were not included there, I shall refer to their earlier edition in: Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva: Monumenta Historica Serbica* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, Belgrade, Državna štamparija, 1860.

lords' declaration of their special disposition towards the Venetians and their authorities (e.g. AAV 1: 1, p. 108, no. 130 [June 12, 1340]: *Ducalis providencia consuevit personas honorabiles sibi devotas et fideles honoribus pervenire...ad nostre magnitudinis excellentiam habere promptis effectibus se ostendit* [July 3, 1362]).⁸

Yet, even so strongly honorific and ceremonial in their form, the citizenship grants issued to the lords of the medieval Balkans had several important elements that could make them useful in real situations too. First and foremost, they gave to the grantees the perpetual right of movement and operation *in Venetijs et extra* (e.g. the grants to Albanian lords John Castrioti and Maurikius Spata, AAV 2: 7, p. 46-47, no. 1809 [May 19, 1413]; AAV 2: 9, p. 68, nos. 2279-2280 [September 30, 1418]), and this right could be extended also to the grantees' close family, heirs and successors.⁹ Essentially, this condition was similar to the *de intus et extra* right conceded to the commoners in their citizenships *per privilegium*, thus allowing the Balkan elite operate their affairs within all territories and seas under the Republic's control, and integrate into the city's society.¹⁰ Some lords —notably, they were of lesser social rank than the neighbouring magnates and dynasts— opted just for the right *de intus* (*deintus, deintus tantum*) which, given the unconditional nature of their citizenships, may have reflected their intention to settle and work within the city, rather than a subjection to the strict conditions of sojourn defined by the conditions of *per privilegium* grants.¹¹

8. Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 43.

9. Listine, vol. iv, MSHSM vol. iv, p. 415 (October 24, 1398), about Vojislava Thopia claiming her brother's citizenship rights, among which also the right to own a house in Durres. An example of the extension of the citizenship grant to one's relatives (e.g. brothers) and their heirs (sons, grandsons, etc.) can be found in AAV 2: 13, p. 153-154, no. 3231 (June 14, 1429). On the other hand, a citizenship grant issued to Bosnian magnate Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić (1350-1416) and his brother Vuk shows that these concessions could also be issued individually and separately for each lord, regardless of their familial proximity, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 135-137 (July 13, 1393). A document in AAV 3: 18, p. 83-85, no. 4888 (December 18, 1443), referring to the citizenship request of Albanian lord John Ducaghini shows that some lords included in their grants also their own vassals and subjects (*cum li nostri fioli et cum tuti i nostri zentilomeni et cum tuta la nostra compagnia sempre se recomandemo ala vostra Signoria*); similarly in AAV 3: 19, no. 5062 (February 12, 1445), p. 16-17, and 5064 (February 20, 1445), p. 20, confirming the citizenship and the noble status to George and Staniša of the Castrioti family.

10. As shown by an example in AAV 2: 11, p. 153, no. 2640 (October 29, 1422), *de intus* right could turn into *de intus et extra*, upon one's compliance to the formal terms of residence set for the latter (after 15 years in the 15th c.).

11. For an example of the lords' requests of *de intus* right only, see AAV 2: 9, p. 68, nos. 2279-2280 (September 30, 1418), (*Magnificus Sauasto cratora dominus Argirocastri partium Albanie libenti-*

Another term that prompted the prospects of Balkan elite in Venice were their aggregations to the Venetian nobility. These aggregations were not issued to all lords, but only to their highest circles, the dynasts and powerful territorial magnates who neighbored the Republic's maritime domain in the Eastern Adriatic.¹² These lords were of various ethnic backgrounds—mostly Slavs, but also Wallachs, Albanians, Italians ('Latins') and Greeks—and of diverse political ambitions, yet their aggregations to the Venetian nobility had similar high ceremonial formulary,¹³ and were all equally confirmed by the Venetian imperial-style golden pendent seal (*bullae aureae pendens*). Diplomatic preparations were also highly elaborate, involving the participation of skilled negotiators (many of these were genuine Venetian citizens)—professionals engaged to work in lords' interest.¹⁴

us vellet admitti in Ciuem nostrorum Venetiarum cum suis filiis et heredibus... civis noster Venetiarum deintus); similarly for Giurasin and Coychin Crnojević of Zeta, AAV 3: 18, p. 226, no. 5003 (July 8?, 1444). Apart from confining their business activities only to Venice, the *de intus right* also limited the new Venetian citizens in operating commercial activities at the *fondaco theotonicum* (*Cum conditione quod in fontico teothonicorum seu cum teothonicis mercari non possit*), which, given the reputation of the place and its vicinity to Rialto, remained reserved exclusively for the commerce of citizens who had 'genuine' Venetian-born ancestry.

12. At the time, this area was commonly called *Schiavonia*, see: Momčilo SPREMIĆ, *Srbija i Venecija VI-XVI vek* (Serbia and Venice 6th-16th c.), Belgrade, Službeni glasnik, 2014, p. 160. The local dynasties (the Bosnian Kotromanić, the Serbian Nemanjić, Lazarević and Branković families), their feudal magnates who controlled the interior parts of the Balkan Peninsula (the Hrvatić, Hranić-Kosača, Pavlović, Branković, etc.) and the semi-independent lords of the Dalmatian and Albanian hinterland (the Šubić clan, Carlo and Nichetas Thopia, Coja Zaccharia, the Balšić and Crnojević families of Lower and Upper Zeta, etc.), were usually seen as factors of regional instability because they skilfully used the lack of strong central power in the region to prompt their own independence and expand their domains on behalf of Venice and other neighbors. From the aspect of the political practice of the time, the Balkan lords and dynastes adopted various models of rulership, largely balancing between the 'western' feudal and Byzantine imperial traditions, but also retaining some tools of the earlier kindred organization.

13. An example of a formulary in which the Venetians indicated their proximity to a grantee with the words such as *carrissimus et intimus amicus nostri dominie*, can be seen in the aggregation of Bosnian Grand Duke Sandalj Hranić, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijjski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 182-183 (July 22, 1396), or a formula *habere et tenere pro bono filio et amico nostro carissimo* with which Venetians mentioned the citizenship and nobility of Serbian magnate Vuk Branković, AAV, 2: 6, p. 73-76, no. 1582 (August 8, 1410). Similar hints can be found in these grant's justifications, for instance: *ad nostre magnitudinis excellentiam habere promptis affectibus se ostendunt, qui in agendis nos ducatum nostrum et singularem personam Venetas tangentibus, devotos et promptos se incensanter preberunt laudabiliter atque prebent*.

14. Generally on these procedures of granting: James GRUBB, «Elite Citizens», p. 334-345. Interestingly, the justifications of these grants do not mention the actual marriage connections which some of these lords had already established within the Venetian society.

The aggregations to the Venetian nobility particularly praised the lords whose political might and wider social influence could be of direct importance to Venice in stabilizing its maritime domain in the Eastern Adriatic. But they eventually challenged and disbalanced their domestic hierarchies because through these grants, the magnates were put at the same level of proximity to the Venetian authorities as were their local suzerains.¹⁵ To the magnates, this was also an exceptional possibility to additionally validate their aristocratic status by referring to the 'antiquity' of their Venetian nobility, and claiming the rights, freedoms, honours and immunities every legitimately born Venetian noble would have, thus reinforcing the autonomies of their feudal domains (AAV 1: 1, p. 108, no. 130 [June 12, 1340]: *omnibus libertatibus beneficiis honoribus et immunitatibus, quibus Alij nobiles Ciues venetiarum, gaudent et perfrui dinoscuntur... in venetiis et extra vbique, plenissimo gaudeant et vtantur*). Even more important that this was the fact that the status of the Venetian nobility allowed them an opportunity to actively participate in the highest instances of the Republic's power, the Major Council. At first sight a natural sign of the Republic's open reception, this cir-

These links existed since the very early relations between the Balkan elite and Venice—in Serbia, for instance, starting with the marriage of Serbian King Stefan Nemanjić (King 1217-1228) with Anna, daughter of Doge Enrico Dandolo (Doge 1192-1205), or as the marriages of the Kosača (to the Quirini family) and the Crnojević (George with Elizabeth Mocenigo)—, yet, these links were not mentioned in the 14th and 15th c. concessions as the justifications of the grantees' citizenship or nobility conference. Despite the elevated diplomatic protocol that usually followed the use of the Venetian *bullae aureae pendens*, in some situations, these concessions could be conferred also by an ordinary diplomatic communication, as can be seen in the case of Grand Duke of Bosnia, Sandalj Hranić, AAV 2: 6, p. 104-107, no. 1627 (January 10, 1411). Nobility aggregations to the Venetian Major Council were usually issued after a concession of a citizenship, for some examples see Listine, vol. 4, MSHSM vol. 4, p. 378; Listine vol. VI, MSHSM, vol. IX, p. 127-128. Likewise, the Venetian granting of a citizenship did not necessarily have to lead to the aggregation to its nobility. Among such cases we find the citizenship grants to Serbian lords Vuk Branković (b. 1345—d. 1397) and Vuk Lazarević (b. 1380—d. 1410), who, despite the Republic's warmest affectionate vocabulary were never aggregated to the Venetian nobility, seemingly due to the problematic nature of their power (alleged usurpation of Serbia's central leadership), see Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijjski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 146-148 (April 9, 1394) (and even despite the fact that here Vuk Branković was addressed as *dominus Rassie, Sclavonie, etc.*), and p. 310-311 (August 10, 1410), (for Vuk Lazarević).

15. An example of this disbalance in the relations between the local ruler and his vassal after both of them formally became citizens of Venice, can be found in the aggregation to the Venetian nobility issued to the Bosnian King Tomaš (1444-1461) and Johannes, the son of the local magnate Radoslav Pavlović (his was one of three key magnate families in Bosnia in the first half of the 15th c., and Radoslav acted as an almost independent ruler) in AAV 3: 18, p. 135, no. 4926 (March 11?, 1444).



FIGURE 1. Hinterland of the Venetian Dalmatia and Albania: Zeta under the Balšić (end of the 14th c.), by Bratislav (Cartography: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/THE_STATE_OF_BALSIC.png. This map is in common domain and copyright free).

cumstance, however, had no special effect, since the lords rarely took part in this body's sessions, and the Major Council was losing its factual power to other instances of the Republic, while its own nobles—particularly those who had failed to establish lucrative commercial businesses in the East—were gradually being excluded from it.¹⁶

Theoretically, every noble Venetian citizen had the right to enjoy a residence in the metropole's noble quarters (*domus*, in Venice meaning palace). However, few Balkan lords invested with the Venetian citizenship had this privilege, and among them we find just several most prominent figures, such as the Grand Duke of Bosnia Sandalj Hranić (c. 1370-1435) or Albanian magnate George Castrioti Skanderbeg (1405-1468).¹⁷ This relative lack of the lords' residences in

16. James GRUBB, «Elite Citizens», p. 341; Anna BELAVTIS, «Per cittadini metterete'... La stratificazione della società Veneziana Cinquentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale», p. 359-383; Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510*, 1997, p. 264.

17. Grand Duke of Bosnia, Sandalj Hranić, acquired a house worth 2000 ducats in Venice in 1429, for which the Venetians contributed with 2/3 of its value. Before that, the Venetians had also provided Sandalj with a house in Kotor's quarter of St. Trinity (1423). Other than these, Sandalj also possessed a palace in the independent city of Ragusa (since 1409), and also in Zadar (since 1406), which he had acquired on his own before the Venetian establishment in this city. Interestingly, both of Sandalj's houses in Kotor and in Venice, had been owned prior to his acquisition by one same Venetian noble, *Nicola Mauroceno*, son of late Gasparis, AAV 2: 13, p. 153-154, no. 3231 (June 14 1429). After his death in 1435, the house was inherited, just like his other property, by his

Venice was, only in part, due to the fact that the majority of the lords continued to live in their original domains after the conference of their citizenships (and until the final Ottoman attacks in the second half of the 15th c.), while its other reason was the limitation of the Venetian real estate market, conditioned at the time by a relative rarity and high prices of the noble houses.¹⁸ Due to this, the lords' houses that were indeed recorded in Venice were not even necessarily located in the core noble areas, but rather in the city zones closer to the spaces inhabited by the commoner émigrés from the East, for instance, the parish quarters of *St. Iustina* and *St. Pantaleone*.¹⁹

nephew, Stephen Vukčić Kosača (1435-1466) (entitled from 1448 as the *Herzeg of St. Sabbas*). The house, although originally donated irrevocably was later confiscated due to Kosača's alleged treason towards the Venetian Republic (that is, during his open war with them 1451-1454). Following the peace and Kosača's return to the favor of the *Serenissima*, he, however, never succeeded in returning this house into the family's possessions. The Venetian house of George Castrioti Scanderbeg was located in the centre of Venice's parish quarter of *St. Pantaleone*, close to the Campo Frari (*palazzo Molin*), where some members of the Albanian emigration in Venice were recorded to have resided, see Lucia NADIN, *Shqiptarët në Venedik: mërgim e integrim (1479-1552)* (Albanians in Venice: exile and integration, 1479-1552), translated into Albanian by Pellumb Xhufi, Tirana, Shtëpia Botuese 55, 2008, map 2. Indications that Assanes Zaccharia, Latin lord of western Greece also for searched for a house in Venice can be found in AAV 3: 25, p. 131, no. 7386 (June 22, 1463), while even the notorious Venetian rival in Lower Zeta, Balša III Balšić (b. 1387-d. 1421) and his mother Helen Lazarević had an offer to settle in Venice in June 1406, see Momčilo SPREMIĆ, *Srbija i Venecija VI-XVI vek* (Serbia and Venice 6th-16th c.), 2014, p. 70. George Crnojević (r. 1490- d. 1496) also resided in Venice during his 'exile' from Zeta following the initial stages of the Ottoman conquest of his domain (1496), but his residence there was marked by considerable poverty and the lack of the authorities' attention, being the consequence of his hostilities with the Republic prior to his arrival to Venice.

18. An interesting reflection of this situation was brought up in the correspondence of the Bosnian King Tomaš whom to the Venetians declined the funds necessary for acquiring a house in Venice for his wife and children, shortly before his death and under an imminent threat to his Kingdom from the Ottomans, AAV 3: 24, p. 240, no. 6989 (November 10, 1460). Objecting to this Venetian refusal, the King evoked their previous favour to Sandalj Hranić, whose house in Venice was allegedly furnished by the Venetians; the Venetians justified their rejection with high property prices. Documents from AAV 3: 22, p. 139-141, no. 6079 (November 5, 1453) and AAV 3: 24, p. 328, no. 7092 (December 1, 1461), show, however, that the Venetians indeed tried to conceal the fact that they had paid 2/3 of Sandalj's house, and that this was possibly due to some diplomatic favor they had owed to Sandalj.

19. For a more general information about the zones of settlement and patterns of foreigners' influence in the urban milieus of Venice, see: Reinhold C. MUELLER, «Veneti facti privilegio: stranieri naturalizzati a Venezia tra XIV e XVI secolo», p. 41-51. Esad KURTOVIĆ, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača* (The Grand Duke of Bosnia Sandalj Hranić), Sarajevo, Institut za istoriju, 2009, p. 294, n. 104, acknowledges the importance of the very fact that Sandalj Hranić had a house in Venice, failing to note the house's lower importance in the quarter's social context. For the significance of some Venetian parish quarters, see: Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le mino-*



FIGURE 2. Hinterland of the Venetian Dalmatia and Albania. Bosnian territorial rulers around 1412, by Panonian (Cartography: https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historija_Bosne_i_Hercegovine#/media/File:Bosnia_around_1412-sh.png). This map is in common domain and copyright free.

The initial attachments of the lower nobility to Venice went somewhat differently. Their citizenship grants had less elaborated formulary and more stressed formula expressions of the lords' humility and subjection to the Doge,²⁰ and the authentication of their grants was made with a less prominent silver pendent seal (*bullā Argentea pendens*)²¹ —or, depending on the lords' rank,

ranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510, 1997, p. 219. For a thorough observation of the location of local urban patriciate's houses towards the town' power zones in Dalmatia under the Venetian rule, see: Irena BENYOVSKY, «The Venetian Impact on Urban Change in Dalmatian Towns in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century», *Acta Historiae* (Koper), vol. 22, num. 3 (2014), p. 1-44.

20. Instead of the expressions typical for high honorary grants such as *humili deuotione et supplicatione*, in these documents one finds a formula common for proper vassalage (*se commendare*). For some other expressions of the lords' devotion, see AAV 2: 6, p. 76-77, no. 1583 (August 10, 1410): *Attendentes igitur multiplicis fidei puritatem et deuotionis plenitudinem; deuotos filios et carissimos seruitores*. AAV 2: 14, p. 131-132, no. 3442 (February 19, 1431): *quanto ducatu nostro deuotiores fide et operibus se ostendunt*.

21. For the examples of Venetian citizenship grants being authenticated with a *bullā Argentea pendens*, see a document to Lecha Zaccharia, the lord of Danjē, AAV 2: 17, p. 191-192, no. 4021 (April 15, 1442); or to George and Balša Balšić, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijiski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 440 (July 3, 1362). Their heirs, George II and Stracimir Balšić soon progressed, so their grants were reconfirmed and authenticated with a golden seal, see *Srbski Istorijiski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva...* (May 11, 1395), p. 168-171. AAV 2: 13, p. 57-58, no. 3138 (February 8, 1427) for *de iure* conditions with AAV 2: 17, p. 53, no. 2828 (December 13?, 1423), and AAV 2: 17, p. 191, no. 4021 (February 17, 1442).

even the basic one made of lead (*bullā plumbea*) that was typical for the commoner citizenships granting *de intus et extra* right.²² Yet, these grants reflect more tangible contractual involvement to the Republic's public structures, most commonly its military service, where the lords were expected to contribute individually, or together with their own subjects to the safeguarding of the Venetian domain in the Eastern Adriatic. Skilled in arms and well-conversant with the regional relations, particularly the advancing Ottomans and the political positions of their neighbours, these lords were active and paid by Venice just as were other (commoner) mercenaries, in solid money or extraordinary gifts.²³ De-

22. Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510*, 1997, p. 262. The Venetian sealing of their grants to Vuk Branković and Vuk Lazarević with the silver seal seems to confirm the Venetian attention to the lords' high ranking but also the legitimacy of their positions, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijiski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 146-148 (April 9, 1394), and p. 310-311 (August 10, 1410). For sealing the commoners' citizenship grants with *de intus et extra* with a lead seal (*sub bullā plumbea*), see examples in AAV 2: 6, p. 101-102, no. 1621 (December 5, 1410); AAV 2: 13, p. 20-21, no. 3111. On the symbolic importance of the Venetian lead seal that, despite its minor value in comparison to other seals, still hinted the Republic's independence from the Holy Roman Emperors and the Pope: Edward Wallace Jr MUIR, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 115.

23. A prominent example of this relation would be Ivan Crnojević, who participated in the Veneto-Turkish war 1463-1479, and was awarded for his service with a salary of 1200 ducats and the Venetian citizenship. More on him, in: Konstantin

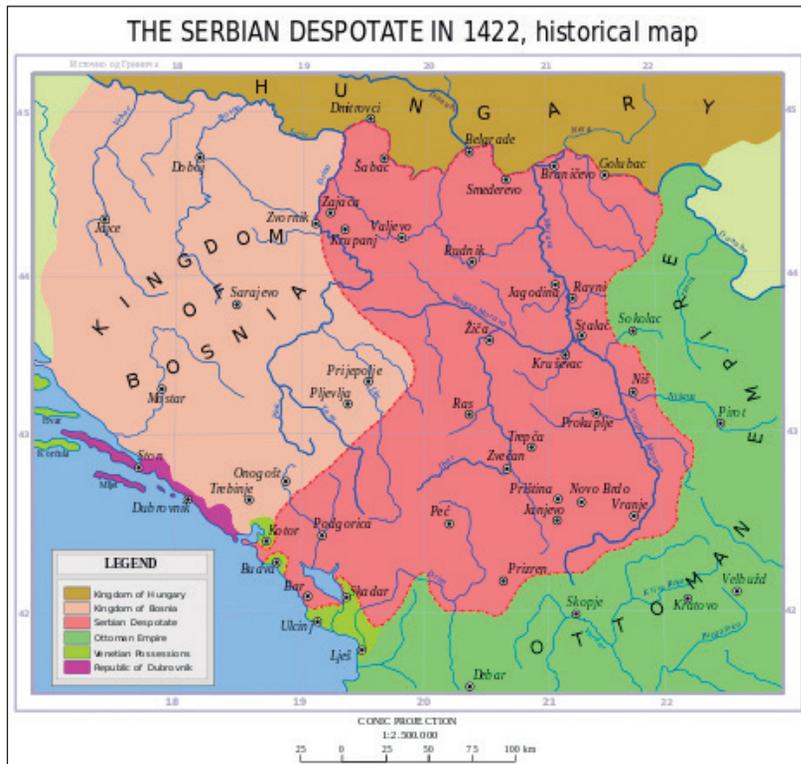


FIGURE 3. Hinterland of the Venetian Dalmatia and Albania. The Serbian Despotate in 1422 (Cartography: http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Serbian_Despotate. This map is in common domain and copyright free).

pending on the level of their military capacity, as well as on their potential/real ambitions, the *Serenissima* could 'tune' the terms of these relations, by requesting occasionally return favours that significantly decreased the lords' political independence. These were the cases when the *Serenissima* opted for the subjections of the lords' territories to its direct administration,²⁴ or a break-up of the lords' individual alliances that appeared harmful for the Republic.²⁵

From the 1420s, when the mutual dissensions of the local lords intensified, just as did the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans (1421-1499), Venetian citizenship grants were outnumbered by one other kind of status concession. These grants were considered privileges by special grace (*privilegium gratia speciali*), with which the Balkan lords could regulate not just their citizenship in the Republic, but also a variety of other practical daily relations. Simpler in their formulation

and formal authentication, these grants frequently arranged the lords' residence in the Venetian Adriatic in case of a final Ottoman attack. The condition of their relation with the Republic stipulated by these acts was usually expressed with a formula *sub nostra umbra, protectione et fauore*, while other arrangements (*amicitia, filia* and *tutella*) indicated more general assurances of the *Serenissima's* protection.²⁶

26. In the general context of the medieval Europe, the term *umbra* seems to have been in use as a synonym for the political

JIREČEK, *Istorija Srba* (History of Serbs), vol. 1, trans. German Jovan Radonić, Belgrade, Naučna knjiga, 1988, p. 401.

24. AAV 3: 24, p. 288-283, no. 7043 (June 23, 1461), shows how Thomas Komnenos, the eldest son of Albanian lord Areniti Komnenos, was placed under the legal tutorship of the Venetian Rector in Albania following the death of his father, although his mother was about to take the regency over their domain. Although his father was widely honored in Venice and throughout the region, and considered as one of the most reputable Albanian lords at the time, Thomas' grant was sealed with a silver seal.

25. AAV, p. 110-112, no. 1632 (January 27, 1411), by which Assanes Zaccharia had to resign the *castro Zoncli, casali Manticori and casale grisi*. A break up of alliances was asked by the Venetians from Balša III Balšić and his mother Helen Lazarević, AAV 2: 5, p. 73-74, no. 1297 (October 25, 1407).



FIGURE 4. Hinterland of the Venetian Albania (15th c.), by Balkanians' word (Cartography: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_history_of_Albania_in_the_Middle_Ages#/media/File:Principality_of_Dukagjini,_Kastrioti_and_Princesdom_of_Albania_in_the_15th_century. This map is in common domain and copyright free).



FIGURA 5. Albania Veneta in 1448, by Bratislav Taboš [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albania_Veneta#/media/File:Venetian_seside_properties_in_Montenegro_1448.png]. This map is in common domain and copyright free.

An interesting type of special grace suggesting the initial stages of the lord's factual settlement and integration to the Venetian social structures was the *salvus*

protection since the time of the conflict between Emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa (HRE 1155-1190) and Pope Alexander III (1159-1181), alluding to the security of the imperial baldachine/protection. For similar examples of this term's use, see AAV 2: 16, p. 16-17, no. 3826 (March 28, 1438). As from AAV 2: 6, p. 208-210, no. 1730 (April 28, 1412), it is clear that the grantee's position of *filius* and *amicus* was equalled to *subditus nostri dominie*. Also, see AAV 3: 19, p. 199-201, no. 5244 (July 20, 1446), when *Damianus Dusmanij*, the lord of Polati in Albania and his brothers *Geramino* and *Nenad*, all relatives of Albanian lord Lecha Duchaghini (b. 1410-d. 1481), offered themselves and their landed possessions at the disposition to the Venetian Rectors of Scutari, having this act validated with the Venetian silver seal. Different was the concession granted as *umbra* to *Nikolaus Niche* and *Ducha Mogulsi*, AAV 3: 19, p. 181-183, no. 5231 (July 11, 1446), being the confirmation of the original concession dated September 9, 1439 and August 17, 1444), which was authenticated by a common impressum (*sigili nostri consueta Sancti Marci euangeliste impressione fecimus muniri*), and was not confirmed at the Major Council as would be usual, but at the Council Rogatorum. The same council also ratified a similar concession of *umbra* mentioned in AAV 3: vol. 20, p. 194-197, no. 5554 (May 12, 1450), as required by *Boglia*, the daughter of Coya Zaccharia, late master of Danjë in Albania. Similar involvement of the Venetian Council Rogatorum can be found, then, in the grants of *umbra* to Giurasin Coychin and Stefanica Crnojević of Zeta, AAV 3: 18, p. 226, no. 5003 (July 8, 1444). This transfer of competence from the Major Council to the Council Rogatorum seems to have been an outcome of the Venetian diplomatic activities which were operated by the *Rogati*, possibly serving as a background for these particular concessions.

conductus.²⁷ Originally a general concession of safe passage that meant free and uninterrupted travel by sea or land, and such most usually used to facilitate travel of distinguished individuals, diplomatic missions, or traders,²⁸ in Venice of the second half of the 15th century, this grant also implied a more substantial asylum on the Venetian soil and, consequently, a *se ipso* licence to settle there. The documents from the time after the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia (June 1463), Herzegovina (1472), Albania (1479) and Zeta (1499) indicate the rise of requests for this type of grant, as the higher elite of the hinterland attempted to transfer to safety not just themselves and their closest families with their mobile property, but also other structures of their feudal domains, including their more remote kinship, vassals, and even non-noble dependents (*villici*).²⁹ The grant of *salvus conductus* still implied, of course, the original right to move across the entire territory controlled by the *Serenissima*, yet the majority of the lords from the Balkans seem to have preferred to use it for their settlement in the

27. Brunhilde IMHAUS, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300-1510*, 1997, p. 248-250.

28. Donald E. QUELLER, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, Geneve, Droz, 1966, p. 56.

29. AAV 2: 7, p. 202-205 no. 1965 (May 31, 1415), illustrates how this was done also for larger groups of grantees, for instance, with aristocratic kindreds receiving a common status grant (*Octi, tusi, et bitidossi nobiles partium Albaniae fideles nostri*); p. 209, no. 1973 (July 9, 1415), for an individual, *Peter Spano*.



FIGURE 6. Venetian territories in Dalmatia in 1560. Map from *Historical Atlas* by William R. Shepherd (1923) (Cartography: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Dalmatia#/media/File:Dalmazia1560.png. This map is in common domain and copyright free).

Venetian dominium in the East Adriatic (urban centres of Dalmatia or Albania —towns such as Zadar, Šibenik, Split, Trogir, Kotor, Budva, Bar, Shkodër, or Durrës—, thus opting to stay as close as possible to their original domains, where they counted to return after the united Christianity repels the Ottomans from there.³⁰ In terms of their diplomatic structure, the *salvus conductus* grants were quite informal, and each lord could negotiate them individually, directly with the Venetian local officers operating in the East Adriatic. This, on the one hand, made the granting procedures more flexible and more prompt than any other concession of the time, but it also yielded frequent abuses, which, then, could lead to the grants' revisions and, in some cases, even their revocations.³¹ Unlike these magnates, the lesser circles of the Balkan elite preferred to stay in the town's rural *pertinentiae* or even reside on the nearby islands, where they had already received infeudated lands from the Republic for their service and loyalty in arms.³²

30. For some examples of *salvus conductus* in their original meaning, see a Venetian communication with Serbian ruler Stephen Dušan (King 1333-1346; 'Emperor of Serbs and Greeks' 1346-1355), AAV 1: 1, p. 105-108, no. 129 (1340, June 1-8), or their assurances for a safe passage to the envoy of Stefanica Jurašević, AAV 2: 17, p. 246, no. 4077 (September 17, 1442).

31. AAV 2: 17, p. 271-272, no. 4088 (October 8, 1442), attesting to an illegal use of concessions granted by *salvus conductus*; AAV, p. 253, no. 5908 (November 17, 1452), requires a revocation of one such grant because the grantee used it to cover his smuggling activities. The flexibility of the terms regulating the *salvus conductus* grant is found in AAV 2: 14, p. 88, no. 3382 (July 11, 1430), instructing the Venetian official of Lissus in Albania to do it 'in that manner and that time' that he would find appropriate.

32. AAV 3: 24, p. 222-335, no. 7093 (December 1, 1461), Herzeg Stefan Kosača was offered to settle with his family on the



FIGURE 7. Albania Veneta, by Arnold Platon (Cartography: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venetian_Albania#/media/File:Venezia_Montenegro.svg. This map is in common domain and copyright free).

In either case, the lords' settlement in the Venetian Adriatic was substantially aided by the Venetian authorities of the region, which might lead again to a conclusion that the lords' integration there was prompt and full. Indeed, for the most prominent lords of the *dominium's* hinterland, the Venetian officials bought, restored and maintained residential houses ('palaces') in the coastal towns, usually on the expense of the local treasuries.³³ Unlike in Venice, these houses were seen as fully

island of *Liesne* (today's Hvar); his son Vlatko later died on the island of Rab (1489). The same island had been previously offered also to Albanian lord Lecha Duchaghini, AAV 3: 24, p. 259, no. 7008 (February 26, 1461), despite the fact that on the Venetian mainland he had had the feudal control over some villages, AAV 3: 24, p. 15-17, no. 6761 (February 19, 1459). In addition to the islands, the larger centres of the Venetian Dalmatia (towns Split, Šibenik, Skradin) already had a tradition of open reception of foreigners (seen in more flexible terms for the possession of *domus*, and the perpetual nature of residence granted to foreigners by these towns' independent statutes) even before the Venetian second expansion in the region (1392-1420). Ragusa (Dubrovnik) also had an elaborate discourse of freedom and asylum granting. For particular examples, see: Jovanka MIJUŠKOVIC, «Dodeljivanje dubrovačkog građanstva u srednjem veku (Granting the citizenship of Ragusa in the Middle Ages)», *Glas SANU* (Belgrade), vol. 246 (1961), p. 89-130; Antun CVITANC, «Pravni položaj stranaca u srednjovekovnoj korčulanskoj komuni (Legal status of foreigners in medieval commune of Korčula)», *Zbornik Pravnog Fakulteta u Zagrebu* (Zagreb), vol. 36, num. 5-6 (1986), p. 591-605.

33. Usually, this was expressed with the phrase *cum supportatione, factionum et onerum nostri comunis in ciuitate nostra* [...]. An

reflecting the lords' high social status, and were located in elite town zones, close to the communes' central squares where the Venetian administration operated and symbols of the *Signoria's* power were exhibited.³⁴

Some of these houses were donated to the lords ir-

example in AAV 3: 22, p. 328, no. 7092 (December 1, 1461). For the Crnojević of Upper Zeta who had a palace in Kotor's central area, and even appeared dressed in the Venetian style (Ivan Crnojević in the 1470s), see: Risto KOVJANIĆ, *Pomeni crnogorskih plemena u kotorskim spomenicima* (The mentions of Montenegrin clans in the monuments of Kotor), vol. II, Titograd, Istorijski institut SR Crne Gore, 1974, p. 144. While looking for a house intended to the Bosnian King Tomaš in Zadar, the authorities realized that no adequate house existed there to fit the King's status, to later coordinate a refurbishment of one dwelling, promising this as a temporary solution till some better solution is found; the King's wish to settle in Venice, however, was never accomplished. More on the Venetian settlement policies, see: Gaetano COZZI, «La politica del diritto nella Repubblica di Venezia», in Gaetano COZZI (ed.), *Stato società e giustizia nella Repubblica veneta (sec. XV-XVIII)*, vol. II, Rome, Jouvence, 1985, p. 35-68; Gherardo ORTALLI, «Entrar nel Dominio: le dedizioni delle città alla Repubblica Serenissima», in Gherardo ORTALLI, Giorgio BORELLI and Giorgio ZORDAN (ed.), *Società, economia, istituzioni. Elementi per la conoscenza della Repubblica Veneta*, Verona, Cierre Edizioni, 2002, p. 49-62; Benjamin ARBEL, «Venice's Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period», in Eric DURSTELER (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 125-253.

34. For some examples of their settlement in towns' urban zones, see above n. 5 the case of Vojislava Thopia, the younger daughter of Charles Thopia, whom for the Venetian authorities of Durrës bought a house from their funds; this grant was conditional, meaning that it had to be returned to the local authorities after her death, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 192, (November 27, 1398). The price of this house was not mentioned, but the officers hinted that it had to reflect Vojislava's nobility, even though the grant itself was literally forced by Vojislava's frequent laments. See the situation with her elder sister Helen, who, when she intended to settle in Durrës, had to furnish her residence with her own funds, Janko ŠAFARIK (ed.), *Srbski Istorijski Spomenici Mletačkoga Arhiva* (=Monumenta Serbica). *Glasnik društva srbske slovesnosti knj. XII*, 1860, p. 197-201, (August 8, 1401). Following Vojislava's death, the Serbian Branković family, whom with she was closely related, also required a house in Durrës, as from Momčilo SPREMIĆ, *Srbija i Venecija VI-XVI vek* (Serbia and Venice 6th-16th c.), 2014, p. 69, possibly the same one that had been used by Vojislava. Similar examples can be found in AAV 3: 24, p. 328, no. 7092 (December 1, 1461). See *salvus conductus* to Francesca Tocco, Latin mistress of the Ionian islands, who was granted, in the time of the internal conflict in her domain, a safe refuge to any Venetian place of her choice, AAV 2: 14, p. 85-88, no. 3377 (July 6, 1430): *ubi melius sibi uidebitur salua et securo cum suis*; no. 3378 (July 6 1430). The local citizenships seem to have been confirmed at that time also by the authorities in the towns appointed from the metropole. For an example, see the case of a *Methical Methews* of Kotor who was granted the citizenship of Bari by Venetian officer Paolo Contareno, AAV 2: 16, p. 77-78, no. 3893 (June 26, 1439); see an *instrumentum ciuilitatis* in AAV 2: 16, no. 3893 (July 5, 1438), 77-78, with which Paul Contareno similarly made a Johannes of late Laurentius from Bar (Antibaro) the citizen of Kotor. For an example of lords residing in rural areas, see a concession to *Nicolaus Nicha et ducha Mogulsi*, AAV 3: 19, p. 181-184, no. 5231 (July 11, 1446), confirming to them an earlier concession

revocably and *in perpetuo*, while some were given upon a condition that they had to be returned to the authorities after a grantee's death. The ratio for such an uneven house granting seems to have been largely based upon the *Serenissima's* assessment of the grantees' economic might, their political and diplomatic usefulness in protecting the domain from the hinterland, or the level of their integration in the Venetian military structures.

Until the very end of the Balkan lordships and their conquest by the Ottomans (the Crnojević domain in Upper Zeta fell by 1499, being the last Christian territory in the medieval Balkans), the urban residences of many lords, however, were not used as their regular dwellings. The lords preferred to visit them on a temporary basis, or send there occasionally their families, envoys and clientele involved in diplomatic missions, or a more regular business exchange they established with the towns.³⁵ In addition, the lords' closer participation in the local affairs was to a large extent limited by the old statutory regulations and social customs that had been set in towns (particularly the bigger centers in the Venetian mainland) before the establishment of the Venetian power over the region. Upon the Venetian 'second' establishment there (1392-1420), these local structures were not largely contested by the authorities in Venice, if they did not challenge the main principles of the *Signoria's* central administration.³⁶ However, tensions between the lords and the local urban structures —themselves permanently on the verge of open internal conflicts— rose particularly high in situations when Venice attempted to charge the local communal resources for the lords' housing. The local urban patricians saw this as a financial exploitation from the metropole, but also the *Signoria's* attack on their 'ancient' customs and local autonomies, especially in situations when the houses in question were to be donated to the lords whom with the townsmen had already had a history of problematic

of September 9, 1439 and August 17, 1444, AAV3: 19, p. 181-183; AAV 2: 6, p. 76-77, no. 1583 (August 10, 1410); AAV 2: 14, p. 131-132, no. 3442 (February 19, 1431) on a *Nicola* of the Ducaghin clan, who was the *proniarius* of villages *Cachorich* and *baladrenij* and in possession of a *monaneam Medoie*.

35. An example of a house that belonged to Joannes Castrioti in Ulcinj, where he came occasionally for business and which he always kept fully supplied with food, to secure his and his family's prompt accommodation in case of their soon escape from the Ottomans, AAV 2: 6, p. 4-6, no. 1505 (January 11, 1410).

36. For the provisions of the local statutes about granting the immovable property to foreigners according to the communes' independent statutes (Šibenik, Mljet and Lastovo), see: Ante BIRIN, «Pravni položaj stranaca u statutima dalmatinskih komuna», *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* (Zagreb), vol. 20 (2003), p. 80-81. For the Venetian administration and its relations with the local urban structures of the communes in Dalmatia: Marko ŠUNJIĆ, *Venecija i Dalmacija u XV stoljeću* (Venice and Dalmatia in the 15th c.), 1967, p. 98-125, 167-184, 187-202.

relations.³⁷ To evade such obligations, the representatives of the local power sometimes delayed, or even failed to provide the required funds, which, subsequently, provoked the central authorities in Venice to threaten with concrete sanctions.³⁸ Another challenge to the integration of the Balkan lords into the local urban social milieu of the Venetian Eastern Adriatic towns came directly from Venice, where their status grants were negotiated and approved. The *Serenissima* processed these grants based upon its own, central perception of the lords' political usefulness, so the lords entered a direct subjection to the central authorities in the capital bypassing the instances of the local power within the communes, thus taking a rare opportunity to keep and operate their own parallel power structures from the initial stages of their settlement.³⁹

37. For instance, the tensions and open conflicts which the town of Kotor had with Sandalj Hranić in the second decade of the 15th c. (Esad KURTOVIĆ, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača* (The Grand Duke of Bosnia Sandalj Hranić), 2009, p. 246-249.

38. E.g. the comes of Split was warned to pay a fine in case he would fail to pay the indemnities to Kosača on time (October 15, 1457), Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senatus Mar, VI, 38, as from Marko ŠUNJIĆ, *Venecija i Dalmacija u XV stoljeću* (Venice and Dalmatia in the 15th c.), 1967, p. 163. A reflection on the local patriciate's attitude towards Venice in this period, Irena BENOVSKY, «The Venetian Impact on Urban Change in Dalmatian Towns in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century», p. 5-6. Ante BIRIN, «Pravni položaj stranaca u statutima dalmatinskih komuna», p. 86-87, about the Venetian politics limiting the decisions of the local communes in Dalmatia, qualifying it as cautious, equally as the communes' restrictive steps towards the Slavic émigrés from the hinterland.

39. An example of old structures of authority operating among entire kindreds (the Paštovići clan) in AAV 2: 11, p. 220-222, no. 2710 (April 4, 1423), authenticated by the silver seal. This does not pertain to the lords' private links, which, in some cases were multiple and extended. The Crnojević of Upper Zeta, for instance, were connected in marriage with three most influential noble families of Kotor (families Buća, Drago and Bizanti), through which they ensured substantial networks in this town even until the 16th century.

To sum up, there is no doubt that the Venetian honorary grants to the lords of the medieval Balkans were indeed acts of ceremonial and honorific nature. Yet these connections also had a set of structured conditions that effectively facilitated the lords' formal inclusion in the highest instances of the Republic's power, and its system of protection, serving, at the same time, as the ground for the *Serenissima's* ambitions to better control their actions and domains. How successful were these processes in prompting the lords' true accommodation and full integration to Venice or its urban environments of the Eastern Adriatic? Certainly not much in the outset. The lower circles of the Balkan elite, although well-received in the Venetian military, were fixed to the Republic's frontier periphery in the Eastern Adriatic and their own feudal structures still operating in the town's rural environments; the higher magnates and rulers, although formally included in the Venetian nobility, relatively well-presented in the central urban zones of the Venetian Eastern Adriatic domain, and generally well-supported by the Venetian officials, were still not largely welcomed by the local patriciate, which saw them as a threat to their own status and resources. Apart from representing an additional point for new social conflicts *intra muros*, this lack of full integrative interactions further encouraged the lords to preserve their old bonds while gradually adopting themselves to the urban life-style. And even though many of them had already been closely connected to the local urban patriciate and upper commoner trading circles by the ties of marriage, clientship and commerce, it took an entire next generation of their offspring to fully enjoy the status initially granted to their ancestors by the Venetian honorific citizenships, and, resulting from it, all the benefits of a perpetual life under the shade, favour and protection of the Republic of Saint Mark.