Politics and Culture in Europe, 1650–1750

Focusing on the years between the end of the Thirty Years' War and the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, this series seeks to broaden scholarly knowledge of this crucial period that witnessed the solidification of Europe into centralized nation states and created a recognizably modern political map. Bridging the gap between the early modern period of the Reformation and the eighteenth century of colonial expansion and industrial revolution, these years provide a fascinating era of study in which nationalism, political dogma, economic advantage, scientific development, cultural and artistic interests and strategic concerns began to compete with religion as the driving force of European relations and national foreign policies.

The period under investigation, the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, corresponds with the decline of Spanish power and the rise of French hegemony that was only to be finally broken following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. This shifting political power base presented opportunities and dangers for many countries, resulting in numerous alliances between formerly hostile nations attempting to consolidate or increase their international influence, or restrain that of a rival. These contests of power were closely bound up with political, cultural and economic issues: particularly the strains of state building, trade competition, religious tension and toleration, accommodating flows of migrants and refugees, the birth pangs of rival absolutist and representative systems of government, radical structures of credit, and new ways in which wider publics interacted with authority.

Despite this being a formative period in the formation of the European landscape, there has been relatively little research on it compared to the earlier Reformation, and the later revolutionary eras. By providing a forum that encourages scholars to engage with the forces that were shaping the continent - either in a particular country, or taking a trans-national or comparative approach - it is hoped a greater understanding of this pivotal era will be forthcoming.

Ideologies of Western Naval Power, c. 1500–1815
Edited by J.D. Davies, Alan James and Gijs Rommelse

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Politics-and-Culture-in-Europe-1650-1750/book-series/PCE

Ideologies of Western Naval Power, c. 1500–1815

Edited by J.D. Davies, Alan James and Gijs Rommelse

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2020
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

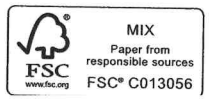
and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Davies, J. D., editor. | James, Alan, 1965– editor. | Rommelse, Gijs, 1977– editor.
Title: Ideologies of Western Naval Power, c. 1500–1815 / edited by J.D. Davies, Alan James, and Gijs Rommelse.
Description: New York : Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020. | Series: Politics and culture in Europe, 1650–1750 | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "This ground-breaking book provides the first study of naval ideology, defined as the mass of cultural ideas and shared perspectives that, for early modern states and belief systems, justified the creation and use of naval forces. Sixteen scholars examine a wide range of themes over a wide time period and broad geographical range, embracing Britain, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Sweden, Russia, Venice and the United States, along with the "extra-national" polities of piracy, neutrality, and international Calvinism. This volume provides important and often provocative new insights into both the growth of western naval power and important elements of political, cultural and religious history."—Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019021697 (print) | LCCN 2019981610 (ebook) | ISBN 9780367321284 | ISBN 9780429316814 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Europe—History, Naval. | Navies—Europe—History. | Sea power—Europe—History. | Naval art and science—Philosophy.
Classification: LCC D215 .I34 2020 (print) | LCC D215 (ebook) | DDC 359/.030940903—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019021697
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019981610

ISBN: 978-0-367-32128-4 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-31681-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC



Printed and bound in Great Britain by

Contents

Figures

1 Groom of the Sea

Venetian Sovereignty Between Power and Myth

Luciano Pezzolo

The spectacle to be seen in Venice in 1617 was magnificent: dozens and dozens of multi-coloured boats of all types, from gondolas to larger vessels, all around the sumptuous *Bucintoro*, the ceremonial barge used by the Doge on public occasions. Every year, on the Thursday of the Ascension, the wedding between Venice and the sea was celebrated in the part of the lagoon between the city and the entrance to the port of San Nicolò. Before the government, the patriarch, patricians, and ambassadors, as well as the people of the city,[1] the Doge poured holy water into the sea and threw the symbolic engagement ring, saying: 'We wed you, our sea, as a symbol of our absolute and everlasting supremacy'. Although to some fussy minds, the event looked 'a long foolish custom',[2] the whole city celebrated the sacred union that always inextricably bound the Most Serene Republic to the source of its fortune. Venice, founded on the water, drew its wealth from the water; its men sailed the seas carrying exotic products to be sold in Europe, and from Europe exported goods to Levantine markets. The Venetians were sailors, mariners, and merchants. The entire population was in close symbiosis with the sea.

Although, during the early seventeenth century, Venice was facing vigorous commercial competition from emerging political and economic powers of Europe (England, the Netherlands, and France), and the calling into question its traditional jurisdictional prerogatives on the Adriatic Sea by the Papacy and the Empire, its citizens continued to feel a strong sense of naval superiority over other powers. This sentiment was based on two pillars: on the one hand, their naval force, which sailed the Mediterranean Sea and imposed the interests of the Most Serene Republic; on the other, the strength of the history, some of it actually myth, that had supported Venetian claims to the detriment of other Adriatic centres. Both pillars had their foundations in the late Middle Ages, when Venice built its maritime and commercial empire, and continued to support the ideological scaffold of sovereignty on the Adriatic well into the early modern age. This essay examines the process of building the myth of Venetian naval sovereignty, which had its roots in the Middle Ages, and the coercive means by which this sovereignty was exercised, albeit

very partially. While the role of the naval force progressively declined *vis-à-vis* the changes occurring in the international political theatre, the idea of naval supremacy persisted, and provides material even to political debates within contemporary Italy.

The Exercise of Hegemony Between Economy and Power

Venetian sovereignty was exercised, as we shall see, by means of a large naval force, which aimed to supervise the commercial traffic on both Adriatic coasts down to Corfu. Venice allowed the coastal towns to trade, but they had to limit themselves to direct, and above all short-range, exchanges. The function of intermediation, and the long-distance trade, was reserved to the Venetians.

Along with commercial concerns, the production of salt was a matter of crucial interest. The control of the sea implied, as the jurist Paolo Campana wrote in the early seventeenth century, a sort of feudal property, in that salt is 'generated in its bottom and fed by seawater'.[3] Because of this principle, Venice felt entitled to prohibit any form of the salt trade that

Figure 1.1 The ceremony of the wedding between Venice and the sea was celebrated every year on Ascension Day. The event, which saw a large participation of people, stressed the close relationship between the city and its fortunes deriving from naval power. *The Bucintoro Festival of Venice*, by Francesco Guardi, eighteenth century.

Source: Google Art Project/Wikimedia Commons.

was not carried in its ships. From the ninth century onwards, numerous Adriatic towns were forced to submit to the power of the Venetian Commune. Comacchio, which was the main production centre for Adriatic salt, was rendered impotent, and as a result, both Chioggia, in the Venetian lagoon, and Cervia, south of the Po delta, developed saltworks. The salt produced by the latter city was gradually controlled by the Venetians, and later, between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, it was replaced by production in Venetian Istria and Dalmatia. When, in 1381, peace was signed in Turin, ending the war between Venice and the allied powers of Genoa, Padua, the Patriarch of Aquileia, and the King of Hungary, the latter gave up the production and trading of salt in exchange for 7,000 ducats, paid annually by Venice. Thus the Commune of St. Mark was fully recognised as an Adriatic power. This meant that markets of the Po Valley, from Pavia to the Friuli, were firmly controlled by Venice. Furthermore, producers and exporters had to pay quite high taxes on salt. Although it is not possible to talk of a Venetian monopoly on the salt industry, it is true, however, that at least until the fifteenth century, the Venetians obtained considerable economic benefits from their ability to control much of the salt production and trade in the northern Adriatic. Following the defeat of 1509 against a powerful coalition (the Pope, the King of France, the Emperor, and Italian states), the area of influence of Venice in the Italian peninsula was considerably reduced, and consequently the Gulf was crossed by trade routes that were no longer controlled only by Venice.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, great cities in central-northern Italy succeeded in exercising extensive powers in their surrounding rural districts (the so-called *contadi*), which were well-organised, compact, and controlled in a way that was unthinkable beyond the Alps. It would be hard to find a European equivalent of an Italian city's *contado*. What we might find is a mosaic of small territories in which a city exercised rights over taxes and justice, and other territories in which it had minor rights exercised in competition with various claimants. The influence of a transalpine city remained weak *vis-à-vis* the prerogatives of lords, individual urban families, or ecclesiastical institutions. Still more indirect is the influence that large European cities sought to obtain by granting citizenship, enacting commercial and tax agreements, regulations for food supply, and controls over waterways, thus defining what has been called their urban space. This influence always remained limited to only some kinds of activity: it never excluded the presence and influence in the same area of other powerful lords and potentates, who were sometimes political and military rivals.

Control over the Italian *contado*, though, was much more firm and complete. Italian cities strove systematically to eliminate all intermediary and indirect forms of government, and to organise their territories into lower-level districts run by officials appointed by the city; the law,

the legislation, and the fiscal, judicial, and administrative rules of the city were extended to the whole territory. This process formed a unitary body in which the city was the head, and the countryside, organically and inseparably linked to it, were its organs. Strict economic control paralleled the territorial administration. It extended to matters of commercial and industrial policy, and above all to agriculture and landed property. The *contado* thus became the natural area of expansion for urban property, which underwent continuous expansion under intensive tutelage from the city.

It is worth asking whether, and in which forms, Venice also formed its own *contado*. First of all, it must be said that the Venetian Commune exercised jurisdictional prerogatives in a lagoon area (the *Dogado*), which however was not comparable to a *contado*.[4] As for control on the Italian mainland—the so-called *Stato da Terra*, which had been forming in the late fourteenth and mid-fifteenth century—Venice did not consider land borders as permanent and inalienable elements of its sovereignty. In terms of principle, the vast hinterland of the Po Valley could not be rightly claimed, being subjected, at least theoretically, to imperial sovereignty. On the other hand, at sea, or at least on large areas of the Adriatic from Venice to the Channel of Otranto, the hegemony of Venice did not permit any challenge; no other external power, whether the Papacy, or the Empire, or the Ottoman Sultan, could be recognised here. Beginning in the eleventh century, Venice undertook an aggressive policy towards centres located in the northern Adriatic in order to limit their political, and especially their economic, space. The forms of control were various, from direct domination to subjection, or alliances through pacts. Istrian cities were subjugated both by means of force and negotiations, implying an unequal relationship between a rising power (Venice) and minor local powers. An interesting example concerns the relationship between Venice and the Marche city of Fano, in central Italy.[5] In 1141, a treaty was signed between the lagoon city and the town in the Marche. Unlike other acts of subjection made between rural communities and Italian cities, this agreement did not entail a territorial acquisition on the part of the city-state, creating instead a strong link with this major centre of Adriatic trade. Fano maintained its political autonomy, while at a commercial level it enjoyed a kind of alliance with the powerful Venice; Venetian mercantile interests were also linked to those of the citizens of Fano. The framework of political, economic, and legal relations between the cities of the Adriatic and Venice is quite complex and intricate. No doubt Venice was particularly interested in the control of the Illyrian coast, which offered a number of key bases for its trade routes; and for its needs, the exercise of power, both political and military, was focused to protect its economic interests. Venice was thus being formed through a system that was based on interdependence, albeit in a manner which was not cohesive and homogeneous, with mutual advantages for the capital and

its subject territories. On the other side of the Adriatic, the Italian one, the situation was completely different: numerous strong centres of power were opposed to any Venetian attempts at control, and, from the early sixteenth century, new coastal powers, which questioned the traditional hegemony of the Most Serene Republic, emerged in the Adriatic.

One of the pillars of legitimacy of Venetian sovereignty over the Gulf was the use of military force, which was supposed to ensure public order over a quite large area. Technical limits and financial difficulties, however, made it impossible successfully to accomplish such a mission; consider that a voyage by galley from Venice to the mouth of the Ionian Sea took between ten and twenty days. Venice was the first European state to establish a permanent, albeit small, fleet. During the second half of the thirteenth century, Venice deployed no fewer than thirty light galleys, and throughout the sixteenth century their number was about twenty to thirty in peace, and as many as 140 in case of military need. The guard fleet, the so-called Gulf fleet, which had the specific aim of patrolling the Adriatic (sometimes galleys might also sail across the Aegean Sea), was composed of two to six light galleys. Their task was to protect Venice's trade fleets from pirate raids and to intercept smugglers. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, at least fifteen Venetian galleys, divided into three small fleets, watched the area from Venice to the mouth of the Adriatic. By the late seventeenth century, the Gulf galleys were supported by some frigates, which, unlike the former, also carried out patrol and escort functions during the winter period.[6] As early as 1224, the Commune maintained a policing fleet in the Adriatic Sea; and after 1300, the office of Captain of the Gulf was regularly present in the naval hierarchy. His duties were wide. They were concerned not only with control of the Gulf, but went beyond the Channel of Otranto, providing escort for merchant galleys in case of need. The Captain of the Gulf had the right to search, halt, and seize pirate ships, smugglers and vessels not permitted to trade in Adriatic waters. It goes without saying that such prerogatives could be exploited for both defensive aims and aggressive operations.[7] In peacetime, the captain had to obey the *Provveditore all'Armata*, who led the navy, and in wartime, the *Capitano Generale da Mar*, who was the commander in chief of the whole naval system of the Venetian state. The commanders of the galleys were chosen from among the aristocracy, and until the mid-sixteenth century some positions as 'bowmen of the quarterdeck' were reserved for young patricians.[8] Until the mid-sixteenth century, the rowers were volunteers, but later, convicts were increasingly used, even though they were less efficient than the former. Although we do not have much information about the social composition of the crews, most of the rowers came from Venice, the Dalmatian islands, and Greek territories. According to information provided by the so-called testament of Doge Tommaso Mocenigo (1423), the sailors employed in the fleet of forty-five galleys reached the enormous number of 11,000 men, about

ten per cent of the whole population of Venice, and possibly one third of the adult males. The shipping industry was therefore very important for international trade and for the urban poor class employed in the fleet. The galley symbolically represented the union of the various classes of the city: the patricians, who held the higher posts, the merchants who transported and traded goods, and the common people working as oarsmen.[9] The galley was the end product of an impressive production and logistics system, from the control of the production of timber to shipbuilding. Consider that the construction of a great galley called for about 600 oaks, while 300 were needed for a light galley.[10] State-owned forests, in the mountains of the Venetian mainland and in Istria, provided timber, which was transported along the rivers to the *Arsenale* in Venice. There, where the galleys were built and equipped, shipbuilders worked in a highly organised and efficient environment. In 1524, the government decided to increase the reserve galleys from fifty to a hundred, twenty-five of which had to be ready for use. This allowed the *Arsenale*, on the eve of the Battle of Lepanto, to launch as many as a hundred fully equipped galleys in just fifty days.[11] Such a number, which was maintained, more or less, until the 1630s, was to be remembered 'as a symbol and myth of the maritime power of Venice' and its dockyard.[12]

The whole city looked to the sea as the source of its wealth, and took for granted its legitimate right to dominate at least the Gulf's waters. In the early fifteenth century, the *Capitano Generale da Mar* Carlo Zen did not hesitate to describe the sea at Modon and southern Morea as 'our home'.[13] In the seventeenth century, Venice continued to exercise a certain control over the Adriatic, which was also recognised by those who were not subjects of Saint Mark. On 5 May 1683, the *Gazzetta di Ancona* reported the arrival of two Venetian galleys on a mission to 'keep the Gulf clean of corsairs' vessels'. The next day, they engaged in a fight with a corsair ship, which was sunk. The Venetians returned to the port of Ancona with the flag of the corsairs and brought 'great joy to all'.[14] The reporter did not complain at all about the fact the Venetian warships had entered the waters of the State of the Church. In 1766, during its long phase of political decline, Venice forbade the ships of Tripoli, which infested the Adriatic, to enter the Gulf.[15] Although, in the eighteenth century, the glorious maritime power of the Republic was just a relic of the past, the city continued to maintain a developed and unchanged sense of thalassocracy. Legends, paintings, ceremonies, novels, and plays proclaimed the maritime vocation of the Venetians, and their superiority over the rest of the world, across the city. In the novel *La Dianea*, published in 1635, a sailor affirmed that the 'right title' of the Venetian sovereignty over the Adriatic was justified by both the fact that its ancient masters (the ancient Romans) had relinquished it, and that the Venetians exercised the function of maintaining public order, for which 'the gold and the blood they spend may repurchase and fill a world'. It

is interesting to note that they were the same reasons Paolo Sarpi had reiterated thirty years earlier during the controversy against the papacy. Moreover, the author added the traditional Ascension Day ceremony of wedding the sea as one of the 'most true' evidences supporting Venetian rights.[16] Likewise, in 1645, the readers of Girolamo Brusoni's *Il Camerotto* could find the very same arguments.[17] After all, as late as 1630, the Venetian government had threatened the Spanish king that it would welcome his sister, on her way to Trieste to marry Ferdinand of Hungary, by means of a 'wedding shower of cannon balls' had he not agreed to accept a Venetian naval escort in the Adriatic.[18] This, however, was one of the last episodes in which Venice strongly asserted its rights over the Adriatic. From the late seventeenth century onwards, the declining military and political power of Venice made the Gulf an open space, but the sense of superiority did not disappear. In 1752, the patrician Tommaso Giuseppe Farsetti sang in his poem *La trasformazione d'Adria* that Venice, thanks to God's will, was never subdued, but was born in the middle of the sea to defend others.[19]

When the Napoleonic army arrived in Venice in May 1797, the long decline of the Most Serene Republic ended, but its navy and sailors survived. Although the French brutally seized or destroyed warehouses and vessels (included the gorgeous *Bucintoro*) in the *Arsenale*, the Austrians, just after their arrival later in 1797, established the *Cesarea Regia Imperial Marina* (Imperial Royal Venetian Navy).[20] When Napoleon came back, the personnel were absorbed into the navy of the Kingdom of Italy and various Venetian elements were maintained, which persisted until Austrian rule was re-established. The revolt of Venice in 1848 and its defeat brought about a sort of 'devenetianisation' of the navy, so it would be wrong to believe, as some still do, that most of the crews of the Imperial fleet at the battle of Lissa (20 July 1866) were mostly composed of Venetians. It was a long time since the Lion of St. Mark had definitively lost its maritime character.

The Invention of the Medieval Myth

The 'wedding ceremony' mentioned in the introduction of this chapter evoked two episodes in the history of Venice, dating back to its early days, as it was building its dominion beyond the borders of the lagoon. The first episode was related to Ascension Day in 1000 CE, when Doge Pietro Orseolo II set sail towards Dalmatia at the head of a fleet. The reasons for the expedition lay in the Venetians' refusal to continue to pay a tribute to the Croatian kingdom, which controlled the Dalmatian coast; the ensuing escalation of tensions brought about the unavoidable clash. The chronicler Giovannia Diacono ('John the Deacon') tells us that the Venetian campaign was a triumph.[21] Received with awe and respect, the fleet touched at Grado, Porec, Pula, Osor, and Zadar, where the Doge

received the oath of allegiance of the representatives of Krk and Rab, and similar ceremonies also took place in Trogir and Split, the metropolitan seat of Dalmatia. The island of Korcula, which had resisted, was easily subdued, as was Lastovo island, a shelter for pirates who had been long threatening Venetian merchants. After about forty days, the Doge triumphantly returned to Venice, where he was soon to receive the legitimate title of *Dux Veneticorum et Dalmaticorum*.[22]

The second episode concerns the role played by Venice in the conflict between the Italian communes in northern Italy, backed by Pope Alexander III, and Emperor Frederick I Hohenstaufen, who was determined to win back his hegemony on the peninsula.[23] Venice had maintained a quite ambiguous position in this conflict, even sometimes standing by the imperial party to gain advantages over rival ports. The struggle between Italian cities and the empire saw the decisive defeat of Frederick I at the battle of Legnano in May 1176. Following this event, the Emperor and the Pope decided, after various uncertainties, to meet in Venice to sign the peace. On 23 March 1177, the Pope arrived in the lagoon, and the next day was received in grand style by Doge Sebastiano Ziani and the patriarchs of Venice and Aquileia. Alexander III blessed the citizenry in the church of San Marco, and was then the guest of the Doge, who received a gold rose as a gift. After a few weeks, and despite tensions between the imperial, Italian, and papal representatives, the negotiations came to an end. Alexander III was recognised as the only Pope, and he, in turn, revoked the excommunication of Frederick I. On 24 and 25 July, ceremonies with high symbolic value took place: the Emperor kissed the Pope's feet, as a sign of submission, and the Pope in his turn blessed and kissed him as a sign of peace. Between August and October, the key players of the peace and their retinues left Venice. As a sign of gratitude, both the Emperor and the Pope granted prerogatives and privileges to Venice and its merchants.

From the early fourteenth century onwards, the account of the peace was drastically altered at various levels—historical, artistic, and political—so as to create 'a representation of pre-eminence and power, a prerogative of perfect faith and exclusive heavenly and papal predilection' in favour of Venice.[24] The Pope was depicted in a weak position in front of Frederick I, and consequently, as being protected by the Doge. Thus, following the imperial threats, Venice supposedly established a fleet of thirty galleys under the personal command of Doge Ziani, which was said to have fought against the imperial fleet, made up of more than seventy ships led by Frederick's Otto Hohenstaufen. This battle supposedly took place off Punta Salvore (Savudrija), in north-western Istria, and saw the victory of the Venetians, who captured Otto. As a sign of gratitude, Alexander III granted the city a white candle, representing the Pope's love, to be used during processions; the lead seal for the official documents, as a tangible sign of the Venetian Commune's

political sovereignty; the royal umbrella, that stressed the equality of rank between the Pope, emperor, and Doge; banners and triumphal silver trumpets; a sword to defend justice and faith; and a gold ring, 'saying that he [Doge] married the sea like the man marries the woman to be her lord'.[25]

This legend quickly became accepted historical fact. In 1319, a cycle of paintings, representing the events of the Peace of Venice, was commissioned for the San Nicola Chapel of the Palazzo Ducale.[26] The Doge was represented as a mediator, of equal dignity, between the Pope and the emperor; after 1365, a similar cycle, made up of twenty-two paintings, was installed in the Great Council Hall. Even when these frescoes were replaced with works in canvas, painted by Titian, the central issue was the confrontation between the two great medieval powers and the role played by Venice. In 1577, a fire destroyed the paintings, which were replaced towards the end of the century with works by Federico Zuccari. Pictorial testimony can also be found in a fresco of the Sala di Balia of the Public Palace in Siena, the birthplace of Pope Alexander III. The clash between soldiers holding the shield of San Marco and enemies under the imperial eagle insignia makes explicit reference to the battle of Savudrija. It seems that Domenico Tintoretto also painted the battle in the Piran Council Hall (Istria), but no direct evidence exists. The message of Venetian power and rights over the sea was thus spread beyond the borders of the Republic. The power of these images is unequivocal, and is a strong mnemonic device. Not only Venetians citizens, but also the many foreigners visiting the city, had the opportunity to admire the paintings glorifying Venice's power, to the extent that it has been argued that the story of the Peace of Venice was a part of the 'common knowledge' of European travellers in the early modern period.[27] The exhibition in public places of the Most Serene Republic's victories acquired greater efficacy as a reminder than written chronicles. Francesco Sansovino, author of the most famous guide to Venice in the sixteenth century, stated that the Palazzo Ducale painting cycle 'must be trusted as a public thing, in that it has been made not by a single head, and according his will, but by decision of a great and most prudent senate'.[28] In 1584, the Florentine Girolamo Bardi argued, as confirmation of the rightful prerogatives of Venice, that in addition to many written sources there were paintings, or evidence of old paintings, in the main church in Siena, and in the Fuggers' building in Augsburg.[29] It is likely that the widespread criticism of written sources, which developed during the Renaissance, reinforced the belief that the figurative ones were more reliable in describing the events.[30]

Alongside paintings and ceremonial objects that, according to legend, had been granted by the Pope, the Venetians could also behold relics of their grand past, or at least know that they existed. The armoury of the Council of Ten—the highest state court—exhibited the armour, helmet,

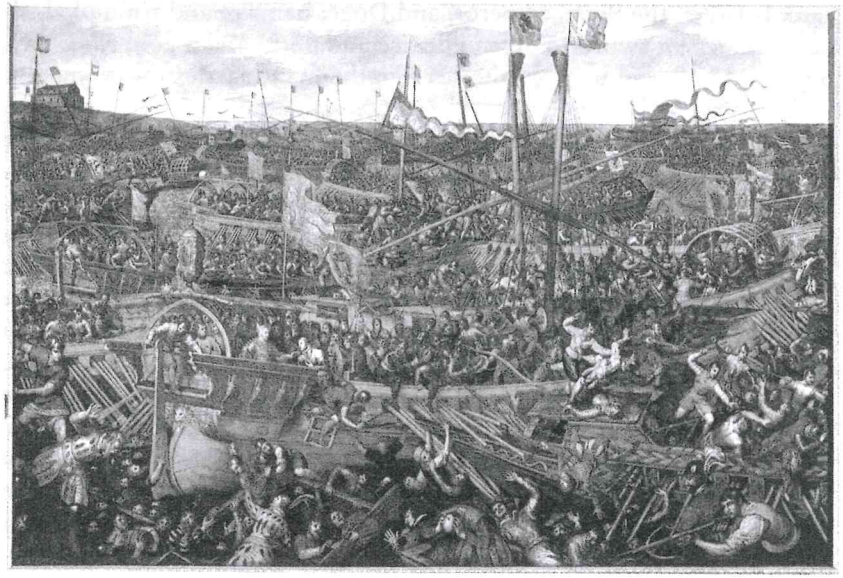


Figure 1.2 Domenico Tintoretto, *The Battle of Salvore (Savudrja)*. The painting, which was made by Tintoretto in 1605 for the rooms in Palazzo Ducale, shows the alleged naval battle fought in 1177 between the Venetians and the imperial fleet.

Source: Wikimedia Commons. Image enhancement: Robert Rowlinson.

and sword, as well as the war banner belonging to Doge Ziani, the defender of the Pope and the victor over the emperor's son.[31]

In addition to the iconography, the Venetian government extensively exploited both the unofficial chronicle and the 'public history', that is, historical accounts written by the 'public historiographer' upon the order of the government. The chronicler Martin Canal, who wrote in the 1260–70s, focused on the peace between Pope and emperor, but did not mention the battle of Punta Salvore at all.[32] A few decades later, Andrea Dandolo (d. 1354) spoke explicitly of a papal act 'as a sign of the universal rule' of Venice over the sea; while another contemporary chronicle, after describing the battle, did not mention the papal concession.[33] Giorgio Dolfin, in his *Cronicha*, which ended in 1458, recalled the battle, and stated that the Pope 'ordered and commanded that every year, on the Ascension day, in the morning, each Doge of Venice had joyfully to go to wed the sea in eternal memory of the great victory got from the divine will and also as sign that Venetians had free dominion on the sea for their merits and good works'.[34] A few pages before this passage, however, the chronicler mentions an agreement between the Narentans and Doge Sebastiano Ziani, by which the Venetians were recognised as 'guardians of this Gulf, and so privileges were made in patent form in

memory of everybody'.[35] It seems, therefore, that there was a legal precedent supporting the claims of Venice to be a 'guardian' of the Adriatic. These claims, of course, reflected the political, and especially the military, dynamics taking place in the area between the ninth and eleventh century, and which had favoured various powers. The wedding ceremony with the sea still had to find its own consecration through the papal blessing, and thus the struggle between Frederick I and Alexander III provided a perfect context in which to place this rite. It is also interesting to note that the rite of the wedding meant taking possession of the sea, which linguistically turned the neuter gender of the Latin language to the female gender in the Venetian dialect of the time.[36] The Doge thus became the groom, seen as *pater familias*, who exercised his full authority over his bride, the sea. It is therefore not surprising that, in 1465, it was decided to place the papal bull of Alexander III in the sacred treasury of Saint Mark. In December 1483, the government even ordered the episode concerning Venice and Alexander III to be placed for posterity in the *Commemoriali* books, a sort of official annal of the Republic.[37] No Venetian harboured doubts about the validity of the tradition: official paintings, historians, and jurists had transformed what was a legendary episode into a historically validated fact. In the early sixteenth century, the Venetian theologian Rainier Fioravanti supported the Republic's claims through a historical and legal dissertation that aimed to reaffirm Venetian sovereignty over the Adriatic, held since the Middle Ages.[38] At the end of the century, the Vicentine jurist Marcantonio Pellegrini, writing a treatise on the jurisdictional rights of Venice over the Adriatic, harbours, coasts, fishing, and public rivers, supported Venice's claims, mentioning its naval victory against Otto and the papal concession of the gold ring, true symbol of the marriage to the sea.[39]

The Myth Questioned

In a world where references to the past and custom were genuine sources of law, the wedding ceremony, public paintings, and public historians, praised the continuity with the past, and thus legitimised the Venetian claims on the Adriatic, the Gulf of Venice:[40] '[the] Adriatic, or Gulf of the Venetians', the chronicler Piero Giustinian wrote in the mid-fourteenth century.[41] It is no coincidence that the *consultori in iure*, that is, the legal advisors who were requested to provide historical and legal material for the jurisdictional claims of the Venetian government, sustained their arguments through historical and documentary research.[42] Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the *consultore in iure* Angelo Matteazzi, asked to defend the Most Serene Republic's claims concerning the Gulf, did not hesitate to refer to, among other arguments, the 'golden and sacred title of privilege' granted by Pope Alexander.[43] This privilege, of course, was also invoked in diplomatic negotiations. In 1594, a dispute between Venice and the States of the Church arose over the right to claim a duty

from papal vessels that found shelter from storms in Venetian ports. Against the protests of the papal ambassador, the government claimed that 'because of the domain of the Adriatic Gulf granted by Popes and confirmed by emperors, [Venetians] can levy duties on all those who sail, as if they were in Venice'.[44] The reference to the papal grant, however, did not at all represent a point in favour of Venice, as the vivid debate which developed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries over rights in the Adriatic was to show.

Since the late fifteenth century, Venetian rights in 'its' Gulf had been challenged, first by the Pope; but during the sixteenth century, Venice had to cope with both legally and even more practically forthright attacks by emerging powers. The mythical version of the papal grant was initially questioned by Carlo Sigonio, in his *De Regno Italiae* (1574), who denied the battle of Savudrija had ever happened. Subsequently, the traditional version was effectively demolished by Cardinal Cesare Baronio, who in the twelfth volume of his *Annales ecclesiastici* (published in the year of his death in 1607) demonstrated that the sources supporting the Venetian version did not prove at all the events of 1177, as proclaimed by the government of the Most Serene Republic.[45] A few years later, in 1611, the Neapolitan jurist Giovan Francesco Da Ponte defined as 'ridiculous' the claims of Venice over the Adriatic.[46] The legitimacy of Venetian sovereignty over the Gulf, sanctioned by papal concession, no longer had the value that had been broadly recognised, or at least tacitly accepted, by coastal governments in the Adriatic. For Venice, the alternative was not so much in reiterating the mythical roots of its sovereignty, as in affirming the centuries-long exercise of power over those waters; a power that dated back at least to the expedition of Pietro Orseolo, and his taking on the protection of the Adriatic. In 1612, the *consultore in iure* Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623) expressed this concept very clearly: the right was never bought, 'but born with the freedom of the Republic, raised and preserved by means of the power of arms and disbursement of treasures, and confirmed by immemorial tradition'.[47] The papal grant, according to Sarpi, was untrue, and its evocation was not 'useful' at all. Acknowledging its own maritime rule as a privilege granted by a superior authority, that of the Pope, would mean admitting a dangerous legal dependence on an exterior power, while the Republic had always been careful to emphasise its independence from any power, whether the Empire or Rome. The proof, instead, of the legitimacy of the sovereignty over the Adriatic consisted primarily of four elements: the enduring appointment of magistrates exercising jurisdiction over the Gulf; the 'armed watch', excluding any other military power; the enactment and enforcement of laws on navigation; and finally, the collection of taxes.[48] Unlike the oceans, on which no nation could claim the exercise of power, being unable to secure it, the Adriatic, instead, being a closed sea, had been controlled and made peaceful by the Venetians.

Despite the alleged historical roots of the Venetian right over the Gulf (the battle of Savudrija and the papal grant) having undoubtedly been destroyed by historians, the myth continues to survive. In his first volume of his monumental *Saggio*, the Spanish abbot Tentori (1745–1810) dealt with the then still thorny issue of Salvore's battle, exploring a wide array of written and artistic sources that would demonstrate the battle to be a genuine historical event.[49] Ultimately, he did not produce new evidence, but merely reaffirmed that numerous pieces of evidence from outside Venice supported the truth about the battle. Still, the most extensive history of Venice published in the nineteenth century, the *Storia documentata di Venezia* by Samuele Romanin, took for granted the truth of the battle, although it rejected the account of the peace between the Emperor and the Pope.[50] Even such an attentive historian as De Vergottini (born in Parenzo in 1900) manifested uncertainty about the battle, which he defined as a 'problematic' event.[51] No doubt, though, has been shown by some amateur historians, who currently maintain the historical truth of the battle, relying on Tentori to do so.[52] Considering the political and ideological context in north-eastern Veneto between the late twentieth and the early twenty-first century, it is no surprise that myths are being reused to support the current political debate. While in the Most Serene Republic, the myth sustained its claims over the Gulf, in the Veneto region today the same myth is useful to assert the continuity of some elements of local ideology from the distant past to the present.

Notes

1. Among the public there were also courtesans, although their presence raised controversies. See the letter of Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Ralph Winwood in Logan Pearsall Smith, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907), 114, 'Venice, 5 May 1617'.
2. Smith, *Life and Letters*, 113.
3. For what follows, Jean-Claude Hocquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise: production et monopole*, vol. 1 (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1982), 179–208, 313–32.
4. Ermanno Orlando, *Altre Venezie. Il Dogado veneziano nei secoli XIII e XIV* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere e arti, 2008).
5. Attilio Bartoli Langeli, ed., *Il patto con Fano 1141* (Venezia: Il Cardo, 1993).
6. Guido Candiani, *I vascelli della Serenissima. Guerra, politica e costruzioni navali a Venezia in età moderna, 1650–1720* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere e arti, 2009), 405–14.
7. Irene B. Katele, 'Piracy and the Venetian State: The Dilemma of Maritime Defense in the Fourteenth Century', *Speculum* 63, 4 (Oct. 1988): 865–89; Alberto Tenenti, 'Venezia e la pirateria nel Levante: 1300 circa-1460', in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, vol. 1, Agostino Pertusi, ed. (Florence: Olschki, 1973), 705–71.
8. For the activity of the Gulf fleet in the early fifteenth century, Alan M. Stahl, 'Michael of Rhodes: Mariner in Service to Venice', in *The Book of Michael of*

Rhodes: A Fifteenth-Century Maritime Manuscript, vol. 2, Pamela O. Lang, David McGee and Alan M. Stahl, eds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 35–38.

9. Claire Judde de la Rivière, *Naviguer, commercer, gouverner. Economie maritime et pouvoirs à Venise* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 46–47.
10. For the question, see di Antonio Lazzarini, 'Boschi, legnami, costruzioni navali. L'Arsenale di Venezia fra XVI e XVIII secolo', *Archivio Veneto* 145 (2014): 111–74.
11. Luciano Pezzolo, 'Stato, guerra e finanza nella Repubblica di Venezia fra Medioevo e prima età moderna', in *Mediterraneo in armi (sec. XV–XVIII)*, vol. 1, Rossella Cancila, ed. (Palermo: Mediterranea, 2007), 74.
12. Lazzarini, 'Boschi', 121–22.
13. Quoted in Alberto Tenenti, 'Il senso del mare', in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12, Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, eds (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1991), 7–76. This essay is fundamental for this paragraph.
14. The episode is reported in Sergio Anselmi, *Adriatico. Studi di storia, secoli XIV–XIX* (Ancona: Clua, 1991), 198.
15. Giacomo Nani, *Memorie e documenti*, Filippo Nani Mocenigo, ed. (Venice: Tipografia dell'Ancora, 1893), 31.
16. Giovan Francesco Loredano, *La Dianea* (Venice: Sarzina, 1635), 240–42.
17. Girolamo Brusoni, *Il Camerotto* (Venice: Valuasense, 1645), 4–7.
18. Frederic C. Lane, *Venice. A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 417.
19. Tommaso Giuseppe Farsetti, *La trasformazione d'Adria* (Venezia: Albrizzi, 1752), 1.
20. Alvise Zorzi, *Napoleone e Venezia* (Milano: Mondadori 2010), 98–99; Amable de Fournoux, *Napoléon et Venise* (Paris: Fallois, 2002), 215.
21. Giovanni Diacono, 'Cronaca veneziana', in *Cronache veneziane antichissime*, vol. 4, Giovanni Monticolo, ed. (Roma: Forzani, 1890), 45–54.
22. Nedo Fiorin, ed., *Venezia e la Dalmazia anno Mille. Secoli di vicende comuni* (Treviso: Canova, 2002).
23. For this section I mostly rely on Gabriele Köster, '24 luglio 1177. La Pace di Venezia e la guerra delle interpretazioni', in *Venezia. I giorni della storia*, Uwe Israel, ed. (Rome: Viella, 2011), 47–90; Carlo Campana, 'Sant'Ubaldo, Salvore, San Marco. Il mito di Venezia nella *Legenda Aurea* di Nicolò Manerbi', in *Historiae. Scritti per Gherardo Ortalli*, Claudio Azzara, Ermanno Orlando, Marco Pozza and Alessandra Rizzi, eds (Venice: Ca' Foscari, 2013), 99–114; Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 103–9; Filippo De Vivo, 'Historical Justifications of Venetian Power in the Adriatic', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, 2 (Apr. 2003): 159–76.
24. Campana, 'Sant'Ubaldo'.
25. Quoted by Campana, 'Sant'Ubaldo', 106.
26. A list of artistic sources supporting the Venetian version is provided by Emanuele A. Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, vol. 4 (Venice: Orlandelli, 1834), 583–84.
27. Köster, '24 luglio 1177', 88.
28. Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice: Iacomo Sansovino, 1581), 199.
29. Girolamo Bardi, *Vittoria navale ottenuta dalla Republica venetiana contra Othone, figliuolo di Federigo Primo imperadore* (Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1584), 154.
30. Francis Haskell, *Le immagini della storia. L'arte e l'interpretazione del passato*, E. Zoratti and A. Nadotti, trans (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 77.

31. Federico Berchet, 'Le sale d'armi del Consiglio dei Dieci nel Palazzo Ducale di Venezia', *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 59 (1899–1900), 140–41, 152, 165–66.
32. Martin da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise*, Alberto Limentani, ed. (Florence: Olschki, 1972), 41–45.
33. Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta*, 12 vols, Ester Pastorello, ed. (Città di Castello: Unione Arti Tipografiche, 1939), 366; *Cronica di Venexia detta di Enrico Dandolo*, Roberto Pesce, ed. (Venice: Centro di studi medioevali e rinascimentali Emanuele A. Cicogna, 2010), 67–70.
34. Giorgio Dolfin, *Cronicha dela nobil cità de Venetia et dela sua provintia et destretto*, vol. 1, Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed. (Venice: Centro di studi medioevali e rinascimentali Emanuele A. Cicogna, 2009), 212.
35. Dolfin, *Cronicha*, 204.
36. Gina Fasoli, 'Nascita di un mito', in *Scritti di storia medievale* (Bologna: Fotocromo Emiliana, 1974), 459.
37. Riccardo Predelli and Pietro Bosmin, eds, *I Libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia*, 17 vols (Venice: Deputazione veneta di storia patria, 1876–1914), 5:155, 247; Muir, *Civic Ritual*.
38. Predelli and Bosmin, *I Libri commemoriali*, 6:50–51.
39. Predelli and Bosmin, *I Libri commemoriali*, 7:98–99.
40. Of course, the reference work is Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
41. The Chronicle is published in Luca Fiori, 'Il codice autografo di Piero Giustinian: un esempio di genesi ed evoluzione della cronachistica medievale' (PhD diss., University of Bologna, 2014), 7, 12.
42. Antonella Barzazi, 'I consultori "in iure" ', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 5, Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1986), 179–99.
43. Angelo Matteazzi, *Del diritto de' viniziani e della loro giurisdizione sul mare Adriatico*, Leonardo Dudreville, ed. (Venice: Gazzetta Uffiziale, 1858), 30. On Matteazzi, see Giovanni Diquattro, 'Angelo Matteazzi (1535–1601). Un giurista "culto" nella Repubblica di Venezia', *Studi Veneziani* 35 (1998), 89–136; and Claudio Povolo, *L'intrigo dell'onore. Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona: Cierre, 1997), 147–53.
44. Sergio M. Pagano, ed., *Nunziature di Venezia*, vol. 19 (Rome: Istituto storico per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 2008), 408; '*Ludovico Taverna to Cinzio Aldobrandini* (Venice, 24 June 1594).
45. De Vivo, 'Historical Justifications', 165–66; on Baronio, see Alberto Pincherle in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol 6. (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1964); Stefano Zen, 'Paolo Sarpi, il cardinal Baronio e il calvinista Isaac Casaubon: polemiche storiografiche e Interdetto su Venezia', in *Società, cultura e vita religiosa in età moderna. Studi in onore di Romeo De Maio*, Luigi Gulia, Ingo Herklotz and Stefano Zen, eds (Sora: Centro di studi sorani Vincenzo Patriarca, 2009), 547–609.
46. Giovan Francesco Da Ponte, *De potestate proregis collaterali consiliis et regni regimine*, 2nd ed. (Naples: Eredi Tarquino Longo, 1621), 364. See Silvio Zotta, *Giovan Francesco Da Ponte. Il giurista politico* (Naples: Jovene, 1987).
47. Paolo Sarpi, 'Scrittura seconda che tratta del titolo del legitimo dominio sopra il mar Adriatico', in *Opere*, Gaetano and Luisa Cozzi, eds (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1969), 623.
48. Paolo Sarpi, 'Dominio del mar Adriatico della Serenissima repubblica di Venetia', in *Opere*, Paolo Sarpi, ed., vol. 6 (Venice: Meietti, 1685).

49. Cristoforo Tentori, *Saggio sulla storia civile, politica, ecclesiastica e sulla corografia e topografia degli stati della Repubblica di Venezia* (Venice: Storti, 1785–1790), 74–85.
50. Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. 2 (Venice: Naratovich, 1853–61), 114–16.
51. Giovanni De Vergottini, *Lineamenti della costituzione politica dell'Istria durante il Medio Evo* (Trieste: Società istriana di archeologia e storia patria, 1974), 73. I owe this reference to my friend and colleague Alessandra Rizzi.
52. See, for instance, www.veneziadoc.net/Storia-di-Venezia/Battaglia-Salvore.php, consulted 30 November 2016.

2 National Flags as Essential Elements of Dutch Naval Ideology, 1570–1800

Gijs Rommelse

Introduction

In 1781, one year into the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, an anonymous author published a pamphlet entitled 'Dialogue held in the Elysian Fields between the ghosts of Admiral De Ruyter and A.Z., who during his life was a creature of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel'.[1] It was sharply critical of the role of Wolfenbüttel, the closest political advisor of Stadholder Prince William V of Orange, in bringing about the war. Accusing him of conspiring to bring the Dutch Republic into political servitude, the author had De Ruyter's ghost lament that, if only there were a resolute politician with the courage to warn the Stadholder of his advisor's treason, 'the Republic could be saved from its imminent downfall and the English, as in the past, be brought to respect the flag of the United Netherlands'.

The words of the great admiral's ghost remind us of the crucial role played by the national flag in the self-image of the Dutch people. Displaying and defending the flag on the state's warships at sea was a self-evident manifestation of sovereignty and independence, essential for the nation's political self-respect and continued strategic viability. Its defence was entrusted to the country's battle fleet. The late admiral's words could, furthermore, be taken as criticism of the current policy and policymakers, since absence of assertiveness in demanding respect for the flag at sea was an indication of lack of self-confidence in the regime's strategy and repute. The flag could also be invoked by the opposition when challenging and offering alternatives to these policies. The 'Dialogue in the Elysian Fields' thus indicates the existence of a distinct Dutch naval ideology, integral to the broader Dutch identity, in which the national flag played a crucial role.

The aim of this essay is to analyse the character of this Dutch naval ideology and the transformations it underwent during the period 1570–1800. Taking as its point of departure the emergence of the Northern-Netherlandish identity during the Dutch Revolt, it will discuss the economic and politico-cultural contexts of representations of Dutch naval battles produced by visual artists, poets, song writers, and pamphleteers. Focusing