

THE NOTION OF *HONOR* IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES AND THE SUBJECTS ON THE EXAMPLE OF ZADAR IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The author analyzes the appearance and meaning of notion of honor in medieval sources on the case of the relationship between authorities and subjects in fourteenth century Zadar. The following problems are considered: the adjective honorabilis connected to the city officials, honor as the right and privilege (according to the Statute law of Zadar), the political meaning of honor (expressed in the relationships between Zadar and Venice and Zadar and Hungaro-Croatian king), and honor as a moral quality and human virtue (best expressed in the relationship between Zadar and the king in 1345/6).

Key words: ethical values, honour, Middle Ages, Zadar, Venice, Hungaro-Croatian kingdom

I. Political frame

Already from the period of Byzantine dominion over Dalmatia, Zadar was certainly the most important city of this province. The importance of Zadar was caused by its position as the center of administrative and military government in Dalmatia, and as the seat of archbishopric. In the middle of the ninth century Dalmatia became Byzantine theme with Zadar as its center. The highest imperial official, *strateg*, was seated in Zadar. During the entire medieval period Zadar kept this position and was considered as the political and economic metropolis of Dalmatia.

Although there were some other factors periodically influencing on political and economic history of medieval Zadar there were two main powers that during the

centuries constantly shaped its destiny.¹ From the end of the tenth century Venice became one of the most important factors that strongly influenced on the history of Zadar. As soon as Venice became the most influential power on the Adriatic one of the aims of its policy was to subjugate Zadar under its authority. However, from the beginning of the twelfth century the Venetian interests in Dalmatia conflicted with the interest of Hungaro - Croatian kingdom since the kings from the Arpad dynasty also wanted to annex Dalmatia. When king Kalman in 1105 entered the city of Zadar first what he organized was a new city government. The count (*comes*) as the highest city official became one of the king's candidates while the right to elect archbishop king left to the commune. However, the king's dominion over Zadar was rather short and soon Venice overtook the rule of Zadar. The Venetian dominion lasted until the end of the twelfth century when again city came under the power of Hungaro - Croatian king Bela III. According to the agreement between the Venice and the Crusade commanders during the Forth Crusade Zadar was occupied by the Crusaders and given to the Venetians in 1202. During the thirteenth century Zadar was continuously under Venetian dominion although there were some sporadical conflicts, especially in 1242, when Hungaro - Croatian king Bela IV tried to subjugate the city under his rule.

For the short period at the beginning of the fourteenth century Zadar came under the dominion of powerful Croatian magnate family Šubić. In 1311 the Croatian ban Mladin, member of the family Šubić, became the count of Zadar.² The king Charles I of Anjou also confirmed the old privileges given to Zadar by the king Bela IV. According to this privileges the citizens of Zadar had a right to elect the rectors as the highest city officials and the representants of the authonomy of city. It was contrary to the Venetian policy towards Zadar when the city count was necessarily Venetian citizen elected by and responsible to Venetian government. Soon, in 1313, the city was again subjugated under the Venetian rule. The peace agreement from 1313 was one of the most convenient for Zadar partly because of the patronate role of ban Mladin who intermediated the negotiations between Venice and Zadar. According to the agreement the count had to administrate over the city *secundum formam statutorum factorum vel faciendorum per ipsos Jadratinos* (Ljubić, 1868, 267).

The years between 1345-1347 were probably the hardest in the history of medieval Zadar. Attracted by the promisses given by the king Louis I of Anjou that he

1 The following survey of political history of Zadar in Central and Late Middle Ages is based on: Klaić, Petricoli, 1976, 145-222, 291-315; cf. Fine, 1987.

2 The Zadar's documents between 1311 and 1313 are dated with the name of Mladin in datation e. g. *Temporibus ... et magnifici viri domini Mladini comitis Jadre* (Smičiklas, 1910, 295). The last document dated with the name of Mladin is dated 30th of April 1313 (Smičiklas, 1910, 333). After that date as the count appears again Venetian official.

will military support their uprising, the citizens of Zadar rebelled against Venetian dominion. But the king, because of sudden change of the political situation in the kingdom of Naples, changed his plans and gave up from Zadar. Namely, his brother Andrew, the king of the kingdom of Naples, was murdered in 1345. The assassination of Andrew was the reason for Luis to leave Zadar to Venice and to sign the agreement of armistice with Venice in 1348. Thus, as far as king is concerned, the question of dominion over Zadar lost its importance for almost ten years.

The city was thus left alone and after two years of Venetian siege was again subjugated under Venetian rule. It was the period of Venetian dominion over Zadar which lasted until 1358 when the army of Hungaro - Croatian king Luis I Anjou defeated Venetians and the city was annexed to the Hungaro - Croatian kingdom.

II. Honor

The notion of *honor* in medieval Croatian/Dalmatian sources, same as in contemporary European, appears in various meanings. There are some clearly feudal meanings of *honor* that are to be found only in documents originating from the continental part of Croatia. Thus, in the documents regarding feudal society of Hungaro - Croatian kingdom the notion of *honores* as feudal landed estates (*praedia, beneficia*) given by the ruler to the higher officers of the realm usually during the service are often mentioned. Such a fief could not have been joined with the other landed estates neither some parts divided from it (Lexicon des Mittelalters, 1991, 123; Du Cange, 1954, 228-229; Kostrenčić, 1973, 542).³ The notion of *honor* as the obligatory gift i. e. a kind of tax given by the vassals to their feudal masters is sometimes mentioned in these sources as well.

However, these two meanings of *honor* do not appear in the sources connected to medieval history of Zadar. The reason why they are lacking is in great social and economic differences between medieval Dalmatian and Croatian societies. In Dalmatian cities, organized as communes, the feudal, continental type of nobility with lords and vassals did not exist. Although specific type of nobility, patricians, was established in the communes they were not, except perhaps in wealthiness, similar to the nobility from hinterland. E. g. they did not have neither jurisdiction over territory (including that on their own estates), nor vassals or noble retainers. Because their landed estate was relatively restricted they had to show more practical interest for economy. Patricians accepted professions that were unacceptable for feudal magnates and they were even not ashamed of being merchants.

In this article, because of the mentioned specific type of communal nobility in Zadar and specific relations between subjects and authorities (citizens towards

3 On the specific features of the institution of *honor* in Hungaro - Croatian kingdom in the comparison with the western type of this institution cf. Engel, 1996, 91-100.

community, the commune of Zadar towards the Venice and a king), some other notions of *honor* will be considered: the adjective *honorabilis* connected to the city officials, *honor* as the right and privilege, the political meaning of *honor*, and *honor* as a moral quality and human virtue.

Some of these notions can be traced already from the period of the Church fathers. Du Cange in *Glossarium* mentioned the notion of *honor* that was usually given to the prominent and excellent ecclesiastical officials. This notion was during the Middle Ages transformed and connected to nonecclesiastical persons as well (Du Cange, 1954, 228). They were usually members of the upper classes of medieval society. In the case of Zadar this meaning of *honor* is related to the king, the dodge, the count and some other highest communal officials.

The adjective *honorabilis*, connected to the persons obtaining some communal offices, is often mentioned in the sources. Originating from the notion of *honor*, this title was linked, as far as Zadar is concerned, with performing certain communal office.⁴ It means that only some officials were titled as *honorabilis*. During the periods when Zadar was at peace only the highest communal official and the head of communal government - the count (*comes*) was titled as *honorabilis*. Thus *honorabilis comes Iadrensis* was regularly recorded in the intitulations of notary documents either of civil or ecclesiastical origin.⁵

While during the periods of peace the count was the only city official recorded as *honorabilis* the situation has changed during the periods of extraordinary conditions. Thus in the time of Venetian siege of Zadar in 1345/46 the other communal officials were recorded as *honorabilis*. Namely, during the siege the rectors of Zadar were titled as *honorabiles rectores* (cf. Smičiklas, 1913, 229; 334). This change in intitulation was obviously influenced by the war conditions in which the commune of Zadar was involved at that time. In the course of Middle Ages the count of Zadar was always the exponent of Venetian power in Zadar. During the short period of uprising of Zadar against Venetian rule, when the citizens of Zadar were hoping to receive help from Hungaro - Croatian king Louis I of Anjou, the count, as Venetian official,

4 *Honorabilis* in the Early Middle Ages was also connected to ecclesiastical persons. Du Cange mentioned the case from ninth century concerning the ecclesiastical persons who committed a crime. If they were *honorabiles* after committing a crime they lose their *honor* (Du Cange, 1954, 228). It is interesting that in the sources here analyzed *honorabilis* was never connected to the ecclesiastical officials. E. g. the archbishop of Zadar was always titulated as *venerabilis* or *reverendus pater*.

5 Cf. e. g. Smičiklas, 1911, 128. However, it should be mentioned that in here analyzed period, especially in the first twenty years of fourteenth century the adjective *egregius* appears more frequently connected to the count then adjective *honorabilis*. Actually, during the period 1301-1323 the notion of *honorabilis* never appears in the sources. Only in 1323 the notion of *honorabilis* is first to be met in the documents. It was in the time of *potenti et egregii domini Vgolini Justini honorabilis comitis Jadre*. (Smičiklas, 1911, 119). After that notion of *honorabilis* was more frequently used by the notaries of Zadar although it never outnumbered the term *egregius*. E. g. in 1343 *egregius* appears 13 times while *honorabilis* appears 8 times.

was immediately replaced with rectors. By inheriting the count on the position of the highest city officials, the rectors were also inheriting the title *honorabiles*. In the Zadar's notary documents from this short period of independence they were titled *honorabiles rectores ladre*.⁶ The obvious tendency of Zadar's policy was to equalize rectors with the Venetian count not only as the highest officials in communal government and representatives of communal policy but also to equalize them in formal appearances such as their intitution in notary documents. Thus the rectors became the symbols of the independent policy of the citizens of Zadar.⁷

Although formal, this intitution was considered very important as it was proven a several months later. Namely, the uprising finished unsuccessfully for Zadar and the *Serenissima* restored the rule over the city. In this time of still uncertain post-war conditions the Venetian captains were placed as the exponents of transitional Venetian government in Zadar. In their office they joined military and civil authorities. Together with the real military and civil command over the city the captains got the title *honorabilis* as well (cf. Smičiklas, 1913, 364; 530; 464). In the notary documents from that period they were titled *honorabiles capitanei ladre*.⁸ As it is seen from these examples the title *honorabilis* was always reserved only for the highest city officials (count, rectors, captains).

In the Statute law of Zadar the notion of *honor* is mentioned in only one decree. In this decree *honor* is related to the relationship between an individual as the subject and commune as the authority. In this order concerning the procedure of receiving the Zadar's citizenship the obligations and honors (*honores*) of the citizen (*cives*) are recorded.⁹ The decree ordered that the foreigner could not obtain the citizenship of Zadar *nisi veniat ad habitandum in ea cum familia et uxore* (Kolanović, Križman, 1997). If the Great council of Zadar do not approve his election for citizen *non intellegatur civis quoad utilitates et honores quibus gaudent ceteri cives ladrenses* (Kolanović, Križman, 1997). There are two terms that should be mentioned here: notion of *utilitates* for privileges and notion of *honores* for honors. Same as in the other medieval Dalmatian communities the person obtaining the citizenship of Zadar received some privileges. One of the most important privileges in that period was certainly the communal and governmental protection of the citizen of Zadar in internal communal juridical and economic affairs but also the protection of his rights and interests in relationships with other communities. Because of taking over these obligations the communal government was very rigorous in election of new citizens

6 In datation: *Tempore ... honorabilium rectorum Jadre* (Smičiklas, 1913, 229).

7 Actually, the rectors were exponents of king's policy as they were during the short period of reign of Charles I in 1311-1313.

8 In datation: *Tempore ... honorabilium capitaneorum Jadre* (Smičiklas, 1913, 256).

9 *De muneribus et honoribus omnium personarum, et qualiter forenses recipiantur in cives* (Kolanović, Križman, 1997, 494-495).

and no vagabonds, wanderers or troublemakers were taken into consideration for citizenship. Under the notion of *honores* the obligations and duties of the citizen of Zadar in internal establishment and everyday communal life (respect of the communal statute law, fidelity and loyalty to the communal interest in the times of peace or war) were ment. The notion of *honores* also included the right to obtain various city offices according to the social position of citizens. As a result of respecting communal privileges and honors (i. e. rights and obligations) the inhabitant of Zadar had a right to be titled *civis Iadrensis*. Thus it seems that *honor* means equally obligations and privileges and right on the title *civis*. The second one (title) was conditioned and it spring out from the first (obligations and privileges). For the other inhabitants, *habitatores* and *forenses*, there was not such order because they did not have these obligations toward community but community was not their protector as well.

When the commune of Zadar appears as the subject of authority or political interests of the dodge or the king, the notion of *honor* is used more often. Although there are numerous documents containing the notion of *honor* only the representative will be mentioned. In the contract between the city of Zadar and Venice from 1313 it was said that Zadar must send delegates to Venice *pro honore domini ducis* (Ljubić, 1868, 266-280). It is also ordered the way of approaching of delegates to the dodge (the ceremony) in the palace *pro honore domini ducis*. It seems that *honor* in this phrase has more meanings: expression of honor, servility and subjection from the side of Zadar and the expression of power and might of Venice. In other words, in this case *honor* has nothing to do with personal human virtues but figuratively presents the relationship between subject and ruler - Zadar and Venice.

In the same contract it is further ordered that the count and judges of Zadar had to be elected in accordance with the statute of Zadar but *quod non sint contra honorem domini ducis et communis Venetiarum* (Ljubić, 1868, 267, 280). Later, in a document from 1321 conflict between Zadar and Venice is mentioned because they behaved *contra nostrum* (i. e. Venetian) *honorem* (Ljubić, 1868, 236). Namely, Zadar elected Baiamonte Tiepolo who was *manifestus inimicus et proditor nostri communis* for the communal judge and they even honored him (*honorant eum*) (Ljubić, 1868, 236). On that way Zadar did not respect the decree of contract with Venice according to which Zadar and Venice *amicos pro amicis et inimicos pro inimicis habere debeant* (Ljubić, 1868, 236). According to the political contents of these two document it seems that here the phrase *contra honorem* means that Zadar acted *against political interest and aims of the Republic* but also *against dodge* as the representant of these interests and aims.

Similar meaning the notion of *honor* had in the time of the Venetian siege of Zadar in 1345/46. There are number of documents from that period both of Venetian and Zadar provenience containing the notion of *honor*. From the beginning of the war Venetian government ordered to the captains of the army (*capitaneus terrestris*)

and navy (*capitaneus maris*) to act *ad nostrum honorem et mortem et confusionem dictorum inimicorum nostrorum* or *in honorem nostrum et damnum inimicorum nostrorum* (Ljubić, 1868, 286, 303). Many of commands to Venetian captains finished with these words. When the city of Ancona supported Zadar during the siege Venetians immediately sent delegates to Ancona to complain because Ancona acted *contra nostrum honorem* (Ljubić, 1868, 303). Like in the above mentioned examples it seems again that *honor* means here primarily political interests of Venice. Besides that, notion of *honor* in the events 1345/46 seems to have even stronger meaning regarding the difficult situation. It looks like here *contra honorem* means *against the integrity of Venetian dominion* that was seriously jeopardized. For that reason the verbs *conservare* and *procurare* connected to *honor* were often used in these documents. Finally, since citizens of Zadar acted *contra honorem* of *Serenissima* it means that they behaved dishonorable, against their government and natural ruler and order. Thus they became rebels and infidels and their uprising was illegal and unjust. But, the meanings of justice and legality were usually pretty relative and depended mainly on the point of view of politically interested sides. Thus, the author of chronicle *Obsidio Iadrensis* constantly pointed out that the actions of Zadar are just and legal. To prove that he underlined that King Louis is the *dominus naturalis* of the city of Zadar as it was Louis' father Charles as well.¹⁰ On that way, the author wanted to justify the uprising of Zadar pointing that the action of Zadar was not against the natural ruler of the city but rather against illegal and imposed authority of Venice.

At the end of this article a few words about the notion of *honor* in the relationship between the citizen of Zadar and the king Louis I of Anjou should be mentioned. This is well presented in the chronicle *Obsidio Iadrensis*, a masterpiece of medieval Croatian literature.¹¹ The meaning of *honor* in chronicle strongly depended on the development of events around Zadar during the period of the siege. The author valued king's *honor* according to his political and military actions. If king's actions reflected positively on the situation in Zadar author delightedly elevated king's *honor*. On the contrary, when king left Zadar alone against Venice author was

¹⁰ The chronicle is preserved in several versions and the oldest one is from the beginning of sixteenth century. Two versions of cronicle were also published in seventeenth century. Recently the group of historian in the Department of History of Croatian Academy prepare the new edition of chronicle that will be based on the oldest version but will also include comments on the other version and a huge apparatus (*variae lectiones* and footnotes). Therefore, I use here this version (Glavičić *et al.*, 2000, 30).

¹¹ *Obsidio Iadrensis* was written by an unknown author immediately after the events described in this chronicle. Regarding the number of quotations from Bible, some antique and medieval philosophers and theologians, it is obvious that the author was well educated person, probably a member of ecclesiastical circles in the city of Zadar. He was strong supporter of the policy of independence of Zadar from the Venetian rule and placing of the city under the protection of Hungarian-Croatian kingdom.

sincerely unsatisfied accusing him for lack of consistence.¹²

When inhabitants of Zadar heard, in the hard time of siege, about the arrival of king and his army to help their besieged city they became enthusiastic and "elevated great flag with the king's picture and royal signs on the very high post in king's honor and splendor".¹³ Because the king as *dominus naturalis* decided to protect the city he deserved to be honored for his just and legal actions in favor of Zadar.

But soon the enthusiasm was replaced with disappointment. Namely, as the writer describes, the king's magnates gave up from helping Zadar. Magnates secretly made an agreement with Venetian captains promising that they will not interfere in the conflict on the side of Zadar. The writer disappointedly accused king's magnates for their immorality and lack of honor. Since some of them were even corrupted with a large sum of money the writer accused them for "they had rather chose greed than to achieve so great honor" pointing on their promise given to the delegates of Zadar that they will fight on the side of Zadar against Venetian army.¹⁴ Although the king must have had influence on his magnates the writer did not directly accuse him for dishonorable behavior. It seems that the reason for that was not in the lack of courage of writer. It is rather that he could not believe that king would behave dishonorable. In the writer's eyes dishonor was not characteristic that could be in any way connected to the person of king. Well learned writer was even afraid to doubt king's virtues because it was against all theories about the role of just Christian king in the medieval world's order he was certainly aware of.¹⁵ How the writer escaped this "heretical" thought? He found the justification for king's proceedings in his youthness and inexperience as well as in greed of magnates. Nevertheless, he questioned king's morality to a some extent: "Where is your oath with which you

12 For some reasons it may be presumed that author wrote the chronicle most probably for the unknown Zadar's nobleman from the king's court. The chronicle was written with sincerity, strong emotions and with the certain degree of criticism towards the king's behavior during the period described in the chronicle.

13 *...in honorem et decus sui regis.* (Glavičić et al., 2000, 47).

14 *...qui potius cupiditatem quam tam grandis honoris adeptionem acceptarunt.* (Glavičić et al., 2000, 121).

15 The author's awareness of medieval theories concerning the role of king in Christian world is to some extent proven by following words: *Quid de te machina mundi extimabat, o rex. o rex? Aserebat enim te tanquam ignorans cosmarium. Nunc opinionem mutarunt, iudicabat imperiasse grandiore partem universi...* (What will the world judge about you, o king, o king? He, namely delusioned, considered you as the world sovereign but now the people changed their opinion. They considered you ruled over the greater part of the world...) (Glavičić et al., 2000, 127). It may be presumed that the author's statements were to some extent influenced by the hagiographic literature as well. Namely, the kings were often used by the medieval hagiographic writers as the models for sanctity. In medieval *Vitae* and *Legends* they were presented, especially for their merits in Christianization of pagans, with many human virtues as justness, honor, faith etc. Although the holy kings were not so popular motifs in late medieval hagiographic literature the author, as educated person, may likely have been aware of early medieval *Vitae* and *Legends*.

gave earlier promises? You have rather chose the death than to abandon your faithful subjects".¹⁶ From these words springs out certain disappointment of author in the king. Author hoped in king's promises but since he did not keep the word given to Zadar he lost credibility and his morality became questionable.

The sources regarding Zadar contain various meanings of the term *honor* concerning the relationships between authorities and subjects in medieval society. As it was seen *honor* was rarely considered simply as a human virtue. Actually, only in the case with the king Louis the moral dimension of *honor* was considered. In the other examples *honor* appeared as the social category, political interest, dominion, as well as the rights and obligations of subjects and authorities. The meaning of *honor* highly depended on contemporary political and diplomatic conditions that strongly influenced the relationships between authorities and subjects as in case with Venice and Zadar. For that reason *honor* meant the way of expected behaviour of subjects and authorities in their relationships. Any violation of such behaviour was considered as dishonorable and it was illegal disturbance of natural order of relationship between the authorities and subjects.¹⁷ Thus it seems that *honor* was one of the important instruments of justifying and preserving medieval social and political order.

POJEM ČASTI V ODNOSIH MED OBLASTJO IN PODLOŽNIKI NA PRIMERU ZADRA V PRVI POLOVICI 14. STOLETJA

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POVZETEK

Avtor nas v uvodnem delu članka najprej na kratko seznani s političnimi odnosi med Zadrom, Benetkami in Madžarsko-hrvaškim kraljestvom v prvi polovici 14. stoletja, v nadaljevanju pa analizira različne pomeni pojma časti, kot se pojavljajo v dokumentih iz tistega časa. Najprej se posveča pridevniku *honorabilis* v povezavi z najvišjimi mestnimi veljaki (grofom, rektorjem). V času beneške prevlade nad Zadrom je bil pridevnik *honorabilis* povezan z beneškim grofom, ki so ga poslali v Zadar kot zastopnika beneške vlade, medtem ko je bil v času neodvisnosti Zadra od Benetk povezan z rektorji kot predstavniki neodvisne politike mesta Zadra. V enem izmed odlokov zadarskega statutarnega zakona je čast povezana z odnosi med posameznikom kot podložnikom in med komuno kot oblastjo, kjer čast pomeni tako

¹⁶ *Vbi iuramentum tuum, quod paulisper pollicitus es? Potius uolebas mortem eligere quam illos fideles deserere* (Glavičič et al., 2000, 127).

¹⁷ For that reason the author of *Obsidio Iudrensis* wanted to present Zadar as natural king's possession.

obveznosti kot privilegije osebe, ki je civis Iadrensis. Čast se pojavlja tudi v odnosih med Benetkami kot oblastjo in Zadrom kot podložnikom, in zdi se, da ima čast tu naslednje pomene: izraz spoštovanja, pokorščina in podložnost Zadra na eni strani in izraz moči, oblasti in integritete Benetk na drugi. Na koncu se avtor na primeru odnosov med madžarsko-hrvaškim kraljem in Zadrom posveti časti kot človeški kreposti in moralni kategoriji, kjer ugotavlja, da je bil pomen časti glede na analizirane vire odvisen od takratnih političnih razmer in diplomatskih odnosov med oblastmi in njihovimi podložniki in da je čast pomenila način pričakovanega vedenja podložnikov in oblasti v njihovih medsebojnih odnosih v določenih okoliščinah.

Ključne besede: etične vrednote, čast, srednji vek, Zadar, Benetke, Madžarsko-hrvaško kraljestvo

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