

Review article

NOT AFRAID OF THE LION: THE ROLE OF VENICE IN MODERN HISTORY OF MONTENEGRO

Tommaso GIANCARLI
Accademia di Belle Arti di Urbino,
Pesaro urbino Area, Italy
E-mail: t.giancarli@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The results presented in this article are a segment of the research about the legacy and myths of Venice or the Venetian Republic area of Montenegro. This article explains whether one can find a current, contemporary version of the myth of Venice in Montenegro; and its future significance, if there is any, in the sense of shaping or contributing to shaping the choices and actions of individuals. A detailed comparison with Croatia, a country which has historical, social and “ethnic” similarities, will be fundamental for the study of this entire issue. So we will primarily see what happened through various periods in recent history, or rather what did not happen in Montenegro, and we’ll see what meaning should be given to these events.

KEY WORDS:

Montenegro; Venice; Legacy; Myths; History.

SAŽETAK

Rezultati predstavljeni u članku su segment istraživanja o naslijeđu i mitovima Venecije odnosno Mletačke republike na prostoru Crne Gore. U članku se analizira postojanje tog mita, njegove refleksije u savremenom crnogorskom društvu. U članku se takođe prati mogući uticaj ovog mita i njegove tradicije u bliskoj budućnosti i njegov kapacitet da utiče na postupke pojedinaca. U istraživanju se upoređuje stanje

u Hrvatskoj koja ima istorijske, društvene i etničke sličnosti sa ovim prostorom. Istraživanje stoga omogućava kratak osvrt na različite periode novije istorije u kojima možemo pratiti uticaj Mletačke republike, šta je to što se dogodilo ili nije dogodilo u odnosu na prostore u okruženju čime se stvaraju uslovi za kritički osvrt i objašnjenje značenja ovih događaja.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

Crna Gora; Mletačka republika; Naslijeđe; Mitovi; Istorija.

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THE MYTH AND ROLE OF VENICE: A BRIEF SUMMARY

What is the myth of Venice in the Balkans is a subject that we do not have time to deal with today and which, moreover, should be, of course, familiar to all present (Giancarli, 2008). Suffice it to say, very briefly, that this myth originated from different historical facts, albeit transfigured to varying degrees: one of which being the righteousness of Venice, which was seen as a power protecting its citizens from arbitrary acts of the high and mighty, and, to quote a Balkan bishop, as “the true reign, model of all the most venerable freedoms” (Jerkov, 2001). This judgment, which is all in all valid for the entire Venetian rule - one can’t help but recall the centuries-lasting pro-Venetian feeling of Veneto and Lombardy plebs, which was shown multiple times from 1509 to 1797 – is joined, with regard to the Balkans, by other more specific facts: for start, we must consider that Venice is the power under whose flags the hajduks fought in the war of Candia, Morea and others (Lane, 1978). Venice was for centuries the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks in the Balkans; and the lands ruled and defended by Saint Mark’s Republic are the places where many refugees, who periodically escape the interior of the Balkan peninsula, can find a shelter (Jacov, 1991). In the name of Venice and, particularly, fighting for Venice, Christians of the Western Balkans can form the first rudimentary consciousness of themselves, if not of their nation(s) (Milošević, 1988). It is by choosing Venice that Balkan hinterland Slavs, at least the ones closer to the border and who have the ability to migrate and change sides, claim and shape their first conscious self-affirmation and identity. Finally, Venice secures the subjects, even during its decadence (its neutral, uncombative, sometimes even cowardly Eighteenth century), long de-