the breakup of the Soviet Union) that permitted the admission of the Eastern countries to full membership in the IEOs at a pace that the author could scarcely have been expected to anticipate.


Zdenko Zlatar has produced a very interesting study of Dubrovnik’s response to what he calls “the Great Conspiracy,” a project of the Counter-Reformation in the early seventeenth century—supported by the papacy, Jesuits, Spanish monarchy and the houses of Savoy and Mantua—to launch an attack against the Balkan interior from the Adriatic coast to liberate from the Turks the South Slavs (who were expected to contribute by an uprising). This plan endangered the commercial economy of both Dubrovnik and Venice (otherwise rivals of one another), heavily dependent on trade with the Ottoman Empire and, of course, in the likely event of failure, the de facto independence Dubrovnik had maintained (despite its submission to Ottoman tribute) from both the Ottomans and Venice.

Zlatar lays out in clear fashion how Dubrovnik was administered and how its ruling institutions were monopolized by its patriciate—a closed class of some thirty odd families. His presentation will be of great value to anyone wanting to get a clear understanding of these matters. He also provides a fascinating discussion on the relations between city and Catholic Church, and the city’s efforts, usually successful, to limit the Church’s interference in its domestic affairs.

The Great Conspiracy, to be launched against the Balkan Ottomans in the vicinity of Dubrovnik, obviously presented the town with dangerous choices: loyalty to the Ottomans required by its vassal status or loyalty to the Church and that institution’s revived crusading response to the existence of an Islamic empire in Europe that “tyrannized” over large numbers of fellow Slavs. How did members of the patriciate respond? Zlatar finds that without question the Great Conspiracy would represent the worst case of factional struggle in the history of early modern Dubrovnik, if not in the city’s entire history. Zlatar’s thesis can be put in his own words:

All historians writing on Dubrovnik in the past two hundred years have agreed that the Ragusan Republic [Dubrovnik] was staunchly loyal to the Porte in the 16th and 17th centuries. Is it possible that such a view is erroneous? Is the historians’ assumption that the Ragusan government was a monoloty—and a selfishly pro-Turkish one—too simplistic? This is precisely where historians want wrong: assuming that the official policy reflected accurately the wishes and views of the whole ... patriciate, [historians] had no
choice but to argue that a pro-Turkish course was the unanimous aspiration of the entire patriciate. In fact it was not: for the official course, in Dubrovnik as elsewhere, reflected the majority policy, not the policy of the entire ruling class. As a matter of fact there was a strong anti-Turkish sentiment among the minority patriciate (pp. 261-62).

In the argument that follows, he presents much evidence of this anti-Turkish sentiment and then turns to the activities of a small number of patricians (chiefly of the Resti family) who were drawn into the Counter-Reformation plot, their exposure, and the proceedings taken against them (including a conscious attempt to suppress records of the divided opinion among the ruling class). His description of the factions and in-fighting among patricians is especially well done. And in the end he concludes that the crisis was "primarily ideological in nature and not economic and/or social, as historians have maintained. Though this crisis had both political and socioeconomic repercussions, it was caused by the differences between the world views of the opposing factions within the patriciate" (p. 357).

However, in trying to determine how patricians, silent in the records, lined up, Zlatar had to resort to some educated guess work; one of his principles to determine the side taken by an individual was his tie to a second family through marriage, which clearly has merit on some occasions, particularly if nuptials were recent of the individual in question had married into a superior family. However, at times marriages were not recently concluded, and Zlatar seems to opt for loyalty to the cause of in-laws over loyalty to position of other members of one's own brotherhood. On the surface, this seems to me to be an odd choice and one calling for an argued justification. However, whether non-vocal council member Bona voted for the cause of his first cousin or that of his father-in-law is a minor issue in the broad context of this fascinating subject and does not detract from Zlatar's fine presentation.

The book's flaws, and again they are not central to his argument, appear in its laying out of the general European context of this planned confrontation between the Catholic crusade and Islam. These sections include far too detailed presentations about the potential actors. Having no claim to originality, they not only make the volume unnecessarily long but distract from the truly exciting and original presentation of the local story to be told. Moreover, these discussions contain a certain number of over-simplified and outdated generalizations. Particularly flawed is Zlatar's contention that the papacy played a major role in building up an ideology to justify an imperial title for the Muscovite tsar, with the key ingredient being the marriage between Ivan III and Zoe Palaeologina. In fact, both the alleged papal role in creating such ideological underpinnings and the alleged ideology itself are not demonstrable. The tsar's title started being used, on occasion, from 1480 when Muscovy, having shed its vassalage to the Golden Horde, became a fully independent state; and later, when its publicists wanted to justify imperial titles, they never turned to the Palaeologos marriage but to legends like Monomakh's "cap" or the descent of the Riuriks from Augustus' alleged brother Prus. His discussion of the proposed boundaries for the five South Slav king-