



## **Constructing a Mainland State in Literature: Perceptions of Venice and Its Terraferma in Marin Sanudo's Geographical Descriptions**

Sandra Toffolo

Volume 37, numéro 1, hiver 2014

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1090796ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v37i1.21280>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Toffolo, S. (2014). Constructing a Mainland State in Literature: Perceptions of Venice and Its Terraferma in Marin Sanudo's Geographical Descriptions. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 37(1), 5–30. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v37i1.21280>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article se concentre sur la façon dont, dans une période d'importants changements politiques, les récits concernant Venise et son état sur le continent pouvaient être construits et transformés. Trois descriptions géographiques du patricien vénitien Marin Sanudo (1466-1536) sont analysées et servent d'analyse de cas : *Itinerarium Marini Sanuti Leonardi filij patricij Veneti cum syndicis Terre Firme*, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, et *Descriptione de la patria de Friul*. Plusieurs thèmes entremêlés sont abordés : la façon dont Sanudo justifie le règne de Venise sur un large territoire de l'Italie continentale, sa perception des liens entre capitale et territoire continental ainsi que son opinion sur la force de ces liens. Je montre que sa construction d'une image de l'état vénitien possède sa propre dynamique interne. Tel que le montre le développement chronologique présent dans les écrits de Sanudo, sa représentation de l'état vénitien est en partie une réaction aux circonstances politiques, mais n'en est pas un reflet direct.

# Constructing a Mainland State in Literature: Perceptions of Venice and Its *Terraferma* in Marin Sanudo's Geographical Descriptions

SANDRA TOFFOLO

European University Institute

*This article focuses on how, in a time of important political changes, narratives concerning Venice and its mainland state could be constructed and transformed. As case study, three geographical descriptions by the Venetian patrician Marin Sanudo (1466–1536) are analyzed: Itinerarium Marini Sanuti Leonardi filij patricij Veneti cum syndicis Terre Firme, De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae, and Descriptione de la patria de Friul. Several interwoven themes are treated: the ways Sanudo justified Venice's rule over a large territory on the Italian mainland, his perception of the links between capital and mainland territory, and his view on the strength of these links. I show that the way Sanudo constructed an image of the Venetian state had its own internal dynamics. As shown in the chronological development present in Sanudo's works, his representation of the Venetian state is partly a reaction to the political circumstances, but not a direct reflection of them.*

*Cet article se concentre sur la façon dont, dans une période d'importants changements politiques, les récits concernant Venise et son état sur le continent pouvaient être construits et transformés. Trois descriptions géographiques du patricien vénitien Marin Sanudo (1466-1536) sont analysées et servent d'analyse de cas : Itinerarium Marini Sanuti Leonardi filij patricij Veneti cum syndicis Terre Firme, De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae, et Descriptione de la patria de Friul. Plusieurs thèmes entremêlés sont abordés : la façon dont Sanudo justifie le règne de Venise sur un large territoire de l'Italie continentale, sa perception des liens entre capitale et territoire continental ainsi que son opinion sur la force de ces liens. Je montre que sa construction d'une image de l'état vénitien possède sa propre dynamique interne. Tel que le montre le développement chronologique présent dans les écrits de Sanudo, sa représentation de l'état vénitien est en partie une réaction aux circonstances politiques, mais n'en est pas un reflet direct.*

In the year 1483 the young Venetian patrician Marin Sanudo accompanied three Venetian magistrates, the *auditori nuovi*, on the tour they made through the mainland state in order to inspect the exercise of justice and to hear the complaints of the people. Afterwards he wrote an extensive work in which he described “the cities, fortresses, towns, villages, lakes, rivers, sources, fields, meadows, and woods that are under Venetian rule on the side of the

mainland.<sup>21</sup> He did not stop at this one geographical description: between 1493 and 1530 he wrote an equally extensive description of the city of Venice, while in 1502–03 he again described a part of the Venetian state.

The Venetian state in Sanudo's lifetime extended over a large territory. While Venice had already for centuries been at the head of a large territory east of the lagoon city (the so-called *Stato da Mar*), the Venetian mainland state, called the *Stato da Terra* or *Terraferma*, came into being in the course of the long fifteenth century. Rather than concentrate on this state's institutionalized characteristics, I will focus here on the way contemporaries could construct narratives regarding the relations between Venice and its mainland state. I argue that this formed an individual constituent of the process of early modern state formation, which deserves to be studied as a topic in its own right.

In this article I focus on the case study of Marin Sanudo's geographical descriptions. It will in fact become clear that the development of Sanudo's construction of an image of Venice and its Terraferma did not always run parallel to that of the state's institutionalized aspects. I will analyze the mechanisms by which Sanudo constructed and transformed specific images of Venice and its mainland state. Several interwoven themes will be explored: the ways in which Sanudo justified the fact that Venice now ruled over a large territory in the northeast of the Italian mainland, his perception of the nature of the links between capital city and subject mainland territory, and his view on the strength of these links.

### The political background

For many centuries the Venetian dominion on the Italian peninsula had been limited to a strip of land bordering the Venetian lagoon, called the Dogado. This changed in 1339, when Venice acquired Treviso and its province. Expansion of the Venetian mainland state on a much larger scale took place after the War of Chioggia (1378–81). Through conquest, voluntary subjection, and inheritance this expansion continued during the entire fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, until the Venetian mainland state comprised very roughly the area which nowadays forms Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, and eastern Lombardy.

1. "le terre, castelli, borgi, ville, lagi, fiumi, fonti, campi, prati et boschi ene soto l'imperio Veneto da la parte di terra...." Marin Sanudo, *Itinerario di Marin Sanuto per la terraferma veneziana, nell'anno MCCCCLXXXIII*, ed. Rawdon Brown (Padova: Tipografia del Seminario, 1847), p. 21. All translations into English are my own unless stated otherwise.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, hostility of foreign powers against Venice grew, culminating in the formation of the League of Cambrai in 1508. Following Venice's defeat at the Battle of Agnadello in May 1509, almost the entire mainland state was lost to the members of the League. In the course of the following War of the League of Cambrai (1509–17) Venice managed to reconquer the largest part of this territory. Its striving for enlargement of territory on the Italian mainland, however, did not return.

The political uniting of the lagoon city Venice and the territories of north-eastern Italy did not lead to a state we can call wholly unified. However, it would be anachronistic to consider the fifteenth-century Venetian mainland state a failure, since the aim for a unitary state did not exist in this era.<sup>2</sup> With its mixture of unification and division, the Venetian mainland state lasted in relative stability for roughly four centuries, until its downfall in 1797.

This combination of unification and dichotomy can be found in many aspects of the relations between capital city and mainland territory.<sup>3</sup> Broadly speaking, Venice governed its possessions on the Italian mainland in the Renaissance in the same way as its overseas territory. Pragmatic concessions were made in order to maintain continuity. Venetian patricians were sent for relatively short periods to hold the highest administrative offices, while a certain degree of civil autonomy was maintained: Venetian governors only interfered in exceptional cases and in specific sectors, but left the everyday administration of

2. On the use and uselessness of such a test for modernity, see James S. Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice: Vicenza in the Early Renaissance State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 178–79.

3. On relations between the various constituents of the Venetian state in the Renaissance, see (among many titles on this subject) David Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice, 1380–1580* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1970); Nicholas Davidson, “As Much for Its Culture as for Its Arms<sup>3</sup>: The Cultural Relations of Venice and Its Dependent Cities, 1400–1700,” in *Mediterranean Urban Culture, 1400–1700*, ed. Alexander Cowan (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), pp. 197–214, 264–270; Elena Fasano Guarini, “Center and Periphery,” in *The Origins of the State in Italy, 1300–1600*, ed. Julius Kirshner, *Studies in European History from the Journal of Modern History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 74–96; Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice*; Michael Knapton, “Venice and the Terraferma,” in *The Italian Renaissance State*, ed. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 132–55; John E. Law, *Venice and the Veneto in the Early Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 2000); Nicolai Rubinstein, “Italian Reactions to Terraferma Expansion in the Fifteenth Century,” in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (London: Faber, 1973), pp. 197–217; Alfredo Viggiano, *Governanti e governati: legittimità del potere ed esercizio dell'autorità sovrana nello stato veneto della prima età moderna* (Treviso: Fondazione Benetton, 1993).

their subject cities to local structures. On the level of law we see the existence of a dual jurisdiction: the mainland kept using its traditional *ius commune*, instead of being forced to take over the law of the capital—in contrast with the contemporary Milanese and Florentine states, for example, where this was more the case. Nevertheless, elements from the mainland legal tradition entered into the Venetian tradition and vice versa.

Also with regard to high culture, such as painting and literature, we cannot speak of either complete unification or division of the Venetian Terraferma and the lagoon city. In other fields, too, there was interaction between capital and mainland territory: for instance, intermarriage occurred between Venetian and Terraferma inhabitants; Venetian patricians increasingly owned land on the Terraferma; and many other types of people moved between lagoon city and mainland, such as merchants, artisans, scholars, and artists.

### Marin Sanudo and images of Venice

Marin Sanudo (1466–1536) was a member of one of the oldest families of the Venetian patriciate. He was one of Renaissance Venice's most prolific writers. He never, though, obtained the position of official historiographer of the city which he aspired to have. His political ambitions had just as little success: apart from some positions of minor importance around the turn of the century, he was rarely elected to office. In addition to the work which nowadays he is best known for—namely, his diaries, consisting of 58 volumes—he wrote many other works on a variety of topics. Most of these were, like the geographical descriptions that form the focus of this article, written in vernacular, “so that learned and unlearned people can read and understand it.”<sup>4</sup> Although Sanudo stated in his *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* that he intended this work for “both our patricians and foreigners,” this choice of language would have limited the audience to people familiar with the Venetian vernacular; that is, mainly people from the Venetian state.<sup>5</sup> Even though some of Sanudo's

4. “acciò dotti, et indotti la possino leggere et intendere.” Marin Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae, ovvero, La Città di Venetia (1493–1530)*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò, Collana di testi inediti e rari 1 (Milano: Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1980), p. 5.

5. “sì da patritii nostri qual da forestieri.” Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus*, p. 5. Later in this article it will become clear that with “forestieri” Sanudo intended both people from outside the Venetian state, and from outside the city of Venice but within the borders of the state.

works, such as the *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, circulated in manuscript form, none was ever published until a few centuries after his death. Elegant Latin histories of humanists such as Marcantonio Sabellico and Pietro Bembo were preferred to the vernacular chronicles of Sanudo, whose priority was to provide a large quantity of information with little care for transforming it into a coherent and fluent narrative.<sup>6</sup>

This article focuses on three works of Sanudo's which have in common that they are devoted in their entirety to the description of a certain geographical entity. Following his tour with the *auditori nuovi* in 1483, Sanudo made a description of the Venetian Terraferma entitled *Itinerarium Marini Sanuti Leonardi filij patricij Veneti cum syndicis Terre Firme*. Years later he wrote *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, on the city of Venice. The original version was written in 1493, but until 1530 Sanudo continued to add information, and in 1515 he wrote a new version of the third part of the work, *De magistratibus*.<sup>7</sup> He made a new description of the Terraferma—this time of only a part—when in 1502–03 he wrote about Friuli in the *Descriptione de la patria de Friul*.

6. Angela Caracciolo Aricò, "Marin Sanudo il giovane: le opere e lo stile," *Studi veneziana* 55 (2008), pp. 351–90; Angela Caracciolo Aricò, "Introduzione," in Marin Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. ix–xxix; Angela Caracciolo Aricò, "Marin Sanudo il giovane, precursore di Francesco Sansovino," *Lettere italiane* 31, no. 3 (1979), pp. 419–37. For example: one of the conditions under which Andrea Navagero in 1516 was given the position of official historiographer was to record the Venetian history "non cum el mezo de compendiose e incerte, varie et rude cronice e annali, ma de certe, autentiche, elegante et floride historie" (not through compendious, uncertain, various, and crude chronicles and annals but with certain, authentic, elegant, and well-developed histories). See Franco Gaeta, "Storiografia, coscienza nazionale e politica culturale nella Venezia del Rinascimento," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3: *Dal primo Quattrocento al concilio di Trento*, vol. 1, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980), p. 79. Translation: William James Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 139.

7. *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* is divided into three parts. The first part, *De origine*, deals with Venice's history. *De situ* (also called *Laus urbis Venetae*) is in its turn divided into two parts: the first has the structure of a self-contained description of the city, while the second consists of a collection of lists. The third part, *De magistratibus*, deals with Venetian magistracies. In this article I usually refer to the original version of 1493. When I speak of Sanudo's later revisions of and additions to the text, I explicitly mention this. A new edition of the *De origine, situ et magistratibus*, again edited by Angela Caracciolo Aricò, has been published recently. This has unfortunately been too late to be used for this article.

Sanudo was not the only person in the Renaissance to write about the Venetian state. Ideas on this state were conveyed, both explicitly and implicitly, by many different people and in many shapes and forms: textual forms like official magistrates' reports, political treatises, and travel accounts of foreign visitors, as well as forms such as art, architecture, and ceremonial. These different representations influenced each other. Sometimes authors even state this explicitly. To mention an example, already on the very first page of his *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* Marin Sanudo refers to various unspecified chronicles and to Flavio Biondo.<sup>8</sup> Narratives could also travel further abroad: in his description of Venice, Felix Fabri, a pilgrim from the German town Ulm, takes over accounts which he has read in the works of Sabellico, who was living in Venice.<sup>9</sup> The mutual influence of various forms of representations is attested for instance by the people, from both in and outside Venice, who saw depictions of a certain episode in Venetian history—the 1177 Peace of Venice—in the Hall of the Great Council, or witnessed ceremonies that referred to the same event, and were so impressed by them that in their works they describe both the representations and the historical event.<sup>10</sup>

Historiography has often referred to the images created in these manners as the “myth of Venice.”<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the multiplicity of simultaneously

8. Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 9.

9. Felix Fabri, *Fratris Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, ed. Konrad Dieterich Hassler, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Sumtibus societatis litterariae stuttgardiensis, 1849), pp. 418–19.

10. For example: Santo Brasca and Gabriele Capodilista, *Viaggio in Terrasanta di Santo Brasca (1480), con l'Itinerario di Gabriele Capodilista (1458)*, ed. Anna Laura Momigliano Lepschy (Milano: Longanesi, 1966), p. 48; Pietro Casola, *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Year 1494*, ed. M. Margaret Newett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1907), pp. 126–27; Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi, *El sommo della condizione di Vinegia*, ed. Marta Ceci (Roma: Zauli, 1995), p. 10; Georges Lengherand, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand, mayeur de Mons en Haynaut, a Venise, Rome, Jérusalem, Mont Sinai & Le Kayre, 1485–1486*, ed. Denis Charles Godefroy-Ménilglaise (Mons: Masquillier & Dequesne, 1861), pp. 46–47, 80; Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 34–35; Girnand Von Schwalbach, “Girnand von Schwalbach, ‘Reise zum Heiligen Grab’ (1440),” in *Fünf Palästina-Pilgerberichte aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Randall Herz, Dietrich Huschenbett, and Frank Sczesny, *Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter 33* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1998), p. 111; Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, ed. Malcolm Henry Ikin Letts, *The Broadway Travellers* (London: G. Routledge, 1926), pp. 156, 159–62.

11. The term was coined in 1958 by Gina Fasoli and was quickly taken over by other scholars of Venetian history. Gina Fasoli, “Nascita di un mito,” in *Studi in onore di Gioacchino Volpe*, vol. 1 (Firenze: Sansoni,

existing narratives concerning Venice, and their constant transformations, should not be overlooked. Analysis of single cases can shed light on important issues. Sanudo and, more specifically, his geographical descriptions are a good example of this. Although Sanudo was not the only person writing about Venice and the Terraferma, his geographical descriptions form an excellent case study to analyze how narratives concerning the Venetian state could be constructed. The fact that of one author we possess not one but several geographical descriptions, which are very extensive and which date from various stages of a particularly turbulent period in Venetian history, provides us with the opportunity to make a detailed case study of the ways in which a Venetian patrician could shape and transform images of the relations between lagoon city and Terraferma.

### Justification and perception of links

The *Itinerarium* is not an explicitly apologetic text seeking to justify Venice's mainland expansionism. A few times Sanudo even makes small references to atrocities committed by the Venetian army in the war with Ferrara (1482–84).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the work does contain passages from which we can gather how Sanudo attempts to justify the Venetian acquisition of mainland territory. An example of this is his occasional use of the word “tyrant” for the ruler of Ferrara and former rulers of cities now under Venetian rule.<sup>13</sup> Sanudo was certainly not the first person to use this word to convey certain ideas on the rightfulness of a

---

1958), pp. 447–79.

12. “Cavalchato sopra il fiume, visto sempre caxe et palazi brusiati da' nostri...” (When I rode along the river, I kept seeing houses and palaces that were burnt down by our people...), in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 49. “È uno palazzo bellissimo, con pyture et zardini, ruinado in qualche parte da' nostri...” (There is a very beautiful building, with paintings and gardens, in some parts ruined by our people...), in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 57. “[E]t a la fin è una rocheta vechia, inhabitata et rota, ne la qual al tempo de Italian, Capitano de la Signoria, havendo preso la città et la rocha, questa parte restava, et combatendo fu ferito in una gamba, et per tal ferita non volse tuorli a pati, ma che i saltasse giù; et cussi fece” (And at the end there is an old, small fortress, uninhabited and ruined. When in the time of Italian, Captain of the Signoria [the count of Carmagnola], the city and the fortress had been conquered, this part remained. While he was fighting he was wounded in a leg, and because of this wound he did not want to come to pacts with them, but he wanted them to jump down, and this was done). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 76.

13. Examples can be found in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, pp. 16, 28, 39, 104.



ruler's dominion: people for many centuries had been writing on how to define a tyrannical ruler and how to deal with him.<sup>14</sup> By defining former rulers of conquered territories as tyrants, Sanudo gives Venice the right, almost, or even the duty to overthrow their reign. Particularly strong use of "tyrant" is made in the description of Verona, where the reign of the former tyrant rulers of the city is placed in sharp contrast with the current Venetian rule:

[Verona] was the capital and the seat of the king of the Marca Trevigiana, and at the time of the tyrant lords Della Scala it held sway over this, Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, Feltre, Belluno, Brescia, Parma, Reggio, and Lucca: but the tyrant Ezzelino da Romano subjected it in 1250, and after that it suffered under various tyrants and *podestà*. After that ten years under Mastino I della Scala, then under his successors, then under Giangaleazzo Visconti; and then Francesco da Carrara conquered it, and it was thus subjugated with great calamities and intolerable harm. But then, having in 1404 come under the Venetian empire, for its benefit and freedom, in a marvellous way it has grown and has become rich, and it improves day by day.<sup>15</sup>

Besides branding political adversaries as tyrants, this pointing to the improvement cities have made ever since they came under Venetian rule is another way in which Sanudo tries to convince his readers of the justifiability

14. On definitions of a tyrant throughout the ages and on the answers given to the question of how to deal with him, see Mario Turchetti, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2001). On the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in particular, see pp. 291–332. Some Italian humanists in the service of *signori* broke down the distinction between monarchy and tyranny, focusing on virtuous exercise of power rather than legitimacy of its origins: see James Hankins, "Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Krayer, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 128.

15. "et era capo et sedia dil Re de la Marca Trivisana, et nel tempo de li signori Tyrani de la Scala, dominava questa, Padoa, Terviso, Vicenza, Feltre, Civald de Bellune, Brexa, Parma, Rezo et Luca: ma Ecelino de Romano tyran, del anno M.C.C.L la subiugò, et dapoi varij tyrani et Potestà pati. Dapoi diece anni Mastino primo da la Scala, poi li suo' menori, et Zuan Galeazo viceconte; *demum* Francesco de Karara la prese, et alor servite con gran calamità et intolerabile dano. *Sed demum* del M.C.C.C.IV venuta soto l'imperio veneto, per suo beneficio et libertà, in mirabile è venuta incressimento et opulenta, e di giorno in giorno melgio si rinova." In Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 97.

of the Venetian conquests on the Italian mainland.<sup>16</sup> Connected with this (to mention another example) are the comments in which Sanudo praises the practice of *auditori nuovi* travelling through the Terraferma as a demonstration of Venice's benevolence and good rule over its subject territories.<sup>17</sup> Another way in which Sanudo implicitly seeks to justify the enlargement of Venetian rule is by pointing at cities placing themselves voluntarily under Venice's protection.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, in some cases he states that a recently conquered area had already made part of the Venetian territory before, so as to underline that Venice's claims on this area did not come out of nowhere.<sup>19</sup>

Sanudo's ideas are in keeping with the ways the Venetian government tried to justify its rule over the Terraferma. When we look at contemporary state papers and chronicles, Venice's early fifteenth-century mainland conquests were not perceived as a significant change of policy, either by Venetians

16. See also, "[M]a in questo tempo, zoè del 1440 in qua, che vene soto el Dominio Veneto, è in mirabile cressimento, et opulenta..." (But in this time, that is from 1440 onwards, in which [Brescia] came under Venetian rule, it is marvellously growing, and wealthy...), in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 70; and "Et concludendo ben li sta: *Brixia magni potens Marco dominante triumphat*" (And in conclusion, [Brescia] is well with it [Venice]: "Great and powerful Brescia triumphs under the rule of Mark"). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 73.

17. Sanudo, *Itinerario*, pp. 21–23. Sanudo also writes about the appreciation of the inhabitants of the Terraferma for this system: "Era qui Pretore Nicolao Copo di Jacomo F, da bene in vero; et fece venir, *ut vidi* quando vi fui, alcuni puti con lance in mano, cridando *Marco* in honor de la Sublime Signoria nostra, et dimostrando laude al suo juxto Pretore" (Nicolò Coppo, son of Jacopo, was magistrate here, truly an honest man. And, as I saw when I was there, he had made some children come with lances in their hands, who were shouting "Marco" in honour of our sublime Signoria, and who were showing praise to its just magistrate), in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 104. See also the *De magistratibus*: both in the older version of this text (Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 126–27) and in the newer one (pp. 259–60).

18. For example: "[E]t già *alias* dimandò de gracia a la Signoria che li dovesse mandar uno Pretore, acciò non fusse più soto nè Vicenza nè Verona; et vi pol star..." (And already at another time [Cologna] asked the Signoria to send a magistrate, so that it would not be anymore under either Vicenza or Verona; and this was granted...). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 105.

19. For example: "Già del M.C.C.C.X Bernardo Venerio de Jac.º F. fu qui Pretore, perchè questo Poxene altre volte fu veneto..." (Already in 1410 Bernardo Venerio, son of Jacopo, was magistrate here, because this Polesine at other times was under Venetian rule...). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 43. The Polesine was one of the main territories at stake during the Ferrara war. It had been under Venetian rule from 1395 to 1438 as security for a loan to the Este. John E. Law, "The Venetian Mainland State in the Fifteenth Century," in *Venice and the Veneto*, p. 153.

or by people from elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> Nor were they regarded in the first half of the century as manifestations of a Venetian aspiration to gain rule over Italy. In Florence, for instance, in the first half of the century there existed the fear that the Duke of Milan was trying to create an Italian kingdom, but Venice's expansion into eastern Lombardy was not considered in this way, since it did not constitute a danger to Florence, and since already for a long time the acquisition of neighbouring city-states (often justified by pointing at a need for protection) had been considered a legitimate aspiration for communes.<sup>21</sup> The idea in Italian politics that Venice was aiming at the *imperio*<sup>22</sup> *d'Italia* developed in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

In negotiations and interactions with other states or with newly subjugated territories, the Venetian state responded to this accusation by justifying the conquests on the mainland in two main ways: stating that the subjugated areas had brought themselves spontaneously under Venetian rule, and appealing to right of conquest, which constituted a stronger assertion of sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> The ways in which Sanudo attempts to justify Venice's conquests on the Italian

20. Grubb, pp. 6–8; John E. Law, "Relations Between Venice and the Provinces of the Mainland," in *Venice and the Veneto*, pp. 77–85.

21. Rubinstein.

22. The term *imperium* was an unclear one in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Originally the term had indicated the power held by the highest Roman magistracies, but later it came to hold a territorial meaning as well. Moreover, Saint Augustine had applied the term *Romanum imperium* to both direct subjection and alliance. In medieval public law the term had been used exclusively to indicate the Holy Roman Empire. Italian humanists could use the term in the same way as they used *dominium*, in order to describe Italian territorial states, but they could also use it to indicate political ascendancy in Italy—as in the case of these accusations towards Venice. Rubinstein, pp. 200–01.

23. Law stresses the conflict over Friuli in the first half of the fifteenth century as the moment in which an anti-Venetian sentiment originated. Rubinstein differentiates between anti-Venetian feelings, which were the result of Venetian Terraferma policy, and the idea that it was Venice's ultimate goal to rule over Italy. This latter idea, according to Rubinstein, developed in the second half of the century as a result from diplomatic action and propaganda: it was formulated first in Sforza propaganda and later taken over in other Italian states. See John E. Law, "Venetian Rule in the Patria del Friuli in the Early Fifteenth Century: Problems of Justification," in *Venice and the Veneto*, pp. 1–22; Rubinstein.

24. Grubb, pp. 6–8; Law, "Relations Between Venice and the Provinces of the Mainland"; Law, "Venetian Rule in the Patria del Friuli"; John E. Law, "Verona and the Venetian State in the Fifteenth Century," in *Venice and the Veneto*, pp. 9–22; Rubinstein; Viggiano, pp. 8, 26–27. Law's "Venetian rule in the Patria del Friuli" shows in detail which arguments were used by the Venetian government in legal and diplomatic negotiations in attempts to convince other powers of the justifiability of the conquest of Friuli.

mainland are characterized by a relatively benign attitude, instead of stressing Venice's sovereignty. The acquisitions of mainland territory are presented not so much as conquests, but rather as liberations from tyrannical rulers and a path towards prosperity.

This point shows us something about how Sanudo perceived the link between Venice and the Terraferma. Conditions of subjugated cities often improve thanks to the capital: a beneficial influence from a higher entity to a lower one. This relationship could be illustrated by an inscription which Sanudo saw in Rovereto and reproduced in his *Itinerarium*: "Sleep safe all; the winged Lion himself, always watchful, oh citizens, will guard this city."<sup>25</sup> The subject city Rovereto in this case is asleep, doing nothing, while Venice is taking care of it.

At the same time, the existence of the Venetian mainland state was perceived as affecting not only the Terraferma, but the city of Venice as well. The possession of a mainland state contributed to Venice's glory by making it richer and more powerful, while the benevolence just mentioned emphasized its image of good government. It also provided the city with more connections with antiquity, through the classical pasts of its subject cities. The classical past that Sanudo speaks about, though, still belongs essentially to the Terraferma. It is now associated with the city of Venice through their political connection, but the two remain separate entities.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that Venice had already had a link with antiquity, through the narrative of its double foundation. For this aspect, the actual acquisition of the Terraferma in the fifteenth century brought about a reinforcement of a concept with older roots, not the realization of a completely new concept. Starting from the oldest work on Venetian history handed down to us—the early eleventh-century chronicle of John the Deacon—for centuries

25. "Securi dormite omnes; custodiet urbem / Pervigil hanc, cives, aliger ipse Leo," in Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 94.

26. Brown argues that in Sanudo's *Itinerarium* the classical past of the mainland was seen as reflecting on the city of Venice: according to her, there was a process of incorporating this classical past into Venice's own history through the mentioning of classical literature about the Terraferma, remnants of classical structures, and famous inhabitants from antiquity. Patricia Fortini Brown, "Acquiring a Classical Past. Historical Appropriation in Renaissance Venice," in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, ed. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 27–39. See also Brown's *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

authors wrote about the origins of Venice. This story went through various developments over time and was not the same in all works. By the fifteenth century, however, a clear paradigm can be distinguished.<sup>27</sup> According to most fifteenth-century accounts of Venice's origins, there were two Venices. The first Venice was founded by Antenor after the fall of Troy<sup>28</sup> and stretched from Pannonia to the Adda, with Aquileia as its centre. This is where Saint Mark went to convert people to Christianity. In the year 421, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, people from this area fled from Attila to the islands in the lagoon, where they founded the city of Venice, regarded as the second Venice by this historiographical tradition. According to a tradition going back to the Paduan author Jacopo Dondi (probably writing between 1328 and 1339), it had been people from Padua who founded Rialto. Nevertheless, since this element appeared to give primacy to Padua, it was not often adopted.<sup>29</sup>

In the version of Venice's foundation legend that was dominant in the fifteenth century, there are therefore strong links between the lagoon city Venice and the northeast of the Italian mainland: the population of the city would be made up of people from the mainland, who would also have constructed the buildings, and the name of the city of Venice would derive from the already previously existing region, Venetia. In short, according to this legend the northeastern part of the Italian peninsula was already connected with Venice long before it would ever become part of the Venetian state. Of course, the legend of the double foundation of Venice existed centuries before the creation of the Venetian mainland state. One could, however, pose the question whether Sanudo and his contemporaries, who were living in a time when such a large

27. Dario Canzian, "L'identità cittadina tra storia e legenda: i miti fondativi," in *La costruzione della città comunale italiana (secoli XII–inizio XIV): ventunesimo convegno internazionale di studi, Pistoia, 11–14 maggio 2007* (Pistoia: Centro italiano di studi di storia e d'arte, 2009), pp. 281–82; Antonio Carile, "Le origini di Venezia nella tradizione storiografica," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 1: *Dalle origini al Trecento*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976), pp. 135–66; Edward Wallace Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 65–74.

28. Besides this Trojan theory, which was used by the majority of writers, there were also theories that the founders of Venice came from either Gaul or Paphlagonia. See Muir, p. 66.

29. Muir, pp. 70–71. There were exceptions. For instance, in the *De origine* Sanudo writes that the Paduans sent three consuls to found the city of Venice and to administer justice to the inhabitants of the Venetian islands, also specifying the names of the consuls—one of them called "Sanudo." Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 13.

part of Venice's political concerns was oriented towards the mainland, could look at this legend without also thinking about the present situation.

One could even wonder if this legend, with its focus on the strong link between Venice and the Terraferma, did not take on a new meaning or topicality in the fifteenth century.<sup>30</sup> More specifically, was it used to justify the Venetian conquest of the Terraferma? There are a few examples of writers doing just this. For example, Paolo Morosini (ca.1406–ca.1482) mentions “the conquest of the ancient Venice” as an argument used by Venetian senators in favour of accepting Vicenza as subject territory.<sup>31</sup> In the sixteenth century, to mention a second example, Gasparo Contarini in his *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* (written between 1524 and 1534) states that with the conquest of the Terraferma, the Venetians merely took back what their ancestors had lost by moving to the lagoon.<sup>32</sup>

Other authors, however, do not appeal to the legend of the double foundation in order to justify mainland expansionism.<sup>33</sup> Sanudo is among these.

30. Brown even suggests, concerning Sabellico's and Sanudo's comments on the diversity of the founders of Venice, that “By the late fifteenth century, these diverse roots might well suggest that the rise to empire was a natural and proper reappropriation of the original homelands of a heterogeneous people.” In Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, p. 164.

31. “Alla loro comparsa ed istanza si divisero i pareri de' Senatori, come suol accadere, qualor si tratta d'importanti e difficili affari. Sostenevano gli uni, che non si avesse a disprezzar una tale offerta, e gli altri che si dovesse assolutamente ricusarla: i primi eran di avviso che dietro le costumanze de'maggiori si sfuggisse la Terraferma e la conquista dell'antica Venezia...” (On their [the Vicentine ambassadors'] appearance and request the opinions of the senators divided, as is usually the case when important and difficult matters are at stake. Some maintained that such an offer should not be spurned, and others that it should definitely be refused: the former were of the opinion that following the customs of the ancestors the Terraferma and the conquest of the ancient Venice slipped...), in Paolo Morosini and Giovanni Cornaro, *Memoria storica intorno alla Repubblica di Venezia, scritta da Paolo Morosini e da Giovanni Cornaro, per la prima volta pubblicata nell'ingresso di S.E. Messer Alvise Pisani, cavaliere, alla dignità di Procuratore di San Marco*, ed. Anton Giovanni Bonicelli (Venezia: Palese, 1796), p. xi. The dating of this work is uncertain. It is addressed to Cicco Simonetta, who was secretary and counsellor of the dukes of Milan from ca.1448 until 1480. See Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 133.

32. Lester J. Libby, “Venetian History and Political Thought after 1509,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 20 (1973), pp. 7–45, p. 25.

33. An example is Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi, who regards fishermen fleeing from Attila the Hun as the first Venetians, thereby focusing on the second foundation of Venice. Guidi, p. 5.

In his *De origine, situ et magistratibus* he does not even mention the double foundation of Venice in the two parts that follow *De origine*. At the beginning of *De situ* he says that the city of Venice was built by Christians.<sup>34</sup> This means that here he is thinking about the second foundation of Venice. And when in Sanudo's later additions to the text two short lists are included, one enumerating some cities founded before the coming of Christ<sup>35</sup> and the other some cities founded afterwards,<sup>36</sup> Venice forms part of the second list, with the date 421. Here as well, then, Sanudo has let go of the myth of the double foundation of Venice, focusing exclusively on the lagoon city when he speaks of Venice. In the *Itinerarium* there is a very short reference to this myth when Sanudo in the introductory poem calls Padua "our root."<sup>37</sup> This is not elaborated further, nor does Sanudo come back to it in the description of Padua. This link, then, is only briefly touched on.

Summing up, in the *Itinerarium* we find an image of the Venetian mainland state as an internally harmonious place, in good economic conditions, with Venice as the caring capital, spending much time and money on the welfare of its subject territories—for example by sending *auditori nuovi*,<sup>38</sup> reconstructing beautiful buildings after fires,<sup>39</sup> and spending money on the university of Padua<sup>40</sup>—and with the subjugated cities loyal to Venice in gratitude for

34. Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 20.

35. Namely, Troy, Ravenna, and Rome. See Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 214. The name of a fourth city is mentioned in this list, which due to a hole in the codex is illegible (Ven. Correr, Cicogna 970, p. 76). It appears to have started with the letter "S" and is therefore unlikely to have been the name of the city of Padua. Either way, the fact remains that the name "Venice" is connected with the year 421 and therefore only with the lagoon city.

36. Namely Constantinople and Venice. See Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 214.

37. "Ne la cita si bella et si felice / Pri' arivam che Antenor Troiano / Edificò e fu de noi radice" (We first arrived in that beautiful and happy city, which the Trojan Antenor founded and which was our root). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 14.

38. "...la nostra Ill.ma Signoria, la qual amava le suo terre et subditi bene meriti, per ben suo li havea mandati con tanta spexa, accio se alcun se volesse lamentar *ut supra*, faria justitia..." (... our most Illustrious Signoria, which loved its territories and meritorious subjects, for their good had sent them [the *auditori nuovi*], with great expenses, so that in case anybody wanted to complain, as said above, justice would be done...), Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 23.

39. Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 26.

40. Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 15, 27.

this good care. This corresponds with the few comments on the Terraferma in the *De origine, situ et magistratibus*.<sup>41</sup> In these works of Sanudo's, then, the lagoon city and Terraferma are mostly treated as two virtually self-contained, though linked, entities.

### Constructing otherness within the borders of a state

Not only in institutionalized characteristics of the Venetian mainland state, but also in Sanudo's representations of the involved territories, a certain dichotomy between lagoon city and subject territories was created. In fact, in the *Itinerarium* as well as in the *De origine, situ et magistratibus*, Sanudo constructs an image of differentiation between the lagoon city and the rest of the Venetian state. This happens in various ways. To start with a rather obvious example, concerning Sanudo's use of certain terms: in the *De origine, situ et magistratibus*, the name "Venice" stands exclusively for the lagoon city.<sup>42</sup> The Venetian state beyond the lagoon is denoted with the word "outside" (*fuora*). Sanudo uses this word for instance in order to delineate the authority of a few magistracies in the *De magistratibus*. About the *auditori nuovi*, to mention an example, he says that usually once every two years<sup>43</sup> "they go outside to the Terraferma and Istria as syndics," he refers to their journey through the Terraferma as the period "when they are outside," and says that they "suspend the judges outside in the same way as happens in this city."<sup>44</sup> By excluding in this way everything outside the

41. As well as the instances mentioned in this section, see Sanudo's remark on Venice paying for the University of Padua (Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 31).

42. Examples include "tutte le sententie fatte sì in Venetia come di fuora in terre et luoghi nostri" (all the judgements made both in Venice as well as outside in our territories and places), "Venexia è in aqua e non ha aqua" (Venice is situated in water and has no water), and a subdivision of churches on the Giudecca, "in isola" (on islands), on Murano, and "in Veniexia" (in Venice). Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 126, 38, 42–43.

43. In reality the *auditori nuovi* were supposed to make their tour once every year. In practice sometimes several years passed before they did this. Grubb, pp. 142–43.

44. "vanno fuora in Terraferma et per l'Histria in sinichado"; "quando sono fuora"; "suspende li giudicij sì fuora come in questa Terra...." Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 126. Other examples include "et uno di loro va ogn'anno fuora nel Friul et Istria a scuoder, et incantar datij et altro, in utilità della Signoria nostra" (and one of them [the *ufficiali alle rason vecchie*] every year goes outside to Friuli and Istria to collect and to auction duties and other matters, for the benefit of our Signoria) (p. 111), and "tutte le sententie fatte sì in Venetia come di fuora in terre et luoghi nostri" (all the judgements made both in Venice as well as outside in our territories and places) (p. 126).



Venetian lagoon, Sanudo depicts the city of Venice as a self-contained entity, while creating a sense of otherness for the Terraferma.

In the *Itinerarium* too, a distinction between Venice and the Venetian Terraferma becomes clear from the use of certain words. This is, for instance, the case with the words *Venitiani* (and its variants in spelling) or *Veneti* (interchangeable with *Venitiani* in this work), in contrast with inhabitants of the Venetian Terraferma. Sanudo makes various references to “our Venetians” living in the Terraferma, even if practically the entire territory he visited made part of the Venetian state.<sup>45</sup> An example of this can be found when he speaks of Treviso. This was the first city of the Terraferma to have come under Venetian rule—something which Sanudo himself acknowledges<sup>46</sup>—yet also in this case a distinction is made between, for example, “sir Bartolomeo Malombra da Puovolo, one of our Venetians”<sup>47</sup> and “the doctor and knight Agostino da Onigo, citizen of Treviso.”<sup>48</sup>

The way Sanudo characterizes these two men is not based on where they live, as the former lived in Treviso and the latter close to Asolo. However, it is also not completely based on citizenship. During the first half of the fifteenth century, the type of Venetian citizenship called *de intus* had been granted to the citizens of several cities of the Venetian Terraferma, namely Verona, Padua,

45. Examples from Sanudo's *Itinerario* include “Et mia 3 luntan de qui è la villa di Noventa adornata de caxe de Venitiani nostri” (And three miles from here is the town of Noventa, adorned with houses of our Venetians) (p. 29); “demum fate mia cinque se trova il castello di Bovolenta chè pur soto Piove, villa bella, adornato di molte caxe di Venitiani...” (At last, going for five miles, one finds the castle of Bovolenta, which is also under the rule of Piove: a beautiful town, adorned with many houses of Venetians...) (p. 31); “Questa villa di Noventa è bellissima, piena di caxe di muro de Veneti nostri, zoè di Hironimo Malipiero, di Piero Vituri, di Chimento Thealdini, de Troilo Malipiero et f., di Martin Pisanelo; et ha una bela chiesiula: la caxa di Nicolò Bafo, di Ant.º Marzelo, di Jac.º Gusoni, di Zuan Da-Rio, et di quelli da Buvolo” (This town of Noventa is very beautiful, full of stone houses of our Venetians, that is of Girolamo Malipiero, of Pietro Vitturi, of Chimento Tealdini, of Troilo Malipiero and son, of Martino Pisaneli, and it has a beautiful chapel: and the house of Nicolò Baffo, of Antonio Marcello, of Jacopo Gussoni, of Giovanni Dario, and of the Dal Bovo [the Contarini di San Paternian]) (pp. 114–15).

46. “Questo [*sic*] fo la prima terra in Teraferma venuta soto la Signoria, et fo del 1388, el qual erra, come ho dito, dil Imperador” (This was the first city on the Terraferma that came under the rule of the Signoria, which was in 1388. It used to belong, as I have said, to the emperor). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 118.

47. “ser. Bort.º Malombra da Puovolo venetiam nostro.” Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 118.

48. “Agustin da Unigo dotor e chavalier, citadino trivixan.” Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 119.

Vicenza, Treviso, Feltre, Belluno, Cadore, Bergamo, Brescia, and Crema.<sup>49</sup> Being a citizen of Treviso in 1483, then, also implied possessing Venetian citizenship *de intus*. This is not how Sanudo describes Agostino da Onigo, however. Although existing geographical and legal differentiations were undoubtedly also a factor, the way in which Sanudo makes a distinction between the two men is based on a fundamental perception of dichotomy between mainland and capital city.

Furthermore, the mere fact that Sanudo deems it necessary to give this type of description is significant for this research. He does this not once but several times: evidently he considers the presence in the Terraferma of inhabitants of the city of Venice and of their houses as important enough to merit repeated mentioning. Apparently this differentiation between people coming from the city of Venice and from subject cities on the mainland was essential in Sanudo's perception of the Venetian state. This creates a view of small, clearly demarcated units of "Venetian-ness" on the Terraferma, which is thus depicted as the "other." As mentioned, in various institutionalized characteristics of the early modern Venetian state a division was maintained between capital city and subject mainland territories. The distinctions made in Sanudo's works are in part a reflection of this, while at the same time they form an individual component of the way in which the Venetian mainland state was constructed. I will come back to this important point later.

Another example of how Sanudo makes a distinction between the city of Venice and the territory outside the lagoon can be found in the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* in a list of bodies of saints throughout the world, outside Venice—by which Sanudo understands cities beyond the Venetian lagoon, both in and outside the Venetian state.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, throughout this work Sanudo brings up the subject territories in general and the Terraferma in particular almost exclusively if otherwise he cannot describe something in the lagoon city.

49. Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *Storia della repubblica di Venezia: dalla guerra di Chioggia alla riconquista della terraferma*, Storia (Torino: Utet Libreria, 1986), pp. 133–40; Grubb, p. 173; Luca Molà and Reinhold C. Mueller, "Essere straniero a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo: accoglienza e rifiuto nei privilegi di cittadinanza e nelle sentenze criminali," in *Le migrazioni in Europa, secc. XIII–XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1994), pp. 839–51; Reinhold C. Mueller, *Immigrazione e cittadinanza nella Venezia medievale* (Roma: Viella, 2010).

50. This part is not included in Caracciolo Aricò's edition (see Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 196), but can be found in Ven. Correr, Cicogna 970, pp. 40–61.

In the *De magistratibus*, for example, magistrates having authority over something in the subject territories are only mentioned if they have authority over something in the lagoon city too, or if they at least have their seat here.<sup>51</sup> Coins in use in the subjugated dominion are only spoken of when Sanudo lists the money produced in the mint, which was situated close to the Ducal Palace.<sup>52</sup>

Another example is the way Sanudo speaks about the public schools in Venice. He first mentions the School of Rialto, speaks about the types of lecture given and by whom, and then says:

This worthy institution the Venetians wanted to have in their city so that whoever wants to acquire the virtues of learning and make himself very scholarly could do so here at Venice without going to study at Padua, where there is such an excellent university, full of scholars from all over the world, maintained at great expense to our Signoria.<sup>53</sup>

He then goes on to mention the other public schools of Venice and the other types of education available. The reference to the University of Padua is very brief here. Apart from the small remark that it is maintained by Venice, no link between the two is mentioned. It is not even explicitly stated that Padua was under Venetian authority (although Sanudo's intended readers—who, after all, would have been interested enough in Venice to be reading about

51. See for example Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 111, 115, 116, 126–27, and 141. Venetian magistrates residing outside the city of Venice and having authority only over matters outside the Venetian lagoon are listed only in the second part of the *De situ*. Not only is it clear, therefore, that Sanudo makes a distinction between these two groups of magistrates, but the enumeration of magistrates outside Venice is also much more concise, since it only lists the names of the functions and gives no explanations.

52. Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 63–64. There were different coins in use in the subject Venetian territories—different in both name and value—but they were coined in the Venetian mint. Cozzi and Knapton, p. 341.

53. “Questo degno instituto voleno Venetiani haver in la sua Terra, che chi vole imparar virtute, et farsi dottissimi, senza andar a studiar a Padoa, dove è il Studio sì eccellentissimo, pieno de scolari di tutte le parte del mondo, et di gran spesa alla Signoria nostra, si possi far qui a Veniexia.” Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, p. 31; translation from *Venice: a Documentary History, 1450–1630*, ed. David Chambers, Jennifer Fletcher, and Brian S. Pullan, Renaissance Society of America Reprint Texts 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 2001), p. 14.

it, and familiar enough with it to be reading in its vernacular—undoubtedly would have known this). In the *Itinerarium* a similar remark is made in the description of Padua: its university is called the most famous one in Italy, attracting many students from every nation, including many from north of the Alps, and maintained with great expense by Venice.<sup>54</sup> In reality, the University of Padua was the only university in the Venetian state, and the Senate several times in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries attempted to make it illegal for people from the Venetian republic to obtain their degrees elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> It is true that the Venetian government, among other things, supervised university administration and selected staff, but this did not mean that cultural influences between Venice and the subject cities in the Terraferma were only in one direction. Many Terraferma cities had a thriving cultural life of their own. Regarding Padua, Davidson even states that “in many areas of cultural activity, Padua led the way.”<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the university—based in a city that was part of the Venetian dominion already for almost nine decades, and that played an important role in the legendary foundation of Venice—is mentioned in the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* only in order to give the reader an idea of the quality of the Venetian schools, and in order to demonstrate how generous and caring the Venetian government is (which is emphasized in the *Itinerarium* as well). In this way, Marin Sanudo once again creates a clear distinction between the city of Venice and its mainland territory.

**Changing representations of links with Venice:  
the *Descriptione de la patria de Friul* and the later additions  
to the *De origine, situ et magistratibus***

Both the *Itinerarium* and the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* were written during a period in which hostility of foreign powers towards Venice already existed, but had not yet reached the level that in the first decade of the sixteenth

54. Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 27. There is also a very short remark on the university in the introductory poem to this work, when Sanudo writes about Padua: “Quiivi è ’l ginnasio de tuti soprano” (There is the gymnasium, supreme over all others”). Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 15.

55. Davidson, “As Much for Its Culture as for Its Arms”; Paul F. Grendler, “The University of Padua 1405–1600: a Success Story,” *History of Higher Education Annual* 10 (1990), pp. 7–18.

56. Davidson, p. 212.

century would lead to the formation of the League of Cambrai. The fact that Sanudo wrote a new description of the Terraferma—this time of only a part—in 1502–03, and that he continued to add information to his description of the city of Venice between 1493 and 1530, provides us with the possibility of analyzing the development over time of Sanudo’s representation of the Venetian Terraferma. As I will show, in his description of Friuli Sanudo places a relatively large emphasis on its political affiliation with Venice. Analysis of texts written during the War of the League of Cambrai shows that Sanudo continued to deem it essential to represent the Terraferma as linked to Venice even after it had been lost in 1509—some parts of it only temporarily, other ones for good.

The *Descriptione de la patria de Friul*, written in 1502–03, speaks only about Friuli, and, compared to the dozens of chapters of the *Itinerarium*, with its 28 pages in the modern edition,<sup>57</sup> it is a relatively short work. In comparison with the *Itinerarium*, it puts somewhat more emphasis on whose government a certain territory falls under.<sup>58</sup> On a few occasions it is not the Venetian government,<sup>59</sup> but most of the time it is (since 1420 almost the whole of Friuli

57. Marin Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli di Marino Sanuto, fatta l'anno MDII–MDIII ed ora per la prima volta pubblicata*, ed. Leonardo Manin (Venezia: Tip. P. Naratovich, 1853).

58. A small example is Marano, of which the full description in the *Itinerarium* reads “Di Monfalcon a Maran è mia 20, dove erra Podestà Antonio da Canal; et di qui fino in Aquileia è mia 9; et prima si trova Aviam, Piers fiumicello, et San Zilio; si passa tre aque a guazo: la Mondina, l’Isonzo, et una altra il nome di la qual ignoro” (It is twenty miles from Monfalcone to Marano, where Antonio da Canal was *podestà*. From here to Aquileia it is nine miles, and first there are Aviano, Pieris, Fiumicello, and Sant’Egidio. Three waters are forded: the Mondina, the Isonzo, and another one of which I do not know the name). [Sanudo makes a mistake here: Aviano is not located in this area.]. Sanudo, *Itinerario*, p. 142. In the *Descriptione de la patria de Friul*: “Circha miglia XX bone distante da Udene quasi su la marina e sito el castel de Marano castello assai decente et secondo castello da mare assai richo et popolato et ha porto in mare per alcuni canali che vano per quelle valle salmastre. In questo la nostra Illustrissima Signoria che ne e domina manda podesta et rectore uno suo venetiano patricio” (About a good twenty miles from Udine, almost at sea, the castle of Marano is situated. It is a very respectable castle, and the second castle at sea that is very rich and populated. It has a seaport by means of some canals that go through those brackish lagoons. Our most Illustrious Signoria, which rules over it, sends one of its Venetian patricians here as *podestà* and *rettore*). Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, p. 28. While the former text focuses more on the villages and waters in the countryside around Aquileia, in the latter text Venetian rule over Marano is stated more explicitly.

59. An example is Pordenone, which Sanudo describes (among other points) as a “grosso e richo castello del seren.<sup>mo</sup> et inclyto Imperatore” (big and rich castle of the most serene and illustrious emperor). Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, p. 30.

was under Venetian rule), and this was something Sanudo's intended readers would most probably have already known.

This emphasis on political dominion can be seen from the very beginning of the work and throughout. The text opens with a short description of the geographical position of Friuli and with a brief comment about its early history, and then continues to state that it is now ruled by the

most invincible and always venerable state of the Venetians, who, according to the indisputable law of their illustrious senate, for its [Friuli's] government every sixteen months send one of the first of their patricians, the title of his rank being *luogotenente* of the *patria* [del Friuli]. And he has his seat and residence in the beautiful and kind city of Udine, where as lord he administers the innate Venetian justice and does justice to all the inhabitants of Friuli who appeal to his very just tribunal.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, almost the first thing the reader learns about Friuli—which is thus given relative emphasis—is that it belongs to the Venetian state and that it is governed very well. The book ends with a similar message: Sanudo enumerates the income the Venetian state has from Friuli, and then states that all of this money is used for the government of Friuli.<sup>61</sup> He thereby emphasizes the absence of any selfish reasons the Venetian republic could have had for annexing Friuli: it is only concerned with the good government of this territory and even uses all the income from it to that end.

The Venetian dominion over a city is mentioned many times in the work as a whole. This is often done without any explicit judgments, such as in the statement “To this [city] our Most Illustrious Signoria, which is lord over it, sends one of its noblemen as lord of the castle...”<sup>62</sup> but sometimes phrases such as the following occur:

60. “invictissimo et sempre augusto stato de Veneciani gli quali secondo le irrefragabile leze de lynclito lor senato ogni XVI mesi mandano al governo de quella uno degli primarii soi patricii il titolo dela dignità dil quale e luogo tenente de la patria et fa il segio et residentia sua ne la bella et zentil terra de Udene la dove come signore la innata justicia veneciana ministra et fa ragione a tutti gli foro juliani incolti che al justissimo suo Tribunale se apellano.” Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, pp. 15–16.

61. Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, pp. 42–43.

62. “In questa la nostra Illustrissima Signoria che ne e signora manda un suo zentilhomio per castellano...” Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, p. 25.

and it is a place and under the jurisdiction of our Most Illustrious Signoria, which according to its praiseworthy custom every sixteen months sends one of its noble Venetians here as *podestà* and *rettore*, who administers justice in civil and criminal [cases] for all the inhabitants who are subject to him.<sup>63</sup>

Once, Sanudo even states: “About twenty miles from Udine and seven from Gorizia, our Most Illustrious Signoria, which knows what to do for the aim and protection, not only of the *Patria del Friuli* but also of the whole of Italy, has constructed a beautiful and strong citadel...”<sup>64</sup>

Compared with the *Itinerarium*, the number of times Sanudo in the *Descriptione de la patria de Friul* brings up the Venetian government is relatively large. The changes in Venice’s political situation that had occurred in the two decades between the writing of the two works form an explanation for this. Even though Sanudo does not always state directly whether he sees Venice’s rule over the territory described as justified, the mere number of times he mentions this rule seems to point to a heightened sensibility of it due to the foreign powers at that time calling its justifiability into question. In particular, his somewhat aggressive comment about Venice knowing what is best for the whole of Italy can hardly be dissociated from the increasing hostility of foreign powers toward Venice in this period. This specific comment refers to the fortress of Gradisca, constructed by Venice in 1479 as protection against the Ottomans, who had been invading Friuli since 1468.<sup>65</sup> Sanudo uses his very explicit reference to these events both as a clear reminder of Venice’s rule over this area and as justification for it.

At the same time, the Venetian republic was dealing with foreign criticism regarding not only its mainland expansionism but also its perceived passivity towards the Ottoman Turks. In the years following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, various states accused each other of not doing

63. “et e logo e jurisdictione de la nostra Illustrissima Signoria la quale secondo la laudevole sua usanza ogni XVI mexi li manda per podesta et rettore uno de suoi nobeli venetiani che fa in civile et criminale raxone a tuti gli habitanti sui subditi.” Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, p. 30.

64. “Cercha miglia XX luntano da Udene et da Goritia 7 la nostra Ill.<sup>ma</sup> Signoria che conosce cio fare al proposito et tutela non solum dela patria del frioli ma etiam de tuta italia ha fabricata una bella et forte Citadella....” Sanudo, *Descrizione della patria del Friuli*, pp. 23–24.

65. Claudio Visintini, *Gradisca: analisi della fortezza veneta* (Trieste: Riva, 1985), pp. 17–18.

enough against the threat of the Turks.<sup>66</sup> In this context, Sanudo's comment on the fortress of Gradisca can be seen as an example of how different types of foreign accusations, concerning different aspects of Venice's politics, could lead to a Venetian patrician writing a geographical description that underlined (much more than was the case in his previous works) the links between Venice and its subject mainland territory. Thus, the scarcity of explicit references to the political acts leading to Venice's still growing dominion on the Italian mainland—in the *Descriptione* as well as in the *Itinerarium*—does not mean that Sanudo's writing about Venice's rule over this territory did not change. While in the *Descriptione de la patria de Friul* no other links than formal political affiliation can be found, Sanudo apparently deemed it necessary to emphasize this link more strongly now that the justifiability of Venice's dominion was ever more being disputed.

Sanudo even deemed it essential to represent mainland territories as linked to Venice when they had come under another ruler. After he had finished the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* in 1493, he kept adding information until 1530—that is, during the period in which Venice fought against Charles VIII and his successors, waged war against various powers in and outside Italy, lost almost the entire Terraferma to the League of Cambrai, and reconquered the largest part of it. Already from the late fourteenth century onwards, opinions among the Venetian higher class had been divided on whether the republic should acquire territory on the mainland.<sup>67</sup> After 1509, opinions continued to differ on the value of the Terraferma for the Venetian state. In contrast with the image given by early sixteenth-century Venetian historical writing, not all Venetian patricians were convinced of the necessity of reconquering the Terraferma; some of them would even have preferred to abandon this territory, considered by them as a useless and dangerous burden to the republic.<sup>68</sup>

Marin Sanudo was not among them, as we can tell from the fact that he offered the Venetian government his services for the re-conquest of the Terraferma.<sup>69</sup> In the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* he mentions the Terraferma

66. King, p. 132.

67. Law, "The Venetian Mainland State in the Fifteenth Century," pp. 158–59.

68. Lester J. Libby, "The Reconquest of Padua in 1509 According to the Diary of Girolamo Priuli," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1975), pp. 323–31; Libby, "Venetian History and Political Thought after 1509."

69. Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (London: Benn, 1980), pp. 251–80.



a few times in texts written between 1509 and 1517. A few years after the Battle of Agnadello, he drew up a list entitled “Names of the bishops and archbishops who in the year 1512<sup>70</sup> are living in the cities of the dominion of our Signoria.”<sup>71</sup> This list contains a section entitled “Terra Ferma,” which includes the names of nine cities: among them not only Padua, which by that time had indeed been reconquered by Venice, but also Cremona, which after 1509 would not become part of the Venetian state again—regarded, then, as still under Venetian rule. A few years later, in his 1515 version of the *De magistratibus*, Sanudo made a list of magistracies which presented a somewhat different version.<sup>72</sup> In this list a section is entitled “In Terra Ferma,” which is subdivided into the different regions of the mainland state. After this, Sanudo makes a list of magistracies that no longer exist.<sup>73</sup> This not only contains magistracies that have been changed—as in the case of Monfalcone, where the *castellano* had been replaced by a *podestà*—but also entire regions with all of their magistracies, such as Romagna and Cremona, that do not appear in the first list with still existing magistracies.

Just as shown earlier in the analysis of Sanudo’s *Descriptione de la patria de Friul*, it is clear that the absence of explicit references to the political and military circumstances of the time does not entail an absence of an opinion on how strongly certain territories were linked to Venice. In these additions to the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* we see that Sanudo’s way of writing about the Terraferma changed during the period 1509–17. He was obviously well acquainted with the crisis the Venetian republic found itself in, and it seems that in these years he did not know how to choose between, for example, a patriotic conviction that the loss of the Terraferma would only be a temporary phenomenon, wishful thinking about reconquering this territory, and the desire to give accurate information (which we see throughout Sanudo’s entire oeuvre) about the existence of specific magistracies. Either way, he apparently still deemed it necessary for his definition of Venice to include the mainland territories in his post-Agnadello lists of Venetian magistracies, whether as still belonging to the

70. Since there is no indication for a month, it is unclear—taking into account the Venetian way of dating—whether Sanudo here is speaking about 1512 or 1513. Either way, we are dealing with a period a few years after the Battle of Agnadello, during the War of the League of Cambrai.

71. “Nomi delli vescovi e arzivescovi sonno ne l’anno 1512 vivi in le terre del Dominio della Signoria nostra.” Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 196–97.

72. Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 277–85.

73. “Rezimenti si feva,” in Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae*, pp. 285–88.

Venetian state or lost. Just as in the rest of the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* and in Sanudo's other works discussed, he sees the city of Venice as one entity, and the Terraferma as another, each remaining linked to the other.

In the *Descriptione* and the later additions to the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* we see, then, how Sanudo's representation of the links between Venice and the mainland changed over the last decades of the fifteenth and the first decades of the sixteenth centuries. The increasingly hostile attitude of foreign powers towards Venice probably caused a heightened awareness in Sanudo of Venice's rule over the Terraferma, leading him to stress this rule—and sometimes to attempt to justify it—more in his *Descriptione* than had been the case in the *Itinerarium*. Later still, in the additions to and new version of the *De origine, situ et magistratibus* we can observe how Sanudo's perception of the mainland adjusted slowly to the changing political circumstances: after the loss of this territory—in some cases definitively—it took Sanudo several years to adapt his view of the Venetian state to the new situation. Nevertheless, he still regarded the Terraferma as having enough links with Venice to include it in his lists written during the War of the League of Cambrai. In light of the accusations and hostility of foreign powers towards Venice, he apparently deemed it safer to give more stress to the links between Venice and its subject territories.

### Conclusion

I started this article with the statement that the construction of narratives concerning Venice and its dominion was an individual constituent of the process of state formation, and hence should be studied as a topic in its own right. Focusing on the way in which Marin Sanudo in his geographical descriptions constructs an image of the Venetian state, I have shown that it indeed has its own internal dynamics. Even if dichotomy existed both in the state's institutionalized characteristics and in Sanudo's representations of the territories, the narrative fashioned by Sanudo does not simply mirror the more institutionalized characteristics of the early modern Venetian state. This does not mean that Sanudo created a narrative without taking into account the political reality, or that without thinking about it he just took over other images of Venice that had been constructed over time. His representations of the Venetian state are in part a reaction to the political circumstances, but not a direct reflection of them. The chronological development present in Sanudo's works clearly shows this.

Sanudo's increasing emphasis on the links between Venice and its Terraferma was probably a reaction to the growing hostility of foreign powers towards Venice. It formed an implicit justification of Venice's mainland expansionism. With this, the final part of the article connects to the first part, showing how the themes interweave.