

Celebrating the Prince from Afar

Echoes from the Jubilant Dominions in the Orations to the Newly Elected Doges (XVI-XVII Century)*

Giovanni Florio

(Università degli Studi di Padova)

In 1562 the Roman-born polygraph Francesco Sansovino¹ published his anthology *Delle orationi recitate a Principi di Venetia nella loro creatione da gli ambasciatori di diverse città*². As overtly suggested by its title, the book consists of a reasoned selection of encomiastic speeches delivered before the newly-elected doges by various illustrious representatives hailing from cities — and *almost cities* — subdued to the Republic of Venice³. According to Sansovino, the anthology's main usefulness was to offer the reader the opportunity of comparing the ingenuity of various rhetors dealing with the same topic: the praise of the doge⁴, the «paradoxical Prince» of the Most Serene Republic⁵. Although marginal, the anthology should be considered as an integral part of Sansovino's ambitious editorial project aiming, on the one hand, to dignify renaissance vernacular rhetoric, and on the other hand, to present the praise of Venice and its Prince as an autonomous encomiastic subgenre⁶.

The statement of Venice's radical uniqueness went hand in hand with a claim of full literary dignity of its vernacular rhetoric: Sansovino's anthology matched the main editorial lines he was carrying out in those years, on the long wave of the Italian 'question of the language'. In this regard, opening the anthology mentioning Pietro Bembo⁷ and re-publishing Gian Giorgio Trissino's vernacular oration to Doge Andrea Gritti (1523)⁸ was a rather programmatic editorial choice, fulfilling both literary and explanatory needs. Sansovino leveraged Trissino's words to provide the reader with an extremely accurate definition of the ceremonial occasion in which such encomiastic speeches were meant to be delivered. According to Trissino, the congratulatory embassy — the convention of electing an ambassador, sending

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¹ For a detailed biography, see Bonora 1994.

² Sansovino 1562.

³ Despite its title, the anthology also included several orations delivered by rhetors on their own behalfs, one speech delivered by Bernardino Tomitano on behalf of the University of Padua (1553), another one made by Francesco Baraterio on behalf of Orazio Farnese (1559) and, finally an oration offered to the Venetian Senate by the ambassador of Bergamo Paolo Zanco (*ibidem*).

⁴ «Orationi [...] nelle quali con grandissimo utile de' lettori si vede la forza dell'eloquenza di molti huomini illustri in una materia sola». *Ibidem*, cover.

⁵ Muir 1977, pp. 251-298. On the institutional and ceremonial features of the Venetian doge, see also Cecchetti 1864; Benzoni 1982; Ravegnani 2013, as well as the introductory chapter of Da Mosto 1960.

⁶ See Bolzoni 1984, pp. 1057-1060; Bonora 1994; Panzera 2012a; Panzera 2012b, as well as De Vivo 2007, pp. 21-22.

⁷ See 'Francesco Sansovino ai lettori', introductory chapter of Sansovino 1562.

⁸ Sansovino 1562, fols. 1r-4r (first edition: Trissino 1524). This episode was also reported in Sanudo [ed. 1892], pp. 398-399 and 475-482. For a brief introduction on Gian Giorgio Trissino, see D'Achille 2011 as well as the thorough bibliography published in Corrieri 2012.

him to Venice and appointing him to pay homage to the newly- elected doge with a congratulatory oration⁹ — should be primarily considered as a «nice and honourable custom» common to all the Venetian subject cities¹⁰. Once received in the Venetian Palazzo Ducale and in the Collegio hall, the ambassador of Vicenza chose a legal definition to accredit himself before the new doge enthroned among the *Serenissima Signoria* and the *Consulta dei Savi*¹¹. By defining the congratulatory embassy as a *consuetudine*¹², Trissino consciously demonstrated his awareness that no written law approved by the Venetian government actually forced the Venetian subject cities to pay homage to the newly elected doge in this way: looking at the legislative repertories collected, through the centuries, by the chancelleries of the main Venetian subject cities¹³, we have to go back to 1476 to find a Maggior Consiglio's act explicitly referring to the congratulatory embassy; and furthermore, it is an act which only prevents the neo-elected doge from receiving delegations composed of more than twenty members¹⁴.

This original lack of normative sources¹⁵ could only partially explain the lack of historiographical interest in this peculiar diplomatic ceremony¹⁶; the widespread inclination to consider the ducal ceremonial as an urban phenomenon has not helped in shedding some light on the involvement of the Venetian dominions in the ducal election and in its celebration¹⁷. Nevertheless, this lack of both primary and secondary sources could be partially addressed by considering anthologies like that of Sansovino and, more generally, the texts of the congratulatory orations delivered before the newly-elected doges by the

⁹ On this topic, see Florio 2019.

¹⁰ «Bella et honorevole consuetudine è questa [...] che dopo la creazione di ciascun Duce tutte le città suggette a questo felicissimo stato mandano i loro ambasciatori a sua Serenità». Sansovino 1562, fol. 1r.

¹¹ For a general introduction to the institutional composition and constitutional attribution of the Pien Collegio, see Ferro 1845-1847, vol. ii, pp. [4]37-439. With reference to the communicative and diplomatic functions of the Pien Collegio, see De Vivo 2012, pp. 138-152; more specifically, on the Pien Collegio as recipient of the congratulatory embassies hailing from the dominions, see Sinding-Larsen 1974, pp. 134-135. For an analysis of the decorative programme of the Pien Collegio hall, see *ibidem*, *passim*, and Wolters 1987, pp. 246-255.

¹² Sansovino rather prefers to define it as a «honorevole usanza» (Sansovino 1562, fol. 1r). The juridical, cultural and anthropological relevance of the *consuetudine* within the Venetian political context has been a topic frequently raised by Claudio Povolo, of whom I shall limit myself to mention: Povolo 2008; Povolo 2006a; Povolo 2006b.

¹³ For instance, Archivio di Stato di Verona, Archivio antico del Comune, Processi, b. 59, file 1360, or Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana di Vicenza, Archivio Torre, b. 676. See also Pinetti 1929.

¹⁴ See *ibidem*, file 1, f. not numbered, dated 27 February 1475 *more veneto*, as well as Archivio di Stato di Verona, Archivio antico del Comune, Processi, b. 59, file 1360, not numbered, dated 27 February 1475 *more veneto*. On this act, see also Musatti 1888, pp. 114-115 and Cecchetti 1864, pp. 204-205. Until the early seventeenth century, this act was periodically reiterated but without substantial changes. The most relevant legislative interventions concerned the enforcement of the surveillance on its violation. Nevertheless, such attempts to tighten this prohibition up are the clearest evidence of its lack of efficacy. See Bistort 1912, pp. 242-245 and *Parte presa* [1615]. For a complete overview on the evolution of this norm, see *Promissio* [1675], chapter XXIII.

¹⁵ That was the result of a survey within the Venetian central archives promoted by several Venetian subject cities at the beginning of March 1675. See Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana di Vicenza, Archivio Torre, b. 1439, 9 March 1675, as well as Archivio di Stato di Padova, Archivio Civico Antico, Nunzi e Ambasciatori, b. 101, 5 March 1675.

¹⁶ Paradigmatically, Andrea Da Mosto dismissed the Venetian congratulatory embassies as an empty ritual or, at least, as an annoying ceremonial duty poorly tolerated by the Venetian doges. Da Mosto 1960, p. XXVI.

¹⁷ On the Venetian ducal and civic ritual see Muir 1977; Howard 1993-1994; Casini 1996; Urban 1998; Fenlon 2007; Hopkins 2013; Viallon 2008. On the popular participation in the political and ceremonial ritual of the Venetian ducal election see Van Gelder 2018; Van Gelder 2019. On the popular involvement in shaping the Venetian civic ritual, see also Judde de Larivière 2015.

representatives of the various Venetian dominions and subject cities¹⁸. Widely circulating between the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century¹⁹, the printed editions of these encomiastic speeches represent a huge — and largely unexplored — *corpus* of sources²⁰: reconsidering this encomiastic subgenre and its rhetorical *topoi* from an historical perspective could help us appreciate the involvement of the Venetian dominions in shaping the ceremonial landscape — and soundscape — of the ducal election.

Orations like this one, composed by the ambassador of Lendinara Orazio Toscanella on the occasion of Girolamo Priuli's ducal election (1559), offer us a suggestive glimpse of the reaction that an almost-city of the Venetian *Terraferma* could have had in receiving the news of a ducal enthronement:

As soon as the news of the creation [of the new doge] was heard in Lendinara, a thousand fires were suddenly lit and a rejoicing second to none, [accompanied by] the sound of bells and voices which smote the stars, was heard²¹.

The rejoicing of Capodistria for Francesco Donà's election (1545) was depicted more soberly — but not less incisively — by Francesco Grisonio:

[...] with standards and emblems fluttering in the air; with fires and flames arising from everywhere to the sky; with lanterns and torches hence the earth seemed to be a new starry sky; with drums, noises and the rumble of martial instruments; with voices, jubilations and applause of a consoled heart²².

Around the 1545, Francesco Grisonio depicted more soberly — but not less incisively — the rejoicing of Capodistria for Francesco Donà's election:

Your most faithful City of Capodistria, with sounds, fireworks, salvoes, living voices, celebrations, solemnities and in every possible way, has shown from afar such joy which, rooted in the heart, is spreading through all its parts²³.

¹⁸ For a thorough description of the historical and institutional evolution of the diplomatic apparati of the Venetian subject cities, see Morpurgo 1878; Borgherini Scarabellin 1911; Pinetti 1929; Fasolo 1935; Scroccaro 1986; Varanini 1992; Florio 2017b.

¹⁹ Despite the absence of complete and definitive statistics, the extent of the phenomenon still can be deduced from the huge number of titles recorded in Cicogna 1847, pp. 319-349, Da Mosto 1960, pp. 558-598, and partially in Griffante 2003-2006.

²⁰ See Sinding-Larsen 1974, pp. 134-149; Doglio 1983; Špoljarić 2018; O'Connell 2016a; O'Connell 2017; Florio 2019.

²¹ «Subito che in Lendinara s'udi novelle della sua creazione, furono accesi a un tratto mille fuochi, et con suono di campane et di voci che ferivano le stelle, si senti un giubilo a niuno alt[r]o secondo». Sansovino 1562, fol. 74v.

²² «[...] con vesilli et insegne all'aria sparte, con fuochi e fiamme sorgenti in ogni parte al Cielo, con faci e lumiere, onde nuovo stellato Ciel pareva la Terra, con tamburri, strepiti e rimbombi di guerrieri stromenti, con voci, giubili et applausi de consolati cuori». Michele 1596, p. 25; see also the edition of the same oration published in Consalvi 1597, pp. 115-126.

²³ «La fedelissima vostra Città di Capodistria con suoni, fuochi, artiglierie, vive voci, feste, solennità et tutti gli altri a lei possibili modi ha dimostrato absente quella tanta allegrezza che radicata nel cuore per tutte le sue parti si diffonde». Sansovino 1562, fol. 10r.

Almost sixty-one years later, Nicolò Manzuoli rather preferred to focus on the «solemn musics» coming from the local churches in order to describe to Leonardo Donà how Capodistria had welcomed the news of his ducal election:

That most devoted people [of Capodistria], [...] made merry and rejoiced with unusual displays, also giving due thanks to His Divine Majesty within the Holy Temples by means of solemn musics and devoted orisons²⁴.

Apart from rhetorical stereotypes, such redundant statements offer us a vivid description of the spreading of the ducal election's soundscape from Venice throughout the Venetian dominions. The civic celebration of the republican Prince, the tolling of Venice's bells, the acclamation of the Venetian people and the sound of the solemn Mass performed in St. Mark's basilica did not end in Venice but echoed throughout all the lands controlled by the Most Serene Republic. A myriad of 'other' ducal celebrations, performed by each Venetian subject city, ran parallel to the historiographically far better-known one performed in the city of Venice²⁵. As lamented by the Paduan orator Ottonello Descalzo before Doge Pasquale Cicogna in 1585, it was a pity that the new Prince would only be able to attend the «glorious triumphs» in his honour performed in Venice, without having the opportunity to enjoy the resounding jubilation displayed by the Paduans. According to Descalzo, the news of Cicogna's election, just arrived from Venice, had spread spontaneously, uncontrollably and noisily through the population. As asserted by the orator, the collective euphoria had been irrepressible: people had immediately and chaotically begun to meet each other in the streets and in the squares of Padua. Even faces had become a medium spreading the joyous news coming from Venice: people realized that the new Prince had been elected simply by looking at each other's happy appearance. In a short while everyone began to loudly bless and glorify the name of the new doge and the wisdom of the ducal electors. At the apex of the frenzy, an even more noisy disturbance of the Paduan 'ordinary' soundscape made the news official: all at once, drums started rolling, «bombards thundering, towers flaming, fields burning, trumpets ringings [and] bells tolling». The effect was amazing: according to Descalzo, it seemed as if thunder, lightning and rain were falling down in unison from the sky. Nevertheless, even in the middle of such chaos, «blurred voices» praising the doge could still be heard: people's shouts — Descalzo said — were loud enough to reach the stars²⁶.

²⁴ «Quel popolo devotissimo [...] con insolite dimostrazioni fece festa et allegrezza, rendendo anco ne sacri Tempii, con solenni musiche et con devote orationi, i debiti ringratiamenti a sua divina Maestà». Manzuoli 1606. On Nicolò Manzuoli and its oration, see Florio 2017a.

²⁵ For a detailed description of the Venetian ducal election and its civic celebration, see Muir 1977, pp. 277-289 and Casini 1996. See also the bibliography mentioned *supra*, at fn. 17.

²⁶ «Deh, perché non fu lecito che Vostra Serenità dopo i glori[o]si trionfi di questa alma Città per lo novello suo prencipato avesse potuto mirare il gaudio, il giubilo, il contento da noi dimostrato per tal cagione; corre alla gente non capendo per l'allegrezza in se stessa benedicendo, et insieme essaltando il lodatissimo nome suo, et il giudizio intiero di chi la elesse, s'incontrava l'un l'altro, et con lieti sembianti comunicavano l'essaltatione sua al prencipato come proprio lor bene. S'udi in un punto toccar tamburi, tuonar bombarde, fiammeggiar torri, arder campi, dar segno trombe, suonar campane, come suole avvenire nel cielo alle volte che tuona, et balena, et piove insieme abondevolmente con maraviglia et con gaudio di ciascuno, et fra questi rumori certe voci confuse s'udivano inalzare alle stelle le lodi Vostre». Michele 1587, p. not numbered.

In 1554, the same ascending — and resounding — climax had been chosen by Giovan Domenico Roncale to describe to Doge Francesco Venier how the city of Rovigo welcomed the news of his ducal election²⁷. In Roncale's rhetorical depiction, the announcement of Venier's enthronement was spread through the «universe» directly by the «voice of God»: once arrived in Rovigo, the news first reached the city's ears and then penetrated its heart²⁸. This inner and quiet joy progressively exploded into a noisy, chaotic, collective and — above all — public rejoicing: pious voices began to thank God for the doge's election, first within the monasteries, then in the private houses and, finally, in the squares and in the streets, the quintessential public — and publication — spaces²⁹. As in Descalzo's oration, the swell of sounds and noise marks the progressive escalation of the celebration from an intimate matter to a public dimension. «Most pious voices» and «most devout orisons» started «rending the air» together with «children's shouts» and «the people's voice»; finally, «endless sounds, noises, fireworks, public parties and celebrations» joined the cacophonous concert dedicated to the new Prince³⁰. This transition from *private* to *public* spaces³¹ — and from *private* to *public* sounds — are assumed here — and in other similar orations³² — as an incisive synthesis of the whole process of publication of the doge's election throughout the Venetian *Terraferma*: trumpets, drums, fireworks, peals and cannon salvos coming from public buildings — notably city halls, squares, churches and civic towers — dominates the subject city's soundscape as depicted by the ambassadors appointed to pay homage to the new doge.

In their rhetorical reconstructions of such festive events, the ionic sound of the exulting city echoes in its countryside and, in so doing, contributes to spreading beyond the city walls not only the news of the ducal election, but also the praise of the new Prince. In the oration he delivered on behalf of the Paduan *Universitas Artistarum*, Bernardino Tomitano cast a glance to the soundscape surrounding Padua immediately after Marcantonio Trevisan's ducal election (1553)³³: all «the neighbouring cities give signs of happiness by burning fires, playing trumpets and tolling bells». Tomitano was particularly inclined to interpret such joyous outbursts as communicative acts: as he said, the subject cities used to welcome ducal elections with such resounding celebrations in order to «show to the World the inner affection by which people's souls feel encumbered»³⁴.

²⁷ For a brief biography, see Luciola 2017.

²⁸ «La [...] felicissima nova, altissimo Prencipe, dalla voce di Dio subito per lo universo spargendosi, è pervenuta a gli orecchi della vostra fidelissima città di Rovigo, et indi penetratale al core». Sansovino 1562, fol. 48v (first edition: Roncale 1554).

²⁹ On this topic, see the exhaustive bibliography offered by Nevola 2013. With particular reference to early modern Venice, see Muir – Weissman 1977; Infelise 1997; Fenlon 2009; Cowan 2008; Judde de Larivière 2011; De Vivo 2012; De Vivo 2016; Rospocher – Salzberg 2013; Rospocher 2013; Salzberg 2013.

³⁰ «[Rovigo], non contenta de i voti, de i sacrifici e de i dolci conce[r]ti da pietosissime voci formati ne monasteri, nelle case e nelle piazze, che percotendo l'aria devotissime orationi al gran motor de i cieli, ringratiandolo hanno offerte, n[é] bastandole i gridi de fanciulli, la voce del popolo, gli infiniti suoni, strepiti, fuochi, feste et solennità publiche da lei in ciascun luoco fatte [...]». Sansovino 1562, fols. 48v-49r.

³¹ On the hermeneutic value of this spatial dichotomy, see Rau 2019, p. 93.

³² See, for instance, the oration delivered by Orazio Toscanella to Doge Girolamo Priuli. Sansovino 1562, fols. 74r-76v.

³³ For a detailed biography, see Davi 1995 and Girardi 1995.

³⁴ «[...] le città vicine fanno segno d'allegria ardendo fuochi, sonando trombe, toccando squille e molt'altri segni facendo, onde l'interno affetto, dal qual si sentono ingombrar gli animi de i popoli, possano far manifesto al mondo». Sansovino 1562, fol. 22r; see also the first edition of the oration in Tomitano 1554. More directly, in 1606 the ambassador Agostino Del Bene said to Doge Leonardo Donà that the city of Verona «through very evident signs and clear evidence of ineffable joy had published to the world the huge rejoicing which [...] it was feel- ing inside itself» («con apertissimi segni et chiari

Shaped by the rhetorical ingenuity of the orator, the static landscape surrounding the subject city, once stimulated by the vibration of the urban rejoicing, becomes a dynamic soundscape, actively participating in the ovation offered to the new doge. «Not only the city [of Belluno] is happy», said the ambassador Paolo Novello to Doge Marcantonio Trevisan,

but even everything all around [...]. Even those shady valleys resound of a certain something new; those rivers murmur much more sweetly, and those horrible mountains seem to rise more strongly [...] in order to revere You [...]. All the things of which that land is full — animate or inanimate — [...] exulted, and by exulting they celebrate You, and by celebrating You they honour You³⁵.

Through the emission of sounds, the subject city and its district could finally participate in the doge's celebration and — albeit metaphorically — in his election. «You were enthroned», said the ambassador of Chioggia to the neo-elected Leonardo Donà (1606), «by the voice of all the human beings by means of a public and universal applause». A few lines later, such collective «voice» was better defined as a «scream» or, to be more specific, as «a public noise of joy and immense delight which fills all these lucky surroundings»³⁶. If we are to trust Giovanni Vida, something similar happened in Capodistria immediately before Sebastiano Venier's election (1577): «in the manner of an echo, *Veniero, Veniero* was heard repeated» everywhere. As explained by the ambassador, in this way the whole district of Capodistria was prophetically predicting Venier's enthronement³⁷.

Taking into account the countryside's reactions was an obligation for ambassadors representing regional bodies politic. In 1606, while praising Doge Leonardo Donà on behalf of the *Patria del Friuli*, Massimiliano Montegnacco chose to give a bird's eye description of the Friulian soundscape³⁸: «as soon as it heard the most appreciated and craved news» of Donà's ducal election, the whole *Patria del Friuli* started «singing with clear signs of happiness». The result was «a very sweet concert of very happy voices» praising God and the doge «accompanied by the sound of all the bells, the din of the artilleries, of the trumpets and of the drums»: finally, «the whole Friuli was heard resounding, from the mountains to the sea»³⁹. In this as in other congratulatory speeches devoted to the newly elected doges, the wide arc of

dimostramenti di letitia ineffabile publicò al mondo l'immenso giubilo che in se stessa [...] provava»). Del Bene 1606. On the meanings of the words (and of the practice of) *pubblicare* and *comunicare* in the early modern Venetian context, see De Vivo 2012.

³⁵ «Né pur sol la città sola è lieta, ma etiandio il tutto d'ogn'intorno [...]. In fin quelle ombrose valli, non so che più nuovo risuonano; quei fiumi più soavemente assai mormorano, et quegli horridi monti par che a forza più si ergano mostrando i gioghi loro infin qui per vedervi, per riverirvi, per honorarvi [...]. Tutte le cose di che quel paese è ripieno, animate et inanimate, a tutta prova essultano, et essultando vi celebrano, et celebrando vi honorano». Sansovino 1562, fol. 29r.

³⁶ «Comunemente foste voi dale voci de gl'huomini tutti intronizato a questa suprema dignità con publico, et universale applauso». «A questo grido [...], et a questo publico romore di gaudio et di letitia immensa [...]». Di Marangoni 1606.

³⁷ «Né fin' hora per tutta quella Città si è sentito altro che rissonare di ogni intorno il chiaro et glorioso nome di Vostra Sublimità non solamente dopoi che si è intesa la desideratissima novella di così degna elettione, ma anco inanzi ella a guisa di echo replicar si udiva, Veniero, Veniero, come presaga, e certa, che dovesse succedere un tanto bene». Vida 1577.

³⁸ For a brief biography of Massimiliano Montegnacco, see Cavazza 2012.

³⁹ «[La Patria del Friuli] tantosto che sentì la gratissima et bramata nova [...] piena di maravigliosa letitia, d'ineffabile contento et di suprema consolatione, d'interno affetto tutta si commosse, et intonando con chiarissimi segni d'allegrezza, e con un soavissimo concerto di lietissime voci, et amplissime laudi a Iddio, et alla Serenità Vostra, accompagnate dal

territories extending beyond and in front of the Venetian lagoon acts as a sort of sounding board amplifying and propagating the new doge's urban celebration. Such a *physical* reaction to the vibrations emitted by the city of Venice⁴⁰ — and even by the very sound of the doge's name — was assumed as *natural* in the strictest sense of the word. The already-mentioned Giovan Domenico Roncale, for instance, founded the entire argument of his congratulation to Doge Francesco Venier on a definition of sound as the most natural and instinctive means to display an irrepressible inner joy:

Every living being of all kinds [...] naturally forces itself to express [...] the joy it has conceived inside itself by means of different voices, noises, gestures, and other infinite signs⁴¹.

The use of acoustic images to describe the dominions celebrating the newly elected doge represents a distinctive topos of the encomiastic subgenre we are considering. Bowed before Doge Leonardo Donà (1606), Santo Di Marangoni defined the people of Chioggia as a «hoarse and disordered flock of simple seabirds»: «celebrat[ing] and solemniz[ing]» the doge's «name» «by flapping their wings» and by emitting «shrill voices of confused happiness». The overlapping of a wide range of inarticulate sounds and noises was once again defined as the most natural reaction to the ducal election. The task of imposing order and meaning to this chaos weighed heavily on the orator's shoulders. As explained by Santo Di Marangoni to Leonardo Donà, the seagull's calls emitted by Chioggia «expresses with natural roughness the efficacy and the reverence of its affection» towards the new Prince⁴². In praising the same doge, Pietro Geslino explained that the «noises of drums, and trumpets, the sounds of bells, games, fires and celebrations» which had been heard in Feltre «for many continuous days, denote both the infinite love [...] and the contentment» of the subject city towards its new Prince⁴³. Humbly bowed before the doge, the orator invokes all the performative efficacy of his eloquence in order to give meaning to the joyful chaos coming from the dominions⁴⁴: in 1556, the orator of Crema said to Lorenzo Priuli that it was «easy to show such

sono di tutte le campane, dal strepito delle artiglierie, delle trombe et de i tamburi si sentì risonar tutto'l Friuli da i monti sino al mare». Montegnacco 1606.

⁴⁰ In 1606, the ambassador appointed to praise Doge Leonardo Donà on behalf of Cavarzere refer to the news of the ducal election as a «sounding trumpet» which had «reached the ear» and «pierced the heart» of the subject town («La sonora tromba della qual creazione mirabile pervenuta alle orecchie, anzi trapassata al cuore della fidelissima Terra Vostra di Cavarzere»). Dalla Porta 1606. Similarly, for the anonymous ambassadors sent to Venice by Pirano on the occasion of Marcantonio Trevisan's enthronement (1553), the «welcome and awaited rumor» of the ducal election was comparable with a «the great thunder» («si udì il gran tuono della grata et aspettata voce della sua [...] creatione»). Sansovino 1562, fol. 39v; see also the two editions of the same oration printed in 1553: *Oratione* 1553a and *Oratione* 1553b.

⁴¹ «Naturalmente [...] ciascun animante di qualunque sorte con varie voci, strepiti, noti et altri infiniti segni si sforza a tutto suo potere mostrar fuori quale allegrezza intrinsecamente habbi concetta». Sansovino 1562, fol. 48r.

⁴² «Quel populo tutto, quasi roco et incompoto stuolo di semplici uccelli marini, dibattendo l'ali con stridule voci di confusa allegrezza, festeggia et solennizza il nome di Vostra Serenità, et esprime con la rozezza naturale l'efficacia, et la riverenza dell'affetto suo». Di Marangoni 1606.

⁴³ «Per molti giorni continovi non si sono uditi se non strepiti di tamburi e di trombe, suoni di campane, giochi, fuochi, feste, cose tutte denotanti e l'amor infinito che noi vostri fedelissimi sudditi vi portiamo, et il contento che sentimo della vostra grandezza». Geslino 1606.

⁴⁴ On the concept of performative utterance, see the pivotal Austin 1962.

happiness, after it has already been outwardly manifested»; nevertheless, to explain the «reasons» of such feeling would be «really difficult [...] for any eloquent tongue»⁴⁵. Three years later, the orator of Chioggia Giuliano Scarpa said to the newly elected Girolamo Priuli that his diplomatic task was «to show the very true reasons for which your very devoted people resound with happy voices and rejoicings» and to «make it known and clear also with words»⁴⁶. Through the power of his words, the orator strives to transform an incoherent mass of auditory stimuli into a symphony or — to use a recurring expression from the texts we are considering — into a *concert* in honour of the new republican Prince. In 1545, Francesco Grisonio put the sound produced by the name of the new doge at the heart of his speech, assuming it to be a sort of ordering and harmonising principle:

[...] a concert of peoples moved to speech by such suave and powerful harmony of many virtues was heard continuously clamoring ‘Donato, Donato’ not only within the city [of Capodistria], but also everywhere⁴⁷.

«The people’s voice — concluded Grisonio — is [...] the voice of God»: the echo of the doge’s name, infinitely repeated by the inhabitants of Capodistria, indicated to everyone the joyous news coming from Venice⁴⁸. Once distilled by the orator, the noisy chaos characterising the ducal celebration turns into a well-ordered multi-voice chorus, a polyphonic symphony within which every social body, class or context — as well as every age group or gender — can find its own place. In the idyllic soundscape evoked by the orators, everyone, be they citizen or commoner, city or country dweller, lay or cleric, rich or poor, old or young, male or female, is equally involved in praising the new republican Prince. According to Orazio Toscanella, in 1559, when the news of Girolamo Priuli’s ducal election reached Lendinara,

⁴⁵ «[...] sia però facile quest’allegrezza dimostrare poscia ch’ella già fuori si manifesta, ma le cagioni di questa, e tante e sì alte, ben difficile sarà ad ogni faconda lingua et a questa debil mia quasi impossibile». Giacomo Gennaro edited in Fino 1572, fol. 16v.

⁴⁶ «[...] per dimostrare le verissime cause onde l’affettionatissimo popol suo di liete voci e giubili risuoni, ardino allegri fuochi per la città, facilmente noi tutti siamo condotti in questo honoratissimo luoco per far ciò anco palese e chiaro con le parole». Sansovino 1562, fol. 66r (first edition: Scarpa [1559]).

⁴⁷ «Non in questa Città solo, ma per tutto s’udiva un concerto de popoli messi in voce da quella sì soave e potente harmonia di tante virtù che risonava sempre Donato, Donato. Et pur (come si dice) la voce del Popolo è ella voce di Dio, che tanta felicità a dito ci mostrava». Sansovino 1562, fol. 11r. A very similar argument could be found in the anthology of orations to Marino Grimani edited by Antonio Maria Consalvi in 1597. The rhetor Sallustio Lucillo identified three different socio-political categories exulting for the doge’s election: «the City» of Venice, «the subject» living in the dominions, and the Venetian patriciate (identified in its political expression: «the Senate» together with «the Republic»). In Lucillo rhetoric construction, each of these categories was pushed to celebrate the doge not only by his republican virtues, but also by a specific sound: the «subjects» and the Republic were both invited to celebrate «by the very noble shout» of Grimani’s «very famous name», while the City of Venice by «the unstoppable trumpet of [His] Serenity’s fame». Consalvi 1597, p. 141. For more, in general, on the performative representation of the doge as a harmonising principle, see Cumming 1992.

⁴⁸ Sansovino 1562, fol. 11r.

[...] every person, of any age, gender [and] status gave sign of infinite happiness. The river, the squares, every public and private place suddenly resounded to Your Serenity's highest name⁴⁹.

Giorgio Piloni, used a very similar image to describe to Marino Grimani how the city of Belluno had reacted to his enthronement:

[...] the souls of all the inhabitants of Belluno were [so] filled with joy, happiness and extraordinary solace that suddenly [...] the whole city was seen admirably rejoicing and becoming exceedingly glad and entirely light-hearted: somebody, by running to the Holy Temples and thanking God, prayed for [the doge's] highest felicity; others wished him a prosperous future by celebrating his virtues with very loud voices. [People of] every gender, every age, every status [...] performed joyous concerts in his honour with chants, sounds, celebrations and fires⁵⁰.

Re-semanticised by the orator, the cacophonous soundscape of the jubilant subject city turns into a coherent political expression, although limited to a mere display of monolithic consensus towards the new Prince and, through him, towards the Republic. Having described the soundscape generated by the election of Marcantonio Trevisan (1553), the ambassador of Chioggia exclaimed:

It seems to me I hear not only the voices of the people of Venice, but also those of all the cities subjected to Your Serenity exclaiming with happy rejoicings: There, Lord God has given us not just a very fair Prince, but [also] a very caring and compassionate Father⁵¹.

Dissent and its soundscape struggle to find a place within an encomiastic subgenre — and ritual — overtly aiming to performatively reproduce, through its celebration, the sovereignty of the Most Serene Republic upon the Venetian dominions⁵². Giving to the new doge a vivid testimony of uniform and incorruptible devotion was the main rhetorical — and diplomatic — task which local ambassadors

⁴⁹ «Ogni persona, d'ogni età, d'ogni sesso, d'ogni conditione mostrò segno d'infinita allegrezza. Il fiume, le piazze, tutti i luoghi publici et privati a un tratto risonarono dell'altissimo nome di Vostra Serenità». Sansovino 1562, fols. 74v-75r.

⁵⁰ «[...] si riempirno in modo gli animi de tutti i Bellunesi di giubilo, d'allegrezza e di straordinaria consolatione che in un subito tutta quella sua Città si vide mirabilmente a gioire e divenir sopra modo tutta lieta e tutta gioconda: chi a sacri tempi correndo e Dio ringratiando gli pregava somma felicità; chi con altissime voci celebrando le sue virtù gli augurava prosperi avvenimenti; et ogni sesso, ogni età, ogni conditione da eccessivo gaudio sopraffatti con canti, suoni, feste e fuochi facevan in suo honor lietissimi concerti». Michele 1596, p. 69; see also the edition of the same oration published in Consalvi 1597, p. 86.

⁵¹ «Parmi di sentir le voci del popolo, non solo di Venetia, ma di tutte le città suddite alla Vostra Serenità esclamar con lieti giubili: Ecco che'l Signor Dio ci ha dato non pure un Principe giustissimo et santissimo, ma un padre amorevolissimo et pietosissimo». Silla 1553.

⁵² See Florio 2019; Florio 2017a; Florio 2014, as well as De Vivo 2012, p. 305. Regarding the presence of expressions of dissent — or, at least, «tensions» — within the *orationes in creatione ducis* and other similar encomiastic texts, see Špoljarić 2018 and O'Connell 2016a.

were supposed to accomplish⁵³; in this respect, the subject city's festive soundscape offered them an intuitive — but not less performatively efficient — image.

At the same time, the redundant insistence on the acoustic elements of the dominions' ducal celebration allowed the local ambassadors to meet a more urgent and empirical communicative demand. Beyond the rhetorical stereotype, such emphatic statements hide a deep institutional awareness which can be better appreciated by shifting the focus of the analysis from the oration's sender to its receiver or, to be less cryptic, from the orator to the object of his encomiastic argument: the Venetian doge, the elective head of the Most Serene Republic. It is certainly true that the *Promissione Ducale* — the «ducal oath» that regulated the constitutional and ceremonial duties of the doge — presents only a few references to the congratulatory embassy⁵⁴: nevertheless, this 'constitutional' text played a significant role not only in giving rise to the embassy of obedience, but also in shaping a specific rhetorical style in praising the Venetian Prince. Since the early sixteenth century, for instance, the *Promissione* was amended in order to tighten up the orders which prohibited the doge from leaving the city of Venice or passing the lagoon's border without an expressed authorisation by both the Minor and the Maggior Consiglio⁵⁵. However indirectly, the civic sensibility of the Venetian republicanism put a physical — even before political, anthropological or social — distance between the Venetian Prince and his subjects living in the dominions⁵⁶. This radical separation became rather evident on the occasion of the doge's election and public celebration: by preventing the Prince from leaving Venice even on the occasion of his coronation, the *Promissione* made it impossible to display, in the Venetian dominions, princely ritual that were common in other European political contexts, such as joyous entries, ritual journeys or triumphs⁵⁷. The Venetian republican Prince had to remain confined in Venice as did the ceremonial ritual which characterised the celebration of his — residual — princely authority. If hosting a ducal entry was an impracticable option for the Venetian subject cities, entering Venice to praise the new doge could still be a difficult task

⁵³ According to Gian Giorgio Trissino, the «nice and honourable custom» of greeting the ducal election with a congratulatory embassy was mainly a «sign of obedience and love» («segno di ubidientia e di amore») displayed by the Venetian subject cities. Sansovino 1562, fol. 1r. In Orazio Toscanella's opinion, to pay homage to the new doge through an embassy «it really was a blessed order [...] established by the ancients [...] because in this way the subjects could preserve/keep and increase their Prince's love, and because it is wholesome that the servants recognise their Lord» («Fu veramente santissimo ordine quello che instituirono gli antichi di rallegrarsi nelle novelle creationi de Principi et di mandar loro oratori a questo fine. [...] Perché a questo modo i sudditi si conservano et accrescono l'amor del suo Principe, perché è honesto che i servi riconoscano il suo Signore»). *Ibidem*, fol. 74v.

⁵⁴ Musatti 1888.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 122-123. On similar prohibitions, see Girgensohn 2004, p. 103. More in general, on the effect of the republican discourse on the Venetian institutional framework and, specifically, on the limitations of the ducal prerogatives, see Conti 2002.

⁵⁶ The legal and political separateness between Venice and its Dominions is a topic frequently raised, among others, by Claudio Povolo. See, for instance, Povolo 1994; Povolo 1997; Povolo 2006b. On the constitutional, institutional and social framework of the Venetian *Stato da Terra*, see also the pivotal Cozzi 1982 and Cozzi 1997. On the lack of integration of the Venetian dominions in the republican government and decision-making process, see Berengo 1956 and Ventura 1993. For a more nuanced view on the same topic, see Muir 2000. Finally, particularly useful are the historiographic overviews Knapton 1998 and Varanini 2011.

⁵⁷ Of the massive bibliography on this topic, see Graham – McAllister Johnson 1979; Boutier – Dewerpe – Nordman 1984; Bryant 1986; Bryant 2010; Kipling 1998; Hill Cole 1999; Bertelli 2001, pp. 36-38; Visceglia 2001; Mulryne – Watanabe-O'Kelly – Shewring 2004; Breen 2004; Fosi 2004; Wintroub 2006; Damen 2007; Russell – Visentin 2007; Canova-Green – Andrews – Wagner 2013; Checa Cremades – Fernández-González 2015; Mulryne – Aliverti – Testaverde 2015; Murphy 2016; Rodríguez Moya – Mínguez Cornelles 2016; Mulryne – De Jonge – Morris – Martens 2019.

to achieve: since 1476 the *Promissione Ducale* was integrated with the already-mentioned Maggior Consiglio's act that prevented the new doge from receiving congratulatory delegations composed of more than twenty members⁵⁸. Aiming to scale down the residual princely feature of the doge, the Maggior Consiglio exploited the same act in order to shorten even the duration of the ducal audience: on the occasion of the congratulatory embassy, the doge was prohibited from listening to orations which were excessively long. Nevertheless, the recurring legislative efforts made by the Senate and by the Maggior Consiglio to tighten this prohibition up proves its lack of efficacy⁵⁹. Paradoxically, the embassy of obedience — the custom of paying homage to the new doge by sending a ceremonial embassy to Venice — seems to have found its own *raison d'être* precisely in such vigorous attempts to limit the contacts between the doge and the representatives of the Venetian dominions: the very existence of a political and ceremonial diaphragm between the Prince and his subjects was assumed by the political authorities of the main Venetian subject cities as a sufficient legal justification for sending a congratulatory embassy to Venice and to accredit it to the new doge. A similar political and legal awareness is clearly identifiable, for instance, in the letters of credence which the city council of Brescia issued on 23 May 1606 in order to accredit the ambassador Lodovico Federici — and his colleagues — to the newly- elected Leonardo Donà:

The endless and inestimable joy that this most loyal and devoted city has felt and feels for the deserved election of Your Serenity would have required and needed that all of us, its Citizens, came together to take comfort at the feet of Your Excellency [...]. Nevertheless, as this is impossible to do — or, being it possible, it is prohibited to us by the laws of Yours Sublimity —, we send at Your feet the Magnificent D. Ludovico di Federici and D. Giovan Battista Savallo [...] our ambassadors to this end, to whom You may deign to give the same trust that You would give us⁶⁰.

The oration delivered by Federici on 29 May 1606 perfectly reflected this legal argument: indeed, the heart of his encomiastic speech was an accurate rhetorical transposition of the letter of credence released by the civic chancellery of Brescia. «I would to God», lamented the rhetor, «that we, by means of our tongues, could represent to Your Serenity the happiness shown by the whole city [of Brescia]»: «all the people of every rank and status, and nearly the very walls of the houses gave sign of wanting to come [to Venice] in order to bow before such a glorious Prince and such Most Serene Republic». Nevertheless, considering that «there is no greater sign of reverence [...] than the obedience», that such obedience «had

⁵⁸ Musatti 1888, pp. 114-115.

⁵⁹ See *supra*, fn. 14.

⁶⁰ «L'infinita et inestimabile alerezza che ha sentuto et sente questa sua fidelissima et devotissima città per la meritissima elezione di Vostra Serenità haverebbe voluto, et ricercava, che tutti noi suoi cittadini unitamente venissimo a consolarsi a piedi di Vostra Celsitudine [...]. Ma ciò non potendosi fare, o quando si potesse essendoci vietato dalle leggi di Vostra Sublimità, mandiamo i Magnifici D. Ludovico di Federici et D. Giovan Battista Savallo [...] nostri oratori a piedi di quella per questo effetto, a quali Ella si degnarà prestar quella credenza che farebbe a noi stessi». Archivio Storico Civico del Comune di Brescia, Lettere pubbliche, reg. 31, fol. 99v, dated 23 May 1606. Between the 1675 and the 1676, both the city chancelleries of Padua and Verona used a very similar formula to accredit their congratulatory embassies before Doge Nicolò Sagredo. See Almerighi 1676, p. 34; Bon [1675], pp. 43-44. I would like to thank Cristina Setti for having helped me in collecting this last source.

been ordered [...] by a ducal [letter]» and, finally, having been urged by the local Venetian governors (the *rettori*), Brescia decided to limit its embassy to only a few representatives⁶¹.

The diplomatic task matches the encomiastic needs in the oration's paragraphs used by the rhetors to declare their diplomatic duties and, above all, to justify the absolute necessity of their appearance in the Ducal Palace. In 1554, after having portrayed the festive soundscape of Rovigo in all its detail, Giovan Domenico Roncale explained to Doge Francesco Venier that his city, «as not being allowed (as it wished)» to move entirely to Venice, had been necessarily forced to «send» some ambassadors «on its behalf» in order to «partially vent the incredible overabundance of its heart»⁶². In 1577, The Capodistriean Giovanni Vida exploited a very similar argument in order to justify to Sebastiano Venier the necessity of his embassy⁶³ and Curzio Clavello, ambassador of Crema, did the same in 1570 on the occasion of Alvise Mocenigo's ducal election: his «hometown» was completely aware that the Venetian Prince could neither spiritually nor physically enjoy «the incredible happiness, the extreme joy and the infinite content» felt by its inhabitants; considering this, Crema had decided to send an embassy to Venice in order to «make manifest» to the doge — «through the living voice of its ambassadors» — that «the souls of its citizens are endlessly rejoicing and glad»⁶⁴. Venetian law and magistrates could only put up a poor barrier to such a natural, enthusiastic and gushing display of loyalty and consensus. Or, at least, that was the conclusion of the oration which Bartolomeo Malmignatti, as ambassador of Lendinara, tributed to Francesco Venier in 1554: as he explained, the «authority» of the local *rettore* had been surely able to «hold the bodies of those subjects» but not «their souls and hearts». The few representatives physically sent to Venice had to be seen as a vivid representation of the whole population of Lendinara: as stated by Malmignatti, all the inhabitants were — at least symbolically — there, in the Pien Collegio hall, praising the new Prince together with their ambassadors⁶⁵. In 1618, Giacomo Siega chose a little variation of the same argument in order to rhetorically justify his weakness in praising Doge Antonio Priuli: «if only you», said the ambassador addressing the city of Verona, «could have come before the presence of this Most August

⁶¹ «O volesse Dio che noi co'l ministerio delle nostre lingue potessimo rappresentare alla Serenità Vostra l'allegrezza mostrata da tutta Brescia nel partir nostro; poichè tutte le persone d'ogni grado e qualità, et quasi le mura istesse delle case mostravano segno di voler venire a inchinarsi a tanto glorioso Principe, et a tanta Serenissima Repubblica. Et se non fosse che non v'è maggior segno di riverenza verso al suo Signore che l'obediencia, et che con diploma Ducale non ci fosse stata comandata et dalli Illustrissimi Signori Rettori persuasa la modesta limitatione della nostra Ambasceria, la Città nostra, come altre volte ha fatto et saputo fare, haverebbe con infinita copia de Cittadini, et con assai maggior pompa, mostrato l'intima consolatione che ha sentito, et sente per veder nel capo di Vostra Serenità questo glorioso, et ammirando diadema». Federici 1606.

⁶² «[Rovigo] è stata sforzata, per isfogare in parte la incredibile sovraBondanza del cor suo (non potendo come desiava tutta insieme essa venire), a mandar in sua vece a piedi della Sublimità Vostra noi». Sansovino 1562, fol. 49r.

⁶³ «Poi ché non può quella città [di Capodistria] insieme venire dinanzi il Serenissimo cospetto vostro, né ad altri che al Sommo Dio è permesso di mirare l'intimo de' cuori, ha voluto almeno mandare noi duo suoi cittadini». Vida 1577.

⁶⁴ «Non potendo la Serenità vostra [...] penetrare nella profonda parte de' nostri cuori, né mirando scoprire l'incredibile allegrezza, l'estremo giubilo et l'infinito contento qual'ora sente la fedelissima Patria nostra di Crema per la sua meritevole elettione al Principato, non contenta essa del suo secreto piacere ha voluto con la viva voce de' suoi ambasciatori far a voi noto che [...] gli animi de' suoi cittadini senza fine gioiscono et lieti sono». Fino 1572, fol. 32r.

⁶⁵ «Et non creda Vostra Sublimità che si si habbiano contentati mandare a questa congratulatione noi pochi, li quali corporalmente vede, perché ha ben potuto l'autorità del Clarissimo nostro Rettore ritenere li corpi di quei sudditi, ma non già gli animi et i cuori loro, che non habbiano voluto venir tutti in compagnia nostra a far riverenza a questa Maestà et allegrarsi delle glorie et trionfi suoi». Sansovino 1562, fol. 56r (first edition: Malmignatti 1554).

[Prince], [...] you would have entirely come and you [would have] spoken with words more limited but no less affectionate [than mine]»⁶⁶.

Despite the legal and communicative limits imposed on the embassies, Verona, as well as the other Venetian subject cities, clearly perceived and rhetorically presented its ambassador's *living voice* as the only possible way to make its jubilation resound inside the Ducal Palace: in this respect, to evoke the local festive soundscape within the Pien Collegio hall seemed to be a valid option to bridge the distance to Venice and to allow the new Prince to enjoy the celebrations in his honour performed in — and by — each Venetian dominion. The ambassadors that the Istrian city of Pirano sent to Doge Marcantonio Trevisan in 1553 were completely aware of the crucial diplomatic and communicative task they were entrusted⁶⁷: officially, their main assignment was to — symbolically — renew the *pact of submission*⁶⁸ to Venice signed by their ancestors; nevertheless there was also «another [...] reason for their appearance» before the newly elected doge. As they admitted, they had been sent to Venice in order to make manifest to the new doge — «by means of [their] tongues and living voices» — the «huge happiness» felt by the inhabitants of Pirano once they had been reached by «the great thunder» generated by the «welcome and awaited rumour» of the ducal election⁶⁹. The same necessity was expressed by Giorgio Piloni in 1585: after having welcomed the news of the election of Pasquale Cicogna with a resounding exultation, Belluno decided to send a delegation to Venice in order to «make manifest» to the new doge its «marvellous solace». Here again, the declared task assumed by the local representatives was to «uncover with [their] living voices the cause of [...] such happiness»⁷⁰. To «depict» to the new doge the «true reasons of» its «happiness» was also the main diplomatic task which the city of Verona assigned to the ambassador Agostino Del Bene in 1606: after having honoured Leonardo Donà with «most evident signs and clear evidence of ineffable joy», Verona considered it appropriate to «revere [him] in person». In this regard, to send a congratulatory embassy to Venice seemed to be the only reasonable — if not obligatory — choice⁷¹. Analogously, in 1585 Ottonello Descalzo justified his insistence in describing the Paduan festive soundscape to Doge Pasquale Cicogna as fulfilling an explicit diplomatic duty: to «depict» to the new Prince the rejoicing of Padua was a declared task assigned by the Paduan citizens to their representatives

⁶⁶ «Son sicuro, Patria mia, che se voi stessa havesti potuto venire alla presentia di questo Augustissimo, confesso tutta saresti venuta, e con parole più limite diresti, e non meno affettuose». Siega 1618.

⁶⁷ Sansovino 1562, fol. 39r-v.

⁶⁸ Of the huge bibliography on the Venetian *patti di dedizione* (and in addition to the contributions already mentioned at footnote 56), I shall limit myself to mention Menniti Ippolito 1986, and the more recent Ortalli 2002. On the idea of the 'voluntary submission' to Venice and on its rhetoric transposition, see O'Connell 2017.

⁶⁹ «L'altra veramente cagion del comparir nostro [...] fu accioché con lo strumento delle lingue et vive voci nostre, verace testimonio de cuori nostri, gli potessimo far manifesta quella immensa allegrezza che senza termine di tempo o misura di quantità si diffuse per gli penetrali de nostri petti, tosto che s'udi il gran tuono della grata, et aspettata voce della sua [...] creatione». Sansovino 1562, fol. 39v. In 1606, Daniele Dalla Porta depicted the news of Leonardo Donà's election as a 'sounding trumpet' which first «reached the ears» and then «pierced the heart» of Cavarzere. Dalla Porta 1606.

⁷⁰ «Onde desiderando la Patria nostra che questa sua meravigliosa consolatione fosse ancora alla Sublimità vostra manifestata, ha inviato noi, accioché prestandole la debita obediencia, scuopriamo con vive voci la causa di tanta nostra contentezza». Michele 1596, pp. 69-70; see also the edition of the same oration published in Consalvi 1597, pp. 8-87.

⁷¹ «Essa Città, d'insolita et non più sentita allegrezza ripiena, et in pubblico et in privato con apertissimi segni et chiari dimostramenti di letitia ineffabile publicò al mondo l'immenso giubilo che in se stessa perciò provava: così hora ci ha mandati a i piedi vostri, sì per inchinarvi et riverirvi presentialmente come suo Principe naturale, et sì per offerirvi et consacrarvi il cor suo». Del Bene 1606. On the embassy of Agostino Del Bene to Leonardo Donà, see Pola 1614 and Florio 2014, pp. 140-141. For a brief biography of Agostino del Bene, see Sarpi 2001, pp. 494-496.

in Venice. As asserted by Descalzo, by entrusting their message to the «living voices of their orators», the citizens of Padua were trying to bridge the impossibility of bringing their «immeasurable happiness» to Venice and to celebrate the doge in his presence⁷². Bowed before the same doge, the ambassador hailing from Bergamo admitted sadly that «fireworks, sounds, gestures and voices» were only poor media, useful only to show happiness «from afar». Nevertheless, the congratulatory embassy could offer a valid solution: here again the orator presented himself and the sound of his voice as an efficient means to bring the festive soundscape of the mainland as near as possible to the doge's ears. In this respect, the congratulatory oration could not limit itself to describe the sound of the jubilant dominion but, in a certain sense, it had to simulate it: as admitted by the ambassador of Bergamo, fireworks, sounds, gestures and voices had to be faithfully «represented by the fire of devoted sentences, by the sounds of a well-ordered speech, by gestures of delightful [rhetorical] action and by voices of a befitting pronunciation»⁷³.

However indirectly, the restrictions imposed upon the doge's mobility — and, therefore, the absolute necessity of bringing to him a sample of the local celebration in order to enable him to enjoy it — forced the ambassador to embody the subject city rather than represent it. This process of identification between the representative (the ambassador) and the represented (the subject city) was well highlighted, for instance, by the jurist Ettore Ferramosca, sent to Venice in 1606 «on behalf of the most loyal [...] city of Vicenza»: once arrived in front of Leonardo Donà, he explained that his city, «being not allowed to entirely appear» in the Pien Collegio hall, had decided to «gather the joy of all» its inhabitants within the ambassadors and to «appoint them to represent it at [the doge's] feet»⁷⁴. The representation by mandate ratified by the letters of credence acquired a much more extensive, empirical and tangible meaning once reshaped by the rhetorical ingenuity of the local representative⁷⁵. According to Cornelio Frangipane⁷⁶ and his oration for Francesco Donà's election (1545), the local ambassador had to lend his voice and body to the subject city or — to quote him directly — to «show in the face, in the words and

⁷² «[...] i cittadini [di Padova] più maturi et antichi [...], per tentare in quanto per noi si può adempire ogni ufficio, hanno voluto in vece di trionfi e trofei, con la viva voce de' suoi oratori ritrarvi in parte sì smisurata allegrezza». Michele 1587, p. not numbered.

⁷³ «[...] dimostrava all' hora da lontano questa sua interiore allegrezza con esteriori segni di fuochi, di suoni, di gesti et di voci, et questa io vorrei hora d' appresso a Vostra Sublimità rappresentare con fuoco d' affettuosi concetti, con suono di numerosa locutione, con gesti di lieta attione et con voci d' accomodata pronuntia». Michele 1587, p. not numbered. Ten years later, a very similar expression was used by the paduan ambassador Francesco Centon in order to praise Doge Marino Grimani. Michele 1596, pp. 7-8 and Consalvi 1597, pp. 45-46. The unsuitability of fireworks and, consequently, the absolute necessity to send an embassy at the doge's feet is a recurrent rhetoric topos in the orations delivered by the representatives of Chioggia, despite the proximity between their city and Venice. See, for instance, Falconetto 1568, as well as Sansovino 1562, fol. 66r.

⁷⁴ «Noi sudditi devotissimi veniamo a nome di fidelissima sua Città [di Vicenza], che non potendo qua tutta comparire, raccolta di tutti l' allegrezza in noi soli, che a piedi della Serenità Vostra rappresentarla deviamo ci commette». Ferramosca 1606.

⁷⁵ For an exhaustive conceptualisation of the idea of representation see the fundamental Pitkin 1967 and, in an historical perspective, Hofmann 2003. In this regard, the introductory chapter of Burke 1992 is also particularly useful. More specifically, on the 'representation as embodiment' see the recent Hayat – Péneau – Sintomer 2018. Coming back to the topic of this article, the ambiguity of the early modern concept of 'representation as authorisation' (or 'delegation') has been convincingly highlighted in Della Misericordia 2010. Finally, a fruitful approach on early modern representation of representativeness — or, to be more precise, on the problem of the representativeness' reification through rhetoric — has been provided in Neu 2010.

⁷⁶ For a brief biography, see Cavazza 1998 and Cavazza 2009.

in the gestures the unbelievable happiness» felt by the subject city. In a certain sense, the ambassador couldn't limit himself to reporting to the new Prince the celebrations in his honour performed in — and by — the subject city, but, using the performative efficacy of his words, he had to make himself into a living and tangible representation of the whole subject city exulting for the new Prince⁷⁷. The ambassador *was* the city, as pointed out by the Paduan rhetor Giovan Battista Selvatico in 1606: «Here is [the City of Padua]», he said indicating himself to Doge Leonardo Donà, «which, without distinction of rank, class, status, age (I would also say gender, if feminine modesty and the respect for this place allowed it), gathers all humble and reverent people in Your presence»⁷⁸. Similarly, «Most Serene Prince, here is your most loyal city of Verona» said Giacomo Siega presenting himself to Antonio Priuli in 1618⁷⁹. The concept was redundantly repeated by the ambassador: «Here is your daughter, here is your servant», he insistently explained by making himself a living representation of his homeland⁸⁰. In 1613, Doge Marcantonio Memmo heard a very similar statement pronounced by Ottonello Belli, an illustrious jurist hailing from Capodistria. «For Your Serenity it is easy», argued the rhetor, «to imagine [the whole City of Capodistria] in this small number of citizens»⁸¹:

[...] the eye [...] has already remained satisfied to see, even if through our presence only, the City of Capodistria reverently presenting at Your feet the ancient tribute of [its] voluntary submission⁸².

Even the poor liveries worn by the Capodistrian representatives should be considered an integral part of the *mimesis*' process evoked by Belli: such shabby clothing, he said, «explains very well [...] the appearance of our city»⁸³. As he rhetorically admitted, it was not so «easy [...] to present a City» only «by the means of a little voice»: the sound, indeed, should be considered just one of the many communicative codes that cooperated in shaping the congratulatory ritual. The increasing relevance accorded to the body language by early modern diplomacy appears quite self evident within the text of the orations we are considering⁸⁴. The already-mentioned Cornelio Frangipane, for instance, concluded his praise of Francesco Donà with a perfect identification between the bow he was performing before the new Prince and the bow ideally tributed to him by the entire territory of the Patria del Friuli:

⁷⁷ «[...] noi, da vera interna letitia sospinti, siam venuti a rallegrarci con voi, altissimo Signore, et a dimostrare ne'l volto, ne le parole et ne gesti la incredibile allegrezza che sentiamo de la vostra maggioranza». Sansovino 1562, fol. 7v (first edition: Frangipane 1545).

⁷⁸ «Eccola, invitissimo Prencipe, che senza alcuna distintione di grado, di ordine, di stato, di età (direi di sesso ancora, quando la pudicitia femminile, et la riverenza del luogo lo comportasse) tutta humile, et riverente comparisce al cospetto vostro». Selvatico 1606.

⁷⁹ «Eccovi, Prencipe Serenissimo, la vostra fedelissima Città di Verona». Siega 1618.

⁸⁰ «Eccovi la vostra figlia, eccovi la vostra serva». *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ «È facile alla Serenità Vostra [...] figurarla in questo poco numero di Cittadini». Belli 1613.

⁸² «L'occhio è di già rimasto in lei appagato nel qui vedere alla sola nostra presenza la Città di Capodistria riverente a suoi piedi prestarle il debito antico tributo di volontaria soggettione». *Ibidem*.

⁸³ «Questo tacito nostro comparire, positivo [...], senza pompa, esplica assai bene per se stesso lo aspetto della Città nostra». *Ibidem*.

⁸⁴ See Lazzarini 2009 and Lazzarini 2015, pp. 146-166 and 197-202. More in general, on early modern culture of gestures, see Bremmer – Roodenburg 1993 (especially Burke 1993); Knox 1990b; Knox 1990a, as well as Niccoli 2007. For a special focus on the Venetian cultural context, see Knox 1993, and Faggion 2019. For a long-term perspectives, see the fundamental Bertelli – Centanni 1995, as well as Braddick 2009.

Meanwhile my Homeland, by lowering the high hills and stopping the flowing rivers, bows all humbly and reverently and it obediently offers itself [as] a maidservant of Your Serenity⁸⁵.

Being embodied by an ambassador, the Venetian dominion could reach Venice, enter into the Ducal Palace and celebrate the doge in his presence; by borrowing the physical body of its representative, the local body politic could not only make its voice audible in Venice, but also bow at the doge's feet, performing, in this way, the most recognisable representation of its submission. Nevertheless, even in displaying such an extreme act of humiliation, the local representatives were completely aware of the republican feature of the Prince they were praising. Cornelio Frangipane and his colleagues were completely aware of the gap existing between the symbolic dimension of the dogeship and the constitutional reality of the Venetian Republic. Orators knew that by bowing at the doge's feet they were recognizing a sovereignty which actually rested in the Venetian patriciate and in the Republican magistratures as its political emanation⁸⁶.

The congratulatory orations dedicated to the Venetian doges rested on a complex system of representations and embodiments: if the subject city needed the ambassador's physical body to revere the Republic, the Republic needed to be embodied by the doge in order to receive such reverence. The congratulatory embassy, indeed, partook of a pervasive system of political communication which rested on both the symbolic overlapping of the doge's natural body with the Republic's political one⁸⁷, and the artificial attribution to the doge of an effective personal power, an actual decision-making autonomy and, in other words, of a fictitious monarchical feature. Early modern political treatise writers were perfectly aware of this⁸⁸ as well as the authors of the orations we are considering. As stated to Leonardo Donà by the already-mentioned Santo Di Marangoni, the Venetian doge existed only because of the necessity «to visibly represent the majesty» of the Republic. The doge, he said, was only the «head» of the Venetian Republic, as it was established by ancestors «by means of an ancient and necessary decree». The doge — he continued — was the «vertex» of a «well founded pyramid», the point of convergence of all the «lines» — or «orders» — which composed the republican political architecture⁸⁹. Such a vertex had an empirical representation in the Pien Collegio, commonly recognised as the «main seat of the Republic», «the brightest throne of the public majesty» or, in other words, as the purest synthesis of the Venetian political

⁸⁵ «Intanto la mia patria abbassando gli alti colli et arrestando i correnti fiumi, tutta humile et riverente si inchina et si dona ubidentente ancella de la vostra Serenità». Sansovino 1562, fol. 9v.

⁸⁶ For a updated consideration on the Venetian republican system and its constitution, see Viggiano 2013 as well as Conti 2002.

⁸⁷ On the sovereign's two bodies, see Kantorowicz 1957 as well as Bertelli 2001. For a special focus on the Venetian doge, see Muir 1977, pp. 251-298.

⁸⁸ See, for instance, the paradigmatic Giannotti 1540, fols. 74v-75r and Botero 1605, fols. 38r-v. See also Ferro 1845-1847, vol. I, p. 628.

⁸⁹ «Tra le molte cose [...] che rendono straordinariamente contenti i sudditi di questa Eccelsa Republica una è veramente singolare, et maravigliosa; e questa è, che havendosi a rappresentare visibile la maestà di così fatto Imperio, per antico et necessario decreto fu determinato di costituire un capo, nel quale concorrendo, et conterminandosi tutti gli ordini, et le proportioni del governo, quasi linee di ben fondata piramide in quella sommità a punto». Di Marangoni 1606.

system⁹⁰. That was the Prince whom the Venetian dominions praise by the means of their congratulatory embassies: the doge who appeared to the local representatives was a *primus inter pares*, seated perfectly at the center of the Pien Collegio hall as the head of a magistrature — the Pien Collegio itself — composed by the executive body of the Senate (*Consulta dei Savi*) and that of the Maggior Consiglio (*Serenissima Signoria*)⁹¹. As reminded by Nicolò Manzuoli to Leonardo Donà (1606), the doge was a Prince, but his crown — the source and the seat of the republican sovereignty — was composed of senators and patricians⁹², as overtly suggested by his collocation in the Collegio hall.

The congratulatory embassy made a meeting possible between the embodiment of the Venetian Republic — the doge — and those of the subject communities — the orators. In this respect, the Venetian Prince and the local ambassador, through the meeting of their bodies natural within the Pien Collegio hall, operated in order to bridge the gap between two abstract and distant — if not separated — bodies politic: the Venetian city-republic and its dominions. During the congratulatory embassy, such embodiments provided the dialogue between ruler and ruled with an all the more empiric — and audible — dimension: through the bodies natural of the doge and of the ambassador, the bodies politic of the Republic and of the subject dominion could bow and stand, rejoice and triumph, produce sounds and hear them. The recurring acoustic imagery which characterised the orations in praise of the newly elected doges met encomiastic needs, but in so doing it also fulfilled the subjects' atavic aspiration to a direct — if not personal — connection with the Prince. Such need was all the more felt in a context such as the Venetian one, characterized by a structural separateness between Venice and its dominions⁹³.

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⁹⁰ «Il Pien Collegio [...] si può a ragione chiamare la sede principale della repubblica, ed il trono più luminoso della pubblica maestà». Ferro 1845-1847, vol. II, p. [4]37. For a similar definition, see also Argelati 1737, p. 97.

⁹¹ See Maranini 1931, especially pp. 297-383, and Besta 1899, especially pp. 142-143 and 177-190, Sinding-Larsen 1974, especially pp. 141-142.

⁹² See Sinding-Larsen 1974, p. 134.

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