

gulfs and fiords of the Istrian and Dalmatian seaboard. Under the great Doges of the Candiani and Orseolo families for nearly two centuries (836–998), the Republic fought the Dalmatian freebooters with varying fortune but ever-growing skill and mastery of sea-warfare, till Pietro Orseolo II. captured the pirate stronghold of Lågosta, one of the most southern of the Dalmatian islands, north-west of Ragusa, and was proclaimed Duke of Dalmatia in 998. But Venetian domination extended merely over the seaboard and the seaboard towns; the mainland of Dalmatia remained unconquered under its Croat chieftains, and even the sea-coast cities, notably Zara, were in a perpetual ferment of revolt, appealing for support to Hungary, which, since the year 900, had advanced claims on the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

When the Fourth Crusade assembled at Venice in 1202, Zara was in full revolution, garrisoned by Hungarians. The Venetian Doge, Henry Dandolo, drove a hard bargain with the Crusaders, helplessly stranded on the Lido and unable to move except at the pleasure of the Venetian fleet. One clause of this bargain obliged the soldiers of the Cross to recover Zara for Venice, before proceeding on their true mission to free the Holy Land. Zara and