Anchorages of Faith

Experiencing and Shaping the Holy in the Eastern Adriatic (1300–1550)



Vesna Šćepanović

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By

Vesna Šćepanović



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This book is based on my PhD dissertation, defended in June 2019. Although I was tempted – as some colleagues may relate to – to reshape it to reflect the 'new me' who has emerged since then, the volume remains essentially a translation, or rather an adaptation, of the original work from Italian into English. Changes include a few bibliographical updates and the incorporation of newly uncovered Vatican documents which surfaced while consulting other material. These additions are, however, supplementary and do not alter the main narrative. At the same time, as I am currently working on Venetian material, I felt the first chapter required a deeper treatment of the role of the Istrian hubs, both devotional and practical, within the Venetian Gulf.

These acknowledgments are also an addition. Over the past ten years I have had the privilege of meeting many inspiring people of different academic backgrounds and ages while working at the Chair of Medieval Art History in Fribourg. My deepest gratitude goes to Michele Bacci, who embodied the best kind of *Doktorvater*, offering guidance beyond expectations, methodological and content-related advice, bibliographical references that would have been impossible to find otherwise and encouragement whenever needed. His discreet mentoring allowed me to develop and express my own ideas and methodology freely, even within the framework of his larger project. I am also grateful to Donal Cooper for his generous comments on my thesis.

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Introduction

> When one ventures onto the sea, one comes to understand Venetian dominion and power. Oh, how one may marvel when one sees this might extending into Istria, Dalmatia and Slavonia, from there on to the Greek lands and on to Crete and Cyprus, the royal islands, not to mention other mighty cities, lands and islands in and along the sea, of which there are very many. As this journey progresses, perhaps this will be further revealed. Considering all this, I believe and do not think I am mistaken that no kingdom or dominion on land can be found, yet on the sea (alone and uniquely in itself understood), within all Christendom, there is nothing comparable to Venice. It is easy and a small matter for the Venetians to outfit, protect and arm six hundred galleys and, within two days, bring them out from their arsenal and onto the sea.[1]

⁂

Bernhard von Breydenbach's travelogue, an account written in and widely read during the late Middle Ages, offers an insightful entry point into this volume, providing a valuable lens through which to explore key themes and actors: the Venetian Stato da Mar, its territories and how these regions were perceived through pilgrims' eyes. His narrative extolling Venice's maritime power raises questions about the source of the immense overestimation of the size of the Venetian fleet.[2] Was this outcome a product of the travelogue creation pro-

1 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 73: 'So man aber yn das mer yß faret venedigsche herschafft vnd macht zu erfaren. O wie mag man sich verwundern fo man sicht disen gewalt sich strecken yn Hystriam Dalmaciam vn Schlauoniam von dannen yn kriechsche lande vnd Candiam vnd Cyprum konglich jnsel vßgenomen ander mechtig ftett land vnd jnsel ym mer vnd an dem mer ligend der gar vil syn. Als hye nach yn vollzug diser reyß villicht baß wurde geoffenet. Dem allem nach jch glaub vnd vermeyn mich nit yrren daz keyn kongrich oder herschafft vff land befunder doch vff dem mer (alleyn vn eynig fur sich selbs verstanden) yn der gantzen cristenheyt mug gefun den werden. Es ist den venedigern gar licht vnd eyn kleynes sechshudert gezyret beschutzet vnd gewapnet galeen ynwendig zweyen tagen vß yrem archynal furen vnd bringen in das mer.'

2 For a table of Venetian navy galleys in service (13th–17th centuries), with figures diverging sharply from Breydenbach, see Pezzolo 2006, 4. For instance, at the end of the 15th century, Venice sent 25,000 men against the Ottoman fleet (Pezzolo 2006). In 1571 the fleet comprised

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cess, thus possibly based on earlier diaries? Were locals or international ship crews responsible for these exaggerations or was it Breydenbach himself who amplified the story, adding fresh layers to the myth of Venice?

While Venetian military power remains definitively marginal to the discussion in this volume, the experiential dimension of the holy sites encountered along the route, shaped by pilgrims' anticipation and expectations regarding the Holy Land, emerges as a core theme. This ties into broader questions about pilgrimage as a transformative experience, with pilgrims seen not as passive narrators, but as active recipients and, perhaps more accurately, as co-authors of the holy topographies that punctuated the journey to Palestine.

Breydenbach underscored the dominance of Venice as Christendom's foremost maritime power, while also mapping the network of the Republic's overseas territories, the trade routes of which closely overlapped with those traversed by him and other pilgrims bound for the Holy Land. Though alternative overland routes existed, the sea passage remained the only viable option, as noted by the Dutch pilgrim Jan Aerts: 'One may also travel from Paris by land to other kingdoms and likewise to Jerusalem, though such a journey would be very arduous and perilous, as no one could obtain safe passage or permission to traverse so many lands of unbelievers.'[3]

This book, based on the PhD dissertation 'La santificazione della costa dalmata nel tardo Medioevo. Analisi delle fonti testuali e materiali', defended in 2019 at the University of Fribourg, stems from a broader project on the full extent of Venetian pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land (1300–1550), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (2014–2018).[4] Under Professor Michele Bacci's guidance, five research subprojects examined networks of shrines along the Adriatic, Greek and Levantine coasts, focussing on key stops – Poreč, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Corfu, the Morea (the Peloponnese), Candia (present-day Heraklion), Rhodes and Cyprus – along the Venetian maritime routes that led

about 130 galleys. However, the number of galleys could fluctuate significantly, as it was not based solely on permanent military vessels; merchant ships could be, and at times were, recruited (Pezzolo 2006, 22). For further considerations on these numbers in relation to Venice's 15th-century population of 150,000, see Lane 1991, 338.

3 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 132–133: 'Oock magh men van Paris te lande reyſen na meer ander Koninckrijcken, ende inſgelijcks tot Jeruſalem, hoe-wel dat'et ſeer pijnlick ende oock periculeus ſoude weſen, want niemant en ſeude geleye of paſpoort konnen verkrijgen, om ſoo veel verſcheyde landen der ongeloovigen te paſſeren.'

4 SNSF project 'Von Venedig zum Heiligen Land. Ausstattung und Wahrnehmung von Pilgerorten an der Mittelmeerküste (1300–1550)'. More information about the project is available online: https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/153356.

devotees to disembark at Jaffa or Alexandria, from where they would continue their journey to the Holy Land.[5]

From the outset, Professor Bacci emphasised the transconfessional and translinguistic dynamics of these sacred geographies. The research highlights how sanctuaries were connected to pilgrims' ultimate destinations, whether through mimetic, analogical or synecdochical representations.[6] The project addressed diverse worship practices associated with sites ranging from grand cathedrals to small chapels on remote islets, drawing systematically on Western travelogues. A crucial starting point was the meticulous collection of over 300 pilgrimage accounts – guidebooks, diaries and reports – gathered through a shared research effort. Written between 1300 and 1550 in Latin and various European languages (Italian, German, French, English, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Polish, Dutch and Czech), these sources illuminate the material, cultic and sensory dimensions of sacred sites and form the foundation of this study.

Drawing on this unprecedented corpus of primary sources and benefitting from the methodological and comparative perspectives of the larger project, this book focusses on pilgrims' descriptions of the first segment of the maritime route, specifically the sites along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts up to the Albanian shore. It traces the distinctive cultic dynamics that shaped the history of a particular category of worship-worthy sites, particularly those whose cultic worthiness was acknowledged not only by local communities, but by pilgrims heading to the Holy Land. Rather than surveying every sanctuary of the Eastern Adriatic, the study concentrates exclusively on those that attracted the attention of foreign travellers. It thus reconstructs a sacred topography of the Eastern Adriatic in the late Middle Ages, shaped by the region's involvement in maritime pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land.

This territory, however, should not be seen as politically and culturally homogeneous, but rather as a complex and layered landscape in which

5 Concurrent to my research, Angela Schiffhauer dealt with Venetian monuments in the subproject 'Der Blick von Norden. Venedig als Pilgerstation und Ort der Frömmigkeit im Spätmittelalter'; Gianvito Campobasso, as part of his post-doctoral research 'Cultic and Artistic Encounters in Late Medieval Albania: The Holy Sites of Durrës, Vlora and Pllanë', investigated the Albanian coastline; and the route between Corfu and Candia and the sacred topography developed by the Knights Hospitaller on Rhodes were treated by Argyri Dermitzaki and Sofia Zoitou, respectively, in their doctoral dissertations ('The Making of New Holy Sites in the Venetian-ruled Ionian Islands and Crete [14th–16th Century]' and 'Staging Holiness: The Case of Hospitaller Rhodes [ca. 1309–1522]'; for their published volumes, see Dermitzaki 2021 and Zoitou 2020).

6 On this approach, see Bacci 2017a.

different actors shaped distinctive cultic experiences. The Istrian coastal towns, within Venice's immediate grasp, were the first along the Eastern Adriatic to come under enduring Venetian rule between the 1260s and the 1330s, with its supremacy remaining uncontested until 1797. In contrast, control over Dalmatian towns solidified only a century later, in the early 15th century. The Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) stood apart: referred to as a *Signoria* by Western travellers, much like Venice or Genoa, it was the only polity beyond the Gulf of Venice to remain politically independent throughout the centuries of the grand voyage to Jerusalem.

The structure of this study, perhaps unexpectedly, moves beyond the traditional geographic sequence of pilgrimage routes, instead proposing a typological distinction among holy sites. The first chapter examines *peregrinagia maritima* shrines along the Istrian coast (Poreč, Rovinj) and Dalmatian sites south of the Kvarner Gulf (Prvić, Trogir, Hvar, Korčula). These sites belonged to a liminal maritime zone, catering to international crews aboard Venetian ships. Pilgrims, often facing the perils of seafaring for the first time, may have been particularly receptive to sailors' devotional practices and piety in moments of distress. Yet were these sites, often invoked or vowed to long before being reached, necessarily defined by specific cult objects or architectural settings or did their worship-worthiness reside elsewhere?

As the study progresses, the focus shifts to Zadar and Dubrovnik, where rich collections of relics, sacred bodies and icons shaped the pilgrimage experience through distinctively site-bound practices. These two towns serve as exemplary case studies, sharing common features, particularly in the promotion of first-class relics, while also displaying unique elements in relation to the broader Mediterranean context. Their complex settings are introduced through a synthetic historical overview, in which pilgrims' narratives vividly capture the political, economic and religious landscape, while also offering retrospective considerations, for instance in recording the shifting dominions that had shaped the region since the time of Greek rule.

In all cases – object-bound, site-bound or neither – the promotion of new holy sites is viewed as a gradual, multifaceted phenomenon, rather than a one-sided occurrence. The discussion considers, on the one hand, the selection of cultic objects and practices by pilgrims and, on the other, the local efforts to enhance the appeal of specific shrines.

Questions arise as to which strategies were crucial in transforming a local site into one of regional or even pan-European importance. The research investigates such factors as the dedication of monuments (particularly those associated with saints beneficial to seafaring), the location and accessibility of cult objects, display strategies, indulgences and the spatial and decorative choices that engaged pilgrims. Furthermore, it considers whether references

to these sites in travel accounts, acting as textual amplifiers, helped to elevate them into international pilgrimage destinations. Therefore, within the current art historical debate on creation processes as shared among multiple, nuanced figures, including donors, patrons and recipients, pilgrims, too, can be recognised as active participants and thus as makers.

In challenging the view of travelogues as repetitive or unreliable, this work argues for their value as sources relevant to both religious materiality and sensorial studies. It considers the sensory dimension of pilgrims' experiences, an aspect absent in other primary sources, such as notarial records or apostolic or *ad limina* visitations. While these documents are crucial for historical and art historical research, they lack the immediacy and vividness of firsthand accounts. Pilgrims' narratives, on the other hand, allow us to trace the sacred geography of the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts, while also exploring how late medieval devotees experienced and engaged with these spaces. Also under consideration is whether pilgrims' accounts capture a full spectrum of sensory involvement: auditory, visual, tactile and olfactory, as well as more rarely attested experiences, such as gustatory perception. For instance, the haptic dimension of these encounters is examined, through both pilgrims' direct physical contact and tactile aids that shaped their devotional practices, including their clothing and objects carried in their pockets, such as various types of prayer beads. By bringing together material evidence and rich textual sources, those full of sensory detail and those more detached, this volume bridges the gap between the perceived unreliability of travelogues and the lack of firsthand experience in other archival materials, aiming for a nuanced understanding of late medieval holy sites.

This work enters a historiographical landscape marked by an increasing global engagement with both pilgrimage and the religious monuments along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts on an international level. It takes a broad approach to cultic phenomena as documented in medieval travelogues, expanding on the existing research. The perspective presented here centres on devotional practices, image veneration, pictorial and spatial strategies and perceptions of the sacred, an approach informed by key international scholarship, including works by Hahn (1997), Vassilaki (2000), Bacci (2000, 2003, 2005), Thunø and Wolf (2004) and Classen (2012). Above all, it remains closely tied to the work of Michele Bacci, whose long-standing research has been dedicated to the detailed, multifaceted study of holy sites and sacred spaces as recounted in travel accounts.[7]

7 Bacci 2000a; Bacci 2004; Bacci 2012; Bacci 2017a; Bacci 2017b; Bacci 2019; Bacci 2021a; Bacci 2021b; Bacci 2021c; Bacci 2021d; Bacci 2022a; Bacci 2022b. See also the SNSF Advanced Grant project (2024–2029) led by Michele Bacci dedicated to Palestinian *loca sancta*, 'Holy Networks:

The literature on pilgrimage to the Holy Land is vast and continuously expanding.[8] One indicator of the field's growth can be found on Academia.edu: the category 'Pilgrimage and Travel to the Holy Land' had 3,640 followers in 2019 and spanned 51 pages of publications. As of mid-2025 it counts more than 8,700 followers and an apparently endless number of papers and volumes, illustrating the enduring appeal of the subject in international scholarship.[9]

In the historiographical overview of the Balkans, the earliest interest in travellers' accounts can be traced to the Jovan Ristić's mid-19th-century publication, albeit focussing on a single account, its title already underscoring the potential historical value of these descriptions.[10] Two decades later Petar Matković (1878) followed a similar path, incorporating research conducted beyond the Alps, particularly from the Literarischer Verein in Stuttgart.[11] In his concluding remarks, however, the geographer lamented medieval pilgrims' lack of attention to the landscapes they traversed, noting that their primary focus remained the sacred spaces along the route and the Holy Land itself. Even though the potential of travelogues in the study of historical landscapes is now gaining recognition, his observations, like Ristić's earlier appeal for travel accounts as historical sources, went largely unheeded.

A real turning point came in 1939 with Jorjo Tadić's *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, in which the profound connoisseur of Dubrovnik history included Croatian translations of eight pilgrims' descriptions of the city from the late medieval period in the appendix.[12] Even this effort, however, did not immediately lead to broader engagement. It was only in the 1970s that interest in these sources began to surge, a trend that has continued in the decades since. Over the past 40 years, studies have ranged from analyses of individual travelogues[13]

Locating, Shaping, and Experiencing Palestinian *Loca Sancta* (1187–1852)'; https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/216202 and https://www.unifr.ch/art/fr/recherche/projets-de-recherche/holy-networks/.

8 For historiographical overviews, see Ganz-Blätter 1990; Cardini 1996; Noonan 2007; Figliuolo and Saletti 2016; Tedesco 2017. On the Holy Land pilgrimage phenomena in general, see Prescott 1954; Sumption 1975; Hunt 1982; Maraval 1985; Ganz-Blätter 1990; Külzer 1994; Gómez-Géraud 1999; Chareyron 2000; Webb 2002; Elsner and Rutherford 2005; Herbers 2005; Noonan 2007; Bale and Sobecki 2019.

9 See http://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Pilgrimage_and_travel_to_the_Holy_Land.

10 Ristić 1854. The translation of the title is 'The historical importance of the memories of certain old travellers who passed through Serbia'.

11 Matković 1878.

12 Tadić 1939, 179–204.

13 Petricioli 1966, 205–208; Šime 1978, 274–283; Pivčević 1988, 185–195; Krasić 2001, 133–216; Ibler 2001, 121–132.

to broader explorations of the Dalmatian coast based on well-known reports.[14] Some have approached the material through the lens of a particular time frame,[15] the pilgrims' origins[16] or the specific ports they visited.[17] Others have examined related themes, such as Croatian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Santiago de Compostela and key Italian pilgrimage destinations[18] or maritime routes and portolan charts mapping the Dalmatian coastline.[19]

Around the time this project began, two landmark volumes influenced the study of pilgrimage along the Dalmatian coast, adopting a primarily cultural–historical and linguistic perspective. Krešimir Kužić focussed on German travellers, while Sante Graciotti, building on his contributions to the 2007 Lincei conference in Rome, examined Venetian pilgrims' journeys to the Holy Land.[20] The scale of these studies is evident in their extensive introductory essays and appendices: Kužić provided transcriptions of 94 texts from German travel diaries, while Graciotti included 53 texts in various European languages, covering a time span closely aligned with the present study. These works had a significant impact on local scholarship, leading to the increasing and more systematic use of pilgrimage travelogues across various disciplines, including art history.

Although there has been a growing reliance on pilgrimage accounts for studying Dalmatia's artistic heritage,[21] a turning point in the international debate on their historical–artistic relevance came with the conference 'The Holy Portolano: The Sacred Geography of Navigation in the Middle Ages', organised in Fribourg by Michele Bacci and Martin Rohde in 2013.[22] Among others, Josip Belamarić contributed to the event and subsequent publication by examining major cult phenomena tied to maritime travel along the Dalmatian coast.[23] His work continued in *The Ways of Mercy: Arts, Culture and Marian Routes between East and West*, edited by Maria Stella Calò Mariani and Anna Trono,[24] in which our team delivered an early study, 'Marian Cult-sites along the Venetian Sea-routes to the Holy Land in the Late Middle Ages', exploring

14 Richard 1986, 27–39.
15 Pavić 2007, 33–47.
16 Levental 1989; Kužić 2010, 49–66.
17 Kovačić 1999; Malinar 2008, 5–58; Kužić 2008, 63–104.
18 Kolanović 1983, 13–36; Peričić 1985, 550–552; Ladić 1993, 17–31; Ladić 1997, 19–24; Ladić 1998, 117–122; Čoralić 2009, 1–7.
19 Kozličić 1994, 33–49; Kozličić 1997, 257–279; Pavić 2000, 173–194.
20 Kužić 2013; Graciotti 2009; Graciotti 2014.
21 Cf. Jakšić and Tomić 2004; Vidas 2008; Cooper 2009.
22 Bacci and Rohde 2014.
23 Belamarić 2014a.
24 Belamarić 2017, 107–134.

pilgrimage accounts related to Marian devotion along the route.[25] A second publication by our team, included in *Migrating Art Historians: On the Sacred Ways* (2018), examined the spatial and visual strategies that influenced pilgrims' experiences along the same itinerary.[26]

Other contributions have further deepened this discussion. Donal Cooper (2014) drew extensively on pilgrimage accounts to examine the silver-gilt altarpieces of Dubrovnik's churches.[27] Meanwhile, *Ein Meer und seine Heiligen. Hagiographie im mittelalterlichen Mediterraneum*, edited by Nikolas Jaspert, Christian A. Neumann and Marco di Branco, shed light on maritime hagiography, including Ana Marinković's study (2018) on relics as instruments of Venetian control in the Eastern Adriatic.[28]

This volume positions itself within this dynamic historiographical context, consistently examining Istrian and Dalmatian phenomena in parallel with developments on both sides of the itinerary. Specifically, it is the Venetian side that serves as the primary reference point, while the remainder of the route, extending to the Greek islands, has been analysed within the same wider project by Sofia Zoitou and Argyri Dermitzaki.[29] The parallels with this sea section have been explored less conclusively here, as we are working towards a collective volume that will further highlight the layered network of shared cults and distinct practices, incorporating the extensive appendix with references.

Regarding toponyms, this book adopts the present-day Croatian forms (i.e., Poreč, Rovinj, Zadar, Korčula, Hvar, Dubrovnik), which generally correspond to their English equivalents, even though they were known in the late Middle Ages – at least to pilgrims – by their Italian names, commonly used abroad by Venetian galleys. For demonyms, the Italian noun root has been favoured, opting for such well-established variants as Zaratine and Ragusan. However, the use of both Croatian and Italian terms is historically grounded; for example, the Dalmatian maritime republic was referred to as both Dubrovnik and Ragusa in travelogues.

Finally, regarding what this volume does not cover: unfortunately, due to the nature of the primary sources, it does not offer a gender-neutral or socially inclusive perspective. Although one of the earliest pilgrimage accounts was written by a woman, the 4th-century pilgrim Egeria, who chronicled her journey and highlighted the experiential dimension of the holy through descriptions

25 Bacci *et al.* 2017, 81–106.
26 Bacci *et al.* 2018, 351–398.
27 Cooper 2014.
28 Marinković 2018.
29 Zoitou 2020; Dermitzaki 2021.

of devotional practices in Palestine, impacting over the centuries generations of pilgrims to come, no female accounts emerge in the period under examination here. This absence is not due to a lack of women travelling aboard, as both Venetian archives and travelogues record their presence during long overseas journeys.[30] The narrative presented here is multifaceted, shaped by figures from all over Europe, yet it primarily reflects the standard voice of male individuals, mostly from the middle- to upper-ranking strata of medieval Western European society. This voyage was challenging, at times even frightening, as we will see in certain instances, but it was also extremely expensive – well beyond the reach of most.[31]

30 See the enlightening introduction by Margaret Newett in her translation of Pietro Casola's travelogue; Pietro Casola, 1494, transl. 1907, 37–38.

31 Some tips on how to spend less on customs duties and taxes ('dazzi e gabelle'), among other things, were offered by Stefano Mantegazza; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 30–34.

CHAPTER 1

Istria and Dalmatia: Seafarers' Piety and Devotion

> Tuesday, 6 June, around 12 o'clock, when the *garbino* wind had risen, the captain had all three sails set, and, continuing on our journey, we began to see the mountains of Istria. This Istria stretches for 100 miles in length, and on the side is Muggia, Koper, Piran, Umag, Novigrad, Poreč and Pula. Everything else is to the right, and there is a gulf called the Kvarner, which extends for 30 miles, all under the rule of the *Signoria* of Venice.[1]

⁂

1 Poreč and Rovinj: a Venetian Outer Port

The Istrian coastal towns were the first along the Eastern Adriatic to come under the lasting rule of the Venetian dominion, breaking free from the feudal orbit of the Patriarchate of Aquileia.[2] Poreč pledged *fidelitas* to the doge in 1267, followed by Umag, Novigrad and Rovinj in 1269, 1270 and 1283, respectively, and finally Pula, a stronghold under fluctuating Venetian control since the mid-12th century, in 1331.[3] Their status, however, differed significantly

1 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 52: 'Martedì 6 iunij, circa le dodece hore, levato lo vento garbino, el patrono fece piantare tute tre le vele et prosequendo al nostro viagio incomenzassemo scoprire le montagne de l'Istria. Questa Istria dura cento miglia per longo et suxo gli è Muglia, Cavodistria, Pirrano, Imago, Citanova. Parenzo et Pola. Tuto lo resto a man destra, puoi gli è uno colpho chiamato el Quarnaro che dura trenta miglia, tuto sottoposto a la Signoria de Ventia.'

2 Jan Aerts made a retrospective note recalling the past dominion of the Patriarch of Aquileia over the city of Poreč; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 132–133: 'Paris is een ſtadt gelegen in Hiſtria, ſeer ſterck ende ſchoon van mueren maer van binnen arm, gelijck gemeynlick alle de ſteden zijn, leggende onder de ſubjectie der Venetianen, midts de ſware jaerlickſche ſchattingen. Welcke ſtadt in voorleden tijden was toe-behoorende den Patriarch van Aquilegien, gelijck als my een Minnebroeder vertelt heeft, ende is gelegen in een ſeer luſtigh ende playſant landt, van waer men gevoeghlick magh uyt-gaen na Hungaryen.'

3 Milan Prelog's *Poreč: grad i spomenici* [Poreč: Town and monuments], first published in the 1950s, presents a nuanced discussion of Istrian history. The 2007 reprint reaffirms the lasting relevance of his work; Prelog 2007, 19–64; see also Darovec 2010, 64–67; Ivetić 2014,

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from that of neighbouring Dalmatian towns, largely due to their proximity to Venice, which ensured much tighter military oversight in the area, serving as a defensive buffer for the Republic. Another key factor was their crucial role in supporting Venetian maritime logistics. Unlike well-equipped deep-sea ports, Venice required a carefully coordinated system for departures and arrivals, given the complexities of navigating its lagoon. Poreč and Rovinj played a pivotal role in this system. After leaving Venice, ships bound for the Holy Land typically made their first stop at Poreč or Rovinj, both serving as strategic hubs for crew rotations. On the outward journey, experienced sailors boarded vessels to guide them through the rugged Dalmatian coastline, whose sheltered bays and inlets had been favoured over Italian outposts since antiquity.[4]

In 1440 the Venetian Council of Pregadi decreed that the *pedotti d'Istria*, professional pilots authorised to navigate ships in the lagoon, had to reside in Poreč from 1 September to the end of March and in Rovinj for the remaining six months.[5] That same year, a 'pilot's boat' was mentioned by Milliaduse d'Este,[6] the second son of the marquis of Ferrara, and in the following decade the Italian pilgrim Count Roberto da Sanseverino confirmed the mandatory nature of the stop: 'And so Poreč, [...] is where, by the proper order of the *Signoria* of Venice, every Venetian ship and galley, no matter where they come from, must stop. Nor may they depart from there to go to Venice without the pilots appointed for this purpose, due to the great danger of entering between the two fortresses at the port of Venice, which is very perilous.'[7] That this

75–84. It should be considered that the hinterland stayed under Habsburg domination; Ivetić 2009, 243–247.

4 Belamarić 2014a, 159–162; Marinković 2018, 276.

5 See *Costituzione della Corporazione dei Piloti dell'Estuario Veneto: R.D. 31 gennaio 1877 n. 3664, 1877–2007: Centotrentesimo anniversario* (Venice 2007), 77. On the Istrian pilots and their guild, see mainly Buono 2016, 93–110. For the later, 18th-century system, see Panciera 2020, 30–38.

6 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 7: 'E quella sera a hore 3 di note zunzemo in porto de Parenzo, lontano milgia C da Venexia [...] E la matina che fue el sabato: sabato a dì 14 de magio, la maitina avanti il zorno ore 3, montasimo in la nostra barcha de pedota e via vignissimo inverso Puolla.'

7 Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 97–98: 'Ale .XXII. hore, cenato ogni homo, feceno vella, orzando però, e videvasse ciaramente Mago, che è una città de Istria, sita nel licto del mare, et cossì Parenzo, che è uno loco suso dicto licto, al quale, per bello hordine dela signoria di Vinegia, è necessario faciano capo ogni nave et galee di Venetiani, vengano dove se voglia, né da lì se partano per andare ad Vinegia senza li pedoti deputati ad questo, per lo grande periculo che è alo intrare dentro dele due castelle, cioè dal porto di Vinegia, lo quale è molto periculoso.' See also *ibid.*, 238–239: 'Martesdie .XIIII. di. novembre, il predicto signor Ruberto et don Giovanni Matheo, overo lo soprascripto Giovanni Antonio, suo spenditore, attexe ad fornirsi di pane, vino, carne et de quelle altre chosse gli bisognava, perché

measure was an obligation rather than a recommendation is further confirmed by Arnold von Harff's testimony (1496–1498), which explicitly states that heavy penalties were imposed for violations.[8]

The frequency of recorded stops in pilgrims' accounts underscores the primacy of Poreč, likely due to its customs offices, as noted by numerous travellers, including Felix Fabri, who mentioned that customs officers boarded all the galleys, broke open the locks and searched thoroughly to ensure nothing reached Venice without paying taxes, a necessity due to the war with the duke of Ferrara.[9] However, this does not entirely diminish the importance of Rovinj, a secondary Istrian harbour resulting from the split annual schedule imposed by the Venetian authorities. The role of Rovinj is further evidenced by Fynes Moryson's late 16th-century voyage and Giuseppe Rosaccio's *View of Rovinj* (1598), which marks a small island near the city as 'Scoio dei Peoti' (Fig. 1).[10]

However, by 1527 the entire process, including its significance for Holy Land pilgrims, was succinctly conveyed by Gabriel von Rattenberg:

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intendevano che dicta nave non pigliaria più porto in alchuno locho fin ad Vinegia, overo al Parenzo in Istria, ove per bello hordine, come già dicto, sempre fano scala lane nave, galee et altri navigi grossi de' Venetiani, vengano dove si voglia. Et lo patrone, con li soy marinari, attexe tuto lo dicto die et la nocte sequente ad scharichare chotoni et ad le altre cosse necessarie per spazarse presto.' *Ibid.*, 290–291: 'Giovedie .XI. di zenaro, similiter stetero in Vinegia expectando la venuta deli cavalli et loro mulli, et atendendo ad expedirsi di quello gli havevano ad fare. Et circa una hora di nocte gionsero lì ad caxa loro Iacomo Trono soprascripto, el quale con una barcha di pedati venia pur alora da Parenzo in Istria, ove l'haveva lassato la nave sopra la quale erano venuti da Acri.'

8 Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860, 59–60: 'Item vff sijnt Agathen daich vroich hatten wir guden wynt, lijes der patroyn eicht ancker in wynden dar an dat schyff gehefft was ind tzogen die siegel off dae mit foiren wir in godes namen nae Parens. item van Venedich zo Parens hondert mylie. Item Parens is kleyn steetgen der Venecianer, eyn gude portz des mers dae alle schyff an lenden moissen ee sij dorren zo Venedich faren off eyn groisse pene, as idt gar soerchlich dae en tusschen faren ist.'

9 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 186v: 'Am 7. Tage / da die Sonne auffgienge/ da huben wir die Ancker auch auff/ unnd schlichen wol gemach ghen Parentz in die Port/ und kamen dar zu dem Imbis/ da waren etliche Zöllner zu Parentz/ die uns die Venediger entgegen geschikt hatten/ die giengen in alle Galeen/ und brachen alle Schloß auff/ unnd ersuchten alles das/ das in den Schiffen war/ daß ihnen nichst ghen Venedig unverzollet kommen möchte. Grosse neuwe Steuwer und Zölle nemmen jetzt die Venediger eyn/ denn sie nötig sind worden/ von wegen deß Kriegs/ welchen sie mit dem Hertzogen von Ferrar haben. Als es nun Abendt war worden/ da löseten die Schiffleute alle Galeen ab/ und zogen die Schiff mit Rudern auß der Port.'

10 The passage of pilots to Rovinj was recorded by Fynes Moryson during his late 16th-century voyage, compiled and published only in the second decade of the 17th century; Fynes Moryson, 1617, ed. 1907, 112–113: '[…] upon the seven and twenty day we entered the Haven of Rovingo in Istria, subject to the Venetians, where the ships use to take a Pilot for their owne safety, or els are tied so to due by some old priviledge of the City.'



FIGURE 1 View of Rovinj, 1598

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> If someone today wants to take pilgrims to Venice, this is the usual practice: as soon as they arrive in Rovinj or Poreč (the two towns are close to each other), the pilgrims leave the large ship and hire a smaller one, with which they continue directly to Venice. All ships arriving from overseas must stop in Poreč for some time, where the cargo is inspected. This process takes a long time, which would be tiresome for the pilgrims. To avoid the wait, they arrange for another ship and sail on to Venice with ease, hoping to soon be free from the tedium of sea travel.[11]

The issue of long delays was also recorded by Felix Fabri, who noted that: 'There is no more perilous route than from Poreč to Venice, and a specific wind is needed to navigate it. If that wind does not blow, one cannot sail, and it often happens that galleys must wait there for one or even two months.'[12] Similarly, Francesco Suriano (1484) described Poreč as a harbour where galleys, ships and other vessels remained anchored, waiting for the right conditions to reach

11 Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 128–129: 'Wan ein jetzlicher will die bilgram geen Venedig fueren, wan also ist es gewonhait: als bald man geen Rubina oder geen Parentz kumbt (die zwo stat ligen bei einander), so verlassen die bilgram das gross scheff und verdingen sich auf ein klaines, mit dem faren sie darnach gar geen Venedig, wan alle scheff, die über mer kumen, die halten sich ein zeit auf zu Parentz; daselbst besicht man vor das scheff, was fur kaufmansgueter darauf seint, das verzeucht sich dan lang, das wär dan den bilgram verdrossen, so lang zu warten, und darumb bestellen si ein ander scheff und faren mit freiden geen Venedig, verhoffen sich bald zu erlediget werden von den lankweiligen merfart.'

12 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 124v: 'Denn durch das gantze Meer ist nicht sorglicher fahren/ denn von Parentz ghen Venedig/ und muß ein besonderer Windt sehn/ wenn der nicht whet so fehret man nicht/ unnd kommet offt daß Galeen ein Monat oder zween da müssen warten.' The critical importance of the lagoon passage in the outward direction, 'with the mind to Jerusalem', was also emphasised by Michele da Figline, who insisted on the need for a skilled pilot; Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 54–55. More or less within the same time frame, Heinrich von Zedlitz recorded the sinking of two small boats bound for Mestre, resulting in 18 victims; Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 295: 'Item am Sonnobende (5. Octob.) des morgents bin ich auf einer berckin gefaren frue zu Sanndt Elena, do sie leibhafftig lait, vnd ein Ampt In ihren Namen lossen singen zu danksagung der hailigen Sanndt Elena, das sie mir gelugseliglich her wieder geholffen hat Ir Closter, do sie lait, ist In den Meer auff ij welsche meylen von Venedig vnd sinndt waysse Monche dor Inne vnd gehn auf holtzschuen, vnnd den tagk vmb Vesper Zeit bin ich mit den Bemischen herrn von Venedig gezogenn vnnd sinndt auff berckin gefaren kein Meysteris, nohende bey Meysterys sind vor vnns zwu berckin mit leuten vndergangen vnd bey achzehnn Menschen oder mehr ertruncken, also sinndt wir die nacht do plieben.'

Venice due to the dangers of the passage.[13] Breydenbach (1483–1484) likewise emphasised the perils of navigating those waters when the winds were unfavourable,[14] while Santo Brasca was more specific, correctly pointing out that the sirocco made the route impassable, particularly at the *Fuxa*: 'knowing that with the sirocco one cannot travel from Poreč to Venice, especially because of the entry of the *Fuxa*'.[15]

A recent study suggests that *Fuxa* refers either to the port's main channel or a hazardous sandbar, both underscoring the challenges of entering Venice.[16] Seen from the Poreč side, as in Brasca's account, the Venetian lagoon was protected by the natural barrier of the Lido, which shielded the city from the open sea, but also made the approach treacherous, especially with south winds. The lagoon itself was not a static environment; on the contrary, it was – and still is – a fragile landscape and natural habitat. Its greatest peril lay in fluctuating and often insufficient water levels, far from the deep channels required for today's colossal cruise vessels, which until recently could be seen crossing the lagoon.[17] Tides and silt could form unpredictable shoals, posing a constant risk of shipwreck and vessels running aground.[18]

In the Middle Ages the main entry to the Venetian lagoon, the so-called mouth (*bocca*), followed the shortest route from Poreč towards St Mark's (Fig. 2), passing between the Castello di Sant'Andrea and the Castello di San Nicolò, as recorded by numerous pilgrims.[19] Departures for the Holy Land mainly took place from Castello San Nicolò, also known as the Port of

13 Francesco Suriano, 1481–1484, ed. 1900, 252–253: 'Da questa città in doi giorni pervenimo in Hystria, che è principio de la Italia, alla città de Parenzo, cento miglia lontano da Veuetia. E per esser in quel porto molte galee, nave, et altri navigli, li quali aspectavano tempo apto per passar ad Venetia, per esser passo molto pericoloso: dubitando io de stare qualche di in quel porto, si per non vi esser loco nostro, si etiam per lo gran desiderio che havia de ussire de tanti afani, partendose quella sera una galea sotil, che andava a desarmar ad Venetia, montai su quella galea cmn lo compagno.'

14 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 656: 'Am subenden tag januarij furen wir biß gen Parentz eyn statt ynn histria gelegen vn belyben den selben tag do aber gegen der nacht furen wir mit gutem wynde vn mitt grossen freuden wan eß gar sorglich ist an dissem ende zufaren wan wyderwertig wynd syn also.'

15 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 125–126: 'A dì 17 octobris giongiessimo a Parenzo […] Quivi vedendo che la piogia et lo vento sirocho regnava et parea che fosse per regnare molti giorni, et sapendo che col sirocho non se pò andare da Parenzo a Venetia, maxime per l'intrare de la Fuxa, prese partito de habandonare la galeaza et tuore una barca che per la via del Friuole me cunducesse da Parenzo a Venetia […].'

16 Mueller 2020, 274.

17 Panciera 2020, 9–16.

18 Morachiello 1991, 77–110; Lane 1991, 17–18.

19 Morachiello 1991, 77–110.

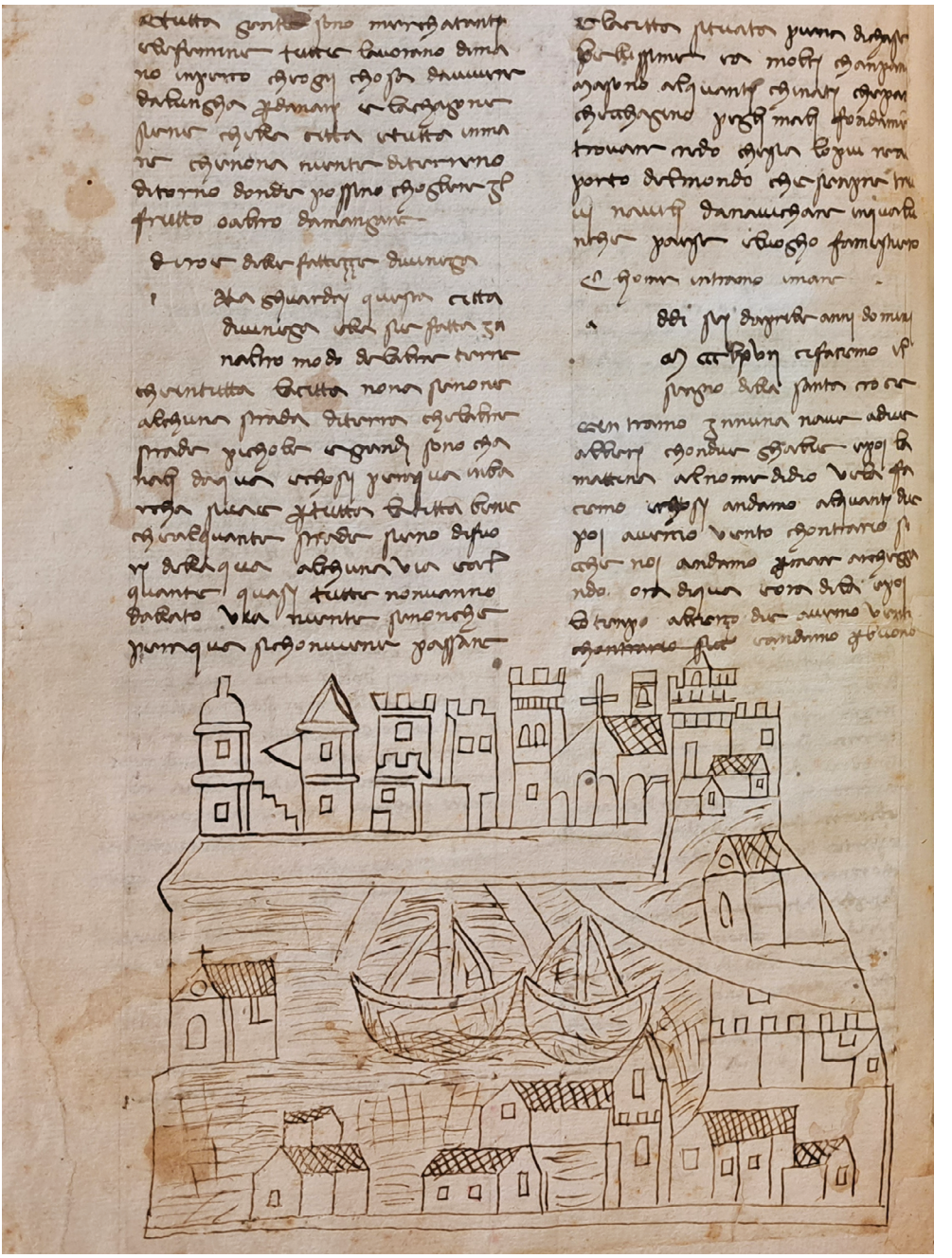

FIGURE 2 View of Venice, 1346–1350

© BNC FIRENZE, MIC|MIC_BNC-FI_UO6|22/08/2025|0005998-P, COURTESY OF THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE / BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE DI FIRENZE; FURTHER REPRODUCTION OR DUPLICATION BY ANY MEANS IS PROHIBITED

San Nicolò or simply *the* port, the main Venetian embarkation point, which retained its primacy until the 16th century, even after the *bocca* of Malamocco was opened in the 1490s.[20] Customs controls took place multiple times and at several places, including the Venetian port of San Nicolò and also at St Mark's, in addition to Poreč.[21] In this regard, Fabri testified that he was checked twice before reaching Venice, probably referring to two additional inspections after a thorough check in the Istrian hub.[22] The port admiral resided at the San Nicolò lighthouse, which guided ships towards the entrance, regulated by a rudimentary traffic signalling system, as described by the pilgrims.[23]

In 1479 Jacob Kreynck warned that waiting times in Venice could stretch to a month, contrary to shipmasters' promises of imminent departure, 'unless his ship is moored at San Nicolò, where they stay no longer than four or five days'.[24] He also noted that pilgrims waiting to depart could visit the Benedictine monastery of San Nicolò (recorded by pilgrims as San Nicolò al Lido or de Celio),[25]

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20 Lane 1991, 17–18. The departure from Malamocco is recorded in the following diaries, among others: Jean Thenaud, 1512, ed. 1884, 148–149; Josue von Beroldingen, 1518, ed. 2008, 28–29; Jean Zuallart, 1586, ed. 1587, 65; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 39.

21 Lane 1991, 17–18; Judde de Larivière 2008, 286.

22 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 124v: 'Am 8. Tage/ zu Mitternacht/ stunde ein guter milter Windt auff/ der name die Schiffe/ und treib sie auß Ysterlandt in das Venedische Meer/ mit grosser Behändigkeit/ Also/ da es frühe war/ und tag war worden/ sahen wir die Edele Statt Venedig vor uns ligen/ und da wir hinzu kamen/ daß wir dennoch bey zwo Teutscher Meilen hineyn hatten/ da wurffen sie die Ancker auß/ und heffteten da die Galeen an/ Also gienge der Scriban umb/ und nam von denen den Lohn eyn/ die umb Lohn gefahren waren/ und welcher den nicht hatte/ der mußte genugsame Pfandt im Schiff lassen/ Wir gebrachen siben Ducaten/ darumb mußt ich auch im Schiff lassen/ das ich ungern hinder mir ließ/ Also banden wir/ Herr Hans und ich/ all unser dinge zusammen/ und wurffen das von der Galee in einen Barcken/ dareyn sassen wir/ und fuhren gen Venedig/ Also theten im auch andere Leute/ Denn das Meer war voll Barcken/ Ich meyn/ daß in die vier tausendt Barcken auff dem Meer schwebeten/ die zu una von den Schiffen fuhren/ un da fuhren vil Zöllner/ die die Barcken ersuchten/ die von den Galeen fuhren/ da wurden wir zweymal besucht/ ehe wir gen Venedig kamen.'

23 Mueller 2020, 273–292.

24 Jacob Kreynck and Deryck Vogel, 1479, electronic source, 3–4: 'Want ook al zegt de patroon dat hij binnen een week zal uitvaren, in werkelijkheid vaart hij niet binnen een maand uit, tenzij dat zijn schip afgemeerd ligt bij Sinte Nicolaus, want daar liggen zij niet langer dan vier of vijf dagen.'

25 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 105: 'Item, in 't klooster van St. Nicolaes, Cilo genaemt'; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 64: 'Jtem aber hynvßbaß ligt eyn closter zů sant Nicolas de elio genant·do ist der krůg eyner dar ynn vnser herr vß wasser wyn machet·do selbet ist auch sant Nicolas stab·den er hette do er bischoff warde·vnd anders vil kleynes heyltumnes.'; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 93: 'Visitai el monastero de Santa Maria de li Carmelitani e tanti altri che, a scriverli tuti, serebbe uno longo scrivere: Santo Nicolao de Lido, Santo Georgio de Alga, Santa Maria de l'Orto, tuti dui de uno medesmo

home to an 'extraordinary number of holy relics', including a precious stone said to have been used by Christ to turn water into wine at the wedding at Cana.[26] Several pilgrims, including Pierre Barbatre, provided detailed lists of relics kept at the monastery: 'Two miles beyond Venice is the church of St Nicholas, where black-clad monks reside. There, one finds the pastoral staff once carried before him, the ring that he wore on his finger and one of the jugs from the wedding feast in which God turned water into wine. Also preserved are his shoes.' Barbatre also noted an unexpected detail that reinforces the maritime character of the monastery: 'At the porch there is a fish rib, 18 feet long and as thick as a log.'[27] The monastery's relics, as well as water drawn from its well, which was believed to be the best in Venice, were highly prized by sailors. Jan Aerts recorded that ships often stocked up on this water, as it did not spoil easily and was valued for quenching the thirst caused by both the hot climate and the strong wines of the Eastern territories.[28]

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ordine.'; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 144–145; see also Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 35–41: 'Nachdem sind meine G.H. gefahren zu St. Niclaus, genannt de Leo, sind Mönche vom St. Benediktorden, da ihre G. haben gesehen das Heiligtum: Erstlich der Krüge einen, in dem Jesus der Herr aus Wasser Wein gemacht hat an der Hochzeit zu Kana m Galtlea, als das Evangelium inhält; St. Niclaus Bischofshut und Stab mit viel anderem Heiligtum.'

26 Jacob Kreynck and Deryck Vogel, 1479, electronic source, 5: 'Op [het eiland] Sint Nicolaus, waar de schepen vier of vijf dagen [voor anker] liggen, zijn bijzonder veel heilige voorwerpen. Zo is daar een [edel]steen, waarmee Onze Lieve Heer tijdens de bruiloft wijn maakte van water.'

27 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 104: 'D' aultre part oultre Venize II milles est l'eglise de Monsseigneur sainct Nicolas et sont moynes noirs. La est le baston pastoral que on portoit devant luy et son agnel qu'il avoit en son doy, et une des ydres des nopces archidiclin en la quelle Dieu mua l'eaue en vin, et les soulliers que chaussait. Et est belle eglise; et au porche y a une coste de poisson la quelle est longue de XVIII piez et grosse comme une bûche.' See also William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 80–82: 'Auf Donnertsag St. Philippi und Jacobi Abend gingen wir zu Venedig auf die Gallen und fuhren da in das Kloster zu St Nicolaus. Das liegt in der Pforte des Meeres. Darinnen ist der Stab St. Nicolai und zween große Ringe, die er gebraucht hat, als er Bischof gewesen ist. Auch der Krüge einer, darinnen Christus Wasser zu Wein machte, und fast viel andern Heilthums. In demselben Kloster lagen die Brüder zwo Nächte und auf den Seonnabend nach dem Abendessen ginen die Brüder auf die Gallen in der Meinung, noch die Nacht.'

28 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 105–106: 'In't selve klooster wordt oock bewaert de kroetse, oste staf van den heyligen Bisschop St. Nicolaes, die hy binnen sijn leven plagh te gebruycken, met noch meer andere heylige Reliquien. In't selve voorschreven klooster wordt oock gevonden 't beste water dat binnen Venetien is te bekomen, waer mede de schepen, varende na Turckeyen, gemeynlcik versien worden, mits dat niet lichtelick en stinckt. Geen meerder gebreck in lijden den broeders ofte pelgrims, dan van wersch water, overmits sy dickwils langen tijdt op 't water zijn, eer sy-linden aen eenige haven

Another miraculous liquid – holy water said to ooze from the tomb of St Nicholas and those of other saints, namely St Nicholas 'lo Zio' (his uncle) and St Theodore – was likewise promoted by the monks, alongside a notable collection of Christological relics and the full presence of St Nicholas's body, accompanied by a vast array of his contact relics.[29] Pilgrims offered valuable

konnen komen; oock ter oorsaken, dat de wijnen daer wonderlicken heet zijn; voorts om de over-groote hitte van dien lande te blusschen.'

29 Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 77–87: 'myt den groefen sceeffen daer licht eyn cloester vnd heit sinte nicolaus vnd sint monichen van sinte benedictus orden; daer wart vns ghethoent dese reliqeren hier na besereuen: inden eersten eyn van den krugen, daer vns lief here waser inden wyn verwandelt; item den arm vnd dat hoefft van finte porphirius ritter vnde mertler, der bekeert wart van fin te katherinen; item ein heyn myt einem voet van sinte maria egipciaca; item den biscop staf van sinte nicolaus,. item die sandalien, der sinte nicolaus plach zto besegenen, do he bischof was, vnd twe vinger; item eyn syden cleit, dat vp sinte nicolaus licham gevonden wroart vnd op twe anderen heilihghen lichamen; dat wilch verdriift die quade geyften vanden mynschen. Item noch twe teend van sinte nicolaus item eynen vingher van sinte Thimoteus, jonger van sinte Paulus; item v gebeynen van den cleinen kinderen, die herodes dede doden; tem hilchdum van den eylfdusent megeden, item van den knyde van Abraham den patriarche; item vanden elenbage van sinte Bartholomeus; item gebeynte van sinte georgius; item eyn oer van sinte paulus die eerste heremite; item twe gebeynte van sinte procopius ritter vnde mertler; item gebeynte van sinte elizabeth itm van sinte laurens; item eyn scoen gelass wul scoens waters, dat wilch wt den graue van sint Nicolaus vnd sinre gesellen geronnen ist; item van dem holte des heiligen cruces, item noch veel meer ander reliquien vnd hillichdum van vele heiligen, wilch auer eyn weren vnde so wt dem seluen casten gedaen weren.'; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 144–145: 'Der 29. Tage Am Freittag nach unnsers lieben Herren Fronnleichnambstage lagen wier zue Venedig unnd auf disen Tage nach dem Essen da fhuere ich mitt meinem Whaalbrueder, ainem Friderich Rederer genanntt, in ainer Patkhen gheenn Sannct Nicolas de Celio genanntt, das ligt heraussen in der Portten beye dem Schloß. Unnd da besachen wier das benannttes Heiligthumb: Erstlichen Sannct Nicolai Ringkh, seinen Stab unnd seinen Schuech ainen. Item wier sachen auch deren Khrüeg ainem, welcher zue Channa in Gallilea auf der Hochzeitt gebraucht wardt worden, da Christus auss Wasser Wein gemachet hette, der sichet gleich, als wann er allawasteren were. Auch ligt da der heilige Leichnamb Sannct Nicolai unnd sunst zwenn heiligen Leichnamb, Sannct Leodii unnd auch Nicolai genanntt, welche baide dess vorgemelten heiligen Nicolai Öhaim gewesenn. Sunst seindt in annderen Altar vill Heiligthumb unnd zwenn von Sannct Nicolao, die haben die Münich herfür gethonn. Item einen Fueß unnd ein Khniegscheiben von Sannct Maria auss Egipten unnd ein Armb unnd Hanndt von Sannct Porphinio, welcher Sannct Cattharinam bekhöerdt hatt.'; Wolfgang Zillenhart (Zülnhart), 1495–1496, ed. 1932–1933, 75–76: 'Item zu Venedig ist ain kirch, haist zu sant Niclaus, statt bey den castellen dausen, auff der rechten hand und ist ain closter benedictiner ordens; da ist diss nach geschribens hailtum. Item ein stuck von dem hailigen creutz. Item der 6 krieg ainer, da unser hergott auss wasser wein machet. Item der stab sant Niclaus. Item ain geel seydins tuch, das gelegen ist auff dreyen hailigen cörpreen, die auch hernach stend, da mit dreypt man den bösen von den leytten. Item sandalia pontificialia sancti Nicolaj magni. Item dentes duo sancti Nicolaii magni. Item

glimpses into the arrangement and distribution of these relics, helping to fill the considerable gaps in our knowledge of the now-demolished Romanesque church of St Nicholas.[30]

According to the pilgrims' accounts, most of the relics were stored either in a single chest (as noted by the Dutch Anonymous in 1472) or in several chests (as reported by Wolfgang Zillenhart in 1495–1496). Zillenhart's remarkably rich and detailed inventory mentions five caskets: one in silver (filled with the sweetest oil), one in lead, one of ivory, one of cypress wood and a fifth, described as recently discovered, the material of which is not specified.[31] He located them within the *confessio* (the space beneath the main altar), a placement confirmed shortly afterwards by Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, in 1507 and by an anonymous traveller (*c.*1500), who used the same term when describing the resting place of the Evangelist in the *confessio* of St Mark's.[32]

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digitus sancti Thimothei discipuli s. Pauli apostoli. Item de sanctis Innocentibus ossa quinque. Item de ossibus undecim milium virginum. Item de genu Abhraham patriarche. Item pes et tibia Marie egiptiace. Item brachium cum manu sancti Porfirij, qui sanctam Katherinam convertit et baptisarifecit. Item os unum de remibus sancti Georgij martyris. Item auris sancti Pauli primi heremite. Item ossa dua de cruribus sancti Procopij militis et martyris. Item reliquie sancti Laurentij. Item vitrea viola aque sive liquoris sancti Achiley, que emanavit de archa sanctissimi Achiley et sotiorum eius. Item de lapide montis Calvarij. Item de columna flagellationis. Item de loco coronationis in domo Pilati. Item de loco ubi sudor Christi factus est in sanguinis gutte. Item de presepio domini. Item de loco ubi Christus flevit super civitatem sanctam Jerusalem. Item de loco ubi sepulta fuit sancta Maria. Item de sepulcro sancte Katherine in monte Sinay. Item capselle quatuor: argentea una suavissimo oleo plena, plumbea altera et eburnea una, altera cipressina, pluribus reliquiis inclusis reponunt sub confessione. Item capsella alia nuper reperta cum multis reliquiis incognitis.'; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 111–113: 'It: ausswendig Venedign ist eine Kirche des H: Nicolai, vnd da ist der Stab, den er hattc, da er Bischoff wardtt, auch ist da ein dich des H. Maurici Item von dem öle, dass auss S. Niclas gruben geflossen ist, It: seiner Heiligen zeene drey, It: etzliche Gebeine der Heiligen Unsehuldigen Kinder, it: ein Arm des H. Procopii, It: in der grofft der H: Kirchen, ligen 3. grosse Heiligen, alss der Heilige Nicolaus ein beichtiger, der H. Nicolaus sein freundt, auch ein beichtigcr. vnd der Heilige Merterer Theodorus, welche 3. Heiligen offt vnd viel seint heffig erschienen.'

30 On the church, see Piazza 2020, 55–79; Rossi 2023, 21–24; Fabbiani 2023, 29–60, with further bibliography.

31 See n. 29 above.

32 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 111–113; Anonymous, *c.*1500, ed. 1742, 183–186: 'Nella Chiesa di San Nicolò di Lio riposa il corpo di S. Nicolò Magno Arcivescovo di Mirea: Item in detta Chisa si riposa il Preziosissimo corpo di S Nicolò suo Barba Vescovo, il qual ordinò S. Nicolò Prete, fecclo poi Abbate di Monasterio dimandato il Monte Sion. Item in detta Chiesa riposa il corpo di S. Teodoro Arcivescovo, tutti questi Ss. Corpi sono sotto confessione sotto all'Altan grande: e fuora traslatati da Mirea nell'Alma, ed Inclita Città di Venezia, come appare nell'Istorie della traslazione.'

The Swiss pilgrim Sebastian Werro offered a rare glimpse into this space of the church, both through his written account and a sketch (Fig. 3), which he labelled *Sacellum et Sepulchrum*. From his description, we understand that, in the absence of further testimony from local custodians about the translation of the relics, additional information could be gleaned from two 13th-century inscriptions and one from the 14th-century found *in situ* and faithfully transcribed by the canon from Fribourg.[33] However, in his sketch – the only known drawing of Venice by Werro, which also reveals the origin of his personal devotion to St Nicholas, patron of his hometown – these inscriptions are not indicated. Still, the image remains the only visual testimony we possess of this crypt-like space.[34]

Based on the depiction of two windows on a flat wall, without an apse, it is possible to deduce that the space was not (entirely) underground. Werro's drawing further allows us to reconstruct the arrangement of the two rows of five columns previously mentioned by Stefano Magno.[35] These appear to have been organised in two rows, echoing the layout of the upper church, though in Werro's quick sketch they are not shown resting on the richly decorated capitals of the upper level, but rather on plain, slab-like abaci supporting a groin vault. The sketch depicts a statue of St Nicholas in the centre, backed by a shell-shaped niche; the figure is shown seated with a mitre and crozier, visually echoing his contact relics, stored in one of the chests and exhibited to pilgrims.

St Nicholas's body, kept alongside his contact relics in this liminal maritime zone, was considered essential and strongly propitiatory before facing the open sea, not only for sailors, but particularly for Holy Land pilgrims who were

33 Sebastian Werro [1581], fols 46r–46v: 'Dum discessum praestolamur, intellexi apud Sanctum Nicolaum de Lion esse sacra domini Nicolai Magni, Myrrheensium olim episcopi, ossa ideoque quum meae ecclesiae patronus sit magno desiderio commotus fui illa invisere. Neminem tamen in cenobio illo, quod monachorum cassinensium est, invenire potui, qui traslationis illius historiam indicasset. Abbas tum discesserat, qui, ut aiebant, historiam penes suam custodiam habebat neque tamen cuique ostendi dicebant, quod clathris et seris ferreis inclusa servaretur, sancti autem corpus in sacello sub altari reconditum esse una cum aliis duobus sanctis. Reperi denique in pariete perantiquos caracteres de eius inventione, quorum haec summa est: Anno Domini 1282, v maii, duce veneto Ioanne Dandulo, Bartholomeo Quirino episcopo et domino Petro abbate inventa sunt eodem in loco ubi recondita sunt corpora Sanctissimi Nicolai et cetera. De anno 1288, VIII maii, fuerunt recondita hoc modo: Sancti Nicolai Magni ossa in medio, Sancti Nicolai illius avunculi ossa ad pedes et Sancti Theodori episcopi et martyris ad caput. In altero latere erat alia inscriptio: Anno Domini 1399, XI augusti, tempore domini Antonii Venerio ducis Venetorum apertum fuit sepulchrum ac visa beatorum ossa eodem ordine sita.'

34 On the crypt, see Fabbiani 2023, 51–57.

35 See *ibid.*; Guiotto 1947–1948, 175–193, esp. 182.



FIGURE 3 View of the crypt of St Nicholas, Venice, 1581
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unaccustomed to long voyages.[36] This charged maritime setting was further emphasised by Pierre Barbatre, who recorded a remarkable story: between Murano and the monastery of San Nicolò lay a body that, despite having been dead for over a century, showed no signs of decay. Said to belong to a pilgrim who had visited the Holy Sepulchre, it was believed to be miraculously preserved, much like other holy bodies encountered by travellers.[37]

Furthermore, Venice's symbolic marriage to the sea – the *Sposalizio del Mare* – was held near the monastery,[38] where a Mass was sung at the ceremony's conclusion, as Barbatre recounted in the 1480s.[39] This liminal dimension is further

36 Cf. Bacci 2009, esp. 162–163.

37 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 104: 'Oultre Morans a une esglise de moynes blancs fondee de sainct Michiel, belle eglise et devote, au grant autel y a une belle table de boys bien paincte et doree richement; a senestre est une belle chapelle toute neufve, en laquelle est une croys faicte de la vraye croys, longue d'ung pié, a croissillons, et vint par grans miracle sur l'eaue de Constantinnoble et se arresta devant ladite eglise. La auprès est une isle en ung cloistre, hault en une sepulture est le corps d'ung homme mort passes LXIX ans, et est tout entier de tous ses membres generalement en chair et en os; on l'a mis a la pluye et au soleil pour le faire diminuer et est tout entier; on dict qu'il a faict par III foys miracle, communement on le appelle le pelerin. D' aultre part oultre Venize II milles est l'eglise de Monsseigneur sainct Nicolas et sont moynes noirs.'; Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 107–108: 'Item am Dornstage (23. Mai) sindt erbiet (?) S. G. die Fürsten da von gefaren, denselbigen tagk bin ich mit etlichen Pilgern gegen Meram gefaren, do man die schone Glesir macht, vnd gesehn, wie man die macht, das den wunderlich zugehet, do vns dan auch etlich hailigthumb geweist, ist In eynen Closter eynen Pilgern vns geweist, der zum heiligen grabe gewest ist vnnd gestorben vor hundert Jhoren vnnd ist noch gantz vnvorwest, das ich vnnd ander Pilgern gesehen haben.'

38 Guiotto 1947–1948, 177.

39 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 110: 'Le jour de l' Ascension, tous les ans, est acoustumé que le duc de Venize espouse la mer. Le matin, le Patriarche vient avecquez le duc et entrent en la galee du duc, laquelle est painct, et faict de l'eaue beniste et benist la mer et dict certain service; et le duc prent l'anel de son doy et le gette dedens la mer; et est entre sainct Anthoine et sainct Nicollas et de la s'en vont dire la messe audit sainct Nicollas et demeure la galee pelerine auprès de la jusques au partir bien a III milles.' See also Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 45: '60. Tag: Venedig. Auf unsers Herrn Auffahrtstag sind meine G.H. mitsamt ihrer G. Gesellschaft ausgefahren zu besehen die Ausfahrt des Herzogs und Herrschaft von Venedig, als man jährlich auf denselben Tag pflegt zu tun, so der Herzog das Meer vermählt, da der Herzog und Herrschaft von Venedig herrlich und köstlich sind gefahren in einem großen Schiff, verdeckt mit rotem Satin, mit ihren Panieren, Trommeten und Pfeifern. In einem anderen Schiff ist gewesen der Patriarch von Venedig mitsamt den Kanonikern und anderer Klerisei von St. Peters Kirche. Nachdem der Patriarch viele Solennität getan hat, so segnete er das Meer; warf alsdann der Herzog einen goldenen Ring in das Meer. Danach ist der Herzog und Herrschaft von Venedig gefahren zu St. Niclaus de Leo, da der Patriarch von Venedig Messe sang.'; Bernhard von Hirschfeld, 1517–1518, ed. 1856, 48: 'Zu Sant Nyclas, Da sol Sant Nyclas, den man nennet de

conveyed by Felix Fabri, who described the Venetian harbour as 'between the sea and the city' and noted that the church was founded in 1042 by the 33rd [*sic*] doge of Venice, Domenico (Contarini).[40] The pilots of Istria, who were required to reside in Poreč and Rovinj, but whose families were mandated to live in Venice,[41] traversed these waters regularly and were frequently recorded at the monastery of San Nicolò. Known as 'men of St Nicholas', they reinforced the monastery's symbolic importance, which extended beyond Venice itself to its surrounding waters, particularly the Istrian coast.[42]

A prominent site in pilgrims' accounts is the Benedictine church of St Nicholas on the islet of the same name in front of Poreč.[43] It appears in Conrad Grünenberg's 1486 travel diary (Fig. 4), where a massive tower, as in the Venetian port, dominates the foreground. Grünenberg specified its function: 'Not far from there, on the same hill, stands a high signalling tower, built to

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Elio, liegen vnd der stab vorhanden sein, darmit ehr Messe gehalben. Da ist auch der Kruge einer, darinnen der Herr Christus Wasser zu Weine gemacht hat, vnd dis Kloster leit auch im Mehre, vnd wirdt vf den tag vnsers Herren Himelfarts ein gros geprenge in gemelter Sant Nyclas Kirchen gehaldenn. Dan auf vnsers Herren Himelfarstag Feret der Hertzog von Venedig mit sambt etlichen von der Synerci vf einer wolgeschmuckten Galleen vss Meher, vnd vormehlet sich darmit dem Mehre zu einer bedeutunge, das der Hertzog vnf Herrschafft zu Venedigt Herren des Mehres sein vnd bleiben mollen. Vnd so geschehen, fahren sie zu vorgemelten San Nyclas Kloster, stigen da abe vnd horen ein ehrlich Umbt in Sant Nyclas Kirchen, das heldet det Patriarch, vnd so das vorbracht, gehen Sie wieder mit grossem geprenge auff die Galleen, da sitzen der Hertzog oder einer von seinetwegen vf einem Stuele mit einem seidenen Tebicht beschlagenn.' Cf. Bacci 2009, 113.

40 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 423: 'In portu Veneto, inter mare et civitatem, est grande S. Nicolai monasterium, quod 33. dux Venetorum, Dominicus, aedificavit anno Domini 1042.'

41 Buono 2016, 93–110.

42 *Ibid*., 93.

43 The Benedictine church is mentioned by the following pilgrims: Milliaduse d'Este, 1440, ed. 2009, 7; Hans Koppler, 1461, ed. 1998, 207; Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 227; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 151; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 52–53, 125–126; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 58; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 378–379; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 135; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 86; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 37; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 318–319; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 294; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 118; Wolfgang Zillenhart (Zülnhart), 1495–1496, ed. 1932–1933, 78; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 49, 102; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 54–55; Anonymous, 1521, ed. 1893, 218; Greffin Affagart, 1519, 1533–1534, ed. 1902, 29; André Thevet d'Angoulesme, 1549–1552, ed. 1556, 22–23; John Locke, 1553, ed. 1889, 177.

keep watch over the sea and alert the town in case of raiders.'[44] Around the same time, Georges Lengherand of Mons and Antonio da Crema recorded that this tower guided pilots into Poreč's harbour, lighting the way for sailors at night.[45] The lighthouse, erected by the Venetians in 1404,[46] should be considered in connection with the introduction in the 1440s of a law requiring professional pilots to reside in the city, underscoring Venice's investment in developing a well-equipped and functional outer port.

Grünenberg's view also frames the newly founded Benedictine church, built after the demolition of an earlier church dedicated to St Anastasius, protector of the previous monastic settlement. The complex, which has received little scholarly attention, had in fact been formally connected to the Venetian lagoon, granted to the Benedictines of San Nicolò al Lido in the 12th century, binding the Istrian islet to the cult of the sailor saint.[47] However, only Jan Aerts (1481) mentioned the complex's connection to its lagoon 'mother house', while other accounts focus entirely on the cult of St Nicholas as a patron of seafarers, likely promoted by the Lido monks, as suggested by Grünenberg's fleeting testimony: 'Above the town lies a monastery where St Nicholas graciously rests, with great and special signs, established by sailors or shipmasters.'[48] While this is the only explicit reference to the disputed relics of the saint in late medieval accounts, the islet was recognised by Jerusalem-bound pilgrims as a place where St Nicholas's intercession was particularly effective. By marking both the beginning and end of the long open-sea journey to the Holy Land and echoing, on a smaller scale, an analogous phenomenon of San Nicolò al Lido in the lagoon, it successfully blended practical function and cultic significance suited to seafarers.

Alongside devotion to the Virgin Mary, veneration of St Nicholas of Myra was central to the religious experience of sailors and, by extension, to Western travellers, who, in facing the perils of the long voyage to the East, actively participated in sailors' prayers, assimilating their maritime piety. A detailed insight into these rituals was provided in 1489 by Michele da Figline, who described the evening prayers recited by the crew and pilgrims at the ship's bow. Alongside invocations dedicated to the Virgin and the most venerated saints, as well as

44 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 318–319: 'Nit ver darvon uff dem selben berg ligt ain hocher sinnweler turn, der ist buwen zu ainer wart wit seachen inn das mer, ob sich da rutter schiff enthalten wetten, der stat ze schaden.'

45 Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 86; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 37.

46 Prelog 2007, 66 and n. 4.

47 Ostojić 1965, 118–121; see also Kužić 2013, 106–107.

48 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 318–319.



FIGURE 4 View of Poreč, 1490
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the prayer for the sailors, the collect for St Nicholas was recited.[49] This is likely the same oration pronounced in Rovinj by the crew that risked a shipwreck near Poreč in 1472, as recorded in the voyage diary of an anonymous traveller. Caught at the mercy of the waves, the crew promptly organised a money collection in honour of the Virgin Mary and St Nicholas, later used to sing the collect of St Nicholas and celebrate a thanksgiving Mass to the Virgin for their narrow escape.[50]

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49 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 54–57: 'Accioché lo sappi, te lo voglio deschrivere perché leggiendo abbi di tutto notitia: che ogni sera, innanzi l'Ave Maria, si va alla prua della nave et dicesi questo versetto, cioè: Ora pro nobis, sancta dei genitrix, ut digni efficiamur gratia Christi: in omni tribulatione et anghustia nostra, succurre nobis, Virgho Maria. Versus: digrzare me laudare te Virgho sacrata. Rexpondit: Da michi virtute contra tuos. ORATIO./Omnipotens senpiterne Deus, qui gloriose Virginis Matris Marie corpus et animam ut dignum Filij tui habitaculum effici mereretur Spiritu Sancto cooperavisti, da ut cuius commemoratione letamur eius pia intercessione, hab istantibus malis et a morte perpetua liberemur, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Alia oratio. Salve regina /Exaudi nos, Domine sancte Pater, omnipotens eterne Deus et mictere digneris sanctum angelum tuum qui custodiat, foveat, visitet at qui defendat omnes habitantes in hoc habitaculo et in ac nave, per Christum Dominum nostrum. ORATIO./Visita Domine, quesumus, navem istam et omnes insidias inimici ab ea longe repelle et angeli tui sancti habitet in ea, qui nos in pace custodiant et benedictio sit super nos semper, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Alia oratio./Deus, qui miro ordine angelorum ministerium hominum que dispensas concede propitius, ut quibus tibi ministrantibus in nave nostra muniantur: per Christum. Oratio. / De qui transtulisti patres nostros per mare rubrum, et transtulisti eos per aquam nimiam, ad laudem tui nominis decantantes te suplices deprecamus ut in nave famulos tuos, repulsis adversantibus, portus et per optabiliter cursu que tranquilla tutamur: per Christum. / Adesto Domine supplicationibus nostris et viam famulorum in salutis tue prosperitate dispone, ut inter omnes vie et vite huius varietatis, tuo semper protegamur ausilio. Oratio. /Esto Domine plebi tue sanctificator et custos, ut apostoli Iacobi munitos iocundos nos facias sue interesse conmemorationi: qui vivis et regnas. Alia oratio. / Deus, qui beatum Nicholaum pontificem tuum in numerus [*sic*] decorasti miraculis, tribue, quesumus, ut eius meritis et precibus a genne incendijs liberemur. Per Christum. Oratio. / Omnipotens, sempiterne Deus, qui frigescente mundo ad inflammandum corda nostra in carne beati Francisci patris nostri passionis tue sacra stigmata renovasti, concede propitius ut, eius meritis et precibus, dignos fructus penitentie faciamus. Alia oratio./ Subveniat plebi tue, quesumus Domine, placari confessoris tui beati Antonij devota et iugis deprecatio que, in presenti, nos, tua gratia, dignos efficiat et in futuro, remedia done eterna. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. / E ancora si dicono letanie el sabato sera; e' marinai aggiunghono da lloro qualche cosa et di poi noi cantavamo la Salve Regina colla oratione della donna et di poi uno de' marinai suona l'Ave Maria et fa il saluto a ttutta la brighata che è in nave, cominciando dal padrone et così alli altri uficiali, di mano in mano seguitando et sempre invocando el nome di Iesu.' The prayers recited on board were described, among others, by Stefano Mantegazza; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 42.

50 Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 91–93: 'So nam die patroen syn wech van parens auer dat meer vnde stormden all den nacht vnde des anderen daghes seer, so dat wir to anchonen nicht comen enkonden. Mer doe wir by dem lande weren, so mosten wir des nachtes

The intersection of seafaring piety with the experience of Western travellers is vividly captured in Felix Fabri's meticulous description of life aboard a 15th-century galley, plunging the reader into a distressing atmosphere of impending disaster:

> As the dark night fell, with no stars in sight, a fierce tempest arose with terrifying storms of wind and sea. The strongest gusts lifted us high, lightning flashed, and dreadful thunder roared, while, from all sides, fearsome bolts struck down – so much so that in many places the sea itself seemed to burn. […]
>
> The pilgrims and others, helpless in the face of these torments, prayed to God and invoked the saints. Some made their confessions, as if standing at the threshold of death. Others vowed great pilgrimages to Rome, to St James and to the Blessed Virgin, promising to undertake them if only they could escape this mortal peril.[51]

No sooner had they left the Greek islands than a furious storm swept Fabri's galley off course during his return from the Holy Land in 1480, leaving it adrift. Deprived of the visual landmarks provided by coastal sanctuaries, pilgrims and crew directed their votive offerings to the most renowned pilgrimage destinations: Rome, Santiago de Compostela and most probably Loreto. After a brief stop in Hvar, the travellers found themselves once again in peril on the treacherous waters of the Kvarner Gulf. This time they turned to the closest maritime shrine, St Nicholas of Poreč. As Fabri reported, they vowed to sail with all the pilgrims to the island of St Nicholas to celebrate and sing Masses in thanksgiving, which they indeed accomplished the following morning.[52]

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by gewalt vandem winde vnd dem storm weder kysen dat land van parense; vnd quamen mut dem storm in groeter noet, went die galeye nicht dicht en was. So voeren wir voer eyn stat vnd heist rewingia vnde ist eyn clein verdoruen steedgen mut eyne scoene hauen vnde licht int lant van slauonien vnde is nicht meir wan x milen bauen parense. In wilche last wir weren, so loefden wir bedeuart vnde wir liesen ommegaen got ter eren vnd sinre lieuer moder maria, wes auont dat doe was, vnde sinte Nicolaus, dat wir mut lieue in eyn hauen mochten comen vnde vergaderden eyn deyl offeranden vur zto doen eyn mysse; so dat wir by der gracien godts vp vnser vrouwen auont visitatio den eersten dach in julio quamen zto rewingie in die hauen omtrent vesperzijt vnd bleuen daer dien dach vnd die nacht vnd voert all den dach van vnserer vrouwen vnd deden singhen eyn scoen misse van vnser vrouwen mut eyn collecte van sinte nicolaus vnd sagen die stat, na dat wir misse gehoert hatden.'

51 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 51–53.

52 *Ibid.*, 58: 'Eramus etiam in Carnero, qui est periculosissimus maris gulphus, et impetuosissime currit ibi mare, contra portum Anchonensem. Ideo propter instans periculum

Santo Brasca, who shared this voyage with the Swiss Dominican, provided additional insight into the rituals performed at the islet upon their arrival: 'On 17 October we arrived in Poreč and ferried to the rock where the church of St Nicholas stands. There, our monks and other priests of the galley sang a devout Mass, offering oblations for the galley's patron, the pilgrims and all the sailors, thanking the saint who, through his intercession with our Lord, had brought us safely ashore.'[53]

The island was described by Antonio da Crema as a 'most pleasant rock' held 'in great reverence by seamen'. Similarly, the Milanese canon Pietro Casola (1494) observed that the monastery, governed by 'two monks and two lay brothers of the Benedictine order', continued to maintain 'great devotion to sailors'.[54] The testimonies of pilgrims, when examined systematically, suggest that this was not only the first, but also the most frequented shrine along the Eastern Adriatic coast explicitly tied to maritime life.[55] The hospitality of the Benedictines undoubtedly played a central role in the sanctuary's growing prominence. Milliaduse d'Este noted this as early as 1440: 'That night at 3 o'clock we arrived at the port of Poreč, a thousand miles from Venice. There, in the inner harbour, was a small monastery of friars called St Nicholas, to whom sailors often turned for good fortune at sea. We climbed onto the rock, went to the monastery, dined and slept there.'[56]

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devenit dominus Patronus, quod statim adepto portu Parentino cum omnibus peregrinis vellet navigare ad insulam S. Nicolai ibique Missas pro gratiarum actione legere et cantare, quod et factum est. Nam mane soluta Galea multis transcursis civitatibus Dalmatiae, venimus in Histriam ad Parentiam, et altero mane navigavimus cum Patrono, et votum solemniter persolvimus.'

53 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 125–126: 'A dì 17 octobris giongiessimo a Parenzo et quivi traghetassemo al scoglio sopra lo quale è situata la chiesia de San Nicolò, nella qual chiesia fu per li nostri frati et altri sacerdoti de la galea cantato una messa devotissima, et a la quale facto oblatione per el patrono de la galea, per li peregrini et per tuti quanti li galeoti, ringratiando dicto sancto che con la sua intercessione apresso lo nostro Signore Dio ne havesse conducti lì sani et salvi.'

54 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 118: 'Andassemo da poi a visitare una giesia de Santo Nicolò, posto sopra uno scoglio, in mare, a reimpeto de dicta cita; è asai bella et è facta per marinari; è in grande devozione a naveganti et è governata da dui monaci e dui conversi de l'ordine de Santo Benedeto de Observantia. Hano uno bello oliveto, sopra dicto scoglio; dico non bavere altra intrata.'

55 The *peregrinagia maritima*, a late medieval phenomenon, has been well defined through Michele Bacci's research, which has mapped an extensive network of shrines visited by seafarers and pilgrims along the route to the Holy Land; Bacci 2004; Bacci 2012; Bacci 2014.

56 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 7: 'E quella sera a hore 3 di note zunzemo in porto de Parenzo, lontano milgia C da Venexia, e lì alo intrare del porto si gli è uno picole monastiero de fraty chiamato Sam Nicolò. I quali frati molte fiate danno riduto a marinari per fortuna di mare. Et là suxo al scholgio andamo al deto monastero, e lì cenamo

Many travellers indeed preferred to spend long waits – often unavoidable due to adverse weather conditions and passing customs checks – strolling among the olive groves of the picturesque islet rather than within the town walls. Although such delays sometimes turned the stopover for impatient Western pilgrims into a prolonged stay, descriptions of local monuments and cult objects in the city are rather meagre. A systematic analysis of the entire coastline highlights the centrality of the Poreč port, mentioned by more than 100 pilgrims, yet reveals an absence of connection between the overall number of mentions devoted to individual ports and those referring to the city's main monuments. Only seven pilgrims recorded the 14th-century Franciscan monastery, and none provided any significant historical details. The complex, which housed an anonymous Italian pilgrim in 1469, is described as rather disappointing, much like the city itself, as noted by Pietro Casola.[57]

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e dormisimo.'; see also Wolfgang Zillenhart (Zülnhart), 1495–1496, ed. 1932–1933, 78: '[…] bey dem selben stettlin über jm meer ligt ain closter auff aim claine berg, auff die rechten hand, haist zu sant Niclaus benedictiner ordens da liesen mir uns aus fieren auff ainer barcken und besachent das, was es fast lustig. Also liesen unser drey unser bett hin ein fieren, und lagen über nacht dar in. Wann die zween do bey mir waren, Haintz von Sehwagen und ain junger von Klingenberg warend ain wenig schwach worden von dem meer, und belib ich bey in der sprach halb. Also fur mein her graff Rudolff wider in das schiff und mornatz frü kam er wider in das closter zu uns und hortten mess und assen in dem closter zu morgen, und beliben dar in bis auff den abend, giengen mir wider zu schiff und furen die selbe nacht hin weg gen Pola zu, was den nocht 30 welsch meyl ligt, ach im land Histria.'

57 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 117. The Franciscan monastery is also mentioned in the following diaries: Anonymous, 1469, ed. 2007, 152: 'Dexiderando in terra quella nocte riposssare, no trovando noi altro albergo, con grnde fatiga alogiamo in uno povero monastero di Frati Menori conventuali. Lì cantamo il vespero e la matina, dito la sancta mesa e lo corpo refitiato, cerca hore 13 fecemo vela e così per riva la Sciavonia navigando.'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 382–383: 'Fratres minores eliam habent ibi conventum parvum. Aliae ecclesiae non sunt in civitate, sed extra in hortis, agris, campis sunt multae ecclesiolae, et campus plenus tumbis lapideis mortuorum, et tamen non est coemeterium, sicut etiam ante civitatem Ulmensem in quolibet horto est una domuncula, in qua ligones et rastra servantur, vel pro solatio.'; Jan Aerts, 1481, ed. 1652, 134–135: 'Item, daer staet een arm klooster van de Minne-broeders, alwaer ontrendt seven broeders waren, ende lijden onderwijlen grooten honger, want sy by-na anders niet en hebben, dan 't gene datse van deure tot deure met bidden halen.'; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 86–87: '[…] et à cause que ledit vent nous demoura encoires contraire, séjournâmes tout le jour audit port; allâmes visiter les églises ou guères n'en y a fors l'eglise cathédrale, l'eglise parroischiale et une église de Cordeliers; en laquelle église des Cordeliers je trouvay escript Collart le Béghin et Gilles le Vinchant.'; Greffin Affagart, 1533–1534, ed. 1902, 29: 'En la ville y a une abbaye de Sainct-Nicolas et ung monastère de Sainct-Françoys et plusieurs autres.' Cf. Graciotti 2014, 120. On the monastery, in decay since the 15th century, see mainly Prelog 2007, 201–205.

On the purely cultic side, in the case of Rovinj there is a reverse phenomenon. The name of the town, mentioned, regardless of the landings, in 62 reports, was almost always accompanied by the name of St Euphemia, whose remains, according to local tradition, had been kept in the town's main church since the 9th century. Notably, the cult of the martyr of Chalcedon was recorded by more than 50 pilgrims and invoked even when adverse winds pushed their galleys out to sea.[58] Even though St Euphemia was not widely regarded as a sacred figure whose intercession was effective in easing the challenges of navigation, her legends, spread across the Mediterranean basin, were imbued with a pelagic dimension, which was promptly appropriated by the Istrian maritime context. Michele da Figline noted in 1486 that the shrine was one for which sailors held 'great devotion'.[59] Other accounts used the expression that St Euphemia 'makes big signs on the sea'.[60]

58 The following pilgrims mentioned St Euphemia in Rovinj: Hans Porner, 1418–1419, ed. 1874–1875, 133; Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301; Philipp, Earl of Katzenellenbogen, 1433–1434, ed. 1882, 369; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 208–209; Milliaduse d'Este, 1440, ed. 2009, 176; Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 115; Hans Rot, 1440, ed. 1882, 348; Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 94; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 93; William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 83; Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 227; Ulrich Leman, 1472–1480, ed. 2007, 20; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 42; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 353; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 135; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 151–152; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 299–300, 377–378; Felix Fabri 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fols 124v, 186r–186v; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 52; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 86, 656; Johannes, Graf zu Solms (?), 1483, ed. 1584 (copy of Breydenbach), fol. 54r; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 136–137; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319; Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 54–57; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148, 248; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 269; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 322; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860, 60; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 127; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 116–117; Georg von Gaming, 1507–1508, ed. 1721, col. 461; Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 66; Melchior zur Gilgen of Lucerne, 1519, ed. 1957, 46; Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 215; Heinrich Stulz, 1519, ed. 1957, 232; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 166–167; Juan del Encina, 1519, ed. 1978, 244; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 55–56; Anonymous, 1521, ed. 1893, 166; Ottheinrich, Pfalzgraf bei Rhein (Otto-Henry, Elector Palatine), 1521, ed. 1880, 362; Barthélemy de Salignac, 1522, ed. 1593, n.p.; Peter Füessli, 1523–1524, ed. 1982, 105; Philipp van Hagen, 1523–1524, ed. 1882, 240; Arent Willemsz, 1525, ed. 1884, 51; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 129; Jan Pascha, 1527, ed. 1563, fol. 34v; Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 37–38, 55; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 109; John Locke, 1553, ed. 1889, 154.

59 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 54–55.

60 Ulrich Leman, 1472–1480, ed. 2007, 20: 'Item in derselben stat ist ain kilch vff dem berg ze obrest, da lit ain halgi junkfrow libhaftig, die haist Sant Effemia, die zogt man vns, vnd

The church's prominent position on the upper part of the island, along with its bell tower leading to the important Istrian harbour, certainly played a crucial role in the establishment of her cult among seafarers. At the same time, as in the case of Poreč, this maritime-oriented cult overshadowed other local sites to the extent that the only known reference to the city's other monuments came in 1527 from Gabriel von Rattenberg, who merely noted in passing that, after visiting St Euphemia, they stopped at other churches as well.[61] Otherwise, the city is primarily recorded as a picturesque maritime stop, frequently associated with observations about women with deformed anatomy, an anomaly that Barthélemy de Salignac uniquely attributed to genetic factors.[62] He also noted that this was a key site for the extraction of construction materials for Venetian buildings and referred to the so-called 'men of the winds' (pilots of Istria?), who instructed others in navigating this perilous stretch of sea towards Venice.

Along this particularly challenging part of the coast, which extended between the exit from the port of Venice and the crossing to the other side of the Kvarner Gulf, numerous episodes attest to the intensification of prayers in moments of extreme distress. In such stressful situations, all those on board participated in the supplications. Antoine Regnault (1549) recorded that, when violent storms arose, Jewish passengers recited psalms in Hebrew, adding that

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dieselbig halig junkfrow kam in aim stainininen sark vss dem witten mer dar geflossen, die ist aines kúngs tochter gesin von Vnger [land], die tut grossi zaichen vff dem mer.'

61 Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 129: 'Also bestellten die teutschen bilgram ein scheff fur sich und namen uns teutsch prueder zu inen und fueren in die porten zu Rubina, welche stat ist auf ainem berg ligend, und ist auch ein bistumb daselbst, und in dem thuem ligt sancta Eufemia, die heilig junkfrau und martrerin, in einem sarch, und ist der corper noch gantz und unverzert; als wir solichs alles hetten gesechen und auch andere kirchen haimgesuecht hetten.'

62 Barthélemy de Salignac, 1522, ed. 1593, n.p.: 'Est etiam in hac provincia Histriae urbecula pusilla, munita tamen muris et moenibus, quae Ruuyna nuncupatur, ab ipsa Venetiarum urbe centum milliaribus distans, littori maris inhaerens, […] Hoc loco notate boni lectores insigne miraculum. Nam in hac civitate, et in tota fere Histriae provincia (ut fideli narratione accepimus) maior pars mulierum in ibi nascentium claudicat. Et asserunt incolae, hunc naturae morbum stirpis esse, non personae, ita quod una generatio non claudicantium haud acquiescit matrimonia iungere cum claudicantibus, propter certum (ut dicunt) huius deformitates periculum. Est etiam in Oriente huius urbeculae mons mari imminens, Aureus nuncupatis, ex quo (ut fama fert) lapides omnes urbes Veneiarum aedificijs sunt excisi. In huius montis confinibus est alius mons medio mari habitaculo idoneo insignis, in quo morantur homines per Ventos deputati, et eorum facientes stipendia, qui maris transitum probe calleant, doceantque; quo tutius Venetias pervehantur citra iacturam.'

at the end of each psalm they would customarily say 'Kyrie eleison' three times, prostrating and bowing in lieu of the Gloria Patri.[63]

It is thus not surprising that this section of the Adriatic reveals a range of cultic phenomena closely tied to the maritime sphere. Alongside the monastery of St Nicholas in Poreč and the church of St Euphemia in Rovinj, the small church of St Mary of the Angels, linked to the opposite Adriatic shore, was also connected with seafaring traditions. These shrines, which we can collectively regard as part of the extensive network of the *peregrinagia maritima* dotting the route to the Holy Land, are discussed later in this chapter, which also includes a network of Marian sanctuaries strategically positioned in central and southern Dalmatia. The only exception is the Euphrasian basilica in Poreč, which, though not at first glance linked to seafarer piety, remains too significant to be overlooked. In this context it should be underlined that many aspects of medieval maritime piety remain elusive nowadays. For example, the Florentine version of the *Sante Parole* (*c*.1470), a prayer recited aboard ships, refers not to St Nicholas in Poreč, as one might expect, but to St Julian, whose body was said to be preserved within the Euphrasian basilica.[64]

1.1 *The Euphrasian Basilica, Poreč*

Although 23 references to the basilica indicate significant interest among pilgrims,[65] only a few travellers focussed on its decoration. It was built by

63 Antoine Regnault (Anthoine Regnaut), 1549, ed. 1573, 17–18: 'Le dimanche iour de Pentecoste vn religieux celebra vne Messe seiche, & eaue beniste. Ce faict primmes nostre repas. Alors se leua tormente plus forte que la premiere, laquelle maistrisoit les officiers de la naue, qui estoyent en grand desroy, furent les voilles abbatues, parce que les vndes, & floz de la mer entroyent en la naue iusques au deuxiesme estage, où estoyent les luifz, qui faisoyent criz espouuentables, tenant chascun leurs heures; où estoyent les psalmes en langue Hebraique. A ce que me dit l'vn d'iceux Iuifz leurs psalmes, & les nostres Latins de l'Eglise Romaine sont temblables. Au reste en la fin de chascun psalme, ont en vsage dire par trois fois kyrie eleison, en soy prosternant & flechissant, & ce, au lieu de Gloria patri. Icelle tormente dura depuis le matin, iusques à l'heure de vespres, que nous nous trouuames deuant vne petite ville nomee Rubine, & puys deux autres, nomees Paule, & Orsaire pais d'Istrye.'

64 Bacci 2004, 223–248.

65 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 82–83; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 41; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 352; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 382–385; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 84; Johannes, Graf zu Solms (?), 1483, ed. 1584, fol. 53v; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 134–135; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 37, 137–139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 318; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 147–148; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 117–118; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498,

Bishop Euphrasius in the 6th century on the site of a 5th-century basilica, yet its frequently studied late antique mosaics received little explicit praise.[66] Georges Lengherand of Mons (1485–1489) was an exception, noting: 'And as for the cathedral, around the choir there is mosaic work with many pearl shells.'[67] At the same time, Antonio da Crema associated the church's age with its 'very ancient mosaic pavement', while Pietro Casola saw the mosaics as evidence of the original splendour of the 'ancient church'.[68] Casola's account also suggests that by the 1490s the mosaic flooring belonging to the pre-Euphrasian basilica was already in poor condition and that the church, in general, was in a deteriorated state and quite abandoned.[69]

However, a closer look at descriptions centred on relics reveals connections to both the setting and the mosaic decoration.[70] Among the 'many relics and bodies of saints' housed in the basilica,[71] travellers devoted the most attention to the remains of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius. While the identity of the latter remains unclear, the record for St Maurus is more complete, thanks to

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ed. 1860 (repr. 2004), 60; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 9; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 127; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 223; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 54; Pedro Manuel de Urrea, 1517–1519, ed. 2008, 135; Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 188; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 110–111; Greffin Affagart, 1519, 1533–1534, ed. 1902, 29.

66 An extensive bibliography exists on the late antique complex; see, among others, Prelog 2004; Terry and Maguire 2007; Matejčić 2014b.

67 Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 87: 'Et quand à l'église cathédrale, il y a à l'enthour du ceur de l'ouvrage de musayke où il y a beaucoup de quonquilles de perles.'

68 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 37.

69 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 118: 'Andassemo a la giesia cathedrale; è giesia antiqua e credo sii stata molto bella, vedando el mosaico a la sua tribuna et el suo pavimento, el qual pur ancora lui fa qualche demonstratione de esser stato lavorato a mosaico. Ora credo che l'absentia de li pastori, pare una giesia mal tractata. Inter alia, vidi una cosa che me dete signali in quella cità siano persone da bene, e più che a caxa nostra. Nam in el coro de la dicta giesia, non gli era stadio, vero che erano pochi che non havesse apozato suxo una cotta da prete. Domandai de chi erano; me fu dicto erano de li canonici. Io son certo se lasasse una de le mie al Domo, o vero a Santo Ambrosio, o che ne trovaria due o nulla. Ha dicta giesia una cortina denante, como, hano le giesie de Roma et anche Santo Ambrosio nostro, et in capo, el suo baptisterio credo sia frequentato da poche persone, imperò che per tuto sono le erbe grande.'

70 Only Fabri and Casola visited the baptistery. A close encounter with scorpions allowed the Dominican from Ulm not only to point out that, given the building's condition, there had probably been no baptisms conducted there for a long time, but also to make an extensive digression on the 'scorpius vermis nigri'; cf. Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 383–385. The opinion of the Italian pilgrim is almost similar: 'el suo baptisterio credo sia frequentato da poche persone, imperò che per tuto sono le erbe grande'; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 117.

71 The words are taken from the account of Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 382: 'multae reliquiae et Sanctorum corpora'.



FIGURE 5 Poreč, site of the pre-Euphrasian basilica and ancient church
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

thorough archaeological analyses conducted on-site. These studies have disentangled the figure of St Maurus, the bishop of Poreč, from the African monk of the same name martyred in Rome, an association likely dating back to the early Middle Ages.

The archaeological findings also indicate the persistence of a cultic tradition dating back to the Early Christian complex.[72] Two inscriptions discovered in the mid-19th century, dating to the 4th and 5th centuries,[73] are now linked to the pre-Euphrasian basilica (5th century) or an earlier structure, the so-called ancient church (4th century; Fig. 5). The first inscription, which is missing its beginning, mentions the translation of a saint's remains within the city walls. The second explicitly references St Maurus and describes the transfer to the site where the saint became bishop and confessor.[74]

72 See mainly Cuscito 1992, 111–128; Colomba 2011, 87–105.

73 On the historiographical point concerning palaeographic analysis and the consequent dating, see Cuscito 1992, 115, with notes.

74 Transcription in Cuscito 1992, 115–121.



FIGURE 6 Poreč, Euphrasian basilica. Detail of the apse mosaic, 6th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

While the exact location of St Maurus's remains in the pre-Euphrasian period remains uncertain, more plausible theories concern their placement following their mid-6th-century translation to the new basilica commissioned by Bishop Euphrasius. The remains were likely housed either in the three-apsed chamber, also built under Euphrasius's direction, or beneath the high altar. The latter scenario aligns with contemporary practices and has a visual counterpart in the main apse mosaic. There, St Maurus is depicted to the right of the Virgin, flanked by the ambitious Bishop Euphrasius (Fig. 6).[75] Moreover, the more revealing of the two inscriptions was discovered beneath the high altar in 1846.[76]

Additional material evidence dates to the 13th century and concerns a new translation, this time into a monumental marble sarcophagus (Fig. 7). According to three inscriptions accompanying the tomb, it was crafted in 1247 by Benvenuto Nicola Bonoscagno and Nicola da Ancona at the behest of Bishop Pagano, who placed within it not only the remains of St Maurus, the first bishop

75 *Ibid.*, 117.
76 *Ibid.*, 115.



FIGURE 7 Poreč, Euphrasian basilica. Marble sarcophagus of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius, 1247
MATEJČIĆ 2014B, 289, FIG. 119



FIGURE 8 Poreč, Euphrasian basilica. Annunciation, mosaic decoration of the ciborium, 1277
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

of Poreč, but also those of St Eleutherius, traditionally regarded as one of his disciples.[77] Subsequent records indicate the development of a shared cultic tradition involving both saints. In 1277 their names appear side by side in the medallions of the mosaic-decorated ciborium, commissioned by Bishop Otto. Like his eager predecessor, Otto marked the work with his signature (Fig. 8).[78]

Nearly without exception, pilgrims' accounts also link the two saints, although their focus often shifts to the absence of relics – objects of *furta sacra*, the practice of stealing saints' relics and moving them to a new shrine, as revealed by the words of William III, Landgrave of Thuringia (1461): 'In Poreč lies the tomb of St Maurus, a holy bishop and patron of this church. Also, two sacred bodies rest within an altar. When the city was taken by the Hungarians, they struck the altar with a stone pick to remove the holy relics and carry them away.'[79] If the German pilgrim correctly identified Maurus as

77 On the sarcophagus, see Matejčić 2014a, 287–290.

78 On the ciborium, see Demus 1945, 240–245.

79 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 83: 'Da zu Barentz ist auch das Grab St. Mauri, der ein heiliger Bischof gewest und Patron derselbigen Kirche ist. Auch liegen

a bishop and protector of Poreč, but mistakenly blamed the Hungarians for the removal of the relics, more accurate accounts emerged in the 1480s. Felix Fabri, Jan Aerts, Bernhard von Breydenbach, Nicholas de Huen and Antonio da Crema rightly attributed the *furta sacra* to Paganino Doria's Genoese troops, who sacked the town in 1354.[80] As a contemporary Genoese chronicle attests, the relics were taken to the church of St Matthew in Genoa, sponsored by the Doria family.[81] Although the relics remained on the Ligurian coast until 1934, the devotional itinerary to the empty sarcophagus-reliquary continued uninterrupted in Poreč.[82]

The landgrave of Thuringia's testimony reveals the early emergence of legends surrounding the sarcophagus. He recounted that when an attempt was made to breach it, the hammer turned on the attacker, striking him instead.[83]

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da in einem Altar zween heilige Leichname. Als die Stadt von den Ungarn genommen ward, schlugen sie mit einer Steinpicke in den Altar, die heiligen Leichname daraus zu nehmen und sie weg zu führen.'; cf. Kužić 2013, 95.

80 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 382: 'In eadem ecclesia ante pauca tempora sanctorum martyrum Mauri et Eleutherii corpora quieverunt, sed per Genuenses inde asportata Genuam translata faerunt. Narratum quoque nobis fuit pro certo, quod cum iidem Genuenses aliud quoddam altare tentassent effringere, animo quaedam sanctorum corpora inde recipiendi, mox sanguis miracolose ex eo altari profluxit, cujus hodie sunt ibi vestigia derelicta, unde territi raptores aufugerunt. Fratres minorres eliam habent ibi conventum parvum.'; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 134–135: 'Item, in eenen anderen autaer ter rechter-handt van den selven Choor, hebben hier voortijdts gerust de lichamen der heyliger martelaren Mariam ende Eleuteri, die van den Genovoysers, ofte andere van daer zijn vervoert geweest. Onlangs daer na zijn dees twe voorschreven lichamen daer wedergekomen, ende men toonde ons daerlid-teeckenen van perfect bloet, by mrakelen uyt den selven autaer gekomen, soo men ons-lieden vertelde. Dees kercke heeft hier voormaels seer schon ende kostelick geweest, gelijck men noch bescheydelick magh mercken aen 't welfsel van de kerck, 't welck vergult plagh te zijn, oock gemaeckt van marbersteenen.'; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 84: 'In der selben kyrchen vor kurtzen zyten syn gelegen die lyb der heiligen martrer Mauri vn Eleutherij aber durch die Janueßer syn sye vo dan nen gefuret worden vn bracht gen janua Vns ward auch glaublichen gesaget daz do die ytzgenanten janueser vnderstunden ettlich ander al tar in dißer kyrchen vff brechen in gemut ettlich heylig lybe dar vß zu ettweren vnd stelen do floß blut wuderbarlichen vß dem altar dar ynn das heyltum lag deßhalb die janueser erschreckt (nit unbillich) ließen von yrem furnemen.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 138: 'lo corpo di sancto Proiecto; lo corpo di sancto Acolito; l'arca de la quale alias li Zenovesi portóno via il corpo di sancto Moro e di sancto Lucero'; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; cf. Kužić 2013, 86.

81 Cf. Cuscito 1992, 124; Marinković 2018, 285–286.

82 Ciković 2017, 146.

83 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 83: 'Als die Stadt von den Ungarn genommen ward, schlugen sie mit einer Steinpicke in den Altar, die heiligen Leichname daraus zu nehmen und sie weg zu führen. Als aber der erste Schlag geschah, sprang die

Other accounts, intertwined with claims that the bodies of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius remained *in situ*,[84] describe Genoese attempts to desecrate cathedral altars. These attempts, as narrated by Nicholas le Huen, who credited the locals for this story, were thwarted by miraculous flows of blood.[85]

These are unexplored iterations of late medieval local legends that evolved within just over a century, spurred by the 1354 looting carried out by the Genoese. By the 16th century they were well known among pilgrims,[86] but began to fade already in the following century. For instance, Bishop Giacomo

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Picke hinter sich und sprang den todt, der den Schlag gethan hatte. Das Loch siehet man noch jetzt von Tage zu Tage nahe bei Barentz.'

84 Cf. Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 41; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 352; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66: 'It. zu Parentz ist ain bistum und seÿt man mir, es ligend da zwen hailig lichnam, Sant Laurus und Sant Letherius.'; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 318: 'Item Parentz die stat ist ain pistum und ligend da zwen hailgen, sant Maurus und sant Leitherius, und ligt hundert mil von Venedig.'; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.: 'Auquel iour nous montasmes sur la mer/ et fut la voille desployee et myse au vent/ et au premier port ou nous touchasmes fut au pays de Ystrie en une ville nommee Parence. Du gist le corps de monsieur sainct Mor.'; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860, 60: '[…] item eyn eygen buschdom. allhie in deme doeme ligen tzweyn heylige corper, sent Maurus ind sent Leuterius.'; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 9: 'and Saterdaye, the .iiij. day of July, in the mornynge, we made sayle, and with scarce wynde come to Parence in Hystrya the Sondaye, […]; there lyeth sactus Mauricius.'; Greffin Affagart, 1533–1534, ed. 1902, 29: 'En la ville y a une abbaye de Sainct-Nicolas et ung monastère de Sainct-Françoys et plusieurs autres églises es quelles sont aucuns corps saincts comme Saint Maur, saint Demetoir et saint Julian.'

85 Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.: 'Parence est une cite au pias de Histrie asses grande prounce soubz et en la seignorie de Vensie ditante dicelle lespace de cent milles italiques siege aiant episcopal: et en la grande esglise a moult de nobles et saictes relquies. Premier au grant autel reposent les saincts martyrs glorieux Demetrien avec Sainct Julien; et au devant du cuer en ung autel sont sanctes vierges Berte et Accolite. Et depuis peu de temps les corps de saict Mor et saict Elier ou Eleutere furent transportes par les Januences ou ceulx de Jenes en sez cite translates; et depuis ont entrpris pareillement en alutre lieu; mais le sang en saillir a grant quantite dont furent estonez lesdis de Jenes ; comme nous ont dit les habitans de Prence.'

86 Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 127: 'Y ten solían estar en la dicha iglesia mayor los cuerpos de Sant Maurio & De Sant Eleutherio, los quales fueron de allí tomados por los ginoveses & llevados a la cibdad de Génova; & como essomesmo los dichos ginoveses quisiessen tomar otros sanctos cuerpos que están en otro altar para los llevar de allí, súbitamente saltó por milagro sangre del dicho altar, de la qual aún agora se muestra & parescen las señales; & como este milagro viessen lo ginoveses, no osaron abrir el dicho altar.'; Pedro Manuel de Urrea, 1517–1519, ed. 2008, 135: 'Es cabeca de tierra de Ystria y es obispado, en la qual ciudad ay cuatro cuerpos de santos: sant Acólito y sant Progeto y sant Juliano y san[t] Demetrio. Esta tierra es de venecianos. Aquí en esta ciudad mostró Dios vn grande miraglo: que vinieron vnos cos[s]arios marineros a lleuar de aquí vnos cuerpos de sanctas, los quales auían lleuado ya otros y miraglosamente no los pudieron lleuar, que

Filippo Tommasini of Novigrad recalled the attempted desecration of the altars, but omitted any mention of the miraculous profusion of blood.[87]

The relevance of travellers' accounts extends beyond the legendary narratives, providing valuable insights into the location of the relics within the sacred space. Research by Ciković, based on apostolic and *ad limina* visits from the 16th to the 18th centuries, has established that the sarcophagus-reliquary of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius was located in the apse of the southern nave as early as 1579.[88] Ciković further suggested that there is no reason to assume that it was not in this location earlier;[89] this hypothesis is supported by additional evidence. Cross-referencing the accounts of Felix Fabri, Bernhard von Breydenbach and Nicholas le Huen, as well as other data, suggests the relics had been housed in this location since the 13th century.

While the testimonies of Felix Fabri,[90] Bernhard von Breydenbach[91] and Nicholas le Huen[92] are somewhat vague, the precise arrangement of the relics was outlined in 1481 by Jan Aerts.[93] According to his account, the relics of Sts Demetrius and Julian were under the high altar, those of Berta and Acolita were in the northern apse, and the relics of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius were housed in the southern apse. The reference to Berta and Acolita most likely

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rompiendo vn altar para sacar los cuerpos, salió mucha sangre del mismo altar. Y esto tienen allí por verdadera escri[p]tura.'

87 Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, 1641, ed. 1837, 385.

88 Ciković 2017, 143–159, esp. 149–151.

89 *Ibid*., 148.

90 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 382: 'In ipsa est ecclesia episcopalis cum canonicis et clericis, in qua positae sunt multae reliquiae et Sanctorum corpora. In majori altari quiescunt sancti martyres Demetrius et Julianus. In alio altari ante chorum sanctarum virginum Bertae et Acolitae. In eadem ecclesia ante pauca tempora sanctorum martyrum Mauri et Eleutherii corpora quieverunt.'

91 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 84: '[…] selber ist eyn ertzbistum vnd ist in dem hohen stifft gar kostlich vnd wirdig heyltum das wir auch sahen als billich was. Jn sunderheyt in dem hohen altar rugen vn rasten die hey ligen martrer Demetrius vnd Julianus. Jn eym andern altar vor de kor ligen die lyb der heiligen Jungfrawen Berthe vnd Acolite genant. In der selben kyrchen vor kurtzen zyten syn gelegen die lyb der heiligen martrer Mauri vn Eleutherij.'

92 Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.

93 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 134: '[…] ende is een Aerts- bisdom. In de hoostkercke zijn veel kostelicke en heylige Reliquien te sien, die wy devotelick versocht hebben. Eerst in den hoogen autaer, rusten twee weerdige lichamen der heyliger Martelaren, met name Demetrius en Julianus. In eenen anderen autaer ter slincker- hant voor den Choor worden twee lichamen bewaert de heylige maeghden Berta ende Acolita genaemt. Item, in eenen anderen autaer ter rechter-handt van den selven Choor, hebben hier voortijdts gerust de lichamen der heyliger martelaren Mariam ende Eleuteri, die van den Genovoysers, ofte andere van daer zijn vervoert geweest.'

stems from confusion (common to other accounts as well) with the cult of Sts Projectus and Acolytus. Indeed, Aerts's description perfectly aligns with the orientation of the medallions decorating the ciborium commissioned by Bishop Otto in 1277. The Annunciation is depicted towards the faithful, while the southern side features the medallions of Maurus and Eleutherius, with Acolytus and Projectus on the opposite side. The northern profile, towards the high altar, where pilgrims recorded their relics, depicts Demetrius and Julian.

In a letter dated 9 August 1667, included in Tommasini's *Commentaries*, Niccolò Petronio Caldana, the bishop of Poreč, referenced inscriptions found during his inspection of the basilica. He claimed that Bishop Otto placed the relics of Sts Projectus and Acolytus in their respective altars in 1277. Caldana also suggested that in 1233 Bishop Adalbert placed the relics of Sts Julian and Demetrius and the 12 virgins in the high altar.[94] Caldana further argued that the absence of relics on display contributed to the fading of these saints' cults over time.

Yet pilgrims' accounts indicate that these cults were firmly established in the late Middle Ages and were clearly 'visible' to the devout. Antonio da Crema's account in 1486 is particularly telling, since he not only corrected earlier omissions by naming Projectus and Acolytus, but also listed the names of the 12 saints accurately, locating their remains under the high altar.[95] It seems likely that his attention was guided in this direction by the medallions depicting 12 half-length female saints on the intrados of the triumphal arch (Fig. 9), with inscriptions from Euphrasius's time playing a key role in his accurate identification of the saints and precise referencing of their names.

That visual experience played a decisive role for Antonio da Crema is evident also in another excerpt of his account: 'From the letters on the triumphal arch,

94 Niccolò Petronio Caldana, 1667, ed. 1837, 505–507. However, the reference to the 12 virgins remains speculative, as their chest lacked any identifying inscription. The inscription Caldana cited, found under the high altar in the second chest, read simply *ss. Julianii et Demetrii*; *ibid*., 507: 'Anno Domini 1277. die g. menses may, hic requiescunt corporei sanctorum Proietti, et Accoliti, recondita per dominum Ottonem Parentii episcopum, tempore D. Joannis papae. XX. et D. Rodulphi romanorum electi, et D. Ra.ymu.ndi patriarchae Aquileiensis'; 'Anno Domini 1233. Ind. 6. Adelperghus, Dei gratia Parentii episcopus ad honorem Dei, et B. Mariae Virginis, et ss. Juliani, et Demetrii, quorum, corpora hic requiescunt in pace, et aliorum Sanctorum, hoc altare consecravit , die octavo maij.'

95 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 138–139: 'lo corpo di sancto Proiecto; lo corpo di sancto Acolito; l'arca de la qual alias li Zenovesi portóno via il corpo di sancto Moro e di sancto Lucero. In lo altare sono le infrascripte reliquie: ossa di sancta Felicita; ossa di sancta Eugenia; ossa di sancta Cecilia; ossa di sancta Agnes; ossa di sancta Agata; ossa di sancta Eufumia; ossa di sancta Tecla; ossa di sancta Valeria; ossa di sancta Basilissa; ossa di sancta Perpetua; ossa di sancta Susana; ossa di sancta Iustina. Queste sancte reliquie funo reponute(av) in questo loco da Ottone imperatore.'



FIGURE 9 Poreč, Euphrasian basilica. Mosaic decoration of the triumphal arch, detail, 6th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

it is understood that the basilica was constructed by Emperor Otto.'[96] While local traditions about the basilica's foundation appear in other sources,[97] this reference likely misinterprets material evidence. Though the mosaic above the

96 *Ibid.*, 37: 'e per littere si legono in lo arco di la trufina se intende che fu da Otone imperator constructa.'

97 See Richard Pococke, 1738, ed. 1745, 263: 'Parenzo the antient Parentium, was famous for a temple of Neptune; the foundations and basement of which are seen at the west end of the town, and it seems to have been fifty feet broad; there is a curious inscription in the square relating to it, and there are remains of the moles in the sea mentioned in that inscription, consisting of very large stones. It is said that Otho emperor of Germany built the cathedral, with the materials of it, in whicht here are curious Mosaic works; and that which reprcsent stridents and dolphins may be part of the pavement of the antient temple.' By the late 19th century Caprin had already highlighted the inconsistencies in this tradition while recording a local legend that cast Otto the Great as the church's founder. The tale recounts that, upon him ascending the throne and crossing the Adriatic, the Virgin appeared to him in a vision, instructing him to build three churches: one where he saw white lilies (for the Annunciation), another where he found red flowers (for the Assumption) and a third where he saw blue blossoms (for the Nativity). These were said to have been built on the islet of Anie, in Poreč and in Murano; Caprin 1889 (digital ed. 2010), 129–130.

triumphal arch was heavily altered in the 19th century, this testimony is to be linked with the inscription on the marble frame of the 13th-century ciborium, signed, as already pointed out, by Bishop Otto of Poreč (not Emperor Otto).

In my view, Otto, whose tenure spanned nearly three decades (*c.*1256–1282), played a central role in shaping the basilica's programme.[98] By 1277 he had completed the relocation of relics begun by his predecessors. Recognising the importance of mosaic decoration, he employed it strategically, orientating the images and guiding the devotees' gaze towards the relics to enhance their veneration, as evidenced by analysis of Jan Aerts's and Antonio da Crema's accounts.

1.2 *The Church of St Mary of the Angels, Poreč*

Continuing the limited city tour, the desecration of the cathedral altars was certainly not the only subject that attracted the attention of pilgrims. The travel diaries often recorded what was described as 'a common rumour': the extraordinary construction of a church dedicated to the Virgin, built in a single night by angels.[99]

The brief mention by Ottheinrich, Pfalzgraf bei Rhein (Otto-Henry, Elector Palatine; 1521), previously analysed by Krešimir Kužić, does not offer sufficient details for in-depth reasoning: 'I saw in Poreč a small church, they said to us the angels had built it in one night.'[100] Conversely, it is the testimony of French pilgrims, particularly with reference to the church's dedication and its decentralised location, that allows us to identify the shrine in question. In 1480 both Pierre Barbatre and an anonymous Parisian pilgrim referred to the 'common voice' highlighting the church's dedication to 'Our Lady'.[101] Even

98 For the chronology of the Poreč bishops, see mainly Eubel 1913, 390; Babudri 1909, 170–284, esp. 224–228.

99 The church is mentioned by the following pilgrims: Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 29–30; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 112; Ottheinrich, Pfalzgraf bei Rhein (Otto-Henry, Elector Palatine), 1521, ed. 1880, 397; Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 188; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 110–111. Felix Fabri reported that the church of St Mark in Venice, because of its extraordinary beauty, was believed to have been built not by human hands, but by angels; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 415–429: 'Ecclesia illa S. Marci est valde pretiosa et rotonda, undique marmore ornata et adeo mirabilis, ut volgi fama sit, quod non humanis sed angelicis manibus sit fabricata.'

100 Ottheinrich, Pfalzgraf bei Rhein (Otto-Henry, Elector Palatine), 1521, ed. 1880, 397; 'Ich sah zu Parentz ein kirchlin, saget mann unnß, die engel hetten sie in einer nacht gebauwen.'; cf. Kužić 2013, 95.

101 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 112: 'Auprès de Parence, ville de petite valleur, sont es champs bien XX ou XXX petites chapelles entre lesquelles est une entre deux fondee de Nostre Dame, et fust faicte en une nuyt et miraculeusement et des anges comme est voix commune.'; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 29–30: 'Il y a près de ladicte cité plusieurs petites

more significant is the later testimony of Nicolas Loupvent in 1531: 'Outside the city, on the right hand, there is a church named Sancta Maria de Angelis, in which the bell tower is covered with fine gold, and it is firmly said that it was made, constructed and built in one night by the benevolent angels.'[102] The French pilgrim's reference to the church's location and full name allows us to identify it as the suburban church of St Mary of the Angels, destroyed in the 18th century to make way for the Dominican church of the same name on the site. The legendary aspect of this story, attributing miraculous events to angels, may be suggestive of some association with the multiple narratives coalescing around the renowned Holy House of Loreto. According to tradition, the house of the Virgin Mary, transported from Nazareth by angels, 'stopped' for more than three and a half years in the Istrian locality of Trsat, near Rijeka, before reaching the coast of the Marches.[103]

This tradition did not escape the pilgrims' attention. For instance, the anonymous Englishman (1480–1526) generically mentioned the angels' four journeys and the house's location in Italy, while Dietrich von Schachten (1491) specified its presence in 'Schlafflonien' and noted its transport by sea to Recanati due to weak veneration.[104] Furthermore, pilgrims' accounts are also crucial for a

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chapelles: entre lesquelles y a une Nostre Dame ou se font plusieurs miracles et fut faicte en une nuit par les anges comme on dict.'

102 Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 188: 'Au dehors de la cité, a main destre yat une esglise nommé Sancta Maria de Angelis, en laquelle la campanale est couvert de fin or, et dict on affirmativement quelle at esté faict, construict et édifiée en une nuyctée par les benois anges.' See also the reference by Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, which indeed contributes little to earlier accounts; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 110–111: 'Parentina ou Parence, cité sur mer dedans une isle distante de Venise cent milles; […] Il y a près de ladicte cité plusieurs petites chappelles entre lesquelles y a une de Nostre Dame où se font plusieurs miracles, et fut faicte en une nuict par les anges comme on nous dit.'

103 On the Trsat shrine, see mainly Margetić 2002.

104 English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 150: 'Many other full devote holi placis and blessed peregrinagis beth withyn the Hooli Land and thereabowte as in Hebron, in the vale of Mambre, in Nazareth where the most gloryus Virgen Mari was saluted off the angeli Gabriell. And there was a cherch made which hath iiii tymes bee meoved myraculusli bi angelis and so now stondith in Itali called Sancta Maria de Lorett.'; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 236–237: 'Also durch schickunge Mariae wardt die Capelle getragenn von denenn Engelnn auss der staut Nazareth ihnn das Landt Schafflonien und satztte die genandte Capell anu denn Floss, so Flummen genandt, undt daselbstenn wardt Maria noch viel weniger geehrett, also durch schickunge Mariae wardt die Capell vonn denenn heiligen Engelnn gefuertt zum andermal uber Meer auff einenn berg, genandt Rachanech, undt satztte die genandte Capell auff einenn Acker, wilcher Acker zweienn gebrudernn zustundt, also wardt eine grosse walfartt zu deroselbenn Capellenn.'; cf. Kužić 2013, 108–109; see also Pedro Manuel de Urrea, 1517–1519, ed. 2008, 101–102: 'De nuestra señora de Loreto. […] Ase de saber esto: que, como está dicho, esta bendita yglesia fue la casa y cámara donde nuestra Señora fue nascida y criada y saludada del ángel

more precise understanding of the cult dynamics at the Loreto sanctuary in the 15th century, which had seen a growing number of worshippers since the previous century. The testimony of the English pilgrim William Wey (1462) is particularly noteworthy:

> Also, twelve miles from Ancona and three miles from Recanati, there is a village called Loreto, where there is now a chapel of St Mary of Loreto, made of stone, which once was in the Holy Land, built by St Helena. But because the Blessed Mary was not honoured there, the chapel was raised by angels, the Blessed Mary sitting upon it, and carried from the Holy Land to Loreto, with farmers and shepherds witnessing the miracle, seeing angels carrying it and putting it in the place where it now stands, where the Blessed Virgin Mary is held in great honour.[105]

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y aquí crió a nuestro redemptor Jesuchristo hasta /h/edad de doze años. Y quando nuestro Redem[p]tor murió según la humanidad, quedó nuestra Señora en la tierra con los apóstoles y otrós discípulos de Christo, los quales, viendo muchos misterios diuinos que en esta cámara se hizieron, acordaron todos hazer esta camara yglesia en honrra y memoria de la Virgen Madre de Dios y as[s]í fue hecho, donde celebraron mis[s]as y diuinos officios los apóstoles. Y el bienauenturado sant Lucas euangelista hizo con sus prop/r/ias manos vna ymagen a la semejança de nuestra Señora, la qual está agora allí. Es de vulto, la qual está puesta sobre el altar en vn retablo en vna pequeña ventana por la quale entró e1 ángel a saludar a la Madre de Dios diziéndole: Habebis in utero filium Dei. Junto al rexado deste altar de nuestra Señora, a la parte del euangelio, está vn armario, el qual estaua en la mesma cámara de nuestra Señora. Fue trayda esta deuotíssima capilla quando los christianos dexaron la fe de Christo y tomaron la seta de Mahoma. Estonces los ángeles tomaron esta dicha capilla y la traxeron a las partes de Esclauonia e de allí vino por la mar hasta donde está agora. Y en la tierra y suelo donde estaua en Esclauonia, después que se mudó de allí la bendita yglesia de la Madre de Dios por enojos y pecados que allí auía, se vee esto: que no nasce yerua allí donde estuuo. Esta deuotíssima yglesia está con muy gran miraglo y marauilla porque no entra ninguna cosa debaxo de la tierra ni tiene otro fundamento para tenerse sino sólo el miraglo de auer sido casa y cámara de nuestra Señora y ser capilla y yglesia de nuestro Redemptor. Es yglesía de tanto miraglo que en toda Ytalia la visitan con tanta deuoción como yr a Roma, San/c/tiago o Jherusalem y los que an ydo a la Tierra Sancta an traydo la medida de Nazareth del mesmo suelo donde la cámara y yglesia estaua, la qual trayda acá, hallan que es el mesmo tamaño y medida.'

105 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 53–54. See also the slightly later testimony of a Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 91–93: 'Vnde doen wir indem meer quamen, so wartet inden wint gaen vnd et stromden seer, so dat wir quamen des manendages daer na vp sinte peter vnde sinte paulus dach zto parensche inden hauen, daer wir den dach bleuen vnde is hundert milen van venegen. Des dinsdaghes daer na des morgens vroech so wolde die patroen vaeren na Anchonen to vnser vrouwen van loreten, dat eyn scoen bedevaert ist; mer auermidts dat by twe hondert milen vten weghe was, so wast vns pilgrims nicht to wille, dat he to Anchonen varen solde. Nochtans die patrone dede sinen wille vnd voer na Anchonen. Vnde men sal wesen, dat anchonen is eyn guede stat vnd lecht vschicks auer

This passage, found in the chapter 'Decima materia et ultima est de reliquiis sanctorum in diversis locis per viam a Terra Sancta […]', confirms that by this time the Marian centre at Loreto was already part of the network of Italian sanctuaries visited by pilgrims *en route* to the Holy Land. The passage follows references to major sacred attractions in Padua, Viterbo, Spoleto and Assisi.[106] Moreover, it highlights that, by the end of Wey's second journey to the Holy Land, the 14th-century cult of Loreto, centred around an image of the Madonna and Child, had faded into the background. The story omits any mention of the icon, focussing instead on the miraculous translation of the Holy House of Nazareth by the angels. Around this time the efforts to elevate the site's sacred status through associations with the Holy Land also received a boost in official documentation. In 1470, as work on the new basilica began due to the increasing influx of pilgrims, Pope Paul II issued a jubilee indulgence for those visiting the 'Virginis gloriose ymago angelica'.[107]

While the papal brief mentions only the miraculous foundation of the sanctuary, the definitive consecration of the narrative was recorded a few years later by the rector Pietro Tolomei (1473). In his history of the sanctuary he definitively identified the church as the Holy House of Nazareth and described the icon as an autograph of the Evangelist Luke.[108] This is a topos attributed to Byzantine images which, as Michele Bacci has duly pointed out, dotted a continuous network of sanctuaries directly connected to the practice of

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meer an des paues lant vnd hoert im to. So nam die patroen syn wech van parens auer dat meer vnde stormden all den nacht vnde des anderen daghes seer, so dat wir to anchonen nicht comen enkonden. Mer doe wir by dem lande weren, so mosten wir des nachtes by gewalt vandem winde vnd dem storm weder kysen dat land van parense; vnd quamen mut dem storm in groeter noet, went die galeye nicht dicht en was. So voeren wir voer eyn stat vnd heist rewingia vnde ist eyn clein verdoruen steedgen mut eyne scoene hauen vnde licht int lant van slauonien vnde is nicht meir wan x milen bauen parense.' The sanctuary is often mentioned by pilgrims in connection with the route between Dubrovnik and Ancona, as in the case of Zanobi di Antonio del Lavacchio, who, after several days of bad weather, paid homage to the Loreto sanctuary: 'E adì 5 di gennaio a ore 22 g[i]ungniemo nel porto d'Anchona e smontamo in terra per la gratia del Signiore, a salvamento; e la sera alogiamo al Cavaletto, inn Anchona. E a dì sei di detto andamo a vi[sitare] la chiesa di Santa Maria del Loreto, e adì 8 di detto ci partimo da Santa Maria e ritornamo inn Anchona al detto oste.'; Zanobi di Antonio del Lavacchio, 1488–1489, ed. 1958, 266.

106 Cf. Bacci 1998, 292–293; Sensi 2013; Moore 2017, 221–222, where some of the later accounts of Jerusalem pilgrims are also highlighted; see also Vélez 2018. For the Russian version of the legend concerning Loreto referring also to Trsat, see Gukova 1999, 386–396; Pljukhanova 2007, 259–279, esp. 271–272.

107 See Bacci 1998, 294–295.

108 *Ibid*. On the alleged autographs of the Evangelist, see Bacci 2000b, 79–89.

pilgrimage; sanctuaries that marked, as we shall see in detail, the Dalmatian route as well.[109]

Returning to the Poreč area, given the strong ties and flourishing trade between the two shores and the frequent visits to the Loreto sanctuary by Croatian pilgrims, it is unsurprising that the Loreto legend found its way into local stories by the early 1490s.[110] In addition, focussing on the transformation years of the Loreto cult, it is worth noting that in 1470, with the commencement of the new basilica's construction, oversight was entrusted to Francesco Morosini, the Venetian bishop of Poreč at the time.[111] In this context the construction of the Poreč church in a short time frame mirrors customs *vis-à-vis* the Marche region, where votive churches were often built within a single day.[112] Little is known about the structure and appearance of the destroyed Poreč church, though it is thought to have been constructed in the 15th century and associated with the School of the Blessed Virgin of the Angels.[113] Testimonies from the late 16th century, such as the view by Angelo degli Oddi, indicate that the church's bell tower was one of the only structures to rival the Euphrasian basilica's tower within the city walls.[114]

While much remains unknown about the central cult object, 19th-century accounts report the discovery of an image of the Blessed Virgin surrounded by angels, unearthed in the foundations of the church during the construction of the new Dominican church. This miraculous event, linked to the attempt by friars to rename the church, highlights the enduring strength of local devotion. Despite opposition from the locals, the Dominicans halted their plans only after the miraculous discovery of the image.[115] Having preserved the continuity between the two places of worship, the image, heavily repainted and dated to the late 15th–early 16th century, was housed in the Dominican church until 1930 before being transferred to the Sacred Art Collection of the Dioceses of Poreč and Pula, where it remains today (Fig. 10).[116]

109 Bacci 2004, 223–248; Bacci 2012, 179–194, esp. 185–191.
110 See Ladić 1997, 19–24; Peričić 1985, 550–552, esp. 552; Coltrinari 2017, 181–194.
111 Coltrinari 2017, 181.
112 Bacci 1998, 293.
113 Bralić and Burić 2005, 185; Fisković 2011, 307.
114 Fisković 2011, 307; Prelog 2007, 78.
115 Bralić and Burić 2005, 185.
116 *Ibid.*; Fisković 2011, 308.



FIGURE 10 Poreč, Sacred Art Collection of the Dioceses of Poreč and Pula. *Madonna and Child*, late 15th–early 16th century
BRALIĆ AND BURIĆ 2005, 185

1.3 *The Church of St Euphemia, Rovinj*

During the 15th century the remains of St Euphemia, a 4th-century martyr from Chalcedon in Asia Minor, gained significant popularity along the Venetian route to the Holy Land. Her relics were claimed by Venice, the Knights Hospitaller on Rhodes and Rovinj, as documented by Santo Brasca in 1480:

> Beyond this point lies Mount Carmel, where the prophet Elijah dwells with his disciples. From this mountain flows a spring called Fons Elie, and here was the origin of the Carmelite friars. Not far away, atop a small hill, stands a church called Cavea Sancte Marie. Seven miles further is the Castello de li Peregrini, formerly known as Petra Incisa, where the body of St Euphemia, virgin and martyr, was once kept. It is now in Rovinj, Dalmatia, while her head is in Venice, in the church of St Canziano.[117]

The possession of the relics on Rhodes was based on a Syrian tradition developed in the Templar fortress of Atlit, known as the 'castellum peregrinorum', or Petra Incisa, as referred to by Santo Brasca.[118] Another tradition brings Euphemia's relics directly from Chalcedon to Rovinj in the 9th century, bypassing Constantinople. This pattern, especially pronounced along the Eastern Adriatic coast, also appears in accounts of relics claimed from other ports along the route to the Holy Land. By omitting intermediate stops, these narratives emphasise a direct transfer from the saint's original resting place, reinforcing the prominence of the locally promoted cult. The Venetian claim, however, was not related to acquisitions in the East, but directly tied to their dominance of the Gulf, still unstable in the late 14th century. During the War of Chioggia, the Genoese, after defeating Venetian forces along the Istrian coast, gained possession of the relics in 1379. When the situation reversed in favour of Venice in 1381, the relics returned to Venetian hands and were placed in the church of St Canziano, as evidenced also by a manuscript preserved in Pula.[119] According to Kandler and Benussi, with the return of the relics to Rovinj in 1401, not the

117 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 135: 'Passando più ultra è lo monte Carmelo dove è Helia propheta con li suoi discipuli, et da dicto monte uscite uno fonte chiamato Fons Elie, et qui fu la origine de li frati carmeliti. Puocho longe, sopra uno monticulo, si trova una chiesia che si chiama Cavea Sancte Marie. Miglia 7 longe si trova el castello de li peregrini, che già se chiamò Petra Incisa, dove era lo corpo de Sancta Eufemia vergene et martire, et hora·è a Ruigno in Dalmatia, et la sua testa è a Venetia in Sancto Canziano.' For the complete list of references to St Euphemia, see p. 31, n. 58 above.

118 For St Euphemia's cult on Rhodes, see Zoitou 2020, 91–96.

119 Marinković 2018, 286–287; Bralić 2019.



FIGURE 11 View of Rovinj
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

head of the saint, as reported in Brasca's account, but her left arm, now missing, would have been retained in Venice.[120]

Pilgrims' testimonies begin after the relics changed hands: from Rovinj to Genoa in 1379, from Genoa to Venice in 1381 and finally back to Rovinj in 1401. Their primary attraction was the saint's sacred body, housed in the Romanesque church, erroneously referred to by pilgrims as Rovinj's cathedral.[121] According to local tradition, the relics had first been placed temporarily in the church of St George upon arrival on the Istrian shore before being transferred to their final resting place.[122]

Though today the town is dominated by the imposing Baroque church (1725–1736; Fig. 11),[123] medieval pilgrims would have been guided by the Romanesque monument as their visual landmark. However, little is known about its medieval appearance and layout. In 1641 Bishop Tommasini of

120 Kandler 1849, 153–159, esp. 154; Benussi 1888, 40.

121 The church is referred to as a bishopric in the following accounts: Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 151–152; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 656; Barthélemy de Salignac, 1522, ed. 1593, n.p.; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 129; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 109.

122 See Benussi 1888, 38–41; Kužić 2013, 86–87.

123 See Marković 1998, 263–271.

Novigrad described it as having 'three aisles',[124] a feature later confirmed during the Baroque church's construction. In 1724 the Venetian architect Giovanni Scalferotto proposed a new design, but faced strong opposition from the local population, who insisted that the new basilica retain the traditional three-nave layout of the older church.[125] By the late 17th century a chapel had been added at the end of the left aisle to house the saint's sarcophagus, which, according to Benussi, 'had originally remained at the centre of the church since its arrival'.[126]

Western pilgrims offered more specific, yet contrasting testimonies. In 1440 the chaplain of Milliaduse d'Este (appealing to the saint as 'Fumea', similar to the local 'Fuma') recorded that the saint's remains were placed beneath the main altar,[127] while four decades later Michele da Figline described a chapel with the saint's body in a 'stone ark'.[128] The 17th-century chapel likely continued an earlier arrangement, making the Tuscan pilgrim's account more reliable. The claim that the relics were under the high altar may stem from a lack of direct observation, as such an arrangement would have been problematic for the enormous sarcophagus, which many pilgrims referred to and often placed at the centre of their narratives.

The monumental Proconnesian marble sarcophagus, now housed in the Baroque church, dates back to the 3rd century.[129] It is a late antique reused monument, as evidenced by its unfinished work (Fig. 12): only one side of the lid has scale-pattern decoration, suggesting that the piece was not originally intended to stand in the centre of a room (Fig. 13).[130] The lid, adorned with acroteria at the four corners, rests on a parallelepiped-shaped case (1.3 × 2.35 m), which is aniconic and uninscribed.[131] In addition to the typical proportions and features of late antique sarcophagi, it is important to note that the parallelepiped shape of the chest, topped by a double-sloping roof, was a common type along the Eastern Adriatic for the most precious relics. This same shape can be found in the sarcophagi of St Anastasia and St Tryphon (see Figs 73, 75), whose remains arrived in Dalmatian ports – Zadar and Kotor (in present-day Montenegro), respectively – around the same time as those of St Euphemia

124 Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, 1641, ed. 1837, 425. For further yet unreferenced details on the old basilica, see Anonymous 1891, 73–76.
125 Benussi 1888, 461. Marković 1998, 263–264.
126 Benussi 1888, 259.
127 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 176.
128 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 54–55.
129 Šonje 1978, 146–147.
130 *Ibid.*
131 *Ibid.*



FIGURE 12 Rovinj, church of St Euphemia. Marble sarcophagus of St Euphemia
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 13 Rovinj, church of St Euphemia. Marble sarcophagus of St Euphemia, detail of the right side of the lid with scale pattern
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

(9th century).[132] This typology was also later used for the 13th-century sarcophagus of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius (see Fig. 7) and the 14th-century silver-gilt reliquary shrine of St Simeon in Zadar (see Fig. 38), which, as we shall see, is decorated with images of the saint and the miracles he performed for the Zadar community.

In Rovinj, however, the decision was made not to commission a new monument, but to focus on the aniconic ancient sarcophagus, which became a main actor in the legendary tales of the miraculous arrival of St Euphemia's remains on the Istrian coast. Among Western pilgrims, the Swiss merchant Ulrich Leman, in 1472, was the first to mention the legend he was told *in loco*, recounting how her body was brought by the waves in a stone sarcophagus, though he mistakenly identified St Euphemia as a Hungarian princess: 'Likewise, in the same city, there is a church on the highest hill, where the holy virgin, St Euphemia, lies incorrupt. They showed her to us, and this holy virgin arrived in a stone sarcophagus, carried by the waves from the White Sea. She was the daughter

132 Cf. Belamarić 2001, 165; Marinković 2018, 277.

of a king from Hungary and performs great miracles at sea.'[133] A later reference comes from another Swiss pilgrim, Felix Fabri, who offered a detailed account during his return journey in 1483. The Dominican from Ulm described reading a 'pulchram historiam' from a Latin codex in the church of Rovinj, narrating the miraculous journey of St Euphemia's remains from Chalcedon, where she was martyred, to the Adriatic coast.[134] In 1519 Ludwig Tschudi also added that the legend concerning St Euphemia was written in Rovinj.[135]

133 Ulrich Leman, 1472–1480, ed. 2007, 20: 'Item in derselben stat ist ain kilch vff dem berg ze obrest, da lit ain halgi junkfrow libhaftig, die haist Sant Effemia, die zogt man vns, vnd dieselbig halig junkfrow kam in aim staininen sark vss dem witten mer dar geflossen, die ist aines kúngs tochter gesin von Vnger [land], die tut grossi zaichen vff dem mer.'

134 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 377: 'Quam statim autem in portum venimus, ante introductionem aliarum navium, cum nobillibus peregrinis scaphis ad terram ducti in civitatem ascendimus ad vesperas, quae actu pulsabantur in ecclesia S. Euphemiae; nobis in choro stantibus venit patronus galeae meae cum dominis et peregrinis sociis meis, et videntes me quasi monstrum inspexerunt, mirantes, cum quo venissem, et congratulabantur mihi de fortuna mea. Post vesperas videns ecclesiae praepositus ecclesiam esse repletam hominibus, reseravit tumbam beatae virginis Euphemiae, in qua corpus ejus quiescit, et ibi deosculati sumus sanctas martyris reliquias. Legi etiam ibi in libro chori pulchram historiam, quomodo miraculose de Chalcedonia, ubi fuit martyrizata, fuit huc translata. Chalcedonia, est urbs in Asia minori, in littore Bassori pelagi sita, ex opposito Constantinopolis sicut superius Fol. 176 dictum est, in qua Euphemia filia Senatoris sub Diocletiana persecutione a Prisco consule martyrium mirabili agone consummavit superatis inauditis poenis, ut habetur in ejus Legenda. Eam itaque mortuam Christiani cum honore sepelierunt, construentes ei ecclesiam supra petram, quae de littore in mare prominebat, et aqua sub ipsa petra in terre viscera intrabat, martirys enim beatae martyris in brevi tota Chalcedonia ad fidem fuit conversa, et magna devotione corpus virginis venerabatur, eique tumbam grandem valde, quasi domunculam, fabricaverunt de candido marmore. Post temporum autem decursum tepescente Chalcedonensium devotione negligentius se habuere ad ejus sepulchrum, et jam nec lampades nec aliquem ornatum et honorem sibi exhibuere. Quod virgo beata non ferens ab hoc loco recessum a Deo impetravit, nam nocte quadam facta est in mari tam horribilis tempestas, ut Chalcedonenses non nisi suae civitatis et suum interitum adesse lamentarentur. In hac tempestate crepuit et scissa est petra, super quam beatae Euphemiae stabat tumba, et per ipsam scissuram tumba cum corpore dilapsa est in mare, sed nequaquam mersa: quin imo sicut lignea navicula super undas natavit et a fluctibus importune pulsa eadem nocte in ea tempestate per maxima maris spatia est de Asia in Europam delata, a mari Aegeo per Hellespontum in mare Adriaticum et Histriam Dalmatiae translata et in hiatu petrae sub civitate Rubina injecta, ubi multis diebus stetit hominibus incognita. Sancti autem homines viderunt noctibus singulis splendores de scissuris petrae adscendentes et lumina et harmoniam coelestis melodiae audierunt. Cum ergo his signis tumba cum sacro corpore inventa esset et vellent eam deportare, nequaquam eam movere poterant, donec consilio cujusdam sanctae foeminae fuerunt adducti duo tauri indomati, jugis non assueti, qui funibus sarcophago colligati ipsam ingentem tumbam de hiatu advexerunt et supra montem sine difficultate venerunt per praeceps adscendentes in locum, ubi usque

While it cannot be affirmed with certainty, the pilgrims were most likely referring to the 15th-century manuscript *Translatio corporis beate Eufemie*, still preserved in Istria (in the University Library of nearby Pula), the illustrations of which, dating to the second half of the 15th century, clearly reflect Venetian artistic solutions.[136] The same dating can likely be assigned to the folio preceding the *Translatio* narrative, which depicts a town enclosed by a double circuit of walls, alternating flat-topped (Guelph) and swallowtail (Ghibelline) merlons, surrounded by the sea, with a dominant church atop the hill.[137] This depiction is singular in both formal and technical execution, recalling cartographic rather than hagiographic material. However, what stands out is the absence of an inscription identifying the city, a typical feature in travelogues and similar works. The city is commonly recognised as Rovinj, with St Euphemia's church at its summit. It should be noted that the main façade is shown to include a distinctive detail suggesting an important preaching centre: an external pulpit on the right. The folio also contains a coat of arms, identified as that of the Soranzo family.[138] However, this heraldic sign appears to be a later addition on the main gate, suggesting a clear *ante quem* for both the folio and the *Translatio* to which it was attached. The precise placement of this *ante quem* remains uncertain, as members of the Soranzo family governed Rovinj five times in a row from 1468 onwards.[139] However, stylistic features align with this chronological framework, which can be broadly placed between 1468 and 1500. Both the cartographic-style folio and the decorative manuscript illustrations are unlikely to date beyond the end of the 15th century.

Fabri's narrative, likely based on this manuscript,[140] begins with the martyrdom of the saint under Diocletian, an event that triggered the construction of the basilica at a prominent point on the coast. He then emphasised the Chalcedonians' neglect of the saint's remains, which were initially venerated with 'great devotion'.[141] The story then shifts to the miraculous sea voyage: on

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hodie manet et a cunctis veneratur fidelibus, ubi est ecclesia constructa pulchra, habens episcopum et canonicos.' Reference to the codex written in Latin is contained in the German version of Fabri's text: Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 124v.

135 Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 55–56.

136 On the codex, see Cuscito 1992, 131–133; Marinković 2018, 277; Bralić 2019, 9–22. Critical edition: Budicin and Kliman 2000.

137 Cf. Bralić 2019, 15.

138 *Ibid.*; Radossi 2004, 365–368.

139 Radossi 2004, 365–366.

140 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 377–378: 'Legi etiam ibi in libro chori pulchram historiam, quomodo miracolose de Chalcedonia, ubi fuit martyrizata, fuit huc translata.'

141 Felix Fabri also referred to St Euphemia's story while visiting Bithynia; *ibid.*, 299–300: 'Venissemus etiam levi navigatione in Pontum Bithyniae, in qua est Nicomedia urbs, in

a stormy night, the heavy sarcophagus was cast into the sea, but did not sink, instead being carried by the waves from Asia Minor to the Adriatic coast, where it came to rest in a cleft in the rock under Rovinj. The presence of the sacred relics was revealed by nocturnal flashes and 'heavenly melodies'. Despite attempts to move the monumental casket, it was not until a holy woman advised using two wild bulls, which broke open the sarcophagus and carried it to the mountain, that the tomb was transported to the site where the beautiful church was eventually built.[142] Fabri's reading of the codex in 1484 was likely witnessed by Bernhard von Breydenbach, who during his return journey reported: 'Her body is still intact from Chalcedon, where she was martyred, and it miraculously

qua beata Barbara virgo et martyr nata et occisa fuit, et multi alii martyres. Est etiam ibi urbs Chalcedon, in qua beata Euphemia martyrium pertulit, cujus corpus miraculose in Rubinam Histriae venit, ut patet Fol. 203 A. B., In qua etiam anno Domini 454 sub Leone papa primo, Martiano et Valentiniano imperatoribus, synodus oecumenica 1200 episcoporum fuit celebrata pro universis nationibus orbis, in qua multae haereses sunt damnatae. Ibi tunc contigit hoc spectabile miraculum, quod fertur. Nam dum haeretici validissimis argumentis contra catholicos se armassent, ita, ut nostri episcopi penitus in responsionibus deficerent, advocatus fuit S. Achatius, qui in duro lapidis arto antro diu conclusus pro dei amore steterat. Ambae ergo partes in hunc sanctum virum compromiserunt et sententiae ejus stare juraverunt, qui ab utrisque petiit sibi dari in scriptis conclusiones, de quibus erat certamen. Acceptis ergo chartis ambabus ad sepulchrum S. Euphemiae accessit easque super corpus posuit petens, ut ipsa sancta martyr ostendere dignaretur, cui parti standum esset. Statim autem sacra virgo schedulam haereticorom longe a se projecit, nostrorum vero schedulam in pectore reconditam servavit.'

142 A more concise version of the travel itinerary was compiled by Fabri at the conclusion of his second journey, where a shorter version of the Istrian tale also appeared; Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 124v: 'Den Sarck schloß man uns auff/und leiß uns der heligen Jungfrauwen Leib sehen/ und der Probst in dem Münster bracht mir Lateinisch Buch/ in dem stund der heiligen Jungfrauwen Legend/ die legt ich auß in Teutsch meinen Herrn/ in der Legend stunde geschrieben/ daß da die heilige Junfraw zu Chalcedonia gemartert/ und von den Christen Leuten nach der Marter in den Sarck gelegt wardt/ da sund der Sarck viel jar zu Chalcedonia/ und geschahe doch wenig ehr der heiligen Jungfrauwen darbey/ und war das ort da der Sarck mit dem heiligen Leichnam stund/gleich ob dem Meer in einem Felsen am Lande/ und in einer Nacht/ da es Gott eben war/ da ward zu Chalcedonia ein groß Ungewitter in der Lufft und in dem Meer/ also daß man horte die Felsen zerspalten. Da nu daß Wetter still wardt/ da sunden die Calcedonia/ daß sich der Felß auff dem S. Euphemia Sarck stund mit dem Leib/ zerspalten hatte/ und der Sarck in das Meer gefallen war/ und suchten den am bodem/ aber man fandt in nicht/ denn in demUngewitter hatt der Windt den schweren grossen Sarck Uber Meer/ viel hundert meylen geworffen/ biß ghen Rubina an den Berg da die Statt auffsteht/ in ein tieff Loch im Felsen/ das noch da stehet/ und mochte den Sarck auß dem Loche niemandt ziehen/ denn zwey junger unzahmer Oechßlein spante man dran/ die zogen in biß zu oberst auff den Berg/und da ward ir das Münster gebauwet.'

floated in that heavy sarcophagus across the sea to Rovinj and was reverently brought into the church, where the holy virgin still rests.'[143]

Later revisited by Nicholas le Huen (whose text partly relies on that of Breydenbach),[144] the tale also surfaced in 16th-century accounts, where a number of discordant versions are recorded.[145] The most divergent retelling is found

143 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 656: '[…] vnd ist eyn bistum da selbet vn yn dem thum liget sancta Eufemia heilig jugfrauw vn mertrerin yn eym sarch welchen vns der thumprobst vff thete vnd ließ das heyltum sehen vnd ist der corper noch gantz vo Calcedonia do sie ward gemartert wu derbarlichen yn dem selben schweren sarch vff de meer gen Rubina geflossen vnd also yn die kirch eerhch getragen worden do die heilig jung frauw noch ruget vn rastet. Als wir follichs hetten gesehen vn anch an der kirchen heymgesuchet giengen wir wyder yn die galeen.'

144 Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.: 'La on disoit vespres en lesglise saincte Eufemie vierge et martyre. Le preuost du colliege nous ouurist le tombeau de ladicte vierge saincte Eufemie et mostra son corps tout entier. Moult miraculeusement fut translatee de la cite ou elle fut maririsee: car de chalcedoine en une grande tombe fut amenee pare la mer et par les undes iusques a rabine; et de la on rentre aux nauires ou gallees.'

145 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 116–117: 'Item von der Stadtt Pula 6. meilen ist eine Stadtt beim Meer Rubimine, oder Rubinum genandt, da lieget leibhafftig die Heylige Jungfraw Euphemia, die da ist gemartert worden in der Stadt Calcedonia in Grichenland vnd hatt manche zeit da gerast; Sonder es ist von den Grichen nicht ehre geschehen nach ihrem Heiligen vordienstnüss, darumb ist sie eines Nachtes leibhafftig in ein Schiff gesessen vnd aldo ohne Menschliche hülffe mit dem schiffe vnd mit Ihrem Sarge gen Rubinum kommen, vnd da da sie an dem Vber, alda mit Ihrem steinern Sarge war, ist auss Göttlicher ordnung dass schiff wieder kommen an seine stelle vnd der Sarg ist geschwommen mit dem Leichnam an ein fels vnd darinn ein gross tieff Loch gemacht vnd ist aldo wunderlich darein geruckt, dass erfahren die Rubiner, lieffen auss vnd legten seile an den Sarg vnd spinnen an ihre Thier, vnd wollten den Leichnam darauss zihen, Sonder sie mochten in keiner weise nicht vnd alda worden sie gar sehr betrübet, Ist an der Stadtt Rubino gewest ein arme Witwe, die hatte gehabt 2. Ewlen der ist entschienen die heilige Euphemia vnd hat gesaget, dass sie soltten nehmen ihre 2. ewlen vnd sollte sie spannen an ihren Sarg, wenn sie war würdig ihren Leichnam von dannen zu führen vnd niemand anderss, vnd dass ist geschehen, Also ist geleget ihr Heiliger Leichnam mit der Sarge an die stelle, da er noch heute rastet.'; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 166–167: 'Item den yrsten dach van Julio smorgens wanneer die sonne op ghinck, hadden wij goeden wynt ende voeren nae Jherusalem ende dancten god ende waren blij, mer tsavons hadden wij een redilicken storm ende tempeest van wynde, alsoe dat wy singende waren Salve regina, dwelck wy mosten laten staen om dat roepen van den boots gesellen, op dat sy malcanderen horen mochten. Als oquamen wij tsanderdaechs omtrent den noen in een haven voer een cleyn stedeken int rijk van Histria toebehorende den venetianen, wesende C ende 11 mylen van Venegien, in welke plaetse rust dat lichaem van die heilige maecht Euphonia, die welcke waert gemartalizeert in Calcedonia, welck lichaem waert besloten in een marmorsteen ende soe geset in die zee ende quam door mirakel gedreven tot Ruyna.'; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 55–56: '[…] inn der Pfarkirchen so in der Statt auff dem Berg steht/ ist S. Euphemiae der H. Jungfrawen und Marterin Corpel/ in einem Marmelsteininen grossen Sarch/ den man unß auff schloß/ und ihren Leib sehen ließ/ daran wir unser kleinot strichen/ ihr Legent zeuget/ so zu Rubina geschriben steht/ das

in the travel diary of Philipp van Hagen (1523–1524), in which the miraculous arrival does not follow the common topos, widespread in the Mediterranean area, in which cult objects are carried by the waves to the chosen destination. Instead, echoing the Loreto legend, it attributes the arrival of the saint's remains in Rovinj to angels. 'Also, in this town of Rovinj lies the holy virgin St Euphemia, still preserved on a hill in the church, which has been shown to us, and her tomb is a large marble stone rock. It is said that the angels of God carried this holy virgin, along with her tomb, over the sea to this place.'[146]

This version stands alone among travellers' accounts, as soon after Nicolas Loupvent (1531) revived the canonical local tale, adding a previously unpublished detail at the end:

> The body of the said saint was divinely carried and brought from the land of Chalcedon, floating across the sea inside a great and mighty marble coffin and tomb of astonishing weight, all the way to the foot of the mountain of the said Rovinj. The fame of this miracle is wondrous and great in that land, for it is marvellous to see a marble stone float beyond its natural properties.
>
> The following prayer was written in Roman letters on her tomb: 'O God, who transported across the mighty sea from Chalcedon to the summit of Rovinj the body of your blessed virgin and martyr Euphemia, we humbly pray that, through her merits and prayers, we may be delivered from all dangers, through our Lord Jesus.'[147]

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dise Heylige Jungfraw zu Calcedonia, in Griechenland/ in Asia in Königreich Bithinia, gemartert/ un volgender zeyten daselbst/ von Christen/ in den Marmelsteininen Sarch/ dairinn sie noch ligt/ gelegt worden/ und an einem ohrt ob dem Meer/ inn einem Velsen am Land/ in der Statt Calcedonia, gestellt gewesen. Unnd als ihr allda das Volck wenig und kleine Ehr bewise/ hat GOTT inn einer Nacht/ ein groß ungewitter kommen lassen/ daruon der Velß zerspalten/ und der Sarch darinn der H. Corpel lag/ in das Meer gefallen/ und durch ungestümme deß Wetters (wiewol steinen und vast schwer) vil hundert Welsche meyl/ biß unden an den Berg zu Rubina, in ein tieff loch, im Velsen daselbst, so nach steht/ geworffen/ und mag den Sarch auß dem loch niemandts bringen/ dann zwen junge ungezaumpte Oechklein/ die spanne man an den Sarch/ die zugend ihn biß zu oberst auff den Berg/ und wolten weitter nit gehn: Da Bawet man der Heyligen Magt Marterin daselbst das Münster/ da es noch steht.'

146 Philipp van Hagen, 1523–1524, ed. 1882, 105: 'Item in disem stetlin rowina lit die heilge Junckfrow sant Eufemia liphafftig vff ein bergel in der kirchen, die man vnsz gezeigt hat, vnnd ir begrebnis ist ein grosser marmelsteiner fels. Do sagt man fir wor daz die engel gotes dise heilige iunckfrow mit sambt solcher begrebnis yber mer an disz ort dragen hand.'; cf. Kužić 2013.

147 Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 37–38: 'Lequel corps de ladite saincte fust divinement apporté et amené du pays de Calcidone, nageant parmy la mer dedans ung grant et puissant cercuylle et tombel de marbre pesant a merveille, jusque au piedz de la montaigne

We thus learn that an inscription was placed against the aniconic tomb – unalterable as tangible evidence of the saint's miracles and itself an object of veneration – to reaffirm the transfer of the remains from Chalcedon to Rovinj, reinforcing oral accounts or a manuscript codex that, however, probably was not accessible to everyone.

Beyond the legendary tales and 'staging' elements, the accessibility of the relics was central to the success of the site. While early 15th-century diaries vaguely noted the presence of St Euphemia's relics in Rovinj, accounts from the 1480s onwards explicitly attest to the display of the saint's remains. Today, the relics can be seen through the *fenestella confessionis*, a small window adorned with a late image of the saint standing at the shores of Rovinj. In her right hand she holds a model of the city and in her left a palm tree, with further symbols at her feet referring to the martyrdom described in her *passio*.[148]

Tommasini, writing in 1641 before the relics' translation to the new Baroque church, simply noted that the sarcophagus 'opens on one side', is separated from the observer by a 'gilded grating' and is 'locked with three keys'.[149] The pilgrims' accounts are less detailed in this regard. Ulrich Leman briefly mentioned that the body was shown to him, while Fabri's 1483 account is more specific: 'St Euphemia, the virgin, who lies there honourably buried intact in a grand marble tomb, which the church's provost opened for us, showing us the sacred body'.[150] An even clearer description comes from Fabri's return jour-

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dudit Rubigno, duquel miracle la renommé est mervelleuse et grant en celuy pays, de voir nagiere ung piere marbrine oultre son naturel; Loraison qui sensuyt estoyt escript en lettre rommainne contre son tombel: "Deus qui transtulisti per mare validum a Calcidonia usque ad summitatem montis Rubei corpus beate Ensemie virginis et martiris tue quesumus ut eus meritis et precibus ab omnibus periculis liberemur per dominum nostrum Jhesum."'

148 Jan Want made an interesting iconographic observation, noting that Euphemia is depicted much like St Catherine, with two lions at her feet; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 166–167: 'Also quamen wij tsanderdaechs omtrent den noen in een haven voer een cleyn stedeken int rijk van Histria toebehorende den venetianen, wesende C ende II mylen van Venegien, in welke plaetse rust dat lichaem van die heilige maecht Euphonia, die welcke waert gemartalizeert in Calcedonia, welck lichaem waert besloten in een marmorsteen ende soe geset in die zee ende quam door mirakel gedreven tot Ruyna; dat beeldt dat wort bycans gemaect als sunte Cateryn, hebbende twe leuwen onder haer voeten.'

149 Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, 1641, ed. 1837, 425; cf. Benussi 1888, 92.

150 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 151–152: '[…] Finito prandio descendimus de galea in barcam, et in civitatem nos duci fecimus, et in ecclesiam cathedralem ascendimus, orantes ibi Deum et Sanctam Eufemiam virginem, quae ibi honorifice in magna tumba marmorea jacet integra sepulta, quam tumbam eeclesiae praepositus nobis patefecit, et corpus sacrum ostendit. Quomodo autem S. Eufemia de Chalcedonia sit huc translata, et qualis sit illa civitas Rubina, et de portu ejus, dicam in reversione. […] Quarta die mane

ney in 1484, where he explicitly wrote of the possibility of coming into contact with the relics: 'After vespers, seeing the church filled with people, the provost unlocked the tomb of the blessed virgin Euphemia, in which her body rests, and there we kissed the holy relics of the martyr.'[151]

The essential elements underpinning the success of a place of worship are already evident in Fabri's account: the ostension, the integrity of the sacred remains[152] and the opportunity for direct contact, such as kissing the relics. Later accounts provide us with further details regarding the performance of devotional practices. In 1494, for example, an anonymous pilgrim recounted the chance to touch the relics with his rosary and paternoster: 'And they opened the coffin for us and let us see the holy virgin and touch [the body] with our rosaries and paternosters.'[153] The appropriation of relics through tactile objects was also central to pilgrims' interaction with the 'firm and united body' of St Simeon in Zadar, as we shall see. An anonymous account, however, highlights an uncommon detail in the frame of the writer's devotional experience in Rovinj. He distinguished between two types of objects: the paternoster, rooted in an older tradition, and the rosary, the beads of which were used for the recitation of formalised prayers in honour of Christ and Mary, promoted especially by the Dominicans in the early 15th century.[154] While the paternoster is mentioned regularly in travelogue excerpts devoted to Venetian and Dalmatian relics, this account stands out as an isolated reference to the rosary. This does not necessarily imply that pilgrims did not carry rosaries, even though generally it seems that associated prayer only began spreading more

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non erant venti prosperi, idcirco extra galeam navigavimus et ad ecclesiam S. Eufemiae transeuntes ibi Missas legimus et audivimus, et post divina cum nostro hospite manducavimus.' See also Breydenbach (p. 58, n. 143) and Huen (p. 58, n. 144) above.

151 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 377–378: 'Post vesperas videns ecclesiae praepositus ecclesiam esse repletam hominibus, reseravit tumbam beatae virginis Euphemiae, in qua corpus ejus quiescit, et ibi deosculati sumus sanctas (b) martyris reliquias.'

152 On the integrity of the body, see also Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319: 'Item uff funffzechen mil wit von Parentz ligt och ain stat am mer, Zubignia genempt, da Iigt die hailig junkfrow sant Effemia also gantzer.'; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 129: 'Also bestellten die teutschen bilgram ein scheff fur sich und namen uns teutsch prueder zu inen und fueren in die porten zu Rubina, welche stat ist auf ainem berg ligend, und ist auch ein bistumb daselbst, und in dem thuem ligt sancta Eufemia, die heilig junkfrau und martrerin, in einem sarch, und ist der corper noch gantz und unverzert.'

153 Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148: 'Unnd man thett uns den Sarch auf unnd ließe uns die heilige Jungfrauu sechen unnd unnsere Rosaria unnd Patter Noster daran streichen unnd damitt berüeren. Darnach saßen wier auf unnd fhueren dahin.'

154 Concerning the use of the paternoster and the rosary, see Gribble 1992; Winston-Allen 1997; Mitchell 2009; Ardissino 2019, 342–371; Van Asperen 2021.

persistently beyond intellectual Dominican circles later, between the 17th and 18th centuries. Rather, it indicates that the term 'rosary' had not yet gained widespread recognition among devotees in the 15th and early 16th centuries. It also hints at a significant, yet unexplored, connection between the anonymous pilgrim and the Dominican context. This is reinforced by his repeated reference to both prayer aids – three times in the text – and his mention of acquiring them on Rhodes.[155]

Further accounts also attest to the long-standing tradition of obtaining either paternosters or prayer beads in Venice, Candia, Rhodes and Nisyros, underscoring the fluidity of terminology, with the older term, paternoster, remaining dominant.[156] Their production took place on Rhodes, using olive wood or agarwood (a specific type chosen, according to pilgrims, for its pleasant fragrance),[157] sourced from the nearby islands of Kalymnos or Nisyros,[158] where they were likely also made. Venice and Candia (also known as an important production centre)[159] stood out as key selling points.

The large-scale production and availability of such objects along pilgrimage routes suggest their widespread use. Numerous descriptions of relic appropriations, particularly of entire holy bodies, confirm this practice in the Venetian lagoon and along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts.[160] In the 1520s Philipp van Hagen, while visiting a Venetian site, explicitly described this ritual of

155 Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 237: 'Und die Fürmerei zue Rhodiss ist ein gewaltiges herrliches Stift, darvon gar vill zur schreiben were. Item unsere Rosaria un Pater Noster, die wier zue Rhodiss khaufteenn, und die hier mitt uns fhüeretten an die heilgen Stets gheenn Jerusalem, und die seindt von der Art dess Holtz gewesen, daraus die Tafel gemacht ist worden, daran Pilatus den Tittel unnsers lieben Herren Jesu hat lassen schreiben und hast denselben auf das Heilige Creutz geseekht. Und es ist auch die Art des Holtz, von dem die Tauben ein Zweiglein name unnd bracht es Nöe in die Arche, unnd diss Holtz nennen sie, Cignum à Nöe.' For the third instance, see *ibid*., 185.

156 For Rhodes productions, see Zoitou 2020, 102. For the Candia market, see Dermitzaki 2021, 154: Jean de Tournai referred to praying beads using the term 'chapelets', *ibid*., 154, n. 29. Concerning Venice, see Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 93–94; concerning Nisyros, see Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 106.

157 Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 106: ' […] als eyn eylant un heist Nicera, daer veel holts van aloes in west, daer men die pater noster van maecht, um dat seer wal rucht, unde meir ander eylenden.' I am grateful to Michele Bacci for this reference concerning Nisyros. For olive wood, see the exceptional mention by the 1494 Anonymous; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 237. For agarwood, see Zoitou 2020, 102.

158 For Nisyros, see Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 106; for Kalymnos, see Jean Thenaud, 1512, ed. 1884, 136, and cf. Zoitou 2020, 102, n. 364.

159 Dermitzaki 2021, 154.

160 Cf. Bacci *et al*. 2017, 357–361.

systematically using paternosters and other precious objects: 'We also visited the holy church of St Roch, where the saint's relics were displayed; they showed us the body, entirely exposed, lying on the high altar. There, we had a magnificent service sung, accompanied by charming music and trumpets, and we had our paternoster and small items rubbed on the holy relics, just as we did with all the saints' relics we encountered.'[161] Van Hagen referred to these devotional objects using the term *cleinot* (modernised as *Kleinodien*, also spelt *clenodien*), a word widely used among German-speaking pilgrims.[162] Felix Fabri effectively conveyed their meaning and devotional function, well known as objects commonly brought back home, akin to religious souvenirs of great significance, and given to friends and relatives. In some cases these items were even entrusted to pilgrims before their departure for the Levant. At the same time we should not overlook their protective role: imbued with sanctity through contact with holy relics and places, they served as amulets, shielding pilgrims as they undertook the perilous journey across the sea to and from the Holy Land:

> When the office had ended, the people gradually dispersed, but we remained until we could view the relics more easily, without the press of the crowd, and touch them with our precious objects, called *clenodia*.
>
> Pilgrims to the Holy Land customarily bring with them to sacred places gold or silver rings, beloved beads of precious stones for their prayer ropes or even the paternosters themselves, small silver or gold crosses and other cherished, portable items. These objects may be gifts from

161 Philipp van Hagen, 1523–1524, ed. 1882, 232–233: 'Item mir besuchten die heilige kirch do sanct rochus liphafftig lit; den zeigt man vnsz gancz blosz iber den fronaltar ligende. Do liessen wir ein herlich ampt singen mit scharmigen vnd trometen darzu pfisen vnd liessen vnser paternoster vnd cleinot darnoch an den heilgen strichen, alsz wir harnoch an allen heilgen gethon hand die wir sehen.'

162 Outside the context of Holy Land travelogues, the term refers more broadly to objects associated with the sacred sphere, including liturgical vessels and altar furnishings, such as chalices, pectorals, corporals and crosses. See, for instance, the 15th-century inventory published by Valentin Schmidt; Schmidt 1904, 180ff. Moreover, in the 14th-century *Historia trium regum* by John of Hildesheim, the term would have been understood as referring to contact relics. In this specific case the *clenodia* taken by Indian pilgrims was land from the cemetery of the Eleven Thousand Virgins in Cologne; John of Hildesheim, 1364, ed. 1878, 33: 'aliqua mercimonia de partibus istis ibidem cara recipiunt et inter alia patria et rara clenodia ibidem deferunt que de colonia asserunt detulisse et quidam ex eis deferunt ibidem terram quam de cimiterio undecim milium virginum asserunt esse sumptam et talia clenodia de colonia et talem terram querunt Indi in hospicijs talium peregrinorum.' I am grateful to Michele Bacci for these valuable references.

> their parents or friends or they may have been purchased in Venice or overseas for their loved ones. When they arrive at a relic or a holy place, they touch these *clenodia* to the relics or to the sacred site, believing that through this contact the objects receive a kind of sanctity, making them even more precious for those who will receive them.
>
> I, for my part, was the least and poorest in our company, yet I had many precious *clenodia*, which had been given to me by my friends and benefactors, both men and women, so that I might touch them to the relics I visited and the holy places and bring them back as gifts.[163]

This raises the possibility that among these frequently mentioned *Kleinodien* pilgrims may have also included rosaries. That the paternoster was regarded as one of these precious objects was confirmed by Heinrich Stulz in 1519: 'On Saturday morning, we set out for St Helena, to a small island, where there is a nice little church. There, I held Mass, and they allowed us to see her relics. We rubbed our paternoster and other precious objects [*kleinet*] on them.'[164]

A contemporary account by Melchior zur Gilgen of Lucerne emphasises the use of such objects. Moreover, reinforcing the repetitive nature of these

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163 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 93–94: 'Illo ergo primo die Maii barcam conduximus et ad ecclesiam sanctorum Apostolorum Philippi et Jacobi navigavimus, ibiqui divinis Officiis interfuimus. Post Officium ad altare accessimus et caput saciunt St. Philippi, quod ibi habetur, deosculati sumus, et venerandum St. Jacobi brachium. Erat autem magna hominom compressio, propter sacras reliquias videndas et deosculandas. Porro Officio terminato defluxit populus, nos vero mansimus quousque sine popoli pressura melius reliquias videre et nostris jecalibus, quae nominantur clenodia, ea contingere possemus. Nam terrae sanctae peregrini solent secum ad loca sancta deferre annulos aureos, vel argenteos dilectos, et grana lapidum pretiosorum pro paternostris, patriloquiis, vel ipsa paternostra, cruces parvas de argento vel auro, et quaeque chara portabilia, quae vel de parentibus suis et amiciis accipiunt, vel Venetiis aut in transmarinis partibus ro sivi charis emunt, et quando ad aliqua reliquias veniunt, vel ad aliquiem lcoum sanctum, tunc illa clenodia ad reliquias applicant ved ad lcoum sanctum et ea contingunt, ut quandam sanctitatem quodammodo ec contactu accipiant ; et ita suis charis chariora et pretiosora reddantur. ego enim fui minimus, pauperur in nostra societate, et tamen multa preciosa clenodia habui, quae mihi collata fuerunt ab amicics et fautoribus et fautricibus meis, ut reliquias, ad quas veuirem et loca sancta cum eis contingerem, et eis pro munere reportarem.'

164 Heinrich Stulz, 1519, ed. 1957, 229: 'V nd demnach vf sampstag frue fuorent wier zuo Santt Helena in ein klein inselin, ist ein hüpsch clösrerlin, da hat ich meß, ließ man vns ir lib gesaechen, doran wier vnsere pater noster strichen vnd andere kleinet.' He also visited the body of St Euphemia, underlining the still lively presence of her body; *ibid*, 232: 'Vnd demnach am donstag kament wier vff ein placz vnd insel heist Ystria, vnd kament in ein statt heist Ruwin […] Vnd in derselben statt litt die helig junckfrow Sancta Eufemia libhaftig, die wier besuochten mit andacht.'

devotional rituals, he described a near-identical experience of contact with the body of St Helena in Venice (see Fig. 107) and the remains of St Euphemia in Rovinj: 'Also in Rovinj, when we were there with our companions, we saw the body of the holy virgin and martyr St Euphemia, which we pilgrims looked at, and we rubbed our small objects on it.'[165] Likewise, in the same year, Ludwig Tschudi, before approaching the body of St Euphemia and rubbing his precious objects over it, had already listed a nearly complete range of items, much like Fabri, that could be swiped across holy bodies to capture their sanctity in these portable souvenirs. When describing his visit to St Helena, he explicitly mentioned golden chains, rings, *cleinot* and paternosters: 'On Saturday, 11 June, on the evening of Pentecost, we travelled by boat to the monastery of St Helena. There, we attended Mass, and they allowed us to see her holy body, upon which we rubbed our golden chains, rings, *Kleinot* and paternosters. She was the mother of the great Emperor Constantine.'[166]

In a comparative perspective, it should be noted that, unlike St Simeon's body,[167] the remains of the two female saints, St Euphemia and St Helena, were not fully exposed for public veneration.[168] In 1641 Tommasini noted only that St Euphemia was exhibited 'clothed',[169] while as early as 1518 the French pilgrim Jacques Le Saige provided a more specific clue, reporting that 'two or three belt loops encircled [the body of Euphemia], according to the fashion

165 Melchior zur Gilgen of Lucerne, 1519, ed. 1957, 46: 'Jtem zuo Rubigina, da wir dan vns mit spis versachend, lidt der lib der helgen junckfrouwen vnd marterin Santt Eufemina, den wier bilger sachend, vnd vnser kleinot anstrichent.' This text precedes the lagoon passage, *ibid*., 44: 'Vff samstag, wz der xij tag Junius, fuorend wier zuo Sant Helena, hieltend vnser brueder vns da mes (vnd) lies man vns den lib der lieben, seligen frouwen sechen, daran wier vnser kleinot vnd pater noster strichend.'

166 Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 26: 'Sambstags den 11 Junii am Pfinsgst abend fůhren wir inn einer Barcken in das Kloster zu S. Helena da waren wir ben der Mess und liess man unss ihren Heiligen Leychnam sehen daran wir unsere Guldinen Ketten Ring Kleinot vnd Pater noster strichen: Sie ist dess grossen Keysers Constantini Můtter gewesen.'

167 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139.

168 Pierre Barbatre stated clearly that the body of St Helena was entirely covered from the neck to the feet; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 104–105: '[…] En revenant de sainct Nicolas a ung mil pres est l'eglise saincte Helene en une isle et sont moynes blancs. La en une chapelle a dextre, en ung autel, est le corps ma dame saincte Helene mere de l'empereur Constantin, empereur de Romme. On en voit le chef, le visage, dens, col, espaulles, et piez, tout le demourant est couvert. Item dessus sa poictrine y a une oe ronde O, longue d'ung pié a petis croisillons et est de la vraye croys de Jesus, laquelle elle portait continuellement sur elle. Item sur son corps y a ung grant os du traril de l'echine de saincte Marie Magdalene, demy pié de large en quarre.'

169 Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, 1641, ed. 1837, 425.

of the locals'.[170] This object is regarded as a relic by contact. Alongside other items, it was preserved within the reliquary produced in Venetian workshops in the first decade of the 15th century and is still kept in the treasury of the church of St Euphemia.[171]

St Euphemia's relics and her church were not the only sites visited by pilgrims while in Rovinj. As Fabri noted, the spot where Euphemia's sarcophagus landed was also part of the local sacred topography. After venerating her relics, pilgrims descended to the sea to pay homage to the tomb's landing spot before sailing out of the city.[172] Giuseppe Rosaccio's depiction of the city marks this spot, identifying it as the 'Grota de Sta Eufemia' (see Fig. 1).[173]

2 Beyond the Kvarner Gulf

Having left the port of Rovinj, the travel diaries mention Pula primarily for its ancient remains (Fig. 14),[174] with the exception of two accounts of 1507 by Friar Antonio of Lisbon and Martin Wanner (companion and author of the travel diary of Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg). Whereas the Portuguese pilgrim's testimony is limited to a brief list of the relics preserved in the city's

170 Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 66: 'Après disner nous allasmes ouyr vespres a leglise laquelle est sur une haulte roche. Et la vismes le corps de saincte Eupémie vierge et martyre, et je vis le chainture quelle portoit, laquelle est comme une chainette et a bien quatre ou cinq aunes de long. Il fault dire quelle le entortelloit deux ou trois tours autour d'elle, comme ils ont le fachon de faire au païs. Je vis aussy ung agneau dor quelle portoit, il ne pesoit guerre, il est bien grant: il fault dire quelle avoit gros dois.'

171 This was probably the belt that Kandler described as being kept in a 'Gothic' reliquary together with the saint's ring; Kandler 1849, 153–159, esp. 154; similarly, and with references to the dressed body, in Anonymous 1891, 81. On the reliquary, see Bralić 2019.

172 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 378: 'Dicta est autem civitas haec Rubina a sanguine martyrum ibi quondam per tyrannos occisorum pro Christo, estque sub potestate Venetorum, ad Histriae ducatum pertinens. Visis ergo reliquiis et civitate Rubinensi descendimus ad mare et hiatum sub civitate, in quo S. Euphemiae tumba steterat, vidimus et ita in galeas navigavimus.'

173 Tommasini's comment helps to locate the exact landing spot more precisely, placing the cave beneath the church of the Holy Cross; Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, 1641, ed. 1837, 427: '[…] e mirabile che sotto l'istesso scoglio della terra a piedi della chiesa di Santa Croce vi è un profondo di acqua in mare con un giro di grotte ove capitò già l'arca di Santa Eufemia e più innanzi un buco sotterraneo che passa sino in terraferma, dove stanno li vitelli marini.'

174 I refer to the volumes by Kužić and Graciotti that have dealt extensively with Pula's Roman antiquities at the centre of pilgrims' attention: in particular, Kužić 2013, 110–113; Graciotti 2014, 113–118; see also Gudelj 2009, 375–384.



FIGURE 14 Pula, amphitheatre
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

main church,[175] Wanner's testimony is reminiscent of legendary motifs widespread in the Mediterranean area: the apparition of a Marian effigy inside a fig tree, which was interpreted as a sign of the Virgin Mary's special intercession, bringing the plague afflicting Pula to a quick end.[176] Wanner's source was an

175 Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 126: 'Las reliquias que en la iglesia mayor des ta cibdad de Pola nos mostraron son éstas: los huessos del rey Salomón metidos en un arca, los güessos de Sant Gregorio Papa, los huessos de Sant Demetrio, lo huessos de Sant Theodoro, una espina de la corona de Nuestro Redemptor Jesu Christo.'

176 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 116: 'Item die Brüder des Heiligen Augustini haben alda ein Closter vnd in Ihrer Kirchen ist ein Bilde Mariae, welches zu einer Zeit bitterlich geweinet hat, von wegen der Sünde der Menschen vnd des zornes ihres Heiligen Sohnes, vnd man sihet noch die troppen desselbigen bildes vnd vnss sagte dieselbten brüder vnd die Einwohner der Stadtt Pola, dass sie zu einer zeit Gott gar sehr plagete mit Pestilentz vnd es hat gestanden an der stelle, da ietzo dass vormeltte bild stehet, ein feigenbaum, welches bletter vnd zweige seint verwandelt worden, in schöne brennende lichte gar wunderlich vnd mitten auff dem Baume hat sich Maria beweiset mit Ihrem Heiligen Kinde zu einem zeichen, dass sie Gott vor dass Volck zu Pola hette gebeten, vnd alda hat die Pestilentz abgenommen vnd die Brüder des H: Augustinij haben noch derselbigen wunderlichen lichte eines biss auff den heutigen tag.'

Augustinian friar who shared the story concerning an image preserved in the church of Our Lady of Mercy in the Istrian town.[177]

Looking east, Pula marked the final Istrian stop before entering the challenging waters of the Kvarner Gulf. For Dante Alighieri, it marked Italy's border; for Venetians, that of their Gulf; while for pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, it represented the gateway to Dalmatia or Sclavonia.[178]

Without entering the Kvarner Gulf, galleys only rarely stopped at Cres and Osor,[179] aiming to reach the Zadar stronghold in good time, the first mandatory stop in Dalmatia and a highly sought-after stopover for pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, as will be discussed in the following chapter. For the stretch of coastline between the first Dalmatian stopover and Dubrovnik, pilgrims focussed not on sacred sites in the major ports, but on the *peregrinatio maritima* that dotted central Dalmatia. For instance, only Conrad Grünenberg and Milliaduse d'Este mentioned the new cathedral of St James in Šibenik (Fig. 15),[180] while

177 He also stated that the effigy once wept, claiming as proof that one could see the 'drops', probably the same tears as in the painting, referred to by Nicolò Manzuoli about a century later in his description of Istria as being preserved in a glass ampoule and kept in the monastery; cf. Pavanello and Walcher Casotti 2001, 281; Kužić 2013, 114.

178 Cf. Graciotti 2014, 113; Gudelj 2009, 377.

179 Spanish pilgrim Pedro Manuel de Urrea's 1519 account sums up the Venetian stages along the Istrian–Dalmatian route; Pedro Manuel de Urrea, 1517–1519, ed. 2008, 112: 'De las ciudades y fortalezas que tiene Sant Mairco de Venecia: […] En Leuante tiene en tierra de Istria: Trieste, Muya, Capudistria, Insola, Piran, Umago, Ciuitanoua, Parencio, Puola, Robiño. En tierra de Esclauonia tiene: Querso, Osaro, Veya, Pag, Arbe, Zara, Noua Sibenico, Trau, Espalato, Liezena, Corçula, Catara, Budua, Antibori, Dulciño.'

180 While Conrad Grünenberg described this as a new monument, Milliaduse d'Este's annotation is less explicit, referring to a construction site still in progress, before the project underwent significant modifications with the involvement of Juraj Dalmatinac (Giorgio da Sebenico) from 1441 onwards. Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 324–326: 'Item der pottenstat von Venedig wonn stat und land, ist der Venediger mit sambt etlichen zenttelumen. Und giengent gegen uns uns gar fruntlich empfachen und grussen in ir stat Sibennegk. Und noment uns glich zů frundschafft an und fürtend uns des ersten in ain erst nuw gebuwen munsterr, das wunderlichen uns zů secen was, kostlich von wissem marmolstein, von bilden und lobwerk durch ziert, das ze schriben etwas lang wurd. Inn der selben kirchen ligt ain martrer santus Petrus genant, sachent wier also ganzer.'; Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 13–14: 'Et largi da terra milgia **** et più oltra al camino vidissimo a manne sinestra Zara, verso levante Sebenico. La qual citade è maravilgiosa de soi hedificii et maxime in ne la chiexa mazore, prede marmoree che mai fose vedute poste in Opra. Nonn è molto grande el so circuito de deta chieza, non etiamdio el circuito dela citade, ma è bene murata, con di molte tore in cerco in cerco in le dete soe muralgie. Et fasse miglia 50 da Zara a Sebenico.'; cf. Karaman 1964, 25–27; Pivčević 1988, 185–195, esp. 192.



FIGURE 15 Šibenik, cathedral of St James
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI

Joos van Ghistele referred to the patron saint of Split, St Domnius, whose remains were preserved in the cathedral (Fig. 16). St Domnius, traditionally a disciple of St Peter, served as a reminder that the primacy of the Split–Salona diocese could be traced directly back to the Apostolic Age.[181]

The same can be said for the next stretch of coastline: the cathedrals of Hvar[182] and Korčula (Fig. 17),[183] despite the two islands being strategic junctions, were only recalled *en passant* by Western travellers, without reference to

181 Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 52: 'Men lijdt ooc voor bij een proper stedekin over de slincke zijde, in Slavonien gheleghen, ghenaemt Spalato, inde welke begraven leit dlichaem van Sente Doymo, die daer vele schoender mierakelen doet.' Cf. Belamarić 2014a, 165–169.

182 Cf. Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 176: '[…] vnd lach ter rechter hant voer dem wind vnd is genent lisnae vnd is eyn cleyn guet stedchen vnd henget an eynen berge. […] Hier segen wir die kirche staen buten der stat vp dat plein vnd hier bleuen wir alle den dach.'; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 151: 'Item am pfinßtag Allerheiligentag besuechten wier die gottsdiennst zue Lesina in der thuemkirchen und assen daz mal in der stat gar pey ainem frumen man.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 40: 'E ad hore vintetré giongessimo nel porto de Lisna, cità di la serenissima Signoria, quala pocius villa è da baptizare, nisi per lo episcopato che ha intrata ducati settecento. […] Lo vescovo constrinse lo magisiro a fare una predica la sequente matina, e lo thema suo fue Emendamus, conscientiam nostram a peccatis nostris, ut possimus servire Deo viventi, che fu predica di la conscientia precipue e generalmente de ogni peccato.'; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 265: 'La sua giesia episcopale è al basso, chiamata Santo Stefano […] Audita la missa, anderemo a la giesia catedrale per odire la predica la qual predica non era simile a quelle fatte el quondam domino fra' Francesco Triulcio, le quale incitaveno l'homo a l'odire e questa incitava al rasonare et et etiam al dormire.'

183 Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 175: '[…] vnde quemen des auonts des maendaechs den ix dach in nouember to vesperzijt vnder dat harde lant an eyn eylant, daer eyn scoen steedchen is geheiten corsele vnd is eyn groet eylant vnd hoert to den venegeren vnd dat steedchen licht vp eynen cleynen berch, daer vp dat spitse vanden berch der maert is vnd daer steit die kirche, die scoen is na eire groet.'; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 56: 'Lune 19 iunij se dimorassemo fine al mezodì in dicta cità per fornirse de rinfreschamenti de vitualie. Et in questo intervallo, audita la messa nel veschoato, io andai al scoglio de Sancta Maria con certi frati de San Francescho de observanza.'; Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 257: 'Demum navigavimus per diem et noctem, et mane sexte ferie in aurora applicuimus castello Gorsule, quod est in provincia Dalmatie, et statim exivimus galeam, et ibidem in ecclesia cathedrali dixi missam de sancto Stephano astantibus mercatoribus et patrono nostro.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 41: 'Ne la cervice di queslo scoglo è lo centro de la cità, e lì è lo domino condito, che è uno tempio tutto di marmo ben comesso, a Sancto Marco dedicato. Trecento ducati lo episcopato ha intrata. La eminentia di questo tempio e lo digrado, che le case fanno l'una a l'altra persino al pie dil scoglo.'; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 262: 'La sua giesia cathedrale, per la sua qualitate e anche de la citade, è bella, facta tuta de belle petre quadrate, bello coro e bene offitiata.'



FIGURE 16 Split, cathedral, chapel of St Domnius
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 17 View of Korčula with the dominating silhouette of the cathedral
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

the cult objects housed there. When Pierre Barbatre visited Korčula in 1480, he noted that: 'In the city we saw no holy bodies.'[184]

The pilgrims' attention was largely drawn to a series of Franciscan monasteries dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy, places where seafarers sought divine protection during perilous journeys, entrusting the fate of their crews to the Virgin Mary's intercession, as evidenced in the travelogues.[185] The shrines on

184 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 114: 'En la cité n'avons veu nulz corps saincts.'

185 In this study I follow the English convention by which the term 'monastery' designates male religious houses and 'convent' female ones. This usage, although prevailing today, appears in English-speaking historiography only from the 18th century onwards and remains historically problematic when applied to premodern societies and art historical contexts. In French and Italian – also historically used in the regions studied – *monastère*/*monastero* refers to monks and nuns of traditional orders (Byzantine or Latin Benedictine) and sometimes to Poor Clares or Dominican nuns, but not to male friars, who lived in *couvents*/*conventi* without enclosure. In Italian *monastero* generally denotes communities that are cloistered, while *convento* refers to mendicant houses. Paradoxically, the English term 'convent', now applied to enclosed female communities, once meant the

the islands of Prvić and Hvar and the islet of Badija in the Korčula archipelago served as essential landmarks for late medieval seafarers navigating this particularly treacherous stretch of coastline.

The significance of such landmarks as points of orientation and refuge is evident in the account of Fabri, who, in 1483, stood near the island of Murter, north-west of Šibenik, and noted: 'From a distance we saw a sign on a hill marking a safe harbour and we steered towards it.'[186] Once on land, the Dominican pilgrim, driven by curiosity, climbed to the top, offering further details: 'When we reached the summit, we found a high pile of stones with a large wooden cross on top, marking the port. Such signs are placed in harbours so that sailors caught in storms can see them and know where to seek refuge without danger.'[187]

According to tradition, the monastery on the nearby island of Prvić (Fig. 18), strategically situated in the Bay of St Mary within the Šibenik archipelago, was built at the site of a large cross drawn into the rock.[188] Construction of the Tertiary Friars' monastery began in 1461 and continued through 1479.[189] By the 1480s both Felix Fabri and Bernard von Breydenbach referenced the site, underscoring how swiftly the monastery was incorporated into the network of Marian holy places along the Venetian route to Jerusalem (Fig. 19). Fabri, for

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opposite: friars, who never lived under strict cloistering, but in houses understood as spaces of converging community life. See *Online Etymology Dictionary*: https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=convent; *Oxford Etymological Dictionary*: https://www.oed.com/dictionary/convent_n?tab=meaning_and_use#8268629; *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*: https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780227679319.001.0001/acref-9780227679319-e-708?rskey=fANBD4&result=3.

186 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 369: 'A longe autem vidimus super collem signum securi portus et ad signum tetendimus.'

187 *Ibid.*, 370: 'Cum ergo in summitatem venissemus, invenimus ibi altum acervum lapidum et super eum grandem crucem ligneam in signum portus. Sunt enim in locis portuosis sic signa locata, ut dum navigantes tempestas acceperit, possint videre, ad quae littora sine periculo confugere debeant.' On the same stretch of the Šibenik archipelago, see also Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 89–90: 'Le dimence, XVIII.e jour de juing, environ soleil levant, feymes voille et tirâmes chemin; et à l'avant dysner veymcs la ville et cité de Sybeny [...] Aussy nous fut dict que estions passez en faisant nostre chemin assez près des villes nommées Mortet et Stragunt, aussy de Lyzo où l'on prend les sardines que on menge à l'Italie et à l'environ: et sy trouvasmes sur une roche une petitte cappelle qui estoit fort démolie, où on disoit que aulcuns sainctz y avoient faict pénitence. Et en icelles et aultres semblables cappelles les mariniers des gallées y faisoient oraisons et faisoient faire par les pelerins en sonnant les trompettes pour l'honneur des sainctz.'

188 See Šitina 2016, 77–98, esp. 77–78.

189 *Ibid.*



FIGURE 18 Prvić, view of Luka Prvić
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FIGURE 19 Prvić, the church of St Mary of Grace
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

instance, noted the Glagolitic rite (a Latin-rite liturgy read and written in Old Church Slavonic) celebrated by the friars,[190] while Breydenbach highlighted

190 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 366–367: 'Ascendi ergo per littus maris ad eam et ingressus altaria festive decorata inveni et lampades ardentes et eucharistiam parieti sinistro inclusam. Gavisus autem procidi, uti dignum erat, et finita oratione domum annexam ecclesiae pulsavi; exivit autem ad me unus frater tertii ordinis et regulae tertiae sancti Francisci, et verbis Sclavonicis me reeepit et introduxit, videns autem, quod eum non intelligerem, vocavit ad me sacerdotem eorum, qui verbis tantum italicis mihi loquebatur, nec latinum scivit et teutonicum ignoravit. Dixi autem ei, quomodo in multis diebus non audivissem nec legissem Missam; et si contingeret, in ctastinum non recedere classem, mane revertere cum sociis vellem et divina celebrare, si placeret. Sacerdos hoc audito annuit, dixit tamen, se latina missalia non habere, et audito, quod unum haberemus io navi nostra, invitavit me, ut venirem; erat enim unus de illis sacerdotibus, quos nominant Glagolas, qui solum sciunt Sclavonicas litteras et sclavonice legunt Missas et non ordinantur nisi Romae. Dicuntur autem Glagolae vel Glagolae vel Glabri a Graecis pro eo, quod sunt sine barbis, sicut sacerdotes latini, glabrus enim graece imberbis dicitur latine. Graeci autem, sacerdotes sunt omnes ad modum Nazaraeorum comati et barbati, similiter et Latini inter eos habitantes. Dicunt autem, quod S. Jeronymus Dalmatis nationi suae propinquis quasdam litteras a latinis graecisque diversas adinvenit, composuit et eis tradidit, quae postea sclavoniae appellatae sunt. Quod autem beatus Hieronynius in vernaculam linguam divinum offieium et sacram scripturam transtulerit, patet in epistola de locis et nominibus bebraicarum quaestionum, ubi dicit: studii nostri est, de libris

the Virgin's miracles and the vows sailors pronounced in critical moments of crisis: 'On St Sylvester's Day we left the galleys and landed on an island where we found a chapel and a house of the brothers of the Third Rule of St Francis. The chapel is dedicated to the Grace of St Mary, where the Virgin performs many great miracles. And those who travel by sea, when they are in peril and distress, vow to go there with offerings if they escape danger.'[191] This is further confirmed by Nicholas le Huen, who closely followed Breydenbach's text, but in this case elaborated further, describing the site as a sanctuary for sailors in distress:

> We stayed six days in great discomfort near an island with a chapel where the Mother of God displays her power and miracles. The brothers of the Third Order of St Francis reside there. On St Sylvester's Day everyone visited the site in devotion, as it is a refuge for sailors in peril. Once safe, they go there to fulfil their vows and promises. On New Year's Day many descended to hear Mass and serve God in this holy place.[192]

Among the three monasteries, the one on Hvar was the most commonly mentioned by pilgrims from 1470 onwards, coinciding with the completion of its construction (Fig. 20).[193] Travellers were not only eyewitnesses to its growing

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Ebraeorum errores refellere, etymologias quoque nominum atque regionum vernacula lingua explanare. Et iterum in epistle ad Sophronium: antiquorum, inquit, translationem diligentissime emendatam olim meae linguae hominibus tradidi. Pannonia enim adhaeret Dalmatiae, in qua oppidum sancti Hieronymi fuit, dictum Sidrona vel Stridon, dudum penitus destructum a Gothis. A nullo autem in divinis differunt a Latinis, nisi in lingua: legunt sicut nos; cantant et mores habent per omnia, sicut nos. His ergo peractis redii in classem ad navem meam.'; cf. Krasić 2001, 133–216, esp. 193–194, with notes.

191 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 654: 'doch an sant Siluesters tag furen wir vß den galeen ynn eyn jnsel dar an stossende da funden wir eyn cappel vnd dar an eyn huß der bruder von der dritten regel sancti francisci vnd heist die capel von der gnad sancte marie wan die jugfrauw maria do selbet onzall vil grosser zeychen thut vnd die vber meer faren so sie yn engsten vn nothen syn verheyssen sich da hyn mit opffer kunfftig wan sie ettrynnen etc.'

192 Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.: 'On demoura la fix iours en grant ennuy aupres de la en une isle a une chapelle ou la mere de dieu monstre fort ses vertus et miraclez: et la sont demourans freres de la tierce ordre sainct francoys. Le your saincte siluestre chescun y alla par devotion: car cest le refuge des mariniers quant ilz sont en peril: et la vont offrir leurs veux er promesses quant sont hors des perilz. Le jour de lan plusieurs la descendirent pour dire les messes et pour dieu seruir en ce sainct lieu.'

193 It is mentioned by the following pilgrims: Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 151; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 43, 136; Hans Tucher,



FIGURE 20 Hvar, view of the Franciscan monastery dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

prominence, but also contributed to shaping and fostering its cult. In 1480 Santo Brasca noted that it was a newly constructed church, built entirely from sailors' oblations.[194] Georges Lengherand of Mons reported in 1485 that the church was founded by a merchant sailor at his own expense.[195] In 1494 Pietro Casola confirmed this and further specified the circumstances of its foundation: Captain Soranzo initiated the construction of the church and monastery, later expanded, after narrowly escaping a shipwreck in the nearby sea by making a vow to the Virgin Mary.[196] According to tradition, on that occasion the Venetian captain also offered an icon as a votive gift.[197] Nevertheless, we find no explicit mentions of this story in pilgrims' travelogues, which include only generic hints at the presence of a cult-phenomenon for the Virgin Mary.[198] In the eyes of pilgrims, such shrines did not necessarily need to house

1479–1480, ed. 2002, 354–355, 612; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 56, 125; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 34; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 114, 167; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 90; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 40; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 326; Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 111; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 152, 245; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 265; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 101; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 61; Denis Possot and Charles Philippe, 1532, ed. 1890, 206–207; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 21.

194 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 56: 'Ivi è una chiesa de Sancta Maria da le Gratie dove habitano li frati de San Francescho de osservanza, de grandissima devotione a tuti li marinari, et tuta per loro oblatione de novo edifficata.' In the same period Pierre Barbatre provided additional chronological references that do not align with those established in scholarship, which places the monument's construction between 1465 and 1471; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 114: 'et hors la ville, sur la mer, est ung couvent de freres de l'observance, lesquieulx vindrent quérir l'aumosne et est l'eglise faicte des biens des mariniers et pelerins, commenchee depuis cinq ans, fondee de Notre Dame et nommee Nostre Dame de Grace; et y a de Jarre a Lysaynne CXXV mille.'; *ibid.*, 167: 'Le merquedi XIe d'octobre arrivasmes devante Lesine, ville et chasteau, et la estoient III grosses gallees de Venize, lesquelles alloient en Barust en marchandise. Auprès de la ville et cité est ung beau petit co'uvent de Cordeliers de l'observance, lequel est commencé depuis l'an du jubilé.' Cf. Belamarić 2014a, 182.

195 Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 90: 'que ung marchant marenier a fait faire à ses despens'.

196 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 265: 'Fu comenzata la giesia e anche el monastero per uno domine Johanne Soranza, per uno grande miraculo li fece la Nostra Dona, che anche li pare el signo a l'intrare de la porta de la giesia: trovarse in mare con grande fortuna, romperse el timone del navilio, recomandarse a la Nostra Dona, ritrovarse a questo saxo salvo et era di note. Dete questo principio; poi s'è ampliato e lì stano fin a XII frati.'

197 Demori Staničić 2015, 81–88.

198 Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 111: 'Dornoch sinndt wir gefahren für ein Closter, heist Angelorum, vnd an denselben tage sinndt wir kommen zu eyner stadt vnd schlos heist Lesena, vnd ist der Venediger, die türcken sindt auff ij deutsche Mailen darvonn,

notable relics or images; the monuments themselves were sufficient and could be invoked to request benevolence directly from the sacred figures to whom they were dedicated.

The monastery on the islet of Badija in the Korčula archipelago, where 'miracles continually shine forth through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary', offers a slightly different narrative (Fig. 21).[199] Here, the Italian pilgrim Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo referred specifically to an icon painted by St Luke and brought from Constantinople: 'At dawn we departed from Korčula and arrived at the rock of St Mary, where the devout friars reside. The place is beautiful and delightful. In its small chapel, there is an image of Our Most Beautiful Lady, said to have been painted by St Luke and brought from Constantinople. It is worshipped reverently by the local inhabitants. Here, we resupplied with water and then departed after the Holy Mass.'[200] The reference to the Evangelist's pictorial activity is unique and seems to have been part of the Franciscan community's efforts to attract more pilgrims, possibly in competition with the Franciscan church in Orebić on the Pelješac Peninsula (Fig. 22). There, the cultic focus was a miraculous icon said to have arrived

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do ist ein barfussir Closter, do vns vnsser liebe Fraw ist gnedig do, vnndt sind ijc welsche Meilen von Sara.'; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 152: 'In der Statt aber in der Pfarkhirchen alda vastet Unnserr Liebe Frauuen genedigklichen. Unnd nahenndt beye Lessina im Möer da ligt ein schöennes Gebheuue, zue Sannct Maria dei gratia genanntt, welches gar ein fruchtbares Lanndt ist.'; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 101: 'Um 21 Uhr ist die Gallee zu Lezina in Sclavonia gekommen. Ist auch eine feine Stadt, gehört den Venedigern zu. Da ist ein hübsches Barfüßerkloster, da unsere liebe Frau fast gnädig ist.'

199 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1483, ed. 1892, 257–258: 'Item iuxta idem castellum ad duo miliaria italica in una parva insula maris est locus devotissimus fratrum minorum de observantia, et vocatur ud sanctam Mariam de gratiis. Et in eadem ecclesia coruscant continue miracula per intercessionem beate Marie virginis, ad quod monasterium laboravimus venire et ibi visitare fratres. Et cum dudum non poteramus navem habere, tandem dominus contulit, quod gardianus loci cum duobus fratribus ex casu in eorum barca venerunt. ad quos clamavimus in litore maris. Qui cum nos audissent, applicuerunt, et recipientes nos duxerunt ad locum cum summa exultatione, et cum omni reverentia receperunt ad hospitium promittentes nos ipsa die reducere ad galeam. Et peracta lotione pedum incepit flare ventus contrarius et impetuosus, de quo multum eram turbatus.'

200 Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo, 1511, ed. 1886, 10–11: 'A l'alba da Curzola si levamo, et andamo a sorzer al scoglio de sancta Maria, qual da frati bigoti è calpestrato, loco asai bello et deletevole. In sua picola ecclesia ègli una figura de nostra dona belissima; dicono da san Luca esser sta picta, et da Costantinopoli quivi deducta e posta, la quale riverentemente da incoli è adorata. Or quivi de aqua se fornimo; da poi la sancta mesa aldita dipartimo.' The monastery is also mentioned by Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 56–57, and Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 91–92.



FIGURE 21 Badija, Franciscan monastery, view from the sea
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FIGURE 22 Pelješac, Franciscan church in Orebić on the Pelješac Peninsula
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

miraculously by sea, not from Constantinople, but from the shores of the nearby Boka Kotorska Bay, specifically from Žanjice.[201]

While Western pilgrims largely overlooked the Orebić church, George Wheler's travel diary includes references to both locations and notes the political rivalry between Venetian Korčula and Dubrovnik's Sabioncello region:

> And so they lost Korčula, which is of great use to the Venetians, who come hither often to mend and repair their Vessels, the Island being well covered with Woods. […] To the North of this place, on the Continent, runneth a long slip of Land, which maketh a narrow Channel between the Main-Land and it, called Sabioneira; and thereon stands a Town of the same name, just opposite to this, belonging to the Republique of Dubrovnik, where they have many delightful and fruitful Gardens, as we were informed.
>
> This evening we advanced a little further in the Channel to a monastery of Cordeliers, called Madonna del Scoglio, upon the shore of Sabioneira. It was formerly a Greek Church, but now belongeth to Latin Monks. It was robbed by the Turks about ten years ago; who then carried away the Tabernacle, and took the Holy Sacrament, and trod it under foot […] The adjoyning hill yields a good prospect, and hath on the top a little Church, dedicated to Saint Catharine.[202]

The English traveller's reference to the raid on the islet of Badija by the Turks likely pertains to the plundering carried out in 1660 by the pirates of Castelnuovo or, alternatively, to the raid a year later by the corsairs of Ulcinj.[203] Instead, the arrival of Algerian pirates in 1571 is directly tied to the image's cult: according to tradition, it was through the intervention of the miraculous effigy, swiftly transported within the walls of Korčula, that the city's occupation was averted.

This event bolstered the veneration of the icon, now in Korčula cathedral, which studies attribute to the Cretan school and which has recently been dated to *c.*1400 (Fig. 23).[204] In addition to the iconographic scheme of the Hodegetria Dexiokratousa, the presence of the silver *riza* with a crown, donated in 1597 by the rector of Korčula, Vincenzo Baroccio, further emphasised the exceptional status of the image.

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201 See Belamarić 2014a, 182.

202 George Wheler, 1675, ed. 1682, 26.

203 Fabianich 1845, 31–32.

204 For the new dating, see Bacci 2023, 14–25; see also Demori Staničić 2017, 299–300; Tulić and Kudiš 2014, 30–32.



FIGURE 23 Korčula, cathedral of St Mark. *Madonna and Child*, *c.*1400
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Alongside the Marian cult phenomena scattered along the route frequented by pilgrims to the Holy Land, such as the renowned church of the Virgin Kassopitra on Corfu or the revered image at the sanctuary of Mount Phileremos on Rhodes,[205] travel diaries of Western pilgrims reveal a singular cult phenomenon along the Dalmatian coast. This is the small church in the picturesque setting of Punta Planka, which tradition claims was constructed using lime mixed with Malvasia wine, commemorating a shipwreck averted thanks to the intercession of St John. Situated in an isolated context only a few metres from the shoreline, the church has a simple architectural layout – a single nave with a semicircular apse to the east – and modest dimensions, measuring just 7.30 × 5.75 m.[206] These features strongly suggest its role as a maritime votive shrine. However, it differs significantly from similar structures along the Dalmatian coast. The monument served as a navigational landmark for late medieval sailors, marking not a safe harbour, but a treacherous stretch of coastline between Šibenik and Trogir which sailors had long sought to avoid.

The earliest recorded mention of the church dates to 1461, in the account of William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, who noted that it was built by a sailor using Malvasia wine and milk.[207] More detailed descriptions emerged in the 1490s. In 1493 Heinrich von Zedlitz and Jan Hasištejnsky of Lobkowicz reported that votive offerings were dedicated to St John the Baptist and that the saved ship came from Candia.[208] This contrasts with the Dalmatian tradition that sees

205 Bacci 2012, 185–187; Dermitzaki 2021, *passim*; Zoitou 2020, *passim*.

206 Babić 1972, 75–77.

207 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 85: 'Auf den Sonntag Exaudi fuhren wir in der Frühe wieder an. Und zur linken Hand in dem Gebirge auf dem Ufer des Meeres, da liegt eine Capelle, die ist, als man sagt, gebaut von Malmasier und Milch. Das ist also zugangen, daß ein Schiffmann in großen Winden und Fährlichkeit des Nachts gefahren ist, und der Wind ihn mit Macht nach dem Felsen geschlagen hat. Da ist der Schiffsmann in Betrübniß und Aengsten gewest und hat die Jungfrau Mariam angerufen und alsbald gelobet, eine Kirche zu bauen von dem, was er im Schiffe führte. So er nun an die Steinfelsen und Klippen vor ihnen gekommen ist, da hat das Meer sein Schiff erhoben, darüber hinweggeführet, und empor auf das Ufer des Meeres gesetzt mit Allem, was darinnen gewest ist. Und alsbald hat der Schiffmann die Capelle allda gebaut von dem Malmasier, den er geführet hat. Und da es an Malmasier gebrochen hat, so hat er sich Milch auf dem Lande erhandelt und also die Capelle fertig gebaut in der Ehre S. Marien und S. Johannis. Dieselbige Capelle wird von allen Schiffsleuten, die das Meer befahren und da für kehren in großen Ehren gehalten, und von ihnen mit Gebete und fröhlichem Geschrei begrüßet.'

208 Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 111: 'Item am Sontage (9. Juni) sinndt wir gefaren zwischen eitelen Gebirge vnd St. Georgen Kirchen auf die lincke handt gelossenn dornoch nicht weit S. Johannes Kirche auch auf die lincke hanndt, die am Meer ligt, nohen dieselbe Kirche habenn die Kaufleut lassenn bauen, wen an derselbigen stelle ein langer gellinger fels In das Meer geet, do sinndt sie mit eynem grossenn schiff gefaren

the foundation of the shrine in a strictly local perspective: the crew of a Trogir vessel was saved through the intercession of a local bishop named John, whose deeds are dated to the late 10th or early 11th century.[209]

It is not surprising that Western pilgrims were unfamiliar with the local bishop's cult. As Jan Hasištejnsky observed in 1493, Split, Trogir and their monuments, encircled by a maze of islands, were not customary stops for Western travellers: 'Beyond these islands are two fortified towns of the Venetian lords, one is called Split, the other Trogir. But because of the islands, we could not see them.'[210] Thus, the islands of the Split and Trogir archipelago acted as a curtain on a stage, concealing what lay behind them from medieval travelogues – a curtain that, as we will see, would open wide upon approaching the first major port of call along the Eastern Adriatic: the old capital of Dalmatia, Zadar.

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aus Kandia vnnd haben aiteln Malvasier gefürt, vnd ist eyne Vorthune an sie kommen vnnd geschlagenn vber den steynen felss, haben sie globet In ihren nothen, S. Johanssen an der stelle eine Kirche lossen bauen, vnd sie hat der h. Sandt Johannes erhort vnnd In gnediglich geholfenn, also sinndt sie von dannen nicht gezogenn, sie habenn dem h. Sandt Johannes ein kleine Kirche gebauet, wen ein gros Zaichen geschehn ist, das Sandt Johannes Im geholffen hat, das das schiff nicht zu kleinen stücken gebrochen ist, vnd die Kirche noch heist zu Sandt Johannes Malmarssier.'; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 21: 'Dale wsse ten den geli sme mimo Insuli A nechali srne gije snad pateraych honuow po lewe rucze, Na kterezto Insuli lezij kostelik dobrze weliky, ze do nieho muoz asa na dwie Stie aneb na trzi Sta lidij wgiti, pokudz mi se zdaa. Slove ten kostelik Swateho Jana malwazy. [Kostelik So Jana malwazye.] A ma to gmeno proto, ze, kdyz su tyz kostelik stawieli, ze su to wapno wsseczko malwazym rozdielawali. A to se stalo tijernto obyczegem: ze geden Bohaty kupecz z Benatek plul na welike nawie z kandij s malwazym, niekolik Set Suduow ho nakaupiw, Neb tu w kandij malwazy roste. A plowa k benatkom, na czestie na den Swateho Jana przisslo nan welikee powietzie a wietr. A moczy naw hnal k brzehu morskemu, przi kteremzto brzehu morskem gest skala podluhowata a hrzebenita trzij aneb cztyrz loket nad wodu zwyssij. A kdyz nawa k tee skale moczy se s nimi hnala, tehdy ten kupecz modlil se panu bohu a Swatemu Janu krztiteli bozijemu przirzekl kostelik tu vstawieti A wapno wsseczko, czoz k tomu potrzebije, malwazym rozdielati. A tak ten naw s tijem malwazym welikym wietrem a wlnami sa hnan przes tu skalu przeskoczil rownie yako kuon przes plot beze wssije sskody, gessto ge Sycz nepodobne k wijerze, by przes takowu skalu takowy weliky naw bez sskody przeskocziti mohl; nez ze gest se to wsseczko bozim zgednanim stalo. A tyz kupecz hned, odtud neodgijezdiege, wapno kazal wozyti z ginych Insulij A tu ten kostelik postawil wedle slibu sweho.' The chapel is also mentioned by Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 151–152; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 48–55; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 127–128; cf. Kužić 2013, 98–99; Graciotti 2014, 135–136, 459.

209 Belamarić 2014a, 162; Kužić 2013, 98–99; Graciotti 2014, 135–136, 459.

210 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 21: 'A za tiemi Insulemi lezije opiet dwie pewna miesta panuow benatczan; gednomu rzijekagij Sspalato A druhemu Trau. Ale tiech sme pro Insule widieti nemohli.'

CHAPTER 2

Zadar

> And as itt hath well used of late tyme, thei lete make saile towardes Hierusalem from Venyse erli in the Mondaie next affter Corpus Christi daie. And comenli thei arryve att thees placis: Parens, Jarze, Aragoza, Curfoe, Moddon, Candia, Roodis, Cipres, and Jaff, which comprehendis abowt xxii C miles from Venyse.[1]

1 Introductory Notes

The anonymous Englishman quoted above, whose travel account was composed sometime between 1480 and 1526, includes 'Jarze' in the long network of obligatory ports of call on the route between Venice and Jaffa.[2] This appellation for Zadar is one of the many alterations by Holy Land pilgrims of the Latin/Dalmatian toponym Iader/Iadra or its Venetian derivatives Saders, Jare/Jarre, Giara, Sarai, Gadram, Zaira, Gerra, Sara, Ger, Serre, Hyadra, Jara, Jarra, Jasre, Sera and so on.[3]

The systematic reading of travelogues, regardless of the author's provenance or social profile, reveals that between 1300 and 1550 Zadar is mentioned over a hundred times, underscoring its status as the region's capital and a key port on the eastward route. The prominent role of Zadar, rivalled only by Dubrovnik,

1 English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 137.

2 A similar list, in which Pula surprisingly takes the place of Poreč, is included in the earlier account by Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 107: 'als Pola vnnd Gerra, Aroguß, Korfun, Madun, Candien, Rodijs vnnd Cypern'.

3 Hans Porner, 1418–1419, ed. 1874–1875, 133; Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301, 308; Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145; Philipp, Earl of Katzenellenbogen, 1433–1434, ed. 1882, 369; Georg Pfintzing, 1436–1437, 1440, ed. 1880, 73; Pero Tafur, 1436–1439, ed. 1874, 42; Anonymous from Donaueschingen, 1441–1442, ed. 1998, 172–173; Johann I. von Kleve, 1450–1451, ed. 1901, 130; Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 212; Anselmo Adorno, 1470–1471, ed. 1978, 378; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 49–52; Philippe de Voisins, 1490, ed. 1883, 22; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148.

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which has a similar number of references, reflects the importance of these two ports of call. However, while Dubrovnik held the coveted, but never-realised independence that Zadar's nobility long endeavoured to attain, their ambitions were consistently thwarted by the ever-present Venetian pressure, a constant 'breathing down their necks'.

The majority of the town's mentions occur from the 1420s onwards, when the centuries-old rivalry between 'Western' powers over the Adriatic gave way to a period of relative equilibrium, eventually threatened only by Ottoman incursions.[4] This marks the long-lasting Venetian era (which endured until 1797), during which the Serenissima assumed a hegemonic role along the Dalmatian coast. The only exceptions are the accounts of the Irish Franciscan friar Simon Fitzsimons [also known as Symon Semeonis][5] and of Henry, Earl of Derby, dating back to the 1320s and 1390s, respectively.[6] Fitzsymons's account is set during a time when the Serenissima was still making fluctuating attempts to take over the Dalmatian city; those efforts had been ongoing since the year 1000, when the city was under long-standing, though at times only nominal, Byzantine rule, lasting until the 12th century. The testimony of the Earl of Derby is instead inscribed within the 50-year-long parenthesis, from 1358 to 1409, of Hungarian rule. Although non-canonical and focussed solely on a dry enumeration of provisions at 'Jar', the passage indirectly confirms the continuity of stopovers during the Hungarian interlude.[7]

This outlines the three main powers that over the centuries of the Middle Ages repeatedly appeared – often clashing simultaneously – at the gates of Zadar, each seeking to control the city and its surrounding stretch of sea: Byzantium, Venice and the Kingdom of Hungary. Coveted, contested, conquered, ceded and reconquered, Zadar was drawn into the ambitions of shifting powers advancing from the east, west, north and south.[8]

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4 Cf. Graciotti 2014, 129.

5 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252; see also Graciotti 2014, 128.

6 Henry, Earl of Derby, and Richard Kingston, 1390–1392, ed. 1893, 231, 277.

7 This circumstance is also supported by the Dalmatian tradition, which records the visit of the duke of Bavaria and the marquis of Brandenburg in 1375 on their 'return from the Sepulchre' and later, towards the end of the 14th century, that of Albert IV, Count of Habsburg; Kužić 2013, 117–118; Johannes Lucius, 17th century, ed. 1674, 303.

8 With regard to the history of Zadar within the chosen time frame of this study, the main reference texts remain the three volumes of the Prošlost Zadra series, published in the 1970s and 1980s and devoted respectively to antiquity (*Zadar u starom vijeku* [Zadar in antiquity]), the Middle Ages (*Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409* [Zadar in the Middle Ages until 1409]) and the period of Venetian domination over the city (*Zadar pod mletačkom upravom, 1409–1797* [Zadar under Venetian rule, 1409–1797]); respectively, Suić 1981; Klaić and Petricioli 1976; Raukar *et al.* 1987; see also Toth 2016. Among the earlier contributions, comprehensively

Inhabited since Neolithic times, the ancient Liburnian settlement was colonised by the Greeks and became a Roman colony in the 1st century BC. In the early centuries of the new era, Christianity spread along the Adriatic coast, a process completed by the 4th century, when the first bishops of Zadar are recorded.[9] Following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Zadar came under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Roman Empire for six centuries, from the 6th century to the end of the 12th.[10] However, Byzantine rule was far from uninterrupted. Geographically distant and absorbed by other pressing matters, the empire frequently accommodated autonomy to local elites, creating opportunities for rival powers to assert their influence.

By the early 9th century, after the Slavs and Avars had passed through Zadar, Byzantine control over the Adriatic was weakening in the face of Charlemagne's growing ambitions.[11] Positioned between two major powers, Zadar managed the pressure by balancing diplomatic ties with both the Frankish and Byzantine courts.[12] At the centre of these efforts was Bishop Donatus (d. 811?), who played a key role in negotiating the Treaty of Aachen, securing continued Byzantine authority along the Dalmatian coast.[13]

After settling its dispute with the Franks, the Byzantine Empire soon faced a new challenge – not from the West, but from the hinterlands. To appease the Croatian princes and keep them in check, Basil I introduced the *tributum pacis*: a payment no longer directed to the empire, but to these inconvenient neighbours.[14] Zadar, too, was obligated to contribute, though its share was smaller than that of other Dalmatian cities. Under Basil I, however, Zadar also earned the prestigious status of capital of the Theme of Dalmatia, solidifying its prominence in the early Middle Ages.[15]

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summarised in the volumes cited above, I would like to highlight the following, relevant to this volume's topic: Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907/1908/1909; Bianchi 1877. With regard to the relations between Venice and the Eastern Adriatic shore, see mainly the lucid treatise by Tadić 1973, 687–704, along with his pupil's unfailing studies on the 'Adriatic question': Krekić 1997, 51–85. Both the history of the (arch)diocese and the city's main monuments, excluding the cathedral, have been addressed in monographs, with specific sources and studies referenced throughout the discussion.

9 Two volumes have recently been dedicated to the Zadar (arch)diocese: Marijan 2009 and Marijan 2013. For the beginnings of ecclesiastical organisation, see Cambi 2009, 9–24; see also Pavuša Vežić 1993, 29–54, esp. 29–35.

10 Suić 1981, 340–343; Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 55–62.

11 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 66–67.

12 *Ibid.*, 68–72.

13 *Ibid.*, 72–74; Vežić 1998, 56; Vežić 2002d, 21–22.

14 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 77–79.

15 *Ibid.*, 79–80.

This early supremacy resonates in the observations of late medieval pilgrims. Louis de Rochechouart (1461) referred to Zadar as the 'metropolis Esclavonie', while an anonymous traveller in 1494 went further, describing it as 'the capital of the Slavic lands in ancient times'.[16] Balancing its role between centre and periphery, Zadar played a pivotal part as the *Metropolis Dalmatiae*: hosting ambassadors, concluding peace treaties for the entire Dalmatian coast, receiving papal visits and even serving as the site for imperial coronations. The fate of the major Dalmatian towns remained closely tied to that of their capital.

On 26 May 998 Doge Pietro II Orseolo was welcomed to Zadar, marking a turning point in the region's history: the launch of Venetian military actions and expansion along the Adriatic. Framed as a campaign against Narentine piracy, it ultimately led the Dalmatian towns to swear allegiance to the doge.[17] Zadar began paying the *pretium pacis* to Venice, ushering in an era that was anything but peaceful.[18] Over time the Serenissima proved to be a far more assertive and demanding ruler than the distant Byzantine Empire, to which Zadar and the Adriatic still formally belonged. This uneasy arrangement sparked repeated anti-Venetian uprisings, revealing the city's increasingly tense relationship with its new overlord.

In the 12th century the Adriatic became a crowded sea: Venice, Byzantium, Norman incursions (which the capital city successfully resisted), the growing prominence of the Pisans and the emergence of a new stable force, the Kingdom of Hungary. From the late 11th century the newly established Kingdom of Croatia entered into a legal union with Hungary, a bond that would last until the early 20th century.[19] Hungary became the Serenissima's main rival over the next three centuries, a period shaped by rebellions driven by pro-Hungarian and pro-Venetian factions, followed by sieges, dedications and a near-constant cycle of shifting allegiances between the two powers.

At the dawn of the 12th century Coloman, heir to Ladislaus I of Hungary, descended upon the Adriatic to claim the title of *Rex Croatie et Dalmatie*. Crowned in Biograd (Old Zadar), he secured Split and Trogir without resistance and, in 1105, reached Zadar. After subjugating the city, he promised to uphold its ecclesiastical and administrative freedoms.[20] This emphasis on autonomy – or, more accurately, the limitation of interference by the dominant ruler in

16 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229–230; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148: 'die Haubtstatt vor Zeitten im windischem Lanndt ist gewesen'.

17 Tadić 1973, 691–692; Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 94–98; Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 15.

18 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 100.

19 Tadić 1973, 694; Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 149; Toth 2016, 68.

20 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 149–153.

matters of justice and governance – would define the agreements Zadar and other coastal towns were compelled to sign in the centuries that followed.

The peace brokered with the Hungarian king, which extended to all Dalmatian municipalities, was formalised against the backdrop of Zadar's walls. The name *Rex Colomanvs* was even inscribed on its monuments, a lasting testament to the king's assertion of rights over the city.[21] This ancient claim of the Hungarian crown is echoed in the words of the pilgrim Friedrich Steigerwalder (1470), who observed: 'It is the capital of the Kingdom of Croatia, located 200 miles from Venice; though it is held by the Venetians, by right it belongs to the Kingdom of Hungary.'[22]

In the second decade of the 12th century Hungarian power waned with the accession of King Coloman's heir, Stephen II. The Venetians quickly capitalised on this weakness, but by the close of the century Hungary reasserted its influence under King Béla III (1172–1196). The Serenissima's response was swift and devastating. In November 1202, with the forces of the Fourth Crusade at its disposal, Venice launched an assault on Zadar. Surrounded and outmatched, the town capitulated within days.[23] Accounts of the devastation and looting bear a striking resemblance to the horrific sack of Constantinople two years later. Both events provoked a sharp rebuke from Pope Innocent III, who excommunicated the crusader army in response.[24]

At this time Zadar had achieved the coveted status of an archiepiscopal see, freeing itself from the control of the Split–Salona diocese, which had long claimed ancient metropolitan rights over the region. In 1154, during Venetian rule, Bishop Lampridius received the pallium, a prestigious symbol of high ecclesiastical rank, sent alongside a bull from Pope Anastasius IV.[25]

From the 13th century onwards Venice – by then the Queen of the Sea, with a dominion stretching from the Bosphorus to the Adriatic – would secure its hegemony over the stronghold of Zadar, albeit in a still fluctuating manner, until 1358. The Serenissima pursued a policy of centralisation, as reflected in the pact of 1204 with Zadar. The two highest offices, the archbishopric and the countship, were to be filled by Venetians, appointed respectively by the patriarch of Grado and the doge.[26] This strategy, combined with the lingering

21 *Ibid.*, 151.

22 Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 103: 'ist die hauptstat in dem kinigreich Gracien, und ligt zwayhundert meil von Vinödig, und habens inn die Venödiger, aber sy gehört von recht zue dem kinigreich von Unngern.'

23 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 156–157; Goldstein 2006, 359–370.

24 Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 16–17.

25 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 163–164; Bianchi 1877, 14–16.

26 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 182–184; Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 17.

resentment for the recent devastation, fostered anti-Venetian uprisings. These rebellions often led to interludes of rule under Hungarian kings and later of the Croatian feudal families. From 1242 to 1244 Béla IV of the Árpád dynasty regained control, while between 1310 and 1313 the Šubić-Bribirski family held sway.[27] However, a new agreement with Venice, signed on 23 November 1313, ushered in a temporary 30-year armistice, a brief calm before the storm.[28]

In 1344 Dalmatian cities, including Zadar, appealed to the young King Louis I of Hungary for support.[29] His ambitions reached beyond Zadar, as he aimed to unite the Angevin territories with southern Italy. His brother Andrew, married to Joan of Naples, held claims to the Neapolitan throne.[30] From a geopolitical standpoint Zadar and the Eastern Adriatic had become indispensable strongholds for both the Angevin rulers and the Venetians. By the mid-14th century the 'Adriatic question' had reached a critical point.

On 12 August 1345 Venice began a siege of Zadar that lasted until 21 December 1346.[31] The event is detailed in two anonymous chronicles: *Obsidio Iadrensis* and *Cronica Jadretina*, offering contrasting views from the Zaratine and Venetian perspectives.[32] After nine months of siege the Zaratines, exhausted, sent a second petition to King Louis of Hungary in May 1346, stressing the strategic importance of Zadar's port for naval access to southern Italy.[33] Despite the arrival of Louis with 80,000 men, Venice emerged victorious. This victory was commemorated, likewise the deviated Crusade, in the halls of the doge's palace, a few steps from the Riva degli Schiavoni.[34] However, the situation shifted in 1358 with the Treaty of Peace of Zadar, when the city was ceded to the Hungarians.[35] Venice lost control of Zadar for five decades until the so-called

27 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 158–160, 163–164, 206–222; Krekić 1997, 51–85; Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 17–18.

28 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 291–297; Orlando 2013, 15; Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 18.

29 Krekić 1997, 51–85; Dal Borgo and Zanelli 2008, 18.

30 Cf. *Obsidio Iadrensis*, 14th century, ed. 2007, 12.

31 See Begonja 2014, 81–141.

32 Two critical editions are now available: *Obsidio Iadrensis*, 14th century, ed. 2007, and *Cronica Jadretina*, 14th century, ed. 2014.

33 *Obsidio Iadrensis*, 14th century, ed. 2007, 94: 'Nam tanta fuit instantia et importunitas Jadratinorum apud regem Hungarie, pretendentium quod occupatio civitatis Jadre apude regem Hungarie, pretendentium quod occupatio civitatis Jadre via erat per quam portum et navigia haberet pro transitu marino in Appuliam ad vindictam fratris et acquisitionem regni, quod hiis et aliis impssibilibus pollicitationibus regium animum deceperunt.'

34 Toth 2016, 75, 77.

35 *Obsidio Iadrensis*, 14th century, ed. 2007, 10–11.

Santa Intrada in Zadar in 1409, which marked, as mentioned above, the beginning of the Venetian dominance that lasted until 1797.[36]

Less than a decade later Stephan III von Gumppenberg referred to the Hungarian interlude: '[Zadar] had previously belonged to the king of Hungary, but now belongs to the Venetians.'[37] Political references were common in pilgrim accounts, and Zadar's centrality made it a key piece of information in numerous diaries. Gumppenberg's mention, along with the 'Venedier' reference in Hans Porner's *Itinerarium*, initiated a trend of calling Zadar 'ciuitatem Venetorum'[38] in combination with often confused remarks about its complex political, ethnic and geographical affiliations, including mentions of the ancient province of Dalmatia, the neighbouring Kingdom of Croatia and, finally, Sclavonia.[39]

Western pilgrims travelling along the Venetian route, aboard galleons from the Serenissima's arsenals, were aware of this redundant dominance. Pero Tafur, sailing into the now Venetian-controlled gulf just over a decade after the

36 *Ibid*., 10, 15. The *Santa Intrada* [holy entrance] was the Venetian ritualised takeover of Zadar. The city was sold to the Serenissima for a mere 100,000 ducats, a sum far from risky. By the early 15th century salt revenue alone brought in 80,000 ducats annually, nearly matching payments to the Hungarian kings; see Raukar 2013, 74–75. The transfer of power was known to pilgrims, as noted in Conrad Grünenberg's 1486 account (ed. 2011); cf. Graciotti 2014, 131.

37 Stephan III von Gumppenberg, 1419, ed. 1584, fol. 236v: 'welche vorhin deß Konigs von Vngern gewesen/ Aber jetzt den Venedigern zustanding'.

38 The dominion of the Serenissima resonated in the various European languages: 'ciuitatem Venetorum' (Johann of Frankfurt, 1426–1427, ed. 1986, 55–57); 'è de' veniciani' (Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145); 'under the domynacyon of the Venycians' (Anonymous, 1481–1492, ed. 1893, n.p.); 'behoort de Venetianen' (Claes van Dusen 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202); 'der Venediger' (Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 177–178; Botho, Count of Stolberg, 1493–1494, ed. 1868, 194; Hans Schürpff [Peter Wächter], 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 5–6); 'a gest take panuow benadskych' (Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18); 'der herschafft Venedig vnderworffen' (Melchior zur Gilgen of Lucerne, 1519, ed. 1957, 46); 'ende hoort den Venegiane' (Jan Pascha, 1527, ed. 1563, fol. 38v); and so on.

39 The last was by far the appellation most frequently used by pilgrims in relation to the Eastern Adriatic coast, which certainly encompassed a larger territory in their eyes. While Jacques Le Saige, a silk merchant from Douai, used this accommodating reference and noted 'cest esclavonia', his compatriot Georges Lengherand of Mons, on the other hand, tried to include a reference to Dalmatia in his testimony: 'Et est la dicte ville de Jarre pays d'Amassie ou d'Esclavonnie, obéissant et subgiecte aux Vénissien'; Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 163; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 85–89. Subject to the 'potentia de' Venetiani', Zadar also appears, almost in the same time span, in Antonio da Crema's account, which nevertheless emphasises: 'Questa cità è la prima de la Schiavonia.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 39. On regional primacy, see above; on the ethnic and political value of annotations along the Dalmatian coast in general, see Kužić 2013, 75–82.

'Adriatic question' was settled, remarked: 'We left after receiving the blessing, set sail at midday and took the left side of the gulf, which is Slavonia, mostly controlled by the Venetians.'[40] This becomes clearer in William Wey's second itinerary (1462), where, in the chapter 'On the Lands and Dominions of the Venetians from Venice to the Holy Land', he listed the cities that, following the *Santa Intrada* in Zadar, pledged allegiance to Venice: 'Further is Zadar, Šibenik, Split, Trogir and Kotor and several islands, Hvar, Korčula, all under Venetian dominion.'[41]

The relentless alternation of Hungarian and Venetian dominance at the critical crossroads of the Adriatic is encapsulated in the words of Felix Fabri: 'Zadar is a city of Dalmatia belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary, which was captured and held by the Venetians many times, rebelled against them and was eventually brought entirely under their power.'[42]

Travelogues also took note of the city's leadership under Venetian rule, where communal statutes still shaped local governance.[43] Milliaduse d'Este, a member of the Ferrara court, was hosted at dinner by Bernardo Morosini, who highlighted his role in Zadar as 'commander of troops for his *Signoria*'.[44] Pietro Casola, meanwhile, offered a vivid account of the city's judicial administration,

40 Pero Tafur, 1436–1439, ed. 1874, 42: 'É ansí partimos este dia despues de resçebida la benediçion, é fezimos vela á medio dia, é tomando la parte siniestra del golfo, que es la Esclavonia, porque la mayor parte es de veneçianos.' Pero Tafur, well aware of the geopolitical situation, like many other travellers who navigated the same waters, chose his words carefully. His reference to the 'mayor parte' was certainly deliberate, as, just a few lines after describing Zadar as 'de veneçianos', he presented a completely different political reality for Dubrovnik, as will be shown in the relevant chapter below.

41 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 126–127: 'Ulterius est Jadra, Sybynica, Spolaton, Traon, et Kataron, et plures insule, Lesyna, Cursula; et hec sunt in patria Dalmacie, et sunt decem episcopatus in tota terra ista, et tota terra sub dominio Venetorum.' After the not too distant Šibenik, which was subjugated as early as 1412, along the route the major towns and islands of central and southern Dalmatia capitulated by 1420: Trogir, Split, Hvar and Korčula, up to the town of Kotor; only Dubrovnik was once again missing from the list.

42 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–374: 'Est enim Jadra Dalmatiae civitas ad regnum pertinens Hungariae, quae a Venetis capta et possessa multis vicibus eis rebellavit, et tandem ex integro in eorum potestatem est redacta.' The sequence of events was also noted by Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 55: 'Questa città aliasva se regeva a populo, poi devenete al dominio del re de Ungaria che è lì vicino, et hora se tene per fa prefata illustrissima Signoria de Venetia.' See Graciotti 2014, 130.

43 Raukar 2013, 66.

44 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 13: 'conductiero de zente d'arme per la soa Signoria'; cf. Graciotti 2014, 130.

describing 'a square piazza, in front of the place where justice is administered by the rectors sent by the *Signoria*'.[45]

To the pilgrims, who had left behind the Venetian lagoon and the Istrian ports, as well as the treacherous Kvarner Gulf, the Dalmatian town appeared, borrowing the image of Santo Brasca, 'endowed with many reefs in the sea, said to number as many as there are days in the year'.[46] In 1413 Luchino dal Campo outlined the Zadar archipelago's natural barrier, protecting the port: on one side, the Kornati archipelago opposite Biograd and, on the other, the island of Silba, which, despite its modest size, served as a place of safe anchorage.[47]

Northwest from Silba, the nearby islet of St Peter, today marked by the ruined Benedictine abbey on whose site the local cemetery now stands (Fig. 24), was an essential reference point for navigation, especially in the densely indented coastline that challenged sailors. As Louis de Rochechouart described: 'We sailed for a while, to the right and left, between the Zadar islands, which are called Leprose, because the sea there is narrow. We saw the sea bottom; it is dangerous to navigate during storms.'[48] On the opposite side a prominent point on the island of Pašman, which formed a narrow passage towards the coast, was marked by the complex dedicated to Sts Cosmas and Damian, which did not go unnoticed by passing pilgrims: 'Also, opposite Zadar,

45 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 118–121: 'una piazola quadra, inante al loco dove ministra rasone per li rectori li manda la Signoria'.

46 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 55: 'dotata da molti scogli in mare, che se dice esser tanti a numero quanti sono giorni ne l'anno'. The same motif is found in Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252; cf. Graciotti 2014, 128.

47 Luchino dal Campo, 1413, ed. 1861, 81: 'Domenica 2 luglio, abonazato il vento, se ritrovessimo sopra la Incoronata, qu asi per mezo Zara, e la nocte havevamo facto circa 80 miglia. E levandossi il vento a tramontana, orzando, essendo sforzati dal vento contrario, bisognò ritornare; e toleseno la volta di terra, e introne dentro dalle isole di Zara e, fra orzando e a rimi navegando, la sera giongesimo a Zara vechia, e lì stessimo la nocte a ferro. Luni 3 lu glio, passando Zara, sì venessimo a una isola chiamata Selve, e lì stessimo in porto, longi da Zara 50 miglia.'

48 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229–230: 'Navigavimus paulisper, ad dextris et sinistris, inter insulas Hiadrenses, que leprose vocantur, quia mare ibi angustum. Vidimus fundum aquae; tempore tempestatis periculosum est navigare.' The island is also mentioned by Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209. The importance of the sighting of the islet of St Peter, once the dreaded waters of the Kvarner Gulf had been crossed, is captured in the description offered by Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 89: '25 Meilen von dort gibt es einen Flecken, der Polmedor (Pola) heißt und am Ende der Provinz Istrien und am Beginn des Landes Dalmatien liegt. Von dort kommt man durch einen Golf (wobei es wegen des Ungestüms des Meeres eine besorgniserregende Seefahrt ist, bei der sich kein Schiff durch einen Anker festmachen lässt; Cornero heißt der Golf an dieser Stelle) zum Hafen von St. Peter, der 30 Meilen von besagtem Polmedor entfernt liegt.'



FIGURE 24 Islet of St Peter, view of the site where the now-lost Benedictine monastery once stood
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

above the mountain, lies a notable Observant monastery called Our Lady of Grace, with a church dedicated to Sts Cosmas and Damian located on a hill.'[49]

As Krešimir Kužić has noted, Sebald Rieter the Younger's reference to the Observant Franciscans on Pašman is linked to the St Domnius monastery, founded in the late 14th century, which had to face possible sea attacks,[50] a threat that also confronted the island of Ugljan, opposite Zadar, where the Franciscan monastery of St Jerome[51] and the imposing fortress of St Michael

49 Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 42: 'Item gegen Zara vecka uber am gebirg ligt ein parfuser closter der observantz, zu unser frawn gnaden genantt, darob uff einem perg ligt ein kirch zu Sant Cossma und Damian genantt.'

50 Kužić 2013, 123. On the monastery, see Petricioli 1999, 104–105.

51 Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148: 'alda ligt ein schöennes Closter auf seer hochen Perg inutteren Öelpergenn gar lusti'. This excerpt should also be linked to the monastery, as well as the legend annotated by Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 55: 'Mercuri 13 iunij se trovassemo al mezodì al scoglio sopra el quale Sancta Hieronimo stava a far penitentia avante ch'el fosse creato cardinale. Et la maitina sequente se trovassemo sopra Zarra, città in Dalmatia.' A more explicit reference was provided by Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–140: 'Item, tegen over dees stadt ſtaet St. Michiels bergh, op de welcke een ſchoon kaſteel ſtaet. In den voet van den ſelven bergh leyt een proper

stood out.[52] The latter's significance was emphasised by Rochechouart: 'On the right is the castle of St Michael, a defence against Adriatic pirates.'[53] This image, also depicted in the Gotha version of Grünenberg's itinerary (Fig. 25),[54] was etched in the pilgrims' memories before reaching the port of Zadar, which provided the provisions needed for the next leg of their journey.[55]

The tour began to the north of the city, just steps from the boat landing, and included canonical devotional visits, as seen in the schematic notation of an early 16th-century English pilgrim: 'Thursdaye erly we went on londe, and herde masse and visyted the sayntes and relyques there.'[56] Besides the religious sights and antiquities,[57] which blended with Romanesque and Gothic churches within the pilgrims descriptions, it was the composite Zaratine society that caught their attention, as suggested by Heinrich von Zedlitz: 'There are as many Slavic people there as there are Italians (or Romance people).'[58]

Many also noted the linguistic uniqueness of the Dalmatian city, especially regarding the celebration of Mass. Alongside Felix Fabri's observations,[59]

Convent der Minne- broeders Obſervanten, genaemt Jeronimus.' Cf. Škunca 2010, 18–19. On the monastery, see Petricioli 1999, 103–104.

52 Cf. Kužić 2013, 117.

53 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229–230: 'Ad dextram, est castrum Sancti Michaelis, presidium maris Adriatici contra piratas.' On the fortress, see also Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 42.

54 Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Chart. A 541, fols 16v–17r; cf. Mønnesland 2011, 20–21.

55 Another monument that could be spotted by travellers on the right-hand side as they navigated towards the Levant, this time on the coast side, was the small Romanesque church dedicated to St Clement on the islet of the same name, now destroyed. See Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113–114: 'Item oultre Jarre v mille est une chapelle de sainct Clément a semis.'

56 Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10.

57 Felix Fabri's testimony highlights his interest in the Roman past, noting marble columns, arches, triumphal towers and epitaphs before his city tour; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373: 'In ea civitate sunt multae antiquissimae columnae marmoreae magnae in virorum aliquorum insignium memoriam, multae etiam fornices et arces triumphales Romanorum victorum signa ibi sunt, quo potuimus intelligere, terrae principes ibi habitasse. Marmoreas etiam tabulas cum sculptis scutis et imaginibus et latinis scripturis ibi per loca in antiquis muris vidimus.' See also the observation by Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, [fols 13v–14r]: 'dimostra antiquo loco per li antiqui edifitii e per questi lettere sculture in marmo ad uno piede di torre: IMP. CAESAR. DIVI. F. AVG. PARENS. COLONIAE. MVRVM ET TVRIS DEDIT. .T. IVLIVS OPTATVS. TVRIS VETVSTATE CONSUMPTA IMPENSA SUA RESTITVIT. E a Sancto Grisogono sono queste altre: Q. DELLIVS. Q. L. FVSCVS, VI VIR. AVGVS[+++]' Cf. Graciotti 2014, 131.

58 Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 292–294: 'ist also viel Windisch Volck dinnen als Welsch'.

59 Graciotti 2014, 132.



FIGURE 25 View of the city of Zadar, 1490
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Georges Lengherand of Mons offered a brief note, while Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera provided a more detailed account, especially concerning the Glagolitic liturgy.[60] The Spanish pilgrim added a vivid description of the port, comparable to Pietro Casola's famous passage,[61] secured with a chain; he portrayed Zadar as a frontier town with a military role towards hinterland threatened by the Turks:

> It has a very good and very safe harbour, where many ships can dock and can be closed with a chain. It is a very beautiful place and used to be more prosperous, but the Turks have been staining the land with blood. The streets are wide, and there are very good houses. It closes early as a border place; for the defence of the land, the lordship has three castles, each with a hundred cavalry. It is an archbishopric.[62]

Among others, the passage highlights two constants in travel diaries: the presence of the archbishopric and travellers' favourable impressions of the city.[63] Milliaduse d'Este described Zadar as 'one of the most beautiful lands that the *Signoria* of Venice has in the sea', while Francesco Suriano observed: 'The city of Zadar, in nobility, generosity and the goodness of its people, is similar to Dubrovnik, but it is not as mercantile, although it is more beautiful and better endowed with churches.'[64] Suriano's remark accurately reflects the broader

60 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 311–312. Georges Lengherand of Mons also noted that they heard a priest say Mass in the Slavonic language, and they were told that St Jerome composed the Masses that were currently said in this language: 'Et ce propre jour entre autres messes oymes ung prêtre qui dit messe en langage esclavon; et nous fut dit que saint Géromme composa les messes qui pour le présent se dient eo ce langage.'; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 87–89.

61 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 118–121.

62 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 311–312: 'Tiene vn / puerto muy bueno y muy siguro en / que pueden caber muchos navíos y / se puede cerrar con vna cadena. Es / muy bonico lugar y solía ser de más / trato, sino que los turcos le han ydo / ensangostando la tierra. Tiene las / calles bien anchas e muy buenas / cassas. Ciérrase temprano como lu//gar de frontera; para la guarda de la tie/rra tiene la Señoría tres castillos en que / en cada vno ay ciento de cauallo. Es / arçobispado.'

63 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252: 'civitatem opulentissimam et bene munitam'; Anonymous, 1419–1425, ed. 1905, 78: 'très belle chose et notable'; Coppart de Velaine, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301: 'est trez bielle et forte ville', and 308: 'trez bonne ville'; Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76–77: 'Giara, et è una bella cità et grande et è cittadinescha'; Alessandro Ariosto, 1476–1479, ed. 2007, 12: 'Iadrae municipium, decorum satis atque magnum'; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 50–51: 'molto bella et forte'; cf. Kužić 2013, 117.

64 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 12–13; Francesco Suriano, 1481–1584, ed. 1900, 251–252. See also Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 165: 'la ville grande et belle, mais elle nest point marchande'. The opinion of Jacques Le Saige is in contrast with that of Roberto da

pattern in travel reports: while mentions of Zadar and Dubrovnik are comparable, over 80 percent of references to Zadar focus on its places of worship. This emphasis, unparalleled along the Eastern Adriatic coast, was not evenly distributed among Zadar's monuments, with travellers' attention concentrated on specific religious sites.

William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, recorded seven monasteries and about twenty churches in Zadar, yet only a few of these buildings are described in any detail in pilgrims' accounts.[65] The church of St Vitus, for example, demolished in the late 19th century, is mentioned only by Hans Lochner.[66] Female religious communities also receive limited attention, though Conrad Grünenberg briefly noted their presence.[67] One rare exception is Jan Aerts, who offered a glimpse into the Benedictine female abbey of St Mary, founded in the late 11th century (Fig. 26): 'Within the same city, there are still four convents, one of which is called St Mary, where many beautiful relics are kept in reverence, all encased in silver.'[68] Although the Dutch pilgrim observed that the Dominicans had a more beautiful complex than the Franciscans, mendicant houses were not commonly featured in Zadar's pilgrimage itineraries, unlike in Dubrovnik.[69] Exceptionally, in 1519 the German Dietrich von Kettler and the Dutch Jan Want included references to relics at the Dominican monastery: 'St Andrew's foot, St Mary Magdalene's finger' and 'a finger of Thomas Aquinas and a small bone of Empress Helena', respectively.[70]

These accounts, consistent with the notes of apostolic visitor Agostino Valier in 1579,[71] suggest that travellers did indeed stop at the Dominican monastery,

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Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 99–100: 'benché sia picola, è molto merchadantescha et è etiamdio dela prefata signoria.'

65 See Kužić 2013, 119.

66 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; cf. Kužić 2013, 89.

67 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 320–321: 'ligend apttigen und meng closter inn der stat'.

68 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–140: 'Binnen de selve stadt staen noch vier Vrouwen kloosters, daer af d'eene genoemt is St. Maria, in de welcke veel schoone Reliquien in reverentie worden gehouden, al in silver besfagen.'

69 *Ibid.*: 'Ende buyten de stadt leggen noch drie Conventen van de vier-biddende oorden, waer van de Predicaren dat ſchoonſte hebben.'

70 Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77: 'sunte Andres voet, sunte Marien Magdalenen vynger'; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 222–223: 'vinger van Thomas van Aquinen ende een beenken van Helena Keyserinne'.

71 According to Agostino Valier's 16th-century *visitatio*, the following relics were kept in the church of St Dominic: 'Theca argentea ad similitudinem digiti cum reliquiis Sancti Dominici/Theca argentea ad similitudinem bracchii cum reliquiis Sancti Thomae Aquinatis/Theca argentea ad similitudinem brachii cume reliquiis Sanctae Helenae/Theca



FIGURE 26 Zadar, Benedictine abbey of St Mary, façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

though only Felix Fabri's visit is securely documented. Fabri stayed for two days, joining his confreres for meals and the Divine Office.[72] Likewise, Paul Walther Guglingen celebrated Mass with the Franciscans and attended a funeral in their cemetery, recording a narrow escape along with Bernhard von Breydenbach and Philipp von Bicken from a collapsing tavern. The Franciscan monastery (Fig. 27) also caught the eye of Pietro Casola, who noted: 'It is quite

argenetea ad similitudinem pedis cum reliquiis Sancti Andreae'; Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 42r; cf. Krasić 1988, 227–248. Almost the same list was repeated by Fondra a century later: 'un dito di S. Domenico. Ossa del braccio di S. Tommaso d'Aquino, e di S. Andrea apostolo. Piede di S. Elena madre di Costantino imperatore. Del legno della SS. Croce; il tutto in reliquiarii d'argento e di cristallo'. Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 15.

72 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–374; cf. Kužić 2013, 119.



FIGURE 27 Zadar, Franciscan monastery, view of the cloister
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

beautiful, and the church is also a fine one. However, as it is in the city, they do not have a large garden for recreation, as they do in many other places.'[73]

Despite such mentions, the two mendicant complexes, described by Fabri as 'beautiful monasteries', remain marginal in travellers' accounts.[74] Their presence is only briefly noted, as in Ribera's mention after his description of the abbey of St Chrysogonus: 'In an abbey of St Benedict, called Chrysogonus, lies his body along with those of other saints. There are two monasteries, one of St Francis and the other of St Dominic.'[75] The passage is indicative of both the trends found in the voyagers' accounts and the local political and cultic dynamics. The mendicant orders, established along the Dalmatian coast in the early 13th century,[76] contended with the powerful Benedictines, who had dominated the region since the 10th century. The Benedictine abbey enjoyed great

73 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119: 'è asai bello et anche la giesia passa tempo. Non hano, per esser in citade, orto grande per pigliare qualche recreatione, como hano in molti altri loghi.'

74 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–374.

75 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 312: 'En vn abadía de Sant / Benito, que se llama Sant Grisógano, es/tá su cuerpo e otros sanctos demás / destos. Ay dos monesteríos, el vno de / Sant Francisco y el otro de Sancto Do/mingo.'

76 Škunca 2010, 17; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 37.

prestige, backed by its extensive estates and due to its possession of the relics of St Chrysogonus, Zadar's patron saint, throughout the Middle Ages.[77]

References to cult objects in travel diaries begin with St Chrysogonus, with Simon Fitzsimons in 1332 likely indicating the saint.[78] However, his remains did not receive consistent attention from travellers, most probably due to the decline of the abbey from the 15th century on: only 16 mentions were dedicated to his relics.[79] This figure slightly surpasses references to St Donatus, whose cult was distinctively local, but is far outnumbered by mentions of the city cathedral's relic collection, which garnered twice as much interest.

St Simeon, however, eclipsed all others in popularity. Invoked by no fewer than 70 Western travellers,[80] the prophet's relics, housed in the collegiate

77 Raukar 2009, 329.

78 See p. 239, n. 529 below.

79 See p. 225, n. 500 above.

80 The relics of St Simeon in Zadar are mentioned by the following pilgrims: Hans Porner, 1418–1419, ed. 1874–1875, 133; Stephan III von Gumppenberg, 1419, ed. 1584, fols 236v, 246v; Anonymous, 1419–1425, ed. 1905, 78; Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301; Johann of Frankfurt, 1426–1427, ed. 1986, 56; Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145; Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76; Bertrandon de la Broquière, 1432–1433, ed. 1892, 7; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Hans von der Gruben, 1440, ed. 1896, 118; Milliaduse d'Este, 1440, ed. 2009, 12–13; Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 115–116; Hans Rot, 1440, ed. 1882, 349; Anonymous from Donaueschingen, 1441–1442, ed. 1998, 173; German Anonymous, 1444, ed. 1867, 302; Peter Rot, 1453, ed. 1882, 401; Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 55; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 32–34, 52–53, 60–61, 78–79, 93, 126–127; Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 212; William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 84; Hans Koppler, 1461, ed. 1998, 207; Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 103; Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 178; Jacob Kreynck and Deryck Vogel, 1479, electronic source, 7; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 41, 136; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 352–353, 614; English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 154; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 55; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 186r; Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74, 260–261; Francesco Suriano, 1481–1484, ed. 1900, 251; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–139; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 52; Anonymous, 1481–1492, ed. 1893, n.p.; Johannes, Graf zu Solms (?), 1483, ed. 1584, fol. 54r; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 86, 656; Claes van Dusen, 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 87–89; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Philippe de Voisins, 1490, ed. 1883, 22; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 177; Peter Fassbender, 1492, ed. 1880, 250; Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 110–111, 292; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20, 95; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121; Wolfgang Zillenhart (Zülnhart), 1495–1496, ed. 1932–1933, 79; Herzog Alexander

church near the harbour, became the focal point of pilgrimage and devotion for those who arrived in Zadar, a vital hub for sailors and late medieval pilgrims. Mentions of the holy remains and, indirectly, of the church of St Mary Major, known in pilgrim texts exclusively as the church of St Simeon, far surpass those of any other place of worship in Zadar.[81] This trend, overshadowing St Donatus, the Benedictine complex of St Chrysogonus and even the city cathedral, is evident in the account of the German pilgrim Peter Rot in 1453: 'We were told there were many holy relics in this city, but we saw none other than St Simeon.'[82]

On a broader scale, a systematic reading of travel diaries highlights that the body of St Simeon not only dominated Zadar's devotional landscape, but also, thanks to its connection with Gospel episodes and Christological references, emerged as the most frequently mentioned object of worship along the entire Istrian and Dalmatian coast. This prominence also shaped the attention given by pilgrims to Zadar's four major holy sites, which became an integral part of the sacred topography on the Venetian route to the Holy Land.

2 The Church of St Mary Major

2.1 *Historical Background*

The church of St Mary Major, among the most prestigious in Zadar during the mid- and late Middle Ages,[83] stood on the north-eastern side of the Zadar

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von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 50, 101; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 322; Bogislaw X, Duke of Pomerania, 1496–1498, ed. 2001, 64–65, 70; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860 (repr. 2004), 63; Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 209; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 128; Jean Thenaud, 1512, ed. 1884, 150, 225; Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 165; Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77; Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 208, 311; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 222–223; Juan del Encina, 1519, ed. 1978, 244–245; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59, 232, 253; Arent Willemsz, 1525, ed. 1884, 51–52; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 128; Jan Pascha, 1527, ed. 1563, fols 37r–38v.

81 On the centrality of the cult of St Simeon, see also Graciotti 2014, 130.

82 Peter Rot, 1453, ed. 1882, 401: 'Man seit uns och in der selben stat das vil heiliger lichamen do weren. Doch so sohen wir kein andren denn Sant Simeon.' Similarly, Girnard von Schwalbach, after focussing on the description of the body of St Simeon, only briefly noted this concerning the rest of the city: 'And there are also many other saints and relics in the same city, in other monasteries and churches.'; Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 115–116: 'Vnnd sint auch sust ander heylgen vnnd heyltum in der selben stadt in andern clostern vnnd kirchen.'

83 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 93.



FIGURE 28 Zadar, site of the former church of St Mary Major
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

peninsula, adjacent to the Arsenal Gate leading to the port.[84] Its central body was destroyed in the 1570s to make way for a new defensive wall system, the implementation of which was considered necessary under the looming threat of an Ottoman offensive (Fig. 28).[85]

The precise date of construction, consecration and exact original dedication of the church remain unknown. Archaeological evidence suggests a Romanesque structure, likely built in the early 12th century over the remains of an earlier Christian basilica.[86] The first known document referring to the monument dates to 1190, designating it as 'Sancta Maria Maior', a name that, alongside 'Sancta Maria Presbyterorum', became widely used in the following centuries.[87] These names appear in records mentioning the church's parish

84 This was the last of the four city openings from the seaside looking eastwards, after Chain Gate, the Gate of St Demetrius and the Gate of St Chrysogonus; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 21.
85 Among others, see Vežić 1975, 119.
86 *Ibid.*, 135; Petricioli 1990a, 76.
87 Vežić 1975, 119–120.

priests as 'Jadrenses notarii', members of the college of canons established in 1154.[88] The term *collegiata*, often associated with the church, derives from this context. Notably, only five other churches in Zadar enjoyed such a distinguished status: St Peter the Old, St Peter the New, St Michael, St Anthony and St Stephen.[89]

The arrival of St Simeon's relics in Zadar, dated, based on later sources, to the 1290s,[90] marked a turning point in the church's history, propelling it to international prominence.[91] Nevertheless, the name of the church recurs more frequently in local documents only in the following century, more precisely from the 1370s onwards. This crucial phase corresponds to the 50 years of Angevin rule in Zadar (1358–1409), when a new sarcophagus for the relics was commissioned and work began on the chapel of St Simeon.[92] Towards the end of the 14th century the promotion of the saint's cult accelerated rapidly. From 1396 the church, as the repository of the holy relics, was granted the indulgences from which devotees could benefit during the eight days following the feast of the saint on 8 October.[93] This likely encouraged the local aristocracy, in May of the following year, to support efforts to expand St Simeon's chapel, originally built only a few decades earlier.[94]

In 1423 the local master Vidul Ivanov pledged to demolish the existing bell tower and build a new one. However, the commission was not fully accomplished: the bell tower, entrusted in 1463 to Nikola Vidul, the son of

88 For the reference to the college of canons, see Bianchi 1877, 390.

89 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 212; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 92; Bianchi 1877, 169.

90 Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita A b. 3, n.p.; see the section below dedicated to the cult, pp. 123–127.

91 Bianchi 1877, 392.

92 This phase was entrusted in 1377 to the Lombard master Francesco da Milano; Petricioli 1983, 105–106; Praga 1930, 29. Also directly or indirectly connected to the commission of the sarcophagus, as well as to the figure and workshop of Francesco, are documents from the following years, specifically those dated 13 August 1377, 10 February 1378, 26 April 1378, 25 February 1379, 29 July 1379, 2 August 1379 and 5 January 1381; see Praga 1930, 41–42.

93 The papal bull regarding this, traces of which have now been lost, was kept in the cathedral during the first half of the 15th century, as evidenced by the oldest inventory of its treasury (1427): 'Item bulam papalem Indulgentiae Remissionis pecatoprum Eclexiarum sancte Anastaxie et sancte marie presbiterorum in qua Requiesir(!) corpus sancti Simeonis Justi positam in vna parva capseta'; cf. Petricioli 1987, 166. Lorenzo Fondra also wrote of a second papal bull of 1500: 'Bulla indulgentiae pro ecclesiis s. Anastasiae, et s. Simeonis nunc reperitur apud procuratores corporis et arcae s. Simeonis'; cf. Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 271.

94 Paolo de Paolo, 1371–1408, ed. 1904, 22, 24; see the section below on worship for more details, pp. 152–154.

the master, was still at the centre of two contracts in the early years of the following century.[95]

During Archbishop Vallaresco's tenure (1450–1494), plans were made to reconstruct the Romanesque façade. Initially assigned to Andrija Aleši of Durrës, the commission was soon transferred, in 1472, to '*magister* Petar Berić, stonecutter of Šibenik', who worked from a revised design by Vittore Crivelli.[96]

By the 15th century the church, undergoing major renovations by local Eastern Adriatic and Italian masters, had gained European fame due to the presence of the prophet's relics. The Marian cult's prominence gave way to that of St Simeon, and the church became widely known by his name, though its original dedication still appeared in official records.[97] The exceptional preservation of the prophet's body, along with its direct connection to pilgrims' journeys, meant that nearly all late medieval travellers to the Holy Land referred to the church as St Simeon's.[98] Even the nearby Arsenal Gate took on St Simeon's name, as noted by the Italian pilgrim Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo: 'At daybreak, from St Simeon's Gate, where we emerged by the butcher's shop, we departed and went along the shore to the fountain.'[99]

The changes continued into the 16th century: in 1508 construction work began on the Renaissance-style chapel of St Roch, attached to the church's south side, which is the only surviving part of the complex (Fig. 29). When the central body of the church was destroyed in the 1570s,[100] the chapel and the bell tower (which was demolished in the early 18th century) remained standing, along with the sacristy of the church, at least until the early 17th century.[101]

According to tradition, starting from 1571 the sacristy had to temporarily accommodate the relics, due to the demolition of the chapel of St Simeon.[102] This, however, seems to differ from what was reported by apostolic visitor Agostino Valier, who made his survey in May 1579, about the site of the church

95 Petricioli 1983, 25; Petricioli 1985, 86–91; Vežić 1975, 122, 124; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 37.

96 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 168; Vežić 1975, 124–125; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 40.

97 Vežić 1975, 120.

98 The first such reference is from the member of the Ferrarese court, Milliaduse d'Este, who in 1440, pointing to the building as the church of 'Sam Simione' also gave us one of the first detailed descriptions of the *mise-en-scène* of the holy body; Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 12–13.

99 Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo, 1511, ed. 1886, 10: 'Nel far del giorno dala porta de san Simeon, ove sorti ala becharia eramo, partimo e andamo a sorzer drio la terra ala fontana.'

100 Petricioli 1983, 25.

101 See the account by Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 441.

102 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 180.



FIGURE 29 Zadar, chapel of St Roch
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

being 'ruined due to war'.[103] In his visitation account, preserved in the Vatican Apostolic Archives, the bishop of Verona described the sacristy and the chapel of St Roch, as well as 'a certain old chapel located near the site of the said future church', where the body of St Simeon was still kept at the time.[104]

Valier's reference is ambiguous: does it concern the chapel founded in the late 14th century and expanded in the early 15th or another, undocumented structure on the site? Several factors support the latter. In the continuation of the report, Valier clarified that the chapel was connected to the chapel of St Roch.[105] It is therefore evident that the space in question was located on the southern side of the site, spared by the works on the defence system. However, this location poses challenges: the 16th-century chapel of St Roch adjoined the church's south aisle, while the bell tower stood to its east. This suggests the presence of a modestly sized chapel – Valier distinguished the chapel of St Roch by calling it 'major' – which may have partially occupied the end of the south aisle and was possibly spared from demolition temporarily. Based on the travel reports of Jan Aerts (1481) and Felix Fabri (1484) and the later testimony of Jan Hasištejnsky (1493),[106] it can be deduced that the chapel of St Simeon was likely located on the opposite, left side of the presbytery. Finally, Bianchi's comment, unfortunately made without citing sources, concerning the location of the St Simeon chapel at the 'head of the north aisle', clarifies any lingering doubt about which left side the pilgrims were referring to, whether viewed from or facing the altar.[107]

From 1572, deprived of one of its main places of worship, the Zadar community worked to build a new church to properly house 'such a venerable relic', as

103 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 57r: 'diruta tempori belli'.

104 *Ibid.*: 'quadam capella veteri existente apud aream dictae futurae ecclesiae'.

105 *Ibid.*

106 See respectively Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–139: '[…] daer staet een schoon kerck, alwaer ter slincker-handt van den Choor in een lustige kapelle is berustende 't lichaem van den rechtveerdigen Simeon, die het kindeken Jesum in sijn armen ontfing, daer men by Lucam den Euangelist af leest, doen hy den lof-sang maeckte, Nunc dimittis.'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373: 'Ad sinistrum latus chori est capella, in qua est tumulus pretiosus cum tumba corporis S. Simeonis, ferreis cancellis obfirmatus.'; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20: 'A gest w niem mnoho kosteluow a mnoho kniezij. A geden kostel slowe v Swateho Symeona. A w tom kostele na lewe rucze welikeho oltarze gest kapla, w kterezto lezij tyz Swaty Symeon. a gest to ten Swaty Symeon, kteryz Syna bozijeho w Chramie obrzezowal.'

107 Cf. Bianchi 1877, 391; see also Vežić 1975, 136.

Valier put it.[108] The apostolic visitor repeatedly reported progress to the pope, noting that 'the foundations have been laid' and ordering the church's completion within eight months. If delayed, the saint's body was to be moved to another church in Zadar until finished.[109]

Poverty persisted after Valier's visit, and tradition holds that in the spring of the following year the relic was moved to the chapel of St Roch, placed on the altar dedicated to the patron saint.[110] This location was likely noted by the Archbishop of Zadar Minuccio Minucci (1596–1604) in his 1599 *ad limina* visitation, when he stated that St Simeon's body was housed in a 'small church' and observed that the construction of the new church dedicated to the saint was 'progressing slowly due to the misery of the town'.[111] The same location was attested by apostolic visitor Michele Priuli in 1603; in his account, the monument is referred to as the church of St Simeon, likely reflecting the cultic dominance asserted shortly after the translation of the prestigious remains. At the same time, his report does not omit its exact dedication, leaving no room for doubt: 'The church is consecrated under the name of blessed Roch.'[112]

Although at the beginning of the following century a new Mannerist-style façade[113] was erected next to the 16th-century chapel of St Roch up to the height of the tympanum,[114] a lack of funds led to the project's failure, and the construction of the new church was ultimately halted in 1623 (Fig. 30).[115] In parallel, the adaptation within the ancient basilica of St Stephen was completed, and the prophet's body was solemnly translated there in a procession on 16 May 1632 (Fig. 31).[116] The ancient basilica of St Stephen became the main centre of the cult dedicated to Simeon, while the chapel of St Roch remained the congregational space for the confraternity of the same name.[117]

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108 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 17v.

109 *Ibid*., fols 19v–20v, 57r: 'in alliam hujus urbis ecclesiam'.

110 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 180.

111 Minuccio Minucci, 1599, ed. 1970, 42: 'picciola chiesola'.

112 Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 101, fols 693r–693v: 'Ecclesia est sub titulo Beati Rocchi consecrata.'

113 Goja 2008, 102–104; on the site, see also Marković 2005, 95–108.

114 Petricioli 1983, 26; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 4.

115 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 168; Marković 2005, 102.

116 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 207, 209; Petricioli 1983, 26; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 100.

117 Marković 2005, 103; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 44. Run by a rector, the St Roch chapel became a popular place of worship, especially for prayers during plagues, until its suppression in 1808, when it was incorporated into the military prisons. It was later repurposed for various uses, first as a butcher's shop, then as a steam dyeing plant (with an 'economic kitchen' on the upper floors), and today it functions as a shop selling agricultural products; Bianchi 1877, 397; Brunelli 1913, 425.



FIGURE 30 Zadar, abandoned construction of the church of St Simeon, façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 31 Zadar, church of St Simeon (ancient basilica of St Stephen)
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

2.2 *Archaeological Data*

In 1570 the demolition of the medieval wall's northern perimeter facing the harbour, carried out to make way for new fortifications, led to the sacrifice of the church of St Mary Major, located near the Arsenal Gate. The new wall defence system cut through the central and northern naves longitudinally. Initially the south aisle was likely only partially razed, allowing the aforementioned 'south chapel', concerning which no further details are available, to survive temporarily. In the end, only the adjacent chapel of St Roch remained intact. Once the three (still visible) arches that had connected the latter to the north side of the church were sealed, the chapel became a free-standing monument.

The area has not undergone a systematic archaeological campaign. Partial investigations were conducted in 1910–1911 and in the 1970s, during work on a commercial establishment occupying a portion of the shelters excavated during World War II within the Venetian fortifications. These corridors run roughly along the church's north colonnade and extend into the northern section of the central apse.[118] Based on the available archaeological evidence, particularly the imposts, which formed an integral part of the building's structural and load-bearing system, Pavuša Vežić dated the church's construction to the late 11th century or the early 12th, leaning towards the latter.[119]

The mid-1970s investigations also led to the reconstruction of the ground plan of the church's main body: a three-nave building with a semi-circular apse on the central nave, 19 m wide and approximately 28–29 m long, leaving aside the apse (with a radius of over 3 m).[120] The termination of the side aisles and the church's height remain unknown, although the colonnades separating the nave from the side aisles have been reconstructed in detail.[121] The main entrance was likely flanked by two side doors.[122] Although it was one of the most prominent monuments of medieval Zadar, aside from its ground plan and size (together with the basilica of St Stephen and the old cathedral, it was the largest city monument until the end of the 13th century),

118 Vežić 1975, 127, 129. The results were never published, and, despite extensive writings on the relics of St Simeon and the Angevin Gothic sarcophagus, the only comprehensive study of the church is a contribution by Croatian scholar Pavuša Vežić (Vežić 1975).

119 He attributed the low quality of the imposts to less-skilled craftsmen rather than an earlier style; *ibid.*, 132–135. Ivo Petricioli also supported this dating, noting that one of the found capitals, although resembling 11th-century Corinthian capitals, shows a more mature style of modelling; Petricioli 1990a, 76.

120 Vežić 1975, 136.

121 It consisted of two rows of eight columns, rhythmically arranged 3 m apart, forming nine arches; Vežić 1975, 136.

122 *Ibid.*

little is known about the church's condition and its decoration throughout the Middle Ages.[123]

In a letter of 1579 addressed to Agostino Valier, the people of Zadar stated that, at the time of commissioning the Elizabethan sarcophagus (1377), the church was 'dilapidated by age and threatening imminent collapse'.[124] Given the missive's purpose – to persuade the apostolic visitor not to sacrifice the sarcophagus, but to seek other means of funding the new church of St Simeon, while arguing that, even at the time of the Angevin commission, the sarcophagus took priority over the church's condition – the reliability of this passage should be treated with caution.

In contrast, late medieval pilgrims offered a different perspective. While Jan Aerts (1481) briefly noted that it was a 'beautiful church', Felix Fabri (1483) emphasised its quality, calling it a 'precious church of enduring construction', built to a high standard with clean, carved stones.[125] Similarly, Conrad Grünenberg (1486) offered a highly positive remark: 'This church is beautifully constructed.'[126] While it is unclear whether the German pilgrim was impressed by the new façade completed a decade earlier by Petar Berić of Šibenik, he certainly took note of the sculptures crafted by the Zadar master Vidul Ivanov, which adorned the bell tower from the first half of the 15th century. However, as previously highlighted in historiography, his comment does not refer to a limited number of figures (we know the Zadar master installed six in 1439), but rather to a bell tower richly adorned with arches and sculptures extending from the ground up.[127] This observation is supported by the view of Zadar included in the diary of the pilgrim from Constance, in which the tower is depicted with an intricate sculptural apparatus (see Fig. 25). This invites consideration of the possibility that, by 1486, an additional, undocumented phase of work on the bell tower had taken place, rather than the depiction being a mere arbitrary embellishment by the engraver.[128]

Pietro Casola's testimony adds detail to earlier accounts. While affirming the church's beauty, he noted that the choir was 'completed only on one side',

123 *Ibid.*

124 For details of the letter, see p. 124 below. Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita Ap, b. 3., n.p.: 'di vetustà consumpta et che minacciava l'evidente ruina'.

125 See respectively Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–139: 'sschoon kerck'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373: 'ecclesia pretiosa de perpetua fabrica'.

126 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'sin tempel ist gar lustig gebuwen'.

127 *Ibid.*

128 Vežić 1975, 136.

estimating that the rest would eventually be finished.[129] As noted in previous studies, the Italian pilgrim's precise observations are confirmed by local archival sources: in 1488 the church's procurators commissioned a wooden choir, modelled after that in the town cathedral, from Giovanni Petrov of Korčula.[130] Although the contract stipulated the completion of the work within the following year, at the time of Casola's visit in June 1494 only one side of the wooden ensemble had been installed in the collegiate church.[131] The Italian pilgrim's estimation was, however, correct: in April 1494 master Giovanni started working on the remaining part of the choir, which adorned the church until its destruction in the 1570s. It was then transferred to the Benedictine nuns, where it was placed in the women's gallery and destroyed during World War II.[132]

If, by cross-referencing late medieval pilgrim accounts with archival evidence, we can reconstruct the elaborate *mise-en-scène* created by the Zaratines for the body of St Simeon in the chapel named for him, the same cannot be determined for the rest of the liturgical furnishings and ornaments of the collegiate church. It remains uncertain whether the 1386 commission of an icon depicting the Virgin and Child flanked by three unspecified saints[133] was ever completed or, if so, what its features or intended location might have been.[134] A similar uncertainty surrounds the decorative programme entrusted in 1446 (likely frescoes) to the painter Antun Restanović of Split.[135] While the placement of the wooden eucharistic tabernacle, commissioned in 1422 from the Venetian master Matteo Moronzon (Matheus Moronçonus) by the Zadar nobleman Simone Begna, can reasonably be inferred, the appearance of the work likewise remains unknown.[136] Following the destruction of the presbytery area of the collegiate church, the tabernacle was transferred to the chapel of St Roch, where it was placed on the main altar, as documented by Agostino Valier in 1579.[137] Its traces were subsequently lost, as were those of

129 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 120: 'La giesia è asai bella; in el coro ha fin a x stadii, molto notabili; el coro è facto solum da una parte; ho extimato che fornirano el resto col tempo, perché ciò è facto è novo.'

130 Petricioli 1966, 207–208; for the transcription of the contract, see Petricioli 1972, 131.

131 Petricioli 1972, 92.

132 Petricioli 1966, 207–208; Petricioli 1972, 92; Vežić 1975, 125.

133 In all probability St Simeon, St Zoilus or other protectors of the city of Zadar.

134 Vežić 1975, 122.

135 *Ibid.*, 124.

136 *Ibid.*; Petricioli 1972, 122.

137 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 57r. The tabernacle is also mentioned in the same place by Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 101, fol. 693r: 'ad ecclesiam collegiatam sancti Simeonis Civitatis Iadre et in ea celebravit sanctam missam qua completa visitavit sanctissimum/ae eucharestiae

the tabernacle in the cathedral crafted by the same master, which, due to its 'height, width, length and beauty' (altitudine, latitudine, longitudine et pulchritudine), later served as a model for similar works.[138]

The work is mentioned by Carlo Federico Bianchi, a unique – yet not fully trustworthy – author who cast some light on the church décor. He described a gilded iron gate separating the presbytery from the congregation area, with a baldachin supported by four marble columns above the main altar housing the tabernacle.[139] While his mention of the organ aligns with other sources (e.g., Lorenzo Fondra), his claims about a stone choir and the list of altars are questionable.[140] His comments on the adjacent chapel of St Roch are also misleading.[141]

In contrast, the eyewitness account of Valier, who visited the chapel shortly after the pivotal year 1570, is undoubtedly more reliable. He reported that the chapel served as the congregational space for two confraternities, St Roch and the Body of Christ, and contained two altars. The main altar featured a wooden tabernacle, a silver pyx under a silk veil, an image of St Roch, four brass candelabra, three altar cloths and a gilded leather covering. The second, more modest altar, dedicated to St Martin, included an altarpiece, a gilded leather covering and a single altar cloth.[142]

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sacramentum repositum in altari maiori in tabernaculo ligneo deaurato servatur in pisside argentea. Ordinavit pissidem […] et benedici cum non sit benedicta et eamdem etiam accommodari tabernaculum circumornari panno serico et sub pede pissidis haberi corporale mundum, quod sepe mundetur Reperit quod quando defertur sanctissimum Eucharestiae sacramentum ad infirmos asportatur eadem pissis cum sanctissimo sacramento ordinavit aliam pissidem pro deferrendo.'

138 Petricioli 1972, 55, 122; see also Vežić 1975, 124.

139 Bianchi 1877, 391. With regard to the liturgical furnishings found on the site of the church and dating back to the pre-Romanesque phase, see Vežić 1975, 127–128.

140 See Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 126.

141 As noted by Vežić, Bianchi's conclusions regarding the chapel of St Roch, which he claimed was the former south aisle of the church spared from the construction of the defensive wall system, are erroneous, likely due to his unawareness of the documents concerning the adjacent body; Vežić 1975, 119–140.

142 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 57r–57v: 'Cohaeret dictae Capellae Capella maior sub titulo Sancti Rocchi in qua est confraternitas eiusdem tituli./ Visum est ibi Sanctissimum Sacramentum in pixide argentea cooperta velo serico, et recondita in tabernaculo ligneo honorifico super altari maiori. […] In ipsa capella Sancti Rochi sunt duo altaria. / Maius consecratum habet palam honirificam cum imagine Sancti Rochi, quatuor candelabra ex auricalco, tres tobaleas, Palium ex corio inaurato./ Altare Sancti Martini habet palam honorificam, duos angelos […], et palium ex corio, ac unicam tobaleam. /In dicta capella Sancti Rochi est etiam confraternitas corporis Christi.'

2.3 *St Simeon the Prophet: the Origins of the Cult between the Two Adriatic Coasts*

Due to limited sources, the cultic role of the church of St Mary Major (Fig. 32), hypothetically a major Marian shrine in medieval Zadar, before the arrival of St Simeon's relics remains unclear.[143] According to Adriatic tradition, both Venice, the Adriatic queen, and Zadar, under its influence, claimed possession of St Simeon's relics, with translations dating back to the 13th century. However, the early stages of this rivalry remain obscure due to a lack of contemporary records from either side.[144]

The first evidence of the prophet's cult in Venice dates to the early 14th century: a 1310s funerary complex within the church of St Simeon the Prophet (known locally as San Simeon Grando; Fig. 33). Nowadays, it is challenging to define the complex's original appearance, largely due to the 18th-century reconstruction of the high altar, which likely originally housed the complex, and its further rearrangement within the left aisle in the late 19th century.[145] Aside from the mention by Marino Sanudo,[146] references to the relics of St Simeon in the area of the high altar appear in a parallel, though problematic, account by an anonymous traveller around 1500[147] and later by papal nuncio Alberto Bolognetti (1578).[148] They refer respectively to a marble and stone arch, while Bolognetti also noted the securing of the relics with an 'iron grating and accompanying proof'. This last reference is particularly curious, as it recalls one of the longest inscriptions on the Venetian tomb. However, a direct connection cannot be established; it may refer to a written testimony (such as a translation document), to the inscription still present today or to another now-lost inscription on which both sources may have drawn. Yet

143 Bianchi's reference to the veneration of 'an ancient and prodigious image of the most Holy Mary' is now thought to predate the relics' arrival. The icon, still preserved and displayed in the Permanent Exhibition of Sacred Art in Zadar, is dated to the mid-13th century, several decades before the relics reached the city; Bianchi 1877, 392; Demori Staničić 2017, 251–252; Grgić 1973, 160; Petricioli 2004, 63.

144 Seymour 1976, 193–194; Bacci 2012, 193–194; Vidas 2008, 157; Jakšić 2014, 95–96.

145 Tomasi 2012, 278–280; see also Jakšić 2014, 96.

146 Tomasi 2012, 279.

147 Anonymous, *c.*1500, ed. 1742, 133: 'Nella Chiesa di S. Simeon Profeta riposano le ossa di detto Santo, traslatato da Constantinopoli, e sono in un'Arca di marmoro dietro all'Altar grande.'

148 Alberto Bolognetti, 1578, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap 96, fol. 273r: 'Reliquiae S. Simeonis prophetae detinentur in altari maiori in arca lapidea clatrata ferrea circummunitae cum documento. Hic est corpus Sancti Simeonis prophetae in ilice inciso […]. Altare maius est sub titulo sancti Simeonis sine pala omnibus neccessariis instructum.'



FIGURE 32 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. *Madonna and Child*, c.1250
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 33 Venice, church of St Simeon the Prophet (San Simeon Grando), façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

none of the three aforementioned sources – Sanudo, the anonymous traveller or Bolognetti – made any mention of the imposing Venetian tomb, which remains undeniably striking.

This tomb has attracted significant scholarly interest, especially because of St Simeon's marble effigy (Fig. 34) and the accompanying long inscription (Fig. 35).[149] The epigraph, in fact, is the focal point,[150] as it provides, from the outset, the motivation behind the creation of the new monument: the translation of the relics on 4 February 1318 (1317 in the Venetian calendar) to the church from a sarcophagus in which the body had previously rested for 114 years.[151] The earlier presence of the holy body in Venice is further substantiated by references to 'authentic writings' (scripturae authenticate)[152] and a mention of its translation from Constantinople, 'made here in 1203' (MCCIII huc facta).[153] From this earliest chronological reference regarding the body's arrival in the lagoon, the focus shifts once more to the new 14th-century translation into the 'most excellent tomb' (excellentissimum sepulcrum) and to the key figures who orchestrated it: Giacomo, the bishop of Castello, and Bartolomeo Ravachauolo, the parish priest of the church.[154]

Bartolomeo is generally regarded as the commissioner, and the inscription indeed follows the typical votive format, with a request for prayers *pro remedio animae*. It includes a promise of 40 days of plenary remission of penance, likely aimed at promoting the saint's cult and encouraging visits to the church.[155] The message is sealed with the signature of Marco Romano, the author of the marble effigy, renowned for its unprecedented naturalism, particularly in the detailed rendering of the hands, face and long hair and beard (Fig. 36).[156]

The decision to adorn the monument with an almost 'speaking' effigy makes the details in the inscription even more explicit. This message is reinforced by a shorter inscription on the front of the sarcophagus: *Hic stetit orpus beat*[*i*] *Symeo*[*n*]*is p*[*ro*]*ph*[*et*]*e a*[*n*]*nis centum et xiiii* (Here lies the body of the blessed Simeon the prophet after 114 years), presenting the tomb underneath to the faithful as the prophet's primary resting place.[157]

149 Valenzano 2010, 132–139; Tomasi 2012, 278–281.

150 For the complete transcription, see Coazzin 2010, 320–321, and Tomasi 2012, 278.

151 Valenzano 2010, 133.

152 It is this detail of authentic writings that I associate with Bolognetti's aforementioned reference to the accompanying proof/document. Both seemingly refer to the same additional written evidence, whether inscribed or not.

153 Chiesa 1995, 433.

154 Valenzano 2010, 133.

155 Tomasi 2012, 280.

156 *Ibid.*, 278.

157 *Ibid.*



FIGURE 34 Venice, church of St Simeon the Prophet (San Simeon Grando). Marco Romano, tomb of St Simeon, 1318
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

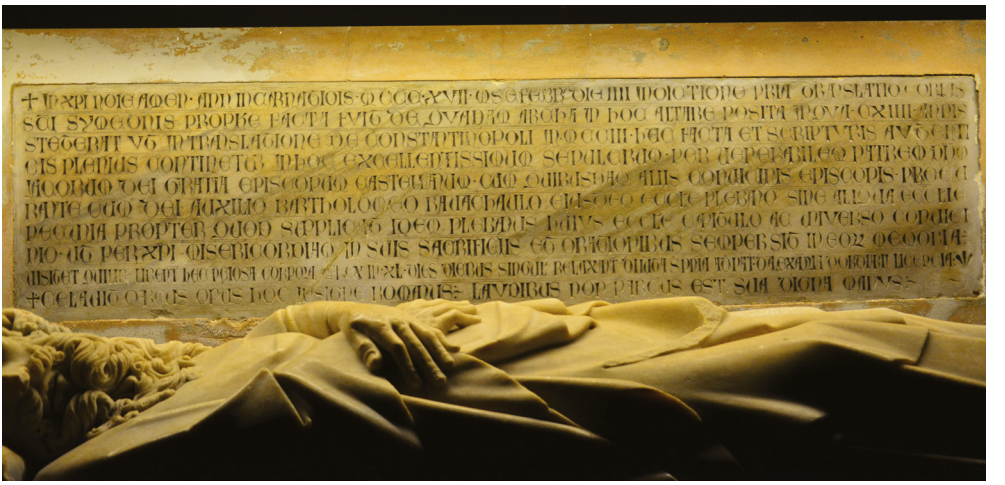

FIGURE 35 Venice, church of St Simeon the Prophet (San Simeon Grando). Marco Romano, tomb of St Simeon, inscription, 1318
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 36A–B Venice, church of St Simeon the Prophet (San Simeon Grando). Marco Romano, tomb of St Simeon the Prophet, details, 1318
PHOTOS VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

A fuller account of the Venetian acquisition, misdated to 1203 in the sepulchre, emerges only in the mid-14th century.[158] Andrea Dandolo's chronicle describes the event as a typical *furta sacra* during the sack of Constantinople in 1204, which, as is well known, brought a significant wave of relics to Venice.[159] The prophet's body was reportedly taken from the oratory of St Mary near Hagia Sophia and brought to a Venetian church built in his name.[160]

The story is further enriched in the *Translatio corporis beati Simeonis*, rediscovered in the 1990s by Paolo Chiesa in a 14th- and 15th-century miscellaneous hagiographic codex in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan.[161] Although certain references in this extensive account, particularly those closely aligned with Andrea Dandolo's chronicle and the sarcophagus inscription's mention of *scripturae autenticae*, could suggest the existence of a 13th-century Venetian translation report, the unique historical–political context and broader cultural dynamics of the 14th and 15th centuries must also be considered. Within this framework, the Braidense codex, the oldest complete account from the Venetian perspective, was composed.

As emphasised earlier, during the 14th century the Serenissima was still struggling to assert undisputed hegemony over the Eastern Adriatic and was forced to cede Zadar to the Hungarian Anjou dynasty for five decades (1358–1409). This timespan coincides with a significant boost in the Zaratine promotion of the cult of St Simeon. As a city under foreign rule, relics offered a potent medium for affirming local identity and autonomy. At the same time, Venice, strongly protective of its saints' cults, could not allow such a prestigious relic to remain in the hands of the rebellious Zaratines.

This context raises the possibility that the Braidense codex reflected an attempt by the Venetians to revive the saint's cult at a time when it may have seemed dormant, if not entirely absent. Viewed in this light, both the mistaken designation of the prophet as 'apostle' by Marino Sanudo in his *Le Vite dei dogi* (before 1530)[162] and Nicolò Malerbi's unusual position within the Venetian cultural sphere take on deeper significance. Malerbi, a Camaldolese monk from the lagoon, is credited with the 1475 *editio princeps* of the *Legenda aurea* in Italian vernacular. This text, however, is more than just a translation of Jacopo da Varazze's book. Among the 66 additions to the corpus, recognised as the final version of the archbishop of Genoa's work thanks to Giovanni Paolo

158 Chiesa 1995, 431; Perry 2008, 102, n. 51.
159 Tramontin 1973, 807; Chiesa 1998, 114.
160 Chiesa 1995, 431; Jakšić 2014, 98.
161 Chiesa 1995, 434; Chiesa 1998, 315–316.
162 Chiesa 1995, 432.

Maggioni's research, Malerbi included the 'Life of St Simeon the Prophet', which in its final section states: 'Although his body is in Zadar, placed with great honour, and is completely intact'.[163]

Malerbi's addition of St Simeon was known in the Dalmatian context at least by the mid-18th century. The Dominican friar from Zadar, Francesco Maria Faini, who consulted the 1484 edition of Malerbi's text, cites the aforementioned passage as proof of the arrival of the relics in Zadar in the 13th century. However, he suspended his final conclusions, awaiting further consultation of a Latin version of Varazze's work, acknowledging the many additions made by 'translators' to the original text.[164]

His caution proved justified: the 'Life of St Simeon the Prophet' is absent from both Varazze's original corpus of 178 lives and from the many Latin printed versions, including the 1478 *editio princeps* and subsequent Venetian volumes up to 1516.[165] It is also missing from the late 14th-century Tuscan vernacular, on which the Levasti edition of 1886 is based.[166] Having established its absence from both the Latin corpus and the vernacular tradition, what stands out most in Malerbi's reference to the placement of the relics in Zadar is the contrast with his other interpolations, which generally express a markedly pro-Venetian stance, as Linda Pagnotta has rightly noted.[167]

As such, the explicit acknowledgment of St Simeon's body in Zadar – or at least the silence regarding its simultaneous presence in Venice – is especially telling, particularly when compared with the fervent narrative surrounding the translation of St Lucy, another prestigious relic that entered the lagoon after 1204.[168] Even more surprising is how Malerbi treated another case of contested relics in the Adriatic: the body of St Nicholas of Myra, claimed by both Bari and Venice, two traditions he presented side by side without hesitation.[169]

In fact, the notion of relics being present in multiple locations posed little difficulty for late medieval authors. This invites further reflection: was Malerbi's deference to the Zaratine monument shaped by biographical factors or had the cult of St Simeon the Prophet faded so thoroughly in Venice by the late 15th century that it was entirely overlooked by the Camaldolese monk?

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163 See Pagnotta 2005, 16, 87: 'Benché el corpo suo è a Zara con dignissimo honore collocato et è tutto integro'.

164 As pointed out earlier by Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 87: 'state fatte dalli traduttori molte aggiunte'.

165 See Pagnotta 2005, 148–152.

166 *Ibid.*, 15.

167 *Ibid.*

168 Pagnotta 2005, 18; Perry 2008, 105.

169 Pagnotta 2005, 19.



FIGURE 37 Zadar, church of St Simeon (formerly St Stephen). Tomb of St Simeon, late 13th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Further evidence of this decline appears in the 1639 visitation by Patriarch Federico Baldissera Bartolomeo Corner. When listing relics housed in Venetian churches, he mentioned only those of St Hermolaus in the church of St Simeon the Prophet, an omission that likely marks the lowest point of the prophet's cult in Venice.[170]

Having outlined the events in the lagoon, our focus turns to the history of the saint's body across the Adriatic, where, like in Venice, the earliest evidence of his cult is not textual, but tied to a tomb made in his honour (Fig. 37). If the secondary inscription on the Venetian monument is authentic and Marco Romano's effigy rests on the oldest tomb, then the Zadar sepulchre stands as the second oldest along the Adriatic. This detail supports the idea of an early and deliberate rivalry between the two cities, suggesting that by the early 14th

170 Federico Baldissera Bartolomeo Corner, 1639, AAV, Congr. Concilio, Relat. Dioec. 860A, fol. 443v: 'In ecclesiis ipsius civitatis plures sanctorum reliquiae insignes et inter alias corpora sanctorum ut infra notata inibi requiescunt videlice Federicus cardinalis Cornelius patriarcha Venetiarum [...] In Ecclesia Sancti Simoenis Prophetae Corpus Sancti Ermolai martiris.'

century Venice was aware of – and promptly copied – the iconographic solution found in Zadar.[171]

However, the task entrusted to the skilled hands of Marco Romano, active mainly between Tuscany and northern Italy, resulted a few decades later in a work brimming with pulsating vitality, stylistically distinct – and distant – from the Zadar stone tomb, which still retains a two-dimensional plasticity, especially evident in the treatment of the drapery.[172] Based on its features, the Zadar monument is almost unanimously dated to the end of the 13th century, most likely coinciding with the arrival of the relics in the Dalmatian port.[173]

Nonetheless, it must be emphasised that there are no contemporary accounts of the translation of the body to Zadar. The only evidence comes from retrospective historical accounts, dating to at least two centuries after the events in question. Unlike the Venetian narratives, which trace the origin of the relic to Constantinople, an intermediary stop for many of the holy bodies that arrived in the lagoon, the Zadar accounts assert a direct provenance from the Holy Land.[174]

The earliest mention of the event, though historically inconsistent, appears in Jan Hasištejnsky's 1493 pilgrimage report.[175] According to him, based on information from the priest of St Mary Major, the body arrived during the Crusades, although he dated this before the year 1000 [*sic*]. He stated that 'After the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre, both in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and elsewhere in that region, many holy bodies were taken, as each had successfully been retrieved.'[176] Two Hungarian lords are said to have brought

171 Vidas 2008, 157.

172 Tomasi 2012, 194.

173 Cecchelli 1932, 107; Vidas 2008, 143; Tomasi 2012, 293–294.

174 On the Constantinopolitan and Jerusalemite tradition, see Jakšić 2014, 98, 99, 101, 102.

175 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20. See also Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesco. e Regolari, Visita A 80: 'Interea corpus Sancti Simeonis iusti quod alias ex Hierusolimis in hanc urbem delatum'.

176 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20: 'A kniez, ktery nam to okazowal, prawil mi latinie o tom hrobu, ze gest gey gedna kralowa vherska dala vdielati, A ze toteez miesto Yadro k kralowstwije Vherskemu przislussije, A ze gest ge Czysarz Zygmund panom Benadskym w nieyake Summie znamenitee zastawil. A tyz kniez prawil mi o tom Swatem tiele, kterak gest se tam dostalo: ze gest se stalo przed Pieti Sty lety Anebo gesstie wijecz, kdyz sutkrali krzestiansstij niekterzij s ginymi knijezaty krzestianskymi poslali mnoho lidij do Swatee zemie, chtiecze hrobu bozijeho dobyti, mezy kterymizto kral Vhersky, kteryz toho czasu kralowal, take swa znamenita dwa pany s lidmi swymi z Vher w tuuz gijezdu wyslal gest A kdyz su hrobu bozijeho krzestianee dobyli, tu su w Geruzalemie, w betlemie, Sycz wokolo w tee kraginie mnoho swatych tiel wzali, ktoz czeho dosahl. A tu ti dwa pani Vherska wzali su take tehdaaz dwie Swatee tiele, totizto Swateho Symeona a Swateho Ezechyele proroka, kterehozto Swateho Ezechyele hlawu nam take tehdaz okazowali. A tak potom,

St Simeon's body. On the return journey, one died, and the other perished after entrusting the relic to the people of Zadar upon arrival.[177]

More circumstantial information, at least from a chronological point of view, is contained in the unpublished letter addressed to the Bishop of Verona Agostino Valier by the Zaratines at the time of his apostolic visitation to the Dalmatian city in the spring of 1579.[178] In this document the event is linked to the brief pontificate of Nicholas IV (1288–1292), still marked, according to the letter, by the desire to 'recover the Holy Land'.[179] The narrative appears scarce

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kdyz ti pani Vhersstij zasse domuow tahli, Stalo se gest, ze geden z dopusstienije bozijeho na czestie vmrzel gest prwe, nez su do tehoz miesta zary przigeli. A ten druhy pan, ktery ziw zuostal, przigew do tehoz miesta, nechal gest tiech obau dwau tiel swatych w zarze, miestie, k wiernee rucze v tychz miesstian. A proto gich negmenowal, by to Swata tiela byla, nez ze su dwie pohanska tiela. A s tim odtud gel precz domuow do Vher. A nez gest domuow dogel, skrze dopusst ienije bozije ze gest take vmrzel. A na Smrtedlne posteli tepruwa to zgewil, ze to Swataa tiela gsu, A gmeny gich ge gmenowal A ge wokazal tymz miesstianom w zarze, aby ge sobie schowali. Potom kralowa Vherska [Kralowa vherska] swrchu dotczena zwiediewssi o tom tielu swateho Symeona, dala ten hrob Strziebrny, pozlaczeny, swrchu dotczeny vdielati. A gela sama osobnie do tehoz miesta zary s tymz hrobem, vmyslu suczy to Swate tielo do nieho wloziti a do vher wezti. A tak kdyz su to swrchupsanee Swatee tielo do hrobu toho Strziebrneho wlozili a s nim przedcze geli, na prwnim noczlehu w noczy to teez swatee tielo ztratilo se gest z toho hrobu a na swem prwnieyssim mijestie w zarze zase se gest nalezlo. A kdyz giz kralowna swrchupsanaa ten diw vzrzela, ze to swate tielo z toho hrobu se gest ztratilo, A vslysiala, ze gest zase w zarze na swem prwnieyssim mijestie, poslala gest ten Strziebrny hrob zase do zary, aby ke czti swatemu Symeonowi nad geho hrobem wisal. A lezij to miesto w czistem kragi, ze wokolo nieho w nassich dwu milech wssudy, czisty krag gest. A tu magij wobile, wina, mandluow, ffikuow y ginych rozlicznych wieczy dosti.'

177 *Ibid.*

178 The unpublished document, which lacks its concluding section and contains no reference to its author(s) within the text, is preserved in the Historical Archive of the Diocesan Curia in Verona, the bishopric headed by Valier from 1565 to 1583, during which time he was assigned to the role of apostolic visitor to the Dalmatian diocese (Vitezić 1957, 11). An analysis of the Verona register entitled *Visitatio Iadrensis* shows that it is a miscellaneous volume and not a mere copy of the visitation by the same prelate, whose original is preserved in the Vatican Apostolic Archives. The letter of interest here is in the first section of the manuscript, the pages of which show substantial wear along the upper edge, together with other unsystematically arranged missives.

179 Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita Ab. 3, n.p.: 'Essendosi l'anno 1273 fatta la sinodo universale in Illione sotto la felice memoria de papa Gregorio X principalmente per la recuperation della Terra santa: quantunque in quella ancor i Greci si unissero con la verità della Santissima Romana Chiesa intorno alla procession del Spirito Santo et facendosi poi indi a pochi anni sotto la felice reggenza di papa Niccolò quarto a questo fine la cruciata vi andò a quella impresa da Zara tredeci legni armati de' quali era capitano misser Francesco Cedulino nobile di questa città, et havendosi egli portato valorosamente con questa sua picciol armata, et havendo all'hor tal impresa havuto sucesso felice, toccò per

in details, likely due to the absence of a solid textual basis, as indicated by the reference to the 'lack of a particularly distinct history' and the 'variety of accounts' in the continuation of the letter.[180] This absence of a firm textual basis in the Dalmatian context is echoed in the testimony of another pilgrim, Stefano Mantegazza, from 1600. The Dominican friar asserted that his testimony was based on an oral narrative, specifically on what he was told by an elderly Zaratine confrere.[181] According to this version, the relics did not arrive at the Dalmatian port as a result of a Crusade expedition, but by divine providence, which guided the body aboard a Venetian merchant galley to Zadar. In the first section of his report, titled 'Historia come capitasse a Zara il corpo di S. Simeone giusto' (The history of how the body of St Simeon the Just came to Zadar), which remains the oldest extended account available today, we learn that the saint himself chose Zadar. He is said to have firmly resisted both

sorte alli nostri Zaratini in parte della lor preda questa reliquia santa.' The account of the Zaratines, who had no prior experience in hagiographical accounts and even less in crusading expeditions, seems implausible. They certainly could not have dated the event to the time of the Fourth Crusade, which, initially promoted by the Venetians before being diverted to Constantinople, besieged Zadar in November 1202. Instead, the event is more likely to have taken place during the brief pontificate of Nicholas IV (1288–1292), still marked by the ambition to 'recover the Holy Land', an enterprise that proved anything but successful and coincided with the fall of Acre in 1291, marking the end of the Latin presence in Palestine.

180 Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita A b. 3, n.p.: '[…] tocò per sorte alli nostri Zaratini in parti della lor preda questa reliquia santa la quale per la cagione d'un equivoco, overo scandalo, che naque tra i conpartecipi fu in un certo modo revocata e posta in dubbio, lo qual equivoco et pur scandalo, che vogliamo dire si per mancamento della historia particolarmente distinta in questo caso, come per la varietà delle relationi è difficil con verità esporlo, si ommette dunque per hora in ogni modo il saperlo nulla o poco rilieva, basta intender che all'hor naque una oppinion nel volgo, ch'in Venezia nella chiesa di S. Simeon Grande in un'arca di pietra fabricata a tal fine con la imagine di questo glorioso santo scolpita sopra vi fosse il ver corpo di questo Santo Symeone Giusto propheta, et che poco doppo miracolosamente fu scoperta la verità del fatto: cioè che questa santissima reliquia realmente era in Zara testificata da segni maravigliosi e visioni mandate da Iddio nel trovarla, e doppo trovata con infinita moltitudine de miracoli certificata dalla bontà divina, per chiarir di questo dubbio i suoi fideli; si comè in progresso di brevissimo tempo feci che ella in un subito divene tanto famosa presso i cristiani.' The last part of the passage was also reported by Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 102.

181 Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 439–443, esp. 439: 'Perche penso non sia in tutto sconueneuole, ne per essere al lettore ingrata la narratione del modo col quale la Città di Zara facesse acquisto del pretioso tesoro di questo Santo Corpo, riferir io qui voglio, quello che in proposito dopo lunga diligenza intesi da vn vecchio, et Venerabile Padre di nostra Religione, e natiuo di quella Città.' In total, Mantegazza devoted no fewer than five sections of the account of his return journey in 1600 to the narrative of St Simeon's translation.

being taken across the Adriatic and later attempts by members of the Angevin dynasty to remove parts of his body.[182]

The story begins in a timeless, undefined East, ruled by a 'proud tyrant'. To protect the relics from 'barbarians', Christians sealed them in a wooden chest, set it afloat and entrusted it to divine will.[183] A Venetian merchant bound for Tripoli found the chest, and favourable winds swiftly carried him to a Dalmatian port. Believing the journey was divinely guided, he prepared to reveal the chest's contents. The relics' exceptionality was marked by a 'most sweet fragrance', a common motif in legendary accounts and described in the Venetian translation of the Braidense codex,[184] while the saint's identity was revealed by a 'note' clasped in his right hand.[185]

The tale continues with another recurring motif from Venetian-influenced regions. Upon learning the relics' nature, the merchant vowed to bring them to his homeland. Yet, a complete absence of wind, essential for reaching the lagoon, prevented his journey there. He left the relics in the port of Zadar, placing them beneath the altar of the church of St Mary Major, before urgently departing to Ancona. He revealed their identity to a religious man, saying that if he returned, he would reclaim them; otherwise, they would belong to the man's order.[186] When friars later tried to remove the relics, four church procurators, awakened and alerted in their sleep, thwarted the attempt. The friars fled, leaving the procurators with what they saw as proof of divine intervention.[187]

The narrative continues with the story of the saint's first miracle in Zadar: a 'poor, disconsolate widow' vows to commission the stone tomb (the aforementioned one?) in exchange for the healing of her dying son. While Mantegazza rightly credited the saint's prompt, miraculous healing intervention with transforming the site into a universal pilgrimage destination,[188] the final sections

182 *Ibid.*, 439–440.

183 *Ibid.*, 439.

184 Chiesa 1995, 436.

185 Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 440: 'Raccolse dunque da tutti questi, et altri gloriosi, et felici successi gran speme del nascosto tesoro, onde infiammato per voglia di vedere ciò che nella cassa ricourato staua, senz'altro dire l'aperse, et vsendone vna flagranza soauissima d'odor, conobbe all'hora, che quello era veramente vn corpo Santo, e da vn'biglietto, che nella destra mano teniua intese appresso, che era il corpo di S. Simeone.'

186 *Ibid.*, 440–441.

187 *Ibid.*, 441.

188 *Ibid.*: 'Fra le quali così ordinando Iddio, per essaltaione del suo santo, v'accorse anco una pouera sconsolata Veduoa, che un figlio vnico in termine di morte hauea. Questa prostrata auanti al Santo Corpo fece à Dio voto, che riauendosi il suo figliuolo per intercesione di quel Santo, gli harebbe procurato più degno luogo, facendogli fabricare vn'Arca di pietra, et aggiungendoui altre caldissime orationi, non partì finalmente, che hebbe

of his account reveal historical inaccuracies.[189] He misattributed the commissioning of a later silver reliquary shrine to St Elizabeth of Hungary (canonised in 1235) rather than to Elizabeth Kotromanić, wife of Louis of Anjou, during the Angevin rule over Zadar (1358–1409). The account closes with a questionable story of a Venetian embassy's failed attempt to seize the relics, allegedly prevented by 'Divine Majesty' itself.[190]

However, Mantegazza's version is not the only one to have come down to us, further suggesting that the legend, long lacking an official written version, was basically transmitted in an oral form and gradually enriched with additional details and variants. A partly divergent version appears in Lorenzo Fondra's *Istoria della insigne reliquia di San Simeone Profeta* (1686), still a key reference for the saint's cult in Zadar. Fondra based his narrative on oral traditions, scenes on the Elizabethan shrine and 'charters that make some mention of it',[191] a partly visual approach somewhat reflected in Mantegazza's version.

Based on these sources, Fondra presented three possibilities for the arrival of the holy relics and early cultic attestations: a date of 1213, inferred from a lost note; that 1213 was considered by him a transcription error for 1273 (the most probable date, according to him); and, as evidence of a well-established cult by the 1280s, a now-lost list of Zadar's patrician families from 1283, found in 1632 inside the silver shrine.[192] The date 1273 was deduced from the aforementioned letter of 1579 to Valier, known to the historian in a redaction that differed from the version in Verona. Fondra's omission of a crucial part of the letter, in which the arrival of the remains is placed under the pontificate of Nicholas IV, led to the passage referencing the Council of Lyon, erroneously attributed to 1273, which was taken up by subsequent scholarship and became the main chronological reference up to the present day.[193] Yet, a late 13th-century arrival fits material evidence, especially the first stone tomb, likely commissioned soon after.

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la desiderata gratia, poscia che vscita appena di Chiesa, vidde il caro figlio sano, che l'andaua ad incontrare tutto allegro, onde la Madre per souerchia allegrezza, quando lo vidde, hebbe à uscire di vita, piangendo, e ridendo nell'istesso tempo. Questo miracolo fu cagione, che non pure la Città di Zara, mà anco in paesi lontani diuulgato, concorreuano da ogni parte genti à visitare quel Santo Corpo.'

189 I am referring to the two following sections of Mantegazza's narrative, *ibid.*, 442–444: 'Come la Reina d'Ongaria Elisabeta venne à visitare il S. Corpo, et di quanto gli auenne' and 'La Republica di Venetia manda a Zara per hauere il Corpo Santo ma non gli riesce'.

190 *Ibid.*, 443.

191 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 40.

192 *Ibid.*, 66–70, 73.

193 *Ibid.*, 66.



FIGURE 38 Zadar, church of St Simeon (formerly St Stephen). Francesco da Milano, silver-gilt reliquary shrine of St Simeon, 1380
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

A second sarcophagus, this time a reliquary shrine in silver gilt, was commissioned, as mentioned above, by Elizabeth Kotromanić, in the second half of the 14th century. Contrary to Mantegazza's claim, it was not made in Constantinople, but by the Italian master Francesco da Milano, active in Zadar from 1359 to 1400 (Fig. 38). The project was entrusted to five Zadar patricians and funded with 1,000 silver marks, as recorded in a document dated 5 July 1377 in the State Archives in Zadar.[194] The work, planned to use 240 kg of silver, exceeded the one-year timeline and was completed by 1380, as confirmed by an inscription on the shrine, which, as in the Venetian example, concludes with the master's signature (Fig. 39).[195]

The dedicatory inscription is on the central panel at the back of the rectangular case, surmounted by a double-pitched sloping roof (Fig. 40). On the front (Fig. 41) the saint's reclining figure follows the iconography of the stone tomb,

194 For the transcription of the contract, see Praga 1930; Petricioli 1983, 105–106.
195 Praga 1930; Petricioli 1983, 17; Tomasi 2012, 295.

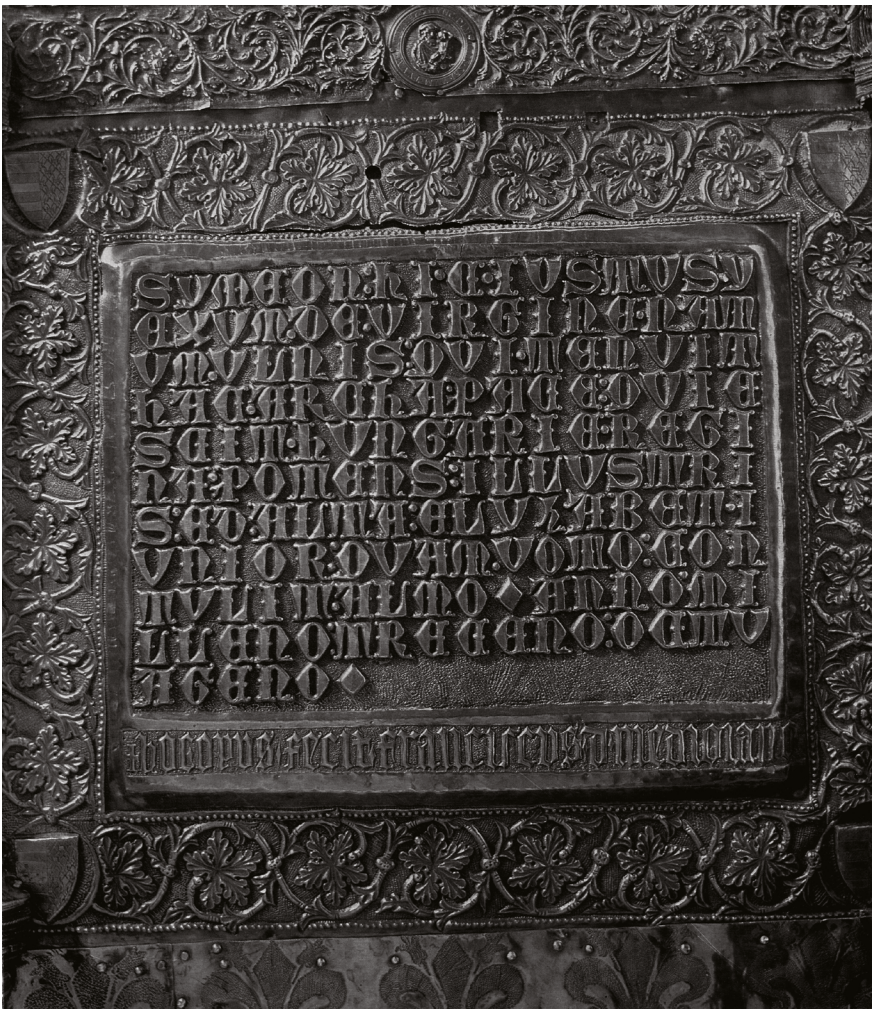

FIGURE 39 Detail of figure 38: inscription
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 18

rendered in high relief.[196] The surrounding scenes are more subtly embossed, though not uniformly throughout the cycle. *The Presentation at the Temple* stands out due to its central position and deeper relief (Fig. 42).[197] Isolated from the *ad hoc* designed local narrative, it is the only scene explicitly mentioned in the contract with the Lombard master. Along with the inscription,

196 Vidas 2008, 143.
197 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 100; Petricioli 1983, 13.



FIGURE 40 Detail of figure 38: rear side
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 41 Detail of figure 38: front side
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

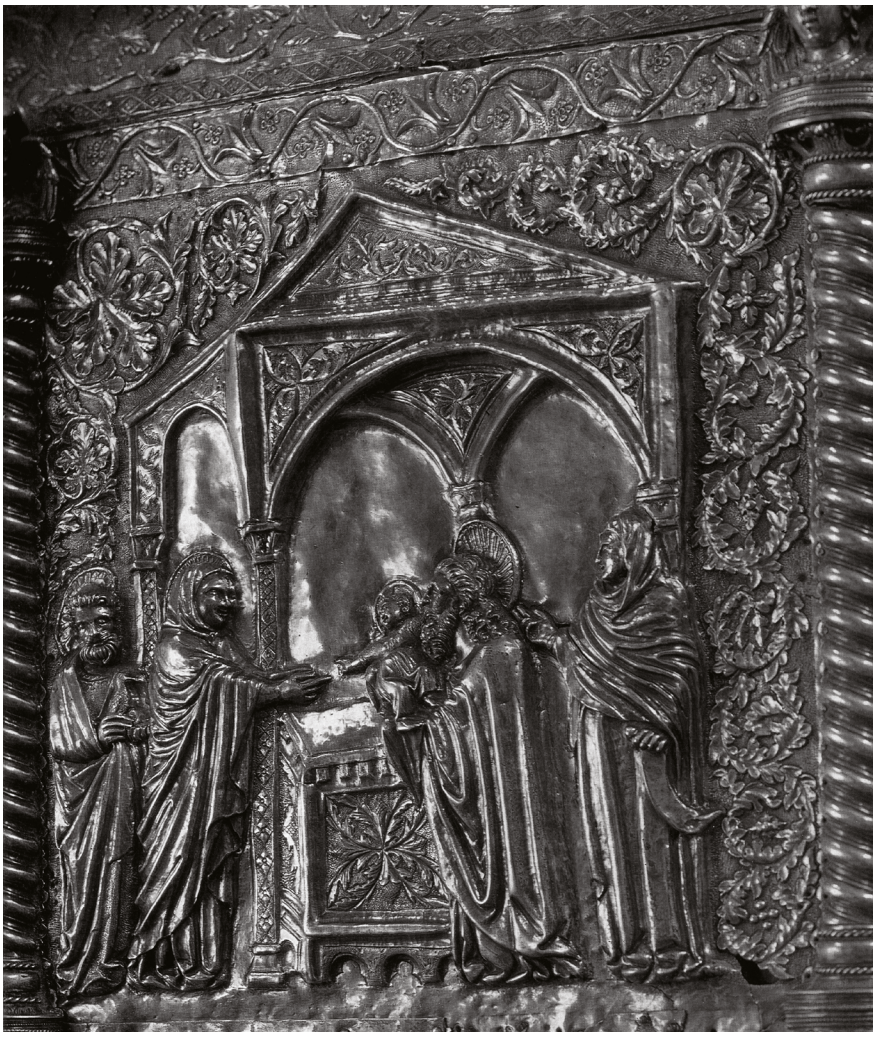

FIGURE 42 Detail of figure 38: *The Presentation at the Temple*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 10

this traditional scene probably served as a focal point for the devout approaching the monument, as attested by pilgrim accounts.[198] For it, the master likely drew from the workshop's repertoire of models, as evidenced by the

198 See Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'Quivi è una arca granda a proportione dil corpo, tutta di argento, indorata, e in la faciata sonno queste for/male lettere de relevo: "Simeon hic iustus, Iesum, de Virgine natum, ulnis qui tenuit, hac arca cura pace quiescit, Ungarie regina potens illustris et alta Elisabeth iunior quam voto contulit almo. Anno milleno treceno octuageno. Hoc opus fecit Franciscus de Mediolano". Tamen il corpo è in

Giottoesque layout, emphasised by scholarship and supported by precise parallels.[199] While the contract stipulates that the shrine's shape should follow the presented model, it offers no specific guidance for the other scenes, referring only to forms, images, signs and miracles.

Moreover, the contract makes no mention of a textual source, suggesting that the Zaratines likely did not compose a narrative of the translation to assert possession of the relics. Their response appears instead to have been visual: the Elizabethan shrine provides the earliest narrative, albeit figurative, of the saint's supernatural interventions on behalf of the Zaratine community. The cycle, focussed on post-Deposition miracles, unfolds through the 'images, signs and miracles' engraved on the shrine – imagery that would have been far more legible to late medieval devotees than to modern viewers seeking concrete historical references. This has, in turn, given rise to a variety of interpretative hypotheses.[200] With the story's transmission, many details faded or became distorted; unsurprisingly, as the shrine's *de visu* observation could continually inspire new interpretations. By the time a textual elucidation was sought to organise the chaotic dissemination of the story, multiple versions were already circulating. Notably, Lorenzo Fondra openly acknowledged that the shrine's silver-gilt images shaped and guided his own reconstruction.

The main narrative spans 13 scenes, on the short sides of the shrine, on the long sides and on the hinged panel, and likely begins on the left with a ship tossed by a storm at sea (Fig. 43). Guiding the vessel towards the safe harbour of the Dalmatian city is the blessing figure of St Simeon, positioned near the mast at the stern, sharply contrasting with the demon clinging to the foremast. While the meaning of this scene has sparked diverse interpretative hypotheses, the most compelling explanation identifies it as the arrival of St Simeon's relics in Zadar.[201] The reading aligns, perhaps too neatly, with Fondra's version of the legend, in which a ship carrying the relics from Syria is caught in an Adriatic storm, but safely reaches the shore.[202] This differs from Mantegazza's account, in which the voyage across the Mediterranean is divinely swift and effortless.

The scene continues the narrative begun on the adjacent panel at the front left corner, depicting an attempted theft of the relics by friars in Franciscan

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lo altare, e la arca è situata di sopra lo altare, come cosa oblata, et se apre per dimostrarla come cosa digna.'

199 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 119.

200 The bibliography on the shrine is vast; see mainly Petricioli 1983; Belamarić 1992, 321–350; Munk 2004, 253–262; Vidas 2008, 136–175; Jakšić 2014, 95–124; Jakšić 2022, 393–419.

201 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 103.

202 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 73–74.



FIGURE 43 Detail of figure 38: *The Arrival of St Simeon's Relics in Zadar*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 4

habit (Fig. 44).[203] Following Mantegazza's plot, the event takes place in the church of St Mary Major; Fondra's later version relocates it to a suburban cemetery, where the remains had been hidden by the 'noble man' who had brought them from the Holy Land.[204] Unlike Mantegazza, Fondra did not disclose the man's origins; yet, like Mantegazza's Venetian merchant, he is a foreigner intent on returning the relics to his homeland as quickly as possible. In both accounts the friars, once aware of the treasure, attempt to seize it for their order's collection in Zadar.[205] Their plan is thwarted by the arrival of local authorities, identified as three city rectors (Fondra) or four church procurators (Mantegazza).[206] The shrine's visual narrative follows Fondra's version – or more likely vice versa: Fondra followed the shrine.

The narrative, interspersed by *The Presentation at the Temple*, continues clockwise along the main sides with four scenes marked by Angevin imagery, though a clear narrative connection remains unclear, prompting various interpretations.[207] The first panel, the decoding of which has long troubled scholars, is most commonly understood as depicting *The Zadar Procession Welcoming Louis the Great at the City Port* (Fig. 45). An alternative proposal by Bersa suggests the panel depicts the return of St Simeon's holy body in 1358, previously taken during the Venetian siege of 1345.[208] Although the two aforementioned chronicles of the siege (ending in December 1346) do not mention the abduction, the lack of evidence confirming the body's presence in Zadar from 1346 to 1358 leaves Bersa's theory potentially plausible.[209]

The cycle continues with three scenes traditionally linked to the shrine's donor: on the short side, *Elizabeth Caught Stealing the Finger* (Fig. 46); on the tripartite back side, *The Queen Offering the Shrine to the Saint* (Fig. 47); and, next to the dedicatory inscription, *The Death of Ban Stephen Kotromanić*, the queen's father (Fig. 48).[210] Among these scenes, all featuring either the saint, the shrine or both, it is the alleged theft by Elizabeth that particularly draws our attention. Indeed, as has already been noted, the absence of a crown and the characterisation of the female figure's clothing suggest that, rather than

203 Vidas 2008, 153.

204 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 74.

205 *Ibid.*, 74–75; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 1441.

206 See respectively Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 76; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 1441.

207 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 115.

208 Trovisani [Bersa] 1923; Jakšić 2014, 101.

209 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 105; for one of the latter proposals, which would recognise the *collocatio corporis*, see Jakšić 2014, 101.

210 This, however, is an anachronistic scene, as the death of the Ban of Bosnia, accused of heresy and here shown under the saint's protection, occurred in 1353; see Vidas 2008, 161–164; Jakšić 2014, 115.



FIGURE 44 Detail of figure 38: *The Discovery and Attempted Theft of the Relics*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 8



FIGURE 45 Detail of figure 38: *The Zadar Procession Welcoming Louis the Great at the City Port*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 14



FIGURE 46 Detail of figure 38: *Elizabeth Caught Stealing the Finger*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 3

Elizabeth, the depiction may actually represent another noblewoman to whom the controversial gesture was originally attributed.[211] Nevertheless, over time, the legendary tales surrounding the shrine led to the Queen of Hungary being seen as the sole actor of the event, as clearly reflected in the words of the French pilgrim Louis de Rochechouart, who visited the church in 1461, just eight decades after the completion of the shrine: 'The body is intact, except for the right thumb, which a certain queen of Hungary took.'[212]

211 Vidas 2008, 154–155.

212 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229: 'Corpus est integrum, excepto pollice dextro, quem regina quedam Ungarie abstraxit.'



FIGURE 47 Detail of figure 38: *The Queen Offering the Shrine to the Saint*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 19



FIGURE 48 Detail of figure 38: *The Death of Ban Stephen Kotromanić*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 21

The tale, attested early on thanks to Louis de Rochechouart's account, was shaped through oral transmission over the following decades and survives in two versions from the turn of the 15th to 16th century. According to a 1579 letter to Valier, Elizabeth, driven by 'excessive devotion', cut off the saint's finger, but, overcome by a 'turmoil of the mind', could not find her way out of the church. She was forced to confess, revealing the finger hidden in her chest – now infested with worms.[213] This differs from Mantegazza's 1600 version, in which, after a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine in Trsat, the queen is granted the ring finger of his left hand by the bishop [*sic*] in Zadar.[214]

At this point, the narrative shifts to the saint's exceptional deeds in Zadar, some of which are depicted on the back part of the slanted top. The surface is again tripartite: while the two side scenes remain uncertain due to a lack of textual evidence, the middle scene stands out. The prevailing interpretation suggests it depicts a miracle performed by the saint during the shrine's construction: the figure of the craftsman with hammer and chisel, arranging the shrine on four columns, is commonly seen as a self-portrait of Francesco da Milano (Fig. 49).[215] Yet one might question whether the scene instead illustrates the widow's episode, as recounted by Mantegazza. If so, this first miracle of St Simeon in Zadar is likely out of sequence, possibly a result of changes made during the 17th-century restoration. It would have replaced the scene of the saint punishing a blasphemous monk and stood alongside other post-Deposition miracles, such as *The Deliverance of a Nobleman Possessed by a Demon* (Fig. 50) and *The Resurrection of a Drowned Boy Following His Placement on the Shrine* (Fig. 51).[216] These three reliefs are concentrated on the inner face of the central panel; their viewing was made possible by special hinges placed along the underside, allowing the panel to be flipped over and the sacred body to be displayed.[217]

As we shall see, the body was not placed inside the silver reliquary until 1632. Nevertheless, the shrine served as the centrepiece of the late medieval setting: it was positioned above the 13th-century tomb, drawing pilgrims' attention to its scenes, particularly the sequence of miracles. With the panel

213 In the continuation of the story, contrary to the French pilgrim's account, once replaced in the shrine the finger miraculously rejoined the body, fusing with the saint's hand 'as if it had never been separated before'; Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita Ap. b. 3, n.p.: 'come se egli non fusse stato separato giamai'.

214 The story concludes with the miraculous healing of the sore on the queen's chest. Unable to leave Zadar's port due to a lack of wind, she ultimately left the relic at the church of St Mary Major; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 442.

215 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 112.

216 Vidas 2008, 147, 152.

217 *Ibid.*, 137.



FIGURE 49 Detail of figure 38: *The First Miracle in Zadar* (?)
VIDAS 2008, 148, FIG. 11

reversed, these scenes were placed lower down, becoming the focal point for devotees approaching the shrine. This thoughtful stratagem, likely devised by the Zadar nobles, allowed the faithful to 'touch with their own hands' the benefits they hoped to receive by addressing their prayers to the holy body, held in exceptional reverence.[218]

In the testimony of the Italian pilgrim Francesco Suriano (1480–1484), who reported that 'no possessed person can approach that holy body, which is freed immediately before it reaches the place', we find a reflection of the stories

218 See also *ibid.*, 136, 151, 155.



FIGURE 50 Detail of figure 38: *The Deliverance of a Nobleman Possessed by a Demon*
PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 61

inspired by the shrine's images – tales that spread widely through pilgrims accounts.[219] It is precisely the scene of the nobleman's deliverance from the devil that stands out. As has been duly emphasised in historiography, for the first time the sarcophagus beneath which the young man prays after

219 Francesco Suriano, 1480–1484, ed. 1900, 251: 'nullo indemoniato può approssimarsi ad quel corpo santo, che immediatamente avanti che giunge al loco, è liberato.'

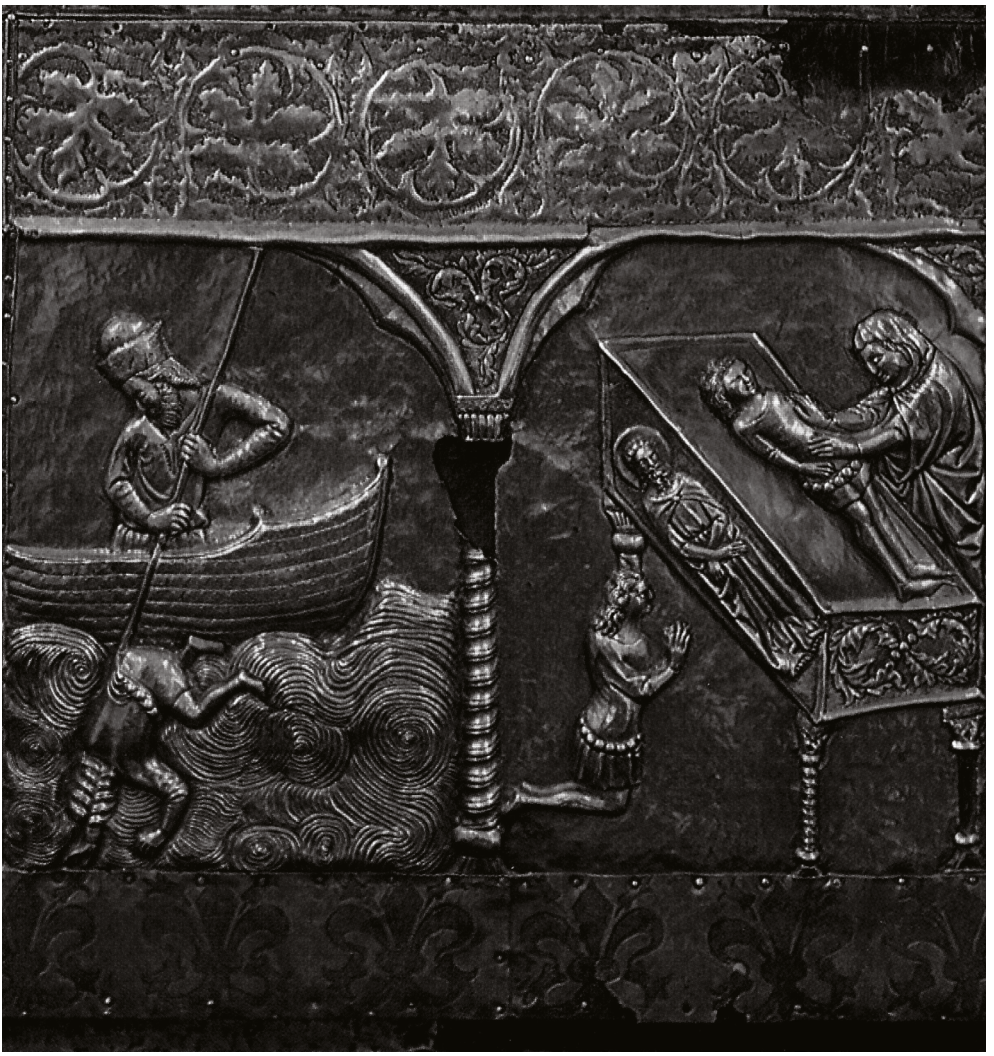

FIGURE 51 Detail of figure 38: *The Resurrection of a Drowned Boy Following His Placement on the Shrine* PETRICIOLI 1983, PL. 43

receiving grace is shown with a sloping covering, following the model of the late 14th-century sarcophagus.[220]

This detail sets it apart from the other scenes, where the sarcophagus follows the design of the stone sarcophagus with a flat top, but with the variation that the saint's effigy appears not on the vertical front panel, but on the closing lid, thus aligning its design more closely with the silver shrine. In my view,

220 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 115.

this deliberate ambiguity – or, in other words, the lack of a clear distinction between the 14th-century silver shrine (which likely appears on the relief of Elizabeth donating the shrine; see Fig. 47) and the stone tomb around which these miracles occurred – was an intentional choice rather than a change made during the three years of the work's construction. While miracles had taken place around the 13th-century tomb, depicting it in this hybrid form likely served a strategic purpose: encouraging the faithful to recognise the silver shrine as a vessel of exceptional virtue from the outset, inspiring them to project their hopes onto an object of worship already believed to be 'operational' and working miracles.

Whatever Elizabeth's motivations for commissioning such an imposing work in honour of the saint – perhaps dynastic, a votive offering prompted by the absence of a male heir to the Hungarian throne – the people of Zadar promptly seized the opportunity. The city's aristocracy, who acted as royal intermediaries in contracts, but also represented the class most opposed to Venetian interference in Zadar's domestic and foreign policy, saw in the potential return of Venice's dominion an insurmountable obstacle to free commerce and their autonomy. They used this occasion to implement an iconographic programme that underscored the centuries-old presence of the saint's relics in Dalmatia, while emphasising the exceptional nature of the sacred remains.

In asserting that the holy body rested in Zadar rather than in the lagoon, the narrative concentrated on miraculous events occurring *in loco*. These extraordinary manifestations elevated the church of St Mary Major to one of the city's main places of worship, spreading the renown of the relics far beyond the Zadar countryside and drawing visitors from all across the region. Within a few decades after master Francesco made the Zadar sarcophagus, the cult attracted a growing number of pilgrims. This process was undoubtedly enhanced by Zadar's position as a mandatory stop for ships *en route* to the Holy Land. The Dalmatian city was not only a vital hub for sailors, but also a highly sought-after destination for late medieval pilgrims, whose interest was largely focussed on the prophet's holy remains housed in the collegiate church, conveniently located just steps from where their ships dropped anchor.

2.4 *The Pilgrims' Encounter with St Simeon's Body and Its* Mise-en-Scène

St Simeon, according to Luke, was the 'righteous and devout' man from Jerusalem who had the privilege of holding the Son of God in his arms on the day of the Presentation at the Temple. On that occasion, he uttered the famous canticle *Nunc dimittis*, also known as the Song of Simeon. This passage, part of the Latin liturgy and familiar to Western travellers, is evoked almost without exception in their travelogues.

The first testimonies by voyagers date back to the late 1410s, by which time the presence of the holy body in the city had already gained pan-European resonance. This is made explicit in the account of Stephan III von Gumppenberg, who, on his return journey in 1419, visited Zadar with the primary intention of seeing the holy body. His plan failed, prompting the German pilgrim to lament: 'We went into the town, hoping to see St Simeon, but the one who held the keys was away.'[221] The frustration of being unable to reach the holy remains is further evidenced in later accounts. A similar experience occurred at the start of Georges Lengherand's stay in Zadar on 16 June 1485, when he noted the disappointment of his group;[222] but the bitterness turned to joy the following day, when the body was finally displayed 'among a great multitude of pilgrims and with the mother of the Queen of Cyprus also present, together with the gentlemen and ladies of her company'.[223]

The determination in wanting to come into contact with the holy body of biblical memory is also evident in the account of Sebald Rieter the Younger (1479), the third member of the Nuremberg family who undertook the journey to the Holy Land in the 15th century. He reported that, due to the plague raging in Venice, pilgrims arriving from the lagoon were barred from entering Zadar. However, this rule seemingly foresaw exceptions: the patron of the ship managed, albeit with difficulty, to negotiate the possibility for a few of them to visit the tomb of St Simeon, on the condition that they immediately returned to the galley once the much-desired visit was over.[224]

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221 Stephan III von Gumppenberg, 1419, ed. 1584, fol. 246v: 'Am Freytag fuhren wir vor tag auß der Porten/ vnd fuhren immer zwischen den Bergen/ da lagen auff beyden seiten viel schoner Hoff und Kloster auff gutem Land. Wir hetten nicht Wind/ vnnd fuhren mit Rudern biß gen Saders/ da kamen wir vor Vesperzeit hin/ vnnd giengen in die Statt/ hetten Sanct Simeon gern gesehen/ da war der außgeritten der die Schlussel darzu hett.'

222 Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 87–89: '[…] et aussy pour veoyr le corps saint Syméon qui rechut Nostre Seigneur quand il fut prèsentè présenté pour estre circoncis; mais à cause que pluiseurs avoyent les clefz pour ouvrir le tombeau, et dont l'un qui en avoit l'une desdites clefz estoit hors, ne le peusmes veoir, dont nous fusmes bien desplaisans.'

223 *Ibid.*: '[…] et après tirâmes en l'église de saint Syméon, et ny eusmes guères arresté, que icelluy corps en grand magnificence, après que les cloches de ladicte église eurent esté batelées, nous fut monstré en grand multitude de pélerins et à la mère de la royne de Cypres aussy y estant, et les gentilz hommes et demoiselles de sa compaignie; et certes c'est belle chose de veoir ledit corps saint. Aussy y estoit le chief de saint Julite confesseur, et en une autre église nous fut dit que le corps saint Pancracy y estoit.'

224 Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 41: 'Item am 15ten tag juny mit untergangk der sünnen tratten wir wider in dy gallien und komen darnach am 18ten tag juny bey Sara in dy portt, da woltt man uns des sterben halb zu Venedig nit einlassen, sunder mit mue erwarb uns der patron, das man unser ettlich in dy statt lyss, Sant Symeons grab in einer

The sea was unpredictable, and one had to be cautious of the dangers that could make such a difficult and perilous journey fatal.[225] As a result, many pilgrims were forced to forgo the obligatory stop, though they rarely failed to record the prophet's name in their diaries. One wonders, therefore, if their attitude was not solely driven by the intention to document the presence of the holy bodies marking the sacred topography of the ports they passed, but also by the belief that the written notes themselves constituted a means of appropriating the sacredness inherent in these first-class relics. The benefits they offered could, after all, be made 'available' again through the devotional armchair reading of travel diaries, long after the journey had ended and far from those ports.

We can consider the testimony of Wolfgang Zillenhart in this light. At the end of the 15th century, despite being kept away from the Dalmatian coast and port by unfavourable winds, he still recorded: 'In the same land lies Zadar, a city where it is said that St Simeon is buried.'[226] Similarly, about four decades earlier, Gabriele Capodilista had been unable to disembark due to an outbreak of plague, this time within Zadar's own walls. However, this did not prevent the Paduan traveller from recalling that 'here lies the body of St Simeon' and emphasising, in great detail, the integrity of the holy body, even though he had not experienced it firsthand.[227] This latter detail was seen as inherent to the holy remains and was the first clear sign distinguishing it from ordinary human remains, confirming its status as a body endowed with exceptional virtues.[228]

From the outset, the insistence on this quality, comparable to the descriptions of St Euphemia's remains, shaped the pilgrims' portrayals of the prophet's body. The wealth of travel accounts allows us to trace the development of this topos, alongside the cultic practices surrounding the tomb. While an

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kirchen im thum zu besehen, der da leibhaftig liget, auch da bey des propheten Johelis hirnschaln, und musten von stund wider auss der statt uff dy gallyen, da selbst wir der wonatz halb im mere ettlich stund stillagen, und von Parentz piss gen Zara rechnet man 200 welisch meyl.' See also the testimony of Hans Tucher, who travelled on the same ship: Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 352–353.

225 Bacci 2004, 223–224.

226 Wolfgang Zillenhart (Zülnhart), 1495–1496, ed. 1932–1933, 79: 'In dem selben land ligt Zara, ain statt sagt man, das sant Symon da begraben lig.'

227 Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 55: 'Et la maitina sequente se trovassemo sopra Zarra, cità in Dalmatia, situata in piano, molto bella et forte; et quivi iace el corpo de Sancto Simeone, che meritoe tenere in brazo el dolce nostro redemptore quando dixe el cantico Nunc dimitis servum tuum, Domine etc., et è anchora intero che non gli mancha se non la ponta del naso. […] Quivi desideraveno tuti far scala, ma restassemo per la peste che gli era.'

228 Bacci 2009, 35.

anonymous Frenchman, at the turn of the second and third decades of the 14th century, briefly emphasised that the body 'is a very beautiful and notable thing', it is the almost contemporary testimony of Johann of Frankfurt (1426–1427) that offers us the first of many variations regarding the exceptional preservation of the holy remains: 'The glorious, whole and unincinerated body was shown to us.'[229] The German pilgrim also indirectly confirmed that the ostension was contemplated from the very beginning: the easy accessibility, as well as the possibility of close inspection of the holy body, were key to the cult's appeal, generating a remarkable number of descriptions. These range from the more hermetic ones, all dating to 1440, by Hans von der Gruben, Girnard von Schwalbach and Hans Rot, who record the body as complete and intact, to the richer elaborations in detail of later decades.[230] It is thus possible to trace a range of expressions characterising the body's condition, rendered in various European languages: 'tout entière', 'integrum et non incineratum', 'et is also whole', 'hoole save', 'leÿbhafftig', 'gantz ohnversehrett' and so on.

From the 1450s, descriptions of the body consistently emphasised its integrity, while noting the absence of the tip of the nose, the bodily part most prone to decay. The earliest testimony concerning it comes from Gabriele Capodilista, who, as we have seen, lacked *de visu* observation. His account was likely based either on information provided by the ship's crew or on earlier written sources.[231] As is well known, reading the travel diaries of those who had already undertaken the journey was a common practice before departure, a habit that inevitably contributed to the spread of shared topoi and the creation of standardised formulas. While the exact origin of Capodilista's testimony remains uncertain, the same motif recurs in later diaries, such as that of Hans Bernhard von Eptingen in 1460, and with a slight variation in an anonymous Englishman's report, who noted: 'hoole save onli as I understond itt is a litell broken uppon the nose and the skynne is drie'.[232]

The most meticulous descriptions date to the 1480s, including the renowned account of Felix Fabri: 'We saw the holy body; the openings of the eyes, ears and mouth were blocked with cotton. They say the tongue in the mouth is

229 See respectively Anonymous, 1419–1425, ed. 1905, 78; Johann of Frankfurt, 1426–1427, ed. 1986, 56: 'ostensum nobis fuit gloriosum corpus integrum et non incineratum.'

230 Hans von der Gruben, 1440, ed. 1894, 118; Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 115–116; Hans Rot, 1440, ed. 1882, 349.

231 Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 55: 'et è anchora intero che non gli mancha se non la ponta del naso.'

232 Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 212; English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 154.

still fresh, neither decayed nor corrupted.'[233] Fabri explicitly cited a source no longer available to us, confirming the practice of consulting prior accounts and the difficulty of verifying others' claims firsthand: 'I read in a pilgrim's account that one claimed to have seen the tongue as fleshy and fresh, but we were not allowed close enough to verify this ourselves.'[234] The meaning becomes even clearer, despite the shift from textual to oral transmission, in the later German version of Fabri's account: 'Whether the tongue in his mouth is still green, fresh and incorrupt, as I heard from certain pilgrims, I cannot say, for we were not allowed close enough to pry open his mouth.'[235]

Although Fabri could not examine the body closely from the desired distance,[236] his testimony suggests that such an experience was both permitted and standard practice. In this context it is worth recalling the meticulous scrutiny of the bodily parts recorded by another traveller from the 1480s, the Italian pilgrim Antonio da Crema: 'I do not think that a more solid and united body than this one may be found, where nothing but a little bit of the tip of the nose is missing, but the nails, the genitals and the other particularities of the body are seen joined and united to his places as if he had been dead for a few days.'[237]

The exceptional preservation of the body led to recurring comparisons with other holy relics, including those at major Christian pilgrimage sites. Sebald Rieter the Younger (1479), returning from Jerusalem, wrote: 'St Simeon's body, completely bare and incorrupt, [is] of such incorruptibility as no other holy body we have ever seen or heard of.'[238] He also mentioned another medieval topos that was common (as seen) in the *inventiones* and *translationes* of relics

233 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373.

234 *Ibid*.

235 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 186r: 'Ob die Zunge in seinem Mund noch grün/ frisch vnd vnverwesen sey/ als ich von etlichen Pilgrin gehört habe/ weyß ich nicht/ Denn so nahe/ daß wir jm dem Mundt möchten auffbrechen/ kamen wir jhm nicht.'

236 The Swiss Dominican's bitter remark is surprising, given that on other occasions he benefitted from privileged conditions compared to other pilgrims when performing cultic practices while visiting monuments along the Dalmatian coast (St Euphemia in Rovinj) and in Venice (the body of St Zechariah); Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 100.

237 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: '[…] il corpo dil iusto e timorato sancto Simeone, qual meritò havere ne li suoi ulni il glorioso bambino, nato di la Verzine, nostro Salvatore: non credo già più compito, saldo et unito corpo di questo si ritrova, che altro che un poco di la punta dil naso non li manca, ma le unge, li genitali et le altre particularitade dil corpo si vedeno congionte e unite a li loci suoi come se fusse morto da pochi zorni.'

238 Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 136: 'St Simeons leichnam gantz ploss und unverwesen, von der gleichen unverwesenlicheyt aynichs heyligen leychnams unser kayner vor nye gesehen oder gehortt hett.'

across the Adriatic, with which the excellence of the sacred remains was further emphasised: 'At times a sweet fragrance emanates from this body, which those near the grave perceive and marvel at.'[239]

Pietro Casola, one of the most acute observers of cult objects along the Dalmatian coast, whose diary remains a key source for art historians,[240] provided not only a detailed description of the holy body, but also declared it the 'most dignified and beautiful relic' he had ever seen, finally adding, as a term of comparison, 'neither in Rome nor elsewhere'.[241] However, pilgrims did not merely linger to observe the holy body, which Jan Aerts claimed was displayed naked to please the Duke of Pomerania.[242] Much like their approach to St Euphemia's remains, they sought to intensify their experience by entering into indirect contact, touching the prophet's body with small objects, such as rings and paternosters, or by seeking direct contact, an opportunity that undoubtedly marked the apotheosis of their religious practice. Casola's account captures this vividly: 'And there, the pilgrims made many offerings and had the relic touched with paternosters, rings, etc.'[243] As noted above, such precious objects, often referred to as *Kleinodien* by pilgrims hailing from across the Alps, were commonly taken home as prestigious religious souvenirs, gifted to friends and relatives.[244] In 1481 Paul Walther Guglingen described an all-encompassing haptic experience of directly touching the holy body with bare hands and rubbing it with his paternoster: 'All the pilgrims saw this saint, and I touched him with my, alas, unworthy and bare hands and with my paternoster.'[245] A decade later Peter Fassbender noted that pilgrims touched the entire holy body, all over, with the precious objects they were carrying.[246]

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239 *Ibid.*: 'es kumpt auch zu maniger zeyt im gar, das gar ein lyplicher ruch und edler geschmacken von dysem leychnam reücht, des dy menschen, so ye zu sölcher zeyt nahet bey dem grab sind, entpfinden und sich des gross verwundern.'

240 See, for example, Petricioli 1966, 205–208; Vidas 2008, 158.

241 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121: 'Andai con li altri peregrini, però che cossì era ordinato, ad una giesia de Santo Symeone, unde, cantato lo vespero, fu monstrato lo corpo de santo Symeone, reliquia dignissima e la più bella che mai vedesse, né in Roma né altroe.'

242 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–139.

243 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121: 'E lì de peregrini se facevano de molte oblatione e facevano tucare essa reliquia, con Paternostri et anelle, etc.'

244 See pp. 63–65 above.

245 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'Hunc sanctum viderunt omnes peregrini, et ego tetigi eum meis heu indignis et nudis manibus et cum Pater noster.'

246 Peter Fassbender, 1492–1493, ed. 1880, 250: 'In der selver stat Sara lycht begraven Sent Symeon, der unsen herren in synen armen nam in dem tempel, den sycht man noch also bescheydelich, als were hye bynnen eyme jair gestorben und die pylgerim haent ir cleynoider bestrychen oever des heilligen gantzen lycham und da selffs ys ouch vyll anders heiltomps.'; see also Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6: 'Vnd jn einer

This practice fulfilled another key function of objects that had come into contact with miraculous bodies: their role as talismans during long and dangerous journeys. By carrying these objects constantly, the protective effect was intensified, prolonging, in theory, the moment of contact indefinitely.

Obviously, the touching of the saint's hands, which had come into direct contact with the Redeemer's body at the moment of the Presentation at the Temple, was the most desired. Indeed, it was Francesco Suriano in 1484 who explicitly recalled this biblical episode, noting that the palms were still 'palpable'.[247] Yet, three decades later, Ribera's account departed from this tradition. When attempting the same gesture, he expressed haptic scepticism, observing that, contrary to earlier claims, the hands were not soft to the touch.[248]

Also connected to the body part considered the most precious is, as we have seen, the legend of Elizabeth Kotromanić's theft of the saint's finger. However, this is not the only legend involving Elizabeth that inspired pilgrims' tales. They also recount the saint's refusal to leave Zadar and his rejection of the shrine commissioned by the queen of Hungary. The first mention of attempts to remove the saint's remains, though vague and possibly linked to other legends about the shrine, emphasises his steadfast refusal, as protector of Zadar, to leave the Dalmatian port.[249] This comes from an anonymous Englishman (1480–1526), who wrote: 'And itt is saide itt cannot bee meoved from thens.'[250]

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kilchen, da litt ein helge jungfrovw mit namen Eostasia, die litt jm fronaltar. Vnd jn eim andern altar, da litt der wirdig priester herr Sÿmeon, der ze Jherusalem Gott jn sine hend enpfieng, vnd hatt gemacht das "Nunc dimittis" Gott ze lob vnd eren jn Salomons tempel zuo Jherusalem. Dz grab dett man vns vff, das wir den herren gantz sachent; vnd ließ man vnß vnsre pater noster daran strichen.'

247 Francesco Suriano, 1481–1484, ed. 1900, 251.

248 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1519, ed. 2001, 208: 'A Sant Symeón le tenté la mano, / porque me dezian que la tenía blan/da, y es burla.'

249 One of the stories, as previously noted, comes from Mantegazza, who attributed to the Venetians the desire to seize the body. He framed the account in a way that partly echoes the Zaratine tradition, particularly the tale of the stolen finger, by focussing on the impossibility of finding the door to leave the site. Mantegazza referred to the passage from the church to the port, metaphorically linking it to the story of Emperor Heraclius and the sudden closure of the Golden Gate, as told in the *Legenda aurea*. This motif seems to have been widely known among pilgrims to the Holy Land towards the end of the 16th century, as suggested by its inclusion in Aquilante Rocchetta's 1598 travel account; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 443; Aquilante Rocchetta, 1598, ed. 1630, 159.

250 English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 154.

The first explicit reference, also with respect to other primary sources, is the testimony of the Anonymous from Donaueschingen (1441–1442).[251] The story begins with a Hungarian queen commissioning a silver shrine to transport the saint's remains back to her homeland. However, the saint resisted several attempts to relocate him, eventually persuading the queen to leave the shrine in Zadar. While the anonymous account is unclear about the body's location, Conrad Grünenberg (1486) clarified that, despite the queen's 'golden' shrine, St Simeon preferred a stone tomb.[252] The basic narrative is repeated in a later account by Heinrich von Zedlitz (1493), who, however, attributed the commission and attempted removal to male agency, specifically that of the Hungarian king. This version could hypothetically have been inspired by one of the previously discussed scenes which features a crowned male figure (see Fig. 45). Following his interpretation, it would not depict the return of the body, as suggested by Bersa, but rather an attempt at its removal.[253] In any case, likely in an effort to lend greater credibility to his account, Zedlitz asserted that the body rested in a silver shrine.[254] In contrast, later travellers' testimonies, such as those of Pietro Casola (1494), Jan Want (1519) and an anonymous travelogue (1569), as well as an account composed by Jan Hasištejnsky in 1493 (the same

251 Anonymous from Donaueschingen, 1441–1442, ed. 1998, 173: 'Vnd eyn ander kirche liget in der stad. Vnd in der selben kirchen da lyt der lyp Sancti Symionis in eynem sarck, der gemacht hat den >Nunc dimittis< vnd unßern herren nam an sÿnen arm, aıß er in den tempel geopfert wart von vnßer lieben Frauwen. Der selbe groß brister liget noch liphaftig mit allen glidmassen da. Vnd die hut synes heiligen lichenamß, die ist ÿm swartz vnd durre. Vnd ist in synem sarck viel kostlicheß heylgtum, vnd stecken jm syne finger vol kostelicher ring. Vnd zu eynen zitten kam eyn kongin von Vngern vnd het bereit eyn kostlichen sylberin sarck vnd wolt erhebt haben Sanctum Symionem. Aber er wolt sich nit lasßen erheben, von dannen zu furen. Vnd man leget jn wol zum dritten male von sÿnem sarck jn den sylbem. Vnd aıß vfft so fant man jn wider jn dem sÿn. Vnd da verstund die küngin wole, das er sich nit wolt lasßen von dannen furen. Vnd die kongin liß den kostlichen sarck da, zu lob vnd ere dem heiligen Sanct Symeonis, vnd hanget noch an iiij ketten vber synem sarck. Vnd die stad Sara die ist gar wol bewart mit grosßer hutt vnd hat gar eyn hohe grosße muer vmb sich ghen vnd lijt jn Krieben land etc.'

252 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Item ze Sara ligend fier hailgen. Der haillig sant Simeon, der unsern heren empfieng im tempel, dem hăt ain Akunginn von Ungern lausen machen ainen schönnen guldinen sarch. Aber der hailig sant Simeon hăt nit dar inn wellen ligen und ligt dar under in aim staininn grab gar wol verschlossen. Item sin tempel ist gar lustig gebuwen. Der turn an der kirchen ist durchsichtig von gehownen bilden, durch howen von grund uff.'; see also Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 99.

253 See p. 134 above.

254 Heinrich von Zedlitz, 1493, ed. 1894, 110–111; the detail of the silver shrine might have been suggested to him by the aforementioned researched ambiguity in the depictions.

year as Zedlitz's), present a different perspective.[255] Hasištejnsky's account largely follows the legendary narrative established in previous decades, adding that it was the queen who, after the miraculous disappearance and rediscovery of the body in Zadar during its journey to Hungary, decided to return the silver shrine to the Dalmatian city, placing it atop the older tomb.

That such an arrangement had been envisioned from the outset can be inferred from the 1384 memoirs of Paolo de Paolo (a prominent local figure, discussed below), which reference the silver shrine 'over the sarcophagus of St Simeon'.[256] This positioning was later confirmed in a letter sent to Agostino Valier in 1579, stating that the Elizabethan shrine, deeply cherished by the people of Zadar, 'has always been positioned above the sarcophagus where his glorious body lay for about 200 years, until the last war and the ruin of his chapel'.[257]

However, the precise arrangement of the shrine in relation to the 13th-century sarcophagus remains uncertain. It is plausible to assume that, over three centuries, the setting in the church of St Mary Major underwent several changes. According to local tradition, the sarcophagus did not initially rest on the four twisted columns, as suggested by the numerous depictions of it on the shrine. Instead, it was reportedly supported by four silver angels, which, as tradition holds, were removed and hidden by the people of Zadar around 1380 out of fear that the queen, visiting the Dalmatian city, might take them along with her shrine.[258] No later evidence, however, confirms the presence of these silver angels. According to the Anonymous from Donaueschingen, the shrine commissioned by the queen of Hungary was suspended on four chains above the older sarcophagus. Another anonymous German pilgrim, whose account dates from more than a century later, described the shrine as elevated on four pillars, but not vertically aligned with the stone tomb; rather, it was placed beside it. This description might correspond, albeit loosely, with the depiction of the tomb on the shrine, possibly misinterpreting columns with pillars.[259]

Providing a definitive explanation for the decision not to keep the body in the silver-gilt shrine is challenging. However, this choice appears less tied to

255 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 36–37; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 222–223; Anonymous, 1569, ed. 1978, 282; see also Kužić 2013, 510–511; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20.

256 Paolo de Paolo, 1371–1408, ed. 1904, 7: 'super arcam Sancti Simeonis'.

257 Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita Ap. b. 3, n.p.: 'è stata sempre in prospettiva sopra l'arca dove giace il suo glorioso corpo per spazio di anni duecento in circa fina all'ultima guerra et sino la rovina della sua cappella.'

258 Vidas 2008, 149, n. 22; Jakšić 2014, 116, n. 103.

259 See respectively Anonymous from Donaueschingen, 1441–1442, ed. 1998, 173; Anonymous, 1569, ed. 1978, 282; see also Kužić 2013, 510–511.

the Hungarian sovereign's decisions and more to the intentions of the local nobility, who actively promoted the saint's cult. Their influence is evident not only in the commissioning of the shrine, but also in several related decisions regarding the holy body during the period of the reliquary's creation. Among these figures, Paolo de Paolo, a Zadar patrician and longtime city rector, played a particularly prominent role, as documented in historical sources. His memoirs, known only through later transcriptions, show that in June 1397 the chapel built in honour of the saint was enlarged. The same document allows us to infer that its original foundation also stemmed from Paolo's initiative.[260]

To date, it is not possible to provide exact details on the starting time of work in the chapel, although 1371 can be assumed as the probable *terminus ante quem*, given that Paolo's memoirs, begun that year, make no mention of the initial building phase. The chronology proposed by Bianchi, suggesting that the chapel's construction began in 1368, though not implausible, lacks source support.[261]

Likely, well aware of the potential of the sacred site, in 1396, during the tenure of Archbishop Matafari, Paolo, still serving as one of the city's rectors, played a key role in obtaining the aforementioned indulgences from Pope Boniface IX, not only for the cathedral where the remains of St Anastasia were kept, but primarily for the church of St Mary Major, 'where the holy body of St Simeon the Just rests, for the reverence of his body'.[262] Paolo's strong commitment to the cult of St Simeon is also evident in his memoirs from 1398, which record the arrival of Albert IV, Count of Hapsburg, in the city on his return from the Holy Sepulchre.[263] Welcomed by Paolo and other notable citizens, the count was led straight to St Mary Major, where Mass was celebrated 'at the altar of St Simeon'.[264] This account is particularly valuable as it attests to the active promotion of Simeon's cult before the consolidation of Venetian rule, during which all known travelogues were written.

260 Paolo de Paolo quoted in Zlatar 1991, 241–242: 'Die lunae 28. dicti mensis madii, me existente rectore cum praedictis, de nostro mandato inceperunt portari lapides et calx, pro fabricatione capellae Sancti Simeonis Iusti, et die veneris 8. mensis iunii proxime venturi, incepit laborari fundamentum pro ipsa capella amplianda, cuius fundamenti primum lapidem ego Paulus cum episcopali benedictione posui.'; Paolo de Paolo, 1371–1408, ed. 1904, 24; see also Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 121.

261 Bianchi 1877, 391.

262 Paolo de Paolo, 1371–1408, ed. 1904, 22: 'ubi requescit sanctum corpus beati Simeonis Iusti, pro reverentia ipsius corporis'; Farlati, 1775, 107; Marijan 2009, 233; see also the oldest cathedral inventory (1427): Petricioli 1987, 166.

263 Paolo de Paolo, 1371–1408, ed. 1904, 26–27; Kužić 2013, 118.

264 Kužić 2013, 118.



FIGURE 52 Zadar, National Museum. Paolo of Sulmona, relief depicting St Simeon and Queen Elizabeth
HILJE AND TOMIĆ 2008, 216, FIG. 089

Work on the chapel of St Simeon, as previously noted, continued into the turn of the century. While a high relief from an earlier phase, commissioned from Paolo of Sulmona (Abruzzo) depicting Queen Elizabeth kneeling before the saint, flanked by two angels holding a coat of arms,[265] has survived (Fig. 52), the sculptural ensemble from the final months of 1401, entrusted to several masters and comprising a rich decorative programme, has been entirely lost.[266]

Among the later commissions for the chapel of St Simeon, those assigned to the Zadar goldsmith Toma Martinov stand out. In addition to the renowned relief completed in 1497, which still adorns the interior of the Elizabethan shrine behind the body of St Simeon, depicting *The Presentation at the Temple* for the second time, flanked by the four protectors of Zadar,[267] the master was also commissioned to create another image of the saint in silver gilt. However, any traces of this second work, if any, have been lost.[268]

265 Petricioli 1985, 83; Vežić 1975, 127–128; Petricioli 2005, 141, 144.

266 The execution of this decoration in the final months of 1401 had been entrusted by Nucio Ucinelli of Fermo, one of the primary masters involved in the project, to Juraj Markov of Ljuba and Petar Pozdančić of Šibenik; see Vežić 1975, 122–123.

267 They are St Donatus, St Chrysogonus, St Anastasia and St Zoilus.

268 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 116–118. The work presumably suffered the same fate as the ex-votos involved in its production: silver-gilt objects were often melted down to create new ones or to raise funds in times of need; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 168.

In 1484 Felix Fabri informed us that the area specifically designated for the cult of St Simeon was 'closed with iron grilles'.[269] This reference should likely be related to the contract of 26 July 1384, in which master Venturini was commissioned by Elizabeth to craft an iron grill with a door to enclose the saint's chapel.[270] The testimony of two Tuscan pilgrims, Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena and Mariano da Siena, in 1431 provides evidence that worshippers crossing the threshold and leaving the presbytery area behind would have encountered an elaborate and sumptuous setting. They describe the body as being surrounded by 'great ornaments and great treasures'.[271] At the beginning of the following decade, another Italian account, this time by the chaplain of Milliaduse d'Este, reveals the location of the body and the stone sarcophagus: 'behind the main altar'.[272] While the location near the altar is confirmed by several later accounts,[273] the chaplain's mention of a 13th-century brass sarcophagus, adorned with depictions of the twelve apostles, and his details of its external finishing remain the sole such reference in the corpus.[274]

The excerpt from the Ferrara pilgrim, though brief, highlights an additional important detail: the shrine's front façade was equipped with two locks, with the keys reportedly held by the archbishop of Zadar and the 'Venetian

269 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373: 'Ibi est ecclesia S. Simeonis senis, qui in faciem Domini: Nunc dimittis, cecinit et puero Jesu matrique ejus benedixit, Lucae II. Est autem ecclesia pretiosa de perpetua fabrica, quia valde artificiose de sculptis et politis lapidibus fabricatur. Ad sinistrum latus chori est capella, in qua est tumulus pretiosus cum tumba corporis S. Simeonis, ferreis cancellis obfirmatus.'

270 See Jakšić 2014, 117.

271 Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76, 145: 'Item, a d' trenta, in su la terza, fum‹m›o in Sch‹i›avonia a una bella et grande terra e di grande, generale guardia. Chiamasi Giara ed è de' veniciani. E ìne vedemmo di nobili et belissimi reliquy fra' quali fu el corpo di Sancto Simeone, el quale compose "Nunc dimictis", con grandi ornamenti et grandi tesori.' Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 7: 'A dì xxx, in su' la terza, fum‹m›o in Ischiavonia a Giara, et è una bella città et grande et è cittadinescha et è de' venetiani. Qui ci furon mostrati di nobili et belli reliqui, fra' quali fu el corpo di sancta Simeone Yusto el quale ricevè nelle sue braccia el picholino et dolcie Yhesu delle mani della dolcie Vergine Maria et compose: «Nunc dimictis servum» et è con grandi tesori.'

272 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 12–13: 'E nota che lì in Zarra sì gli è il corpo de sam Simione profeta, in una bellissima sepultura de dreto dal'altare grande. La quale sepultura si è dentro de marmore, e di fuora è tuta fodrata et adopiata de octone con li xii appostoli. L'uxo denanci dala prima fazada, che pareno tuti sianno dorati, et el g'è due chiavature: l'una tiene el veschovo de Zara, l'altra sì tiene lo rezimento de Venetiani che per loro rege quela terra. E deta chiexa se chiama Sam Simione, che fue quelo che Idio quando naque ge fue posto in braze et alora construse el Nunc dimittis servum tuum etc.'

273 See, for example, Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20.

274 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 12–13; cf. Graciotti 2014, 130.

government that ruled the land'.[275] Hans Tucher (1480) and Jan Hasištejnsky (1493) later reported that the number of locks increased to three and six or seven, respectively.[276] Pietro Casola, in 1494, reiterated that the body was kept under strict guard, with 'the rectors of the city', elected among the Venetians, holding the keys.[277] All of this was corroborated by Fondra, who noted that the number of keys and their holders changed several times over the decades. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that the most commonly adopted practice was the one described by Agostino Valier in 1579: one key was held by the archbishop, two others were in the possession of the city's rector and count and the last was kept by the church's procurators.[278]

The role of the *procuratores ecclesiae*, also known as shrine procurators, was held by local nobles, and their responsibility was to manage commissions concerning any structural or decorative changes, as well as to administer offerings – both monetary and in the form of silverware, furnishings and other types of votive gifts – surrounding the altar of the chapel and the body of St Simeon.[279] The impact produced by this large number of objects, exhibited to further emphasise the sacredness of the place, must have been quite striking, as evidenced by the words of Jan Hasištejnsky (1493).[280] He noted not only that rings set with precious stones adorned St Simeon's right hand, but also that two relics, shaped like hands, were placed at his feet, and additional silver images, some gilded, surrounded the saint's head. The images referred to by the Czech pilgrim were likely ex-votos donated by the faithful, as were the objects described in the remainder of his account: a heavy gold chain (valued by him at around 300 Hungarian guilders) and a large number of rings hanging from cords.[281] The presence of the rings, limited, however, to the saint's hands alone, is also recalled by the Anonymous from Donaueschingen ('and in his

275 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 12–13.

276 Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 614.

277 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121.

278 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Visc. e Regolari, Visita A 80, fol. 57r '[…] arca lapidea munita pluribus et diversis clavibus, quas unam tenet Reverendissimus Dominus Archiepiscopus, alteram Reverendus Dominus Rector, aliam Clarissimus Comes civitatis, et alium procuratores ecclesiae'. A similar situation was presented two decades later by Michele Priuli: 'four keys, one of which is held by the archbishop, another by the most illustrious count, another by the noble procurator of the church and the fourth by the parish priest'; see also Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 101, fols 693r–693v.

279 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 210; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 144.

280 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20.

281 *Ibid.* Of these objects, only about 20 rings have come down to us, together with a chalice and an Angevin crown, as well as a cloth donated by the Serbian Prince Đorđe Branković; see Petricioli 1983, 23–24. It was the cloth, with its beads woven to form a

sarcophagus there are many precious relics, and his fingers are full of valuable rings') and later on by Michele Priuli in 1603:

> In the church, on the main altar, the body of St Simeon the Prophet is preserved intact, secured under four keys: one held by the archbishop, another by the distinguished count, a third by the noble procurator of the church and the fourth by the parish priest. The body remains intact and covered all around with flesh and skin (a truly remarkable sight), with the neck perfectly intact, connected to the head and body as if the saint were alive. The chest in which it rests is made of stone, with a wooden cover, surrounded by silver, and there is a crystal grill through which the body of St Simeon can be viewed. On his hands, many rings are placed […] Many miracles, especially against evil spirits, are witnessed here daily. These relics, carefully examined and treated with utmost reverence, are displayed in the church and cemetery, where the customary prayers for the dead are offered.[282]

Priuli's testimony, although late and referring to the arrangement in the chapel of St Roch, provides additional pieces to the puzzle, complementing Milliaduse d'Este's account of the complex arrangement of the stone sarcophagus, which was crucial for promoting the saint's cult.[283] Therefore, in the Middle Ages, we can imagine that beneath the Elizabethan shrine lay the stone sarcophagus, with the relief of the saint placed laterally (similarly to today), somehow enclosed in bronze and silver and perhaps visible when opened, as suggested by Milliaduse d'Este. As a screen, the glass grill (later described also by George

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Cyrillic inscription, that misled Stefano Mantegazza and the sacristan, who reported it to be an oblation made by the 'Mohammedans' the previous year; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 442.

282 Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 101, fols 693r–693v: 'In ecclesia in altari maiori adest corpus Sancti Simeonis prophetae integrum custoditur sub quattuor clavibus quarum una manet apud Archiepiscopum, altera penes clarissimum Comitem, altera poenes nobilem Procuratorem Ecclesiae et quarta penes plebanum. Corpus est integrum carne et pelle adhuc circumductum (valde admirabile visu) collumque manet integrum capiti et corpori adiectum ac si viveret. Capsa in qua requiescit est lapidea cum cooperimento ligneo argenteo intus circumposito et adest crata ex cristallo per quam in dictum S. Simeonis corpus inspicitur ad manus Sancti positi multi annulli […] ubi multa miracula in dies contra spiritus malivolos presertim videntur quae reliquia diligenter inspecta et maxima devotione percoluit in ecclesia et cemiterio solita suffragia mortuorum.'

283 Cf. Jakšić 2022, 393–419, esp. 403.



FIGURE 53 The tomb of St Barbara in the Coptic church of St Barbara in Cairo, 1346–1350
© BNC FIRENZE, MIC|MIC_BNC-FI_UO6|17/10/2025|0008188-P, COURTESY OF THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE / BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE DI FIRENZE; FURTHER REPRODUCTION OR DUPLICATION BY ANY MEANS IS PROHIBITED

Wheler, in 1675)[284] would have allowed the body to be seen, likely with a wooden structure securing it on top.

This type of arrangement, featuring a crystal grille (grata ex cristallo),[285] seems to have been widespread across the Mediterranean. A comparable *mise-en-scène* appeared in the tomb of St Barbara in the Coptic church of St Barbara in Cairo, which Niccolò da Poggibonsi described in Chapter CXCII of his *Libro d'oltramare*: 'To the right of the altar, in the wall, four feet high, there is a barred window. Inside is the body of St Barbara in a chest.'[286] His account finds a visual counterpart in the oldest surviving version of his text, the illustrated *Codice Magliabechiano*, housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, where a glass grill is shown protecting the schematically sketched tomb, which also features a sloped top, as seen in Eastern Adriatic cases (Fig. 53). This 14th-century example suggests that the arrangement described for St Simeon's tomb may have been in use as early as the time of Angevin rule.

2.5 *Modern-era Transformations*

As previously described, when St Mary Major was destroyed in 1570, St Simeon's body and key relics were kept for a decade in 'a certain old chapel', according to Agostino Valier.[287] The apostolic visitor also mentioned, beside the altar containing the remains of St Simeon, in front of which 'two lamps burn continuously' (ardent continue duas lampades), a second altar 'where the body of a saint lies' (ubi iacet corpus Sancti), whose name he does not specify (likely St Zoilus), surmounted by the 'icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary'.[288] Regarding the church ornaments and votive offerings offered to the saint, Valier's report suggests that they were partly stored in the adjacent chapel of St Roch and the sacristy.[289] The most valuable items likely accompanied the silver shrine, which, for security reasons, was entrusted to the nuns of St Benedict and kept in their sacristy, as documented by Mantegazza in 1600.[290] These objects, though it remains unclear whether their number had already been diminished, are mentioned in the correspondence of 1579 between the bishop of Verona and the Zaratines. In a final attempt to preserve the Elizabethan shrine, the

284 George Wheler, 1675, ed. 1682, 10.

285 For a different transcription and interpretation, see Jakšić 2022, 393–419, esp. 403.

286 Niccolò da Poggibonsi, 1346–1350, ed. 1990, 122: 'dalla parte ritta dell'altare, nel muro, in alto quatro piedi, è una finestra ferrata. E dentro si è lo corpo di santa Barbara in una cassa.'

287 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 57r.

288 *Ibid.*

289 *Ibid.*, fols 57r–57v.

290 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 179–180; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 442.

Zaratines suggested using 'about 200 silver marks that are in the other ornaments outside the shrine' (ducento marche d'argento in circa che sonno nelli altri ornamenti fuor dell'arca).[291] Despite this, the apostolic visitor ultimately deemed the shrine's sacrifice necessary and justified to enable the continued construction of the new church, begun in 1572.[292]

The cult of St Simeon was firmly established over the decades, despite the temporary translations. In addition to the detailed account by Mantegazza, the saint's name continued to be invoked by Western visitors from various regions, including the Czech Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł (1583–1584), the Belgian Jean Zuallart (1586), the Swiss pilgrim Johannes Habbermacher (1606) and an anonymous *peregrination* (also in 1606).[293] The anonymous traveller from Augsburg recalled the saint's body alongside that of 'Prophet Joel'. As Krešimir Kužić rightly pointed out, this reflects a common pilgrims' misinterpretation of the cult of St Zoilus, one of Zadar's patron saints,[294] whose hagiographical tradition closely links him to St Chrysogonus, St Anastasia and the Thessalonian sisters Irene, Agape and Chionia.[295] In the marshes of Grado, Zoilus recovered Chrysogonus's body and foretold the martyrdom of the sisters he had taught. He is also said to have known Anastasia.[296]

According to 16th-century tradition, St Zoilus's body was translated to Zadar in the mid-5th century, while Bianchi, drawing on now-lost sources, dated the relics' arrival to 649.[297] The cult of St Chrysogonus, however, is traditionally regarded as the oldest in Zadar, with his translation generally placed in the 7th century or, at the latest, the early 8th century.[298]

The local character of the cult of St Zoilus, often puzzling to late medieval travellers, is reflected in the various names attributed to him: Hans Lochner, in 1435, referred to him as 'St Cyrillus', while Jan Hasištejnsky identified him not as Joel, one of Israel's minor prophets, but as Ezekiel. The Czech pilgrim also linked the arrival of the saint's body to the same crusading expedition that, according to his account, brought the relics of St Simeon.[299] Not all references,

291 Agostino Valier, 1579, ACV, Visita Ap. b. 3, n.p.

292 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 181; Goja 2008, 99.

293 Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, 1583–1584, ed. 1614, 16; Jean Zuallart, 1586, ed. 1587, 70; Kužić 2013, 544.

294 Kužić 2013, 88; Cf. Jakšić 2022, 404. See, for instance, the accounts of Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–139; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.

295 Vedriš 2016, 49–78.

296 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 22.

297 *Ibid*., 18; Bianchi 1877, 389.

298 Grgić 1973, 150; Strika 2009, 1, 45.

299 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20; cf. Jakšić 2022, 404.

however, are mistaken: in 1458 William Wey correctly named the saint as 'St Zoilus confessor', a title also used by Fondra.[300] In 1486 Antonio da Crema, likely relying on local oral tradition, associated him with the three sisters Irene, Agape and Chionia, calling them 'sisters of this St Zoilus' (sancto Gioliello).[301]

In most accounts, Zoilus's name was paired with that of St Simeon. According to Zaratine tradition, his head (in a silver reliquary) and bones (in a marble chest) were preserved in the church of St Mary Major from an unspecified early period.[302] Following Sebald Rieter the Younger, it is likely that the head reliquary was housed in the chapel of St Simeon, while the remaining relics rested in the high altar, as suggested by Jan Aerts and Nicholas le Huen.[303] The latter, however, located the relics of both saints not in St Mary Major, but in the city cathedral. His account draws directly on that of Breydenbach, based on a journey from the early 1480s, precisely the period when this version is first attested in the reports of Paul Walther Guglingen, Joos van Ghistele, Breydenbach, Konrad Beck and other pilgrims who either accompanied or followed that same itinerary.[304] On his outward journey, Paul Walther Guglingen mistakenly noted that the body rested in the 'main church' (summa ecclesia).[305] This oversight is evident not only from his later reference to St Anastasia's body in 'another church' (alia ecclesia), but also from his return account, in which he correctly located the body in the 'church of St Simeon' (ecclesia sancti Simeonis).[306]

Based on the aforementioned confusion from the 1480s, which gained wide circulation across Europe, the claim that the body was in the city cathedral

300 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 78–79: 'Item secundo die Septembris venimus Jarra in Dalmacia, ubi jacet sanctus Symeon integer, qui accipiebat Christum in ulnas suas. In eadem ecclesia jacet sanctus Zoyolus confessor.'

301 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139.

302 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 22; Grgić 1973, 15.

303 Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 41; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–140; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p. That the head of the saint was also kept separately from other body parts in the chapel of St Roch, where the remains were temporarily placed following the destruction of the collegiate church, is evident from the words of the apostolic visitor Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 101, fol. 694r: 'Visitavit altare S. Joannis non consecratum in quo in arca lapidea dictum fuit ea traditione existere corpus sancti Zoili et capsa marmorea ita reperitur sigillata et non posset aperiri et numquam fuit aperta. Extra adest caput sanct Zoili in quadam capsula argentea.'

304 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 52; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 656; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66.

305 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74.

306 *Ibid*., 260–261. The German pilgrim's correction is further supported by the contemporary testimony of Felix Fabri (1483), who recorded the remains in the 'ecclesia S. Simeonis'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372.

persisted for several decades, though inconsistently.[307] In addition to the popular travelogues, pilgrims were likely misled by the imposing scale of St Mary Major and the common practice of making only a brief stop at the collegiate church before continuing their journey. With few other reference points, they may have mistaken St Mary Major – or St Simeon – for the town's principal church.[308]

In any case, when the project to build the new church dedicated to St Simeon collapsed due to lack of funds, the main objects of worship from St Mary Major were relocated elsewhere. The miraculous effigy of the Virgin Mary was moved to the rotunda of St Donatus, while the relics of St Zoilus were transferred from the chapel of St Roch to the cathedral.

On 16 May 1632 the body of the prophet, placed for the first time in Queen Elizabeth's silver-gilt shrine, was ceremoniously moved to its new permanent home, the basilica of St Stephen.[309] Since then, St Simeon has been celebrated locally not only on 8 October, his feast day according to Roman martyrologies, but also on 16 May, marking this solemn translation.[310] Dedicated to St Simeon at the time, the church soon became a major pilgrimage site, as noted by George Wheler during his visit to the city in 1675:

> In the Church of Saint Simeon they profess to have the Body of that Saint; who received our Saviour in his arms at his Presentation in the Temple. It was brought (as they say) from the Holy Land; and being worshipped with great Devotion, is often carried in procession about the Town, as being their Patron and Protector. It hath a glass on one side of its Shrine, to expose it to the view of the devout, and yet to keep it from the injury of weather. It appears, of a whitish colour, much like to those I have seen

307 For the location within the city cathedral, see the accounts of Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 148; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 322; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860, 63; Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 128; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59; Arent Willemsz, 1525, ed. 1884, 51–52; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 128. The remains are correctly placed in the church of St Simeon / St Mary Major by Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 18–20; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 36–37; Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77; Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1519, ed. 2001, 208.

308 In addition to the above-mentioned visit of Albert IV, Count of Hapsburg (see p. 153), see also as an example the testimony of Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 66.

309 Grgić 1973, 160; Petricioli 2004, 63; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 101.

310 Bianchi 1877, 531. The feast fixed in October, however, coexisted for a long time with the date of 4 February, a local custom that postponed by one day the feast of 3 February, on which day St Simeon was celebrated in the Byzantine Synaxaria; cf. Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 59.

> at Tholouse in France, at the Church the Cordeliers; where all the Bodies [are] buried there, in the space of one year, become as dry as any Mummy, and of a whitish colour.[311]

The custom of distributing cotton balls, known as *bombaci*, to devotees – placed inside the shrine in contact with the saint's body in the days before the feast, as described by Jackson and still practised today – likely dates back to the Middle Ages.[312] Fabri, in fact, described how the body's openings, such as the eyes, ears and mouth, were gently covered with cotton. A similar practice is attested in Venice, where pilgrims recounted that they were given a piece of cotton which a priest had pressed into the neck wound of St Lucy's body.[313] This confirms that the custom, also associated with the Hodegetria of Constantinople, was widespread throughout the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, Fondra's eyewitness testimony reveals that in the 17th century many believers from the surrounding areas flocked to the church on 8 October, with Ottomans also paying respect to the saint.[314] Although unpublished until 1855, Fondra's *Istoria* became a key source for later works thanks to the circulation of manuscripts. This growing interest is reflected in numerous texts and essays about the prophet that appeared in Zadar and Venice over the following two centuries, focussing on the true custodians of the saint's relics.[315] As Jelić noted, the dispute peaked in the exchange between the scholar Šime Ljubić and the priest Giuseppe Cappelletti, who debated both the integrity of the remains and the 'incontrovertible testimonies' regarding the relics' origins, whether Constantinopolitan (Venetian) or Jerusalemite (Zaratine).[316]

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311 George Wheler, 1675, ed. 1682, 10.

312 Jackson 1887, 312–313.

313 Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 871: 'Item in eyn ander cloester int westen van venegen wart vns ghethoent dat lichaem van sinte Lucia, vnd dat lach in eyn serch van marbersteyn vnd hat eyn gulden croen vp eir houft vnde der priester, die vns dat heilige licham thonde stach in die wonde van eiren hals eyn deyl boemwollen vnd gaf eyn yetlichen van vns eyn wenich vandem seluen.'

314 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 232.

315 See the historiographical framework in Jelić's publication and subsequently that offered by Petricioli; Jelić 1901, 160–161; Petricioli 1983, 29–32.

316 For instance, in his *La chiesa di S. Simeone profeta, vulgo il Grande*, Cappelletti cited the remarkable preservation of the Zaratine body, praised by late medieval pilgrims, as counter-evidence. While the debate may now be considered methodologically outdated, it is hard to resist not quoting the Venetian priest's fervent argument; Cappelletti 1860, 32–33: 'Portano gli zaratini a dimostrazione della verità di quello la sua meravigliosa interezza, la quale invece sta contro di loro per la notizia storica, che abbiamo, del braccio di san Simeone regalato a Carlo magno e collocato nella imperiale cappella in Aquisgrana. […] Ed aggiungerò un'altra circostanza di non minore entità; che il braccio di

The Constantinopolitan tradition[317] was familiar to 16th-century pilgrims, as Ludwig Tschudi's account shows. After noting the remains of St Simeon in Zadar, he returned twice to the topic during his pilgrimage to the holy sites in Jerusalem, observing: 'In Venice it is said that some bones of the aforementioned St Simeon the Prophet are kept in a marble sarcophagus, which was brought from Constantinople.'[318] It is, however, one of the few annotations concerning the presence of Simeon's body in Venice in 15th- and 16th-century travelogues; among them, the aforementioned reference by the anonymous traveller around 1500, who also insisted on the translation from Constantinople, and Jacques Le Saige in 1518, who provided the most detailed description: 'I saw the body and head of St Simeon, along with many other bare bones inside a chest.'[319] Ribera, by contrast, only briefly noted 'many bodies of saints in the monasteries of the city and its islands', but promptly corrected himself, stating: 'the body of whom [St Simeon] I saw in the said Zadar'.[320]

Although St Simeon is not a minor saint, but a prophet whose earthly life, albeit briefly, is recorded in the Scriptures, his cult in the Venetian church of St Simeon the Prophet appears to have fallen silent by the late Middle Ages. Mentions of the body remain scarce across 15th-, 16th- and 17th-century sources, whether local (Dandolo and Sanudo), episcopal (limited to Bolognetti's visitation) or among pilgrims (the Anonymous of *c.*1500 and Jacques Le Saige).[321] None of these, however, makes any reference that can be linked to Marco Romano's impressive tomb, raising, at least, the question of its visibility. To this should be added the aforementioned silences concerning the presence of St Simeon's body in Venice in less expected contexts: Malerbi's omission in 1475 and the patriarchal visitation of 1639 by Federico Baldissera Bartolomeo Corner.

This decline coincided with the saint's rising renown across the Adriatic, in Zadar, where his veneration attained pan-European prominence, bolstered by the city's status as a mandatory stop for Holy Land pilgrims. Among the numerous descriptions of the Venetian lagoon – over 300 in number – the

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Aquisgrana era nudo osso spolpato, come lo sono tutti gli altri, che abbiamo qui; mentre il san Simeone, ch' è a Zara, oltre all'avere ambe le braccia, scorgessi altresì tuttora coperto di carne e pelle.'

317 Seymour 1976, 193; Jakšić 2014, 98; Vidas 2008, 157.

318 Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 253: 'Zu Venedig soll auch von gedachtes Simonis deß Propheten ettlichs gebeins/ in einem Marmelsteininen Sarch sein/ so von Constantinopel dargebracht'. See also pp. 59 and 232 of his account.

319 Jacques Le Saige, 1518, ed. 1851, 59: 'Je vis le corps et le chief de sainct Simeon, et tout plain d'autres ossemans tout nuds dedens ung coffre.' From this account, as well as Sanudo's referred to above, it can be deduced that the relics were visible, at least occasionally.

320 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1519, ed. 2001, 208: 'muchos cuerpos de santos en los monasterios de la çiudad y en los de las islas' and 'el qual cuerpo vi en la dicha Zara'.

321 See, respectively, p. 120; p. 114, n. 146; p. 114, n. 148; p. 114, n. 147; and p. 164, n. 319.

14th-century effigy of St Simeon, sculpted by Marco Romano and now much discussed by art historians, receives no mention. Notably, neither William Wey (1462), in his extensive catalogue of holy relics in Venice, nor Santo Brasca, who listed no fewer than 55 Venetian relics, refer red to the church of St Simeon the Prophet, which evidently did not feature among the obligatory stops in the Venetian pilgrimage circuits.[322] This omission cannot be explained by lack of time: pilgrims typically remained in Venice for three to four weeks, visiting churches and monasteries and participating in a variety of, at times rather eclectic, activities.

To summarise, was the body in Zadar, so frequently referenced in descriptions of the Dalmatian coast, more famous in the late Middle Ages than the same relics preserved on the opposite shore? The evidence strongly suggests so. Several factors may have contributed to this outcome. First, the public display of St Simeon's naked body, coupled with the possibility of multisensory engagement, including differentiated forms of haptic interaction, offered pilgrims precisely the kind of devotional experience they sought on such an occasion. The church's position near the harbour, the availability of indulgences and the opulent display funded by local elites also encouraged sustained visitation. The *mise-en-scène* was carefully conceived to stimulate the attention of devotees and underline, in a rather redundant manner, the relics' presence and their extraordinary thaumaturgic powers. Around 1400 the saint's body was not transferred into the newly crafted monumental shrine in silver gilt, which was instead raised above the altar. The message was unequivocal: the relics and two full-length effigies – one in stone, the other in embossed silver – stood one above the other. The silver shrine was further studded with images of the saint and his sarcophagus, emphasising, with insistence, his miracles in Dalmatia.

This rich visual environment, especially the silver-gilt shrine, captured pilgrims' attention to such a degree that their descriptions of it rivalled those of the body itself. These accounts, widely circulated across the Mediterranean, amplified the cult's reach and helped transform a local shrine into a major international pilgrimage site.

3 The Cathedral of St Anastasia

3.1 *Historical Background*

The Romanesque cathedral of St Anastasia was erected on the site of the pre-existing Early Christian basilica that occupied the north-eastern side of

322 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 89–90; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 50–51.

the Roman forum of ancient Iader. It was built in the 12th century and underwent important structural modifications in the 13th century. However, its historical stratification, mirroring that of other cathedrals in prominent port cities along the Eastern Adriatic coast, demands interpretation within the broader framework of the evolution of its ecclesiastical institutions from the Early Christian period onwards.

Valerio Ponte, in his *Historia ecclesiae Iadrensis*, compiled in the second half of the 17th century and published in the early 20th century, clearly stated that the origins of the Church of Zadar remain uncertain.[323] Nevertheless, recent scholarship indicates that Christianity likely reached Zadar in the second half of the 3rd century, probably via Aquileia. By the 4th century the earliest attested bishop, Felix Episcopus Jadertinus, is recorded.[324]

The Early Christian basilica, presumably dedicated to St Peter, should not be regarded as an isolated monument, but rather as part of a larger architectural complex, including the catechumeneum, diaconicon, baptistery and episcopal palace.[325] This episcopal complex likely attained its first codified architectural form in the 5th century, subsequently undergoing a series of structural modifications during the early Middle Ages.[326] In the 9th century the nearby Holy Trinity rotunda was incorporated into the complex. This expansion, likely under Bishop Donatus, marked a new phase in the site's development. At that time the remains of St Anastasia were translated to Zadar; she became the cathedral's patron saint as early as the 10th century.[327]

In the 11th century the basilica underwent major structural alterations, before being demolished in the following century. Only the south façade and southern annexes were preserved.[328] A new Romanesque cathedral was erected in the 12th century[329] on the foundations of the late antique building, likely during the episcopate of Bishop Lampridius (1141/1154–1178). In 1154 he

323 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 112: 'De Jadrensi Ecclesiae origini nihili certi; nam quo tempore Jadrae civitas Christianae militae noimina dederit, ignotum est.'

324 Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 33; Vedriš 2002, 5.

325 Vežić 1995, 150; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 33.

326 Vežić 1988, 166; Vežić 1995, 150; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 33.

327 On the changes that affected the episcopal complex, see mainly Vežić 2002d, 26–30, 62. The exact period when the switch of the dedication occurred is unknown. While 17th-century scholars referenced an original name of St Peter, no archival sources support this claim. See Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 119; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 27. However, it is certain, based on *De Administrando Imperio*, that the monument was already named after Anastasia by the early 10th century; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 27; Vedriš 2002, 8–9; Vežić 2002d, 27.

328 Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 36.

329 *Ibid.*

secured the long-sought title of *archiepiscopus iadrensis*, marking a significant moment in the (arch)diocese's history.[330]

The cathedral appears to have suffered substantial damage during the crusader siege of Zadar in 1202, prompting an extensive reconstruction campaign in the latter half of the century.[331] On 27 May 1285, in the time of Archbishop Lorenzo Periandro, the cathedral was reconsecrated,[332] although the completion of the works dates to 1324, as recorded in an inscription on the main portal: *AN[N]O DOMINI MCCCXXIIII T[EM]P[O]R[E] D[OMI]NI IOH[ANNI]S DE BUTOVANE D[E]IGRA[TIA]JADR[E]N[SIS]ARCHIEPI[SCOPI]*.[333] The epigraph drew the attention of the French pilgrim Louis de Rochechouart in the following century (1461): 'We went to the archiepiscopal church, which was named after St Anastasia, whose body is there. I found at the doors a citation where it was written: *Archiepiscopus Jadrensis*; then I took note of the name.'[334]

During the height of Western pilgrimage to the Dalmatian city, a further significant phase of works took place at the cathedral under Archbishop Valaresco (1450–1494). However, the alterations that proved 'fatal' to the medieval and late medieval fabric of the building were initiated under Archbishop Giovanni Carsan (1774–1801), specifically from 1780 onwards.[335] These included the

330 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 258; Petricioli 2005, 125.

331 Petricioli 2005, 125–127.

332 Bianchi 1877, 41–42; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 36; Vedriš 2002, 10.

333 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 258; Petricioli 1985, 26; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 36; Petricioli 2005, 125; Vedriš 2002, 10.

334 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 229: 'Ivimus ad ecclesiam archiepiscopalem, que sub nomine sancte Anastasie sublata est, cujus corpus ibi est. Inveni in januis unam citacionem ubi scriptum erat: *Archiepiscopus Jadrensis*; tunc notavi de nomine.' The following references by pilgrims also concern Zadar cathedral: Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76–77; Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Milliaduse d'Este, 1440, ed. 2009, 13; Anonymous from Donaueschingen, 1441–1442, ed. 1998, 173; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 78–79; Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 212; William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 84; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 186r; Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 177–178; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 149; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 101; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 322; Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 1860 (repr. 2004), 63; Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6; Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 311; Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 223; Juan del Encina, 1519, ed. 1978, 244–245; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59.

335 Vežić 1994, 229–240; Petricioli 1985, 14.



FIGURE 54 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

extensive rebuilding of the roof, modifications to the openings, the removal of medieval burials during the floor renovation in the nave, the elevation of the triumphal arch in front of the presbytery, the construction of a choir above the main entrance to house the organ and the addition of the rose window to the main façade (Fig. 54).[336] Finally, alongside the erection of a new altar dedicated to the souls in purgatory, other altars were displaced following the desecration of Zadar's churches beginning in 1798. Liturgical furnishings and ecclesiastical ornaments from the adjacent rotunda of St Donatus (1798 and 1809), as well as from other suppressed town churches during Austro-Hungarian rule, were transferred to the cathedral in two successive phases, as we shall see (Fig. 55).[337]

In 1892 the three upper floors of the bell tower were completed according to the designs of the British architect Sir Thomas Graham Jackson, resting on the lower level constructed during Archbishop Valaresco's tenure (1450–1495; Fig. 56).[338] The cathedral complex suffered further damage during World War II, when the south wall of the cathedral was partially destroyed and

336 Bianchi 1877, 97; Petricioli 1985, 14, 20; Raukar *et al.* 1987, 549; Vežić 1994, 229–240; Petricioli 2005, 119.

337 Petricioli 1985, 21, 30–31; Vežić 2002d, 134.

338 Cecchelli 1932, 23–24; Petricioli 1985, 14, 22.



FIGURE 55 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, interior
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

the adjacent baptistery was entirely demolished. The latter was reconstructed in the late 1980s.[339]

3.2 *Archaeological Data*

The building has undergone multiple phases of conservation, beginning during the Austro-Hungarian period in the 19th century.[340] The archaeological investigations of the 1970s proved crucial for a more accurate understanding of the cathedral's earliest architectural layer. These studies confirmed that in the 5th century a monumental church with a basilica layout was erected along the northern perimeter of the Roman forum, about 30 m long and 20 m wide.[341] The central nave, significantly wider than the lateral aisles, terminated to the east in a large semicircular apse, 8 m deep, with an internal diameter of 13 m that exceeded the width of the central nave, partially encompassing the lateral ones.[342] Annexed structures on the southern side included, from west to east, the diaconicon, the baptistery and the catechumeneum (Fig. 57).[343]

339 Petricioli 1985, 23; Živković *et al.*, 2013, 46, n. 100.
340 Vežić 1994, 229–240.
341 Petricioli 1985, 24; Vežić 1988, 172; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 33, 295.
342 Vežić 1988, 173; Crnčević 2013, 46.
343 Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 33, 295. For the specificity of the architecture of the catechumeneum and the baptistery, see Vežić 1988, 171–175, 183; Crnčević 2013, 46, n. 100.



FIGURE 56 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, bell tower
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

As widely recognised in scholarship, this late antique basilica left a lasting impression on early medieval devotees. Notably, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, in his *De Administrando Imperio*, compared it to the church of Chalkoprateia in Constantinople, noting its green and white columns, ancient paintings and mosaics.[344] Conservation efforts in recent decades have brought to light several 5th-century mosaic fragments, including a large section depicting two deer at a fountain in the catechumeneum (Fig. 58).[345] Other fragments, now displayed in the Archaeological Museum in Zadar, provide insights into its liturgical furnishings: the pluteus with interlaced decoration, part of the templon, dates to the reconstruction under Bishop Donatus (Fig. 59), while ciborium segments commemorating the proconsul Grgur date back to the first half of the 11th century (Fig. 60).[346]

The 12th-century Romanesque cathedral built atop the foundations of the earlier basilica maintained the basilica layout. However, the baptistery, catechumeneum and diaconicon, the last two of which had functioned respectively as the sacristy and a cistern since the early Middle Ages, remained unchanged.[347] In the 13th century the cathedral was significantly modified with the addition of galleries above the aisles (Fig. 61) and the 14 m extension of the main body through the addition of three new bays, increasing its total length to 50 m (Fig. 62).[348]

The publications of Ivo Petricioli have clarified, primarily on stylistic grounds, the chronology and attribution of the liturgical furnishings and sculptural programme associated with the various construction phases culminating in the completion of the new façade in 1324.[349] The first Romanesque campaign, during the episcopate of (Arch)bishop Lampridius in the 12th century, involved the construction of the baptismal font,[350] fragments of the archiepiscopal chair, the new architectural partitioning of the presbytery and a part of

344 Vežić 1988, 173.

345 Petricioli 1985, 24; Vežić, 1988, 166; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 63–67.

346 Petricioli 1985, 10; also, dating from the 18th–19th centuries, there are material traces that can be connected to the ambo in the old cathedral (cf. Petricioli 2005, 105–114, esp. 112), as well as the beams in the chapel of St Anastasia, which we will discuss below.

347 Vežić 1988, 178.

348 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 256; Petricioli 1985, 28; Vežić 1988, 178; Vežić 1994, 238.

349 Petricioli 1994, 217–228; Petricioli 2005, 115–139.

350 The baptismal font, destroyed during the bombing in December 1943 and subsequently rebuilt (see Petricioli 1994, 217), was described in 1579 as 'per-protocol' by the visitor Agostino Valier; Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita A 80, fol. 34r: 'Vidit postea fontem baptismalem in capella quadam antigua ecclesiae, is est rotundus, amplus et magnus, [...] cooperculo plano ex asseribus et bene clausas.'

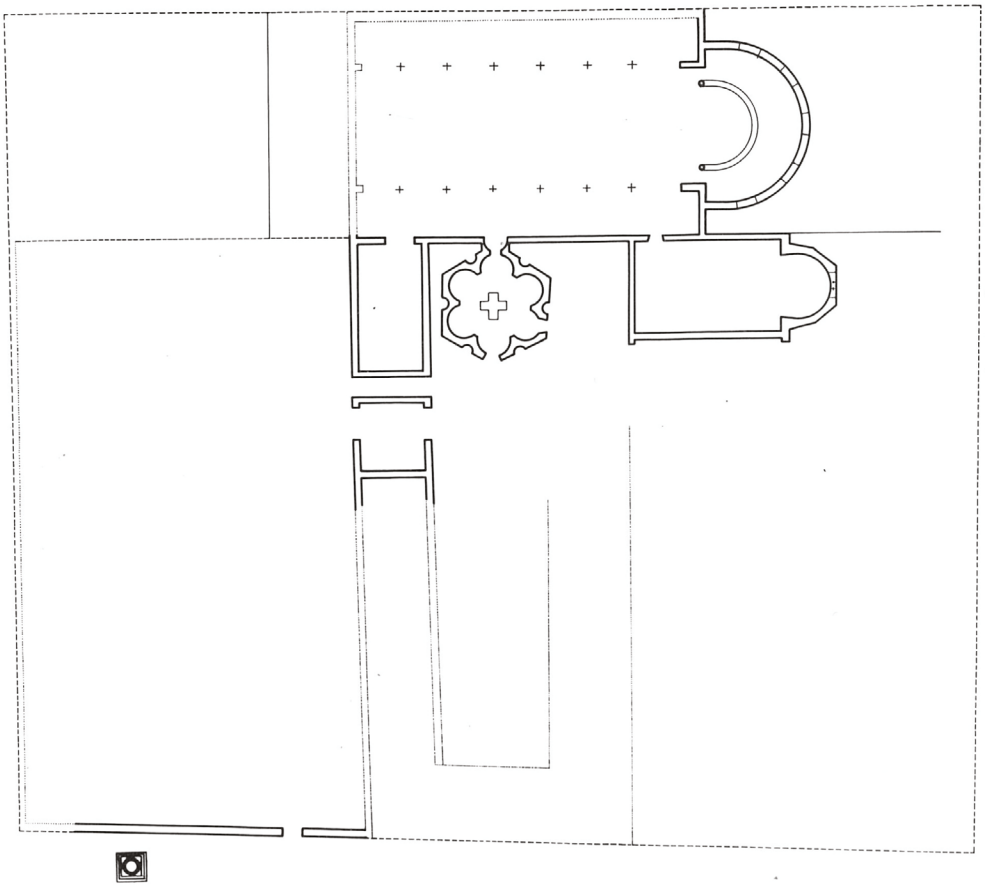

FIGURE 57 Plan of the episcopal complex of Zadar
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 295

the sculptural decoration that remains to this day on the main façade (where it was reinstalled at the time of the 13th-century extension).[351] This phase includes the sculptures of the lion and the ox on the upper part of the façade, as well as the Annunciation group in the lower section of the portal of the north aisle.[352] In this composition the two figures flank the lunette featuring

351 Petricioli 1994, 218–221, 228; Petricioli 2005, 121.
352 Petricioli 1994, 220–221, 228.



FIGURE 58 Zadar, cathedral, catechumeneum. Mosaic decoration, 5th century
PHOTO THOMAS KAFFENBERGER



FIGURE 59 Zadar, Archaeological Museum. Pluteus, 9th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 60A–B Zadar, Archaeological Museum. Ciborium of the proconsul Grgur, *c.*1030
PHOTOS VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 61 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, south matroneum
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 62 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, view of the matroneum and presbytery
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 63A–B Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, south and north portals
PHOTOS VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 64 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, lunette of the central portal
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

the *Agnus Dei*, though with stylistic divergences (Fig. 63).[353] The lunette of the south portal, as well as the four apostles[354] flanking the central portal, also differ in form from the whole, but are likewise attributable to the 12th century. Most probably, as the façade neared completion in 1324, the lunette of the central portal was carved: the enthroned Virgin with the Child stands out, addressed by the full-length figures of St Anastasia and St Chrysogonus (Fig. 64).[355] The Gothic idiom of this composition also characterises the new ciborium, produced under Archbishop Ivan Butovan (1322–1333) in the early 1330s.[356]

The fresco decoration, now heavily fragmentary, within the apse of the catechumeneum and on the cathedral's internal façade should also be ascribed to the 14th century. The lower register of the apse preserves part of the Tree of Jesse (Fig. 65), while the inner façade (likely painted in its entirety in the 14th century) features half-length medallion portraits of Sts Peter and Paul

353 *Ibid*., 225, 228.
354 *Ibid*., 221, 225, 228.
355 *Ibid*., 221–222; Petricioli 2005, 130.
356 Petricioli 1985, 12.



FIGURE 65 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. Tree of Jesse, sacristy fresco, 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

(Fig. 66) and a full-length St Donatus in the uppermost register, originally part of a larger cycle of saints (Fig. 67).[357]

Traces of early 13th-century frescoes survive in the two lateral apses, though their condition prevents comprehensive reconstruction. The central zones once displayed ranks of saints (Fig. 68), while both apses featured Christ in Majesty. In the northern apse Christ is flanked by St Anastasia and St Thomas Becket and holds a book inscribed *EGO SVM ALFA ET OMEGA*. The southern apse features St John the Baptist, suggesting a Deesis composition (Fig. 69).[358]

Late medieval pilgrims offered little insight into these fresco cycles. Their observations, in contrast to those describing the cathedral of Dubrovnik, are generally sparse and less detailed, reflecting the primacy of the cult of St Simeon. Western visitors often focussed exclusively on the collegiate church enshrining the prophet's relics, thereby monopolising their experience and reports.

At any rate, Zadar cathedral was generally received favourably by Western travellers, as in the case in 1431 of Milliaduse d'Este, who underlined the

357 *Ibid.*, 12, 30; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 88–91.
358 Hilje and Tomić 2006, 87–88.



FIGURE 66 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. St Peter, fresco on the counter-façade, 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

presence of a 'beautiful church' in Zadar.[359] Similar remarks appear in the reports by Jan Aerts (1481–1484) and Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken (1496), which respectively noted: 'In the cathedral church, which is very large and beautiful' and 'it is a beautiful church and an archbishopric'.[360]

359 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 13: 'bellissima chiexia'.

360 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 139: 'In de Cathedrael-kercke, die seer groot ende schoon is'; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 101: 'ist eine hübsche Kirche und ein Erzbistum'.



FIGURE 67 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. St Donatus, fresco on the counter-façade, 14th century
FISKOVIĆ 1987, 116



FIGURE 68 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. Fresco decoration in the northern apse, 13th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 69 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. Deesis, fresco in the southern apse, detail, 13th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

The most informative testimony is that of Pietro Casola, whose description, as pointed out by Ivo Petricioli, provides several insights.[361] While the Italian pilgrim's references to the fresco cycle dedicated to Old Testament themes by skilled masters remain unconfirmed by material evidence or local archival sources, the same does not apply to the carvings described by the Milanese canon, which are well documented.[362] The wooden choir, still in the presbytery (Fig. 70), was commissioned in 1418 to Matteo Moronzon, a Venetian master who, eight years later, also crafted the imposing iconostasis, featuring the Virgin Mary, St John and the twelve apostles flanking the Crucified Christ – an ensemble now partially preserved in Zadar's Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art (Fig. 71).[363] Casola's reference to a 'gilded robe' corresponds to the gilding and polychromy added in 1431 by Giovanni di Pietro da Milano.[364] As for the wooden roofing, also referenced by the Italian pilgrim, it was carried out at the end of the 14th century by Juraj Bilisić and replaced with lead sheeting by John of Seville in 1404.[365] The same Spanish master also constructed the organ, which remained in place until its mid-18th-century replacement.[366] This organ drew the attention of the pilgrim Hans Bernhard von Eptingen in 1460, who noted: 'They also placed our coats of arms on an organ in St Anastasia's church, which is a bishopric.'[367]

Casola's remarks on the altars remain open to interpretation: 'It has no vaulted chapels in its structure, but is well equipped with side altars and nicely ornamented with altarpieces and solemn images in our way, that is, in relief and conveniently honoured.' Whether he referred to stylistic, formal or technical aspects, or all three, remains unclear. Significant transformations,

361 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119: 'Sono stato in la sua giesia cathedrale, sub vocabulo de Santa Anaxtasia: è uno bello corpo de giesia, alta in el mezo, in forma de una galea, tuta una volta tonda e longa, pur de legname; et egli depento, per man de boni magistri, el Testamento vegio. Ha uno coro bene ornato de stadii al nostro modo; dico sono belli, e merito nam è giesia archiepiscopale. Non ha capelle voltate in el corpo, ma è fornita de altari, a lato e bene ornate de ancone, maiestate al nostro modo, de rilevo e bene adorate. De sopra del coro, in alto, tra l'una pariete e l'altro, ultra el crucifixo chi è in el mezo, molto ornato, egli uno ligno chi sostene XIII° figure, asai grande, tute vestite ad auro; sono belle e molto naturale.'; see Petricioli 1966, 206–208, esp. 206–207.

362 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119.

363 Petricioli 1972, 38–67, 121–123; Petricioli 2004, 15, 76–79.

364 Petricioli 1972, 123–124; Petricioli 2004, 76–79.

365 Petricioli 1966, 206–207.

366 Petricioli 1966, 206–207; Bianchi 1877, 123.

367 Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 212: 'schluogen auch auff unsere Wappen an ein Orgell Inn Sanct Astasien Kirchen das ist ein Bistumb'.



FIGURE 70 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. Matteo Moronzon, choir, first half of the 15th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 71 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Matteo Moronzon, choir iconostasis, 1426
PHOTO THOMAS KAFFENBERGER

particularly during the Baroque period, make it impossible to satisfactorily reconstruct the cathedral's medieval *mise-en-scène*.[368]

More concrete information regarding the number and distribution of altars comes again from Agostino Valier's account. The Veronese bishop, who inspected the monument on 4 May 1579, recorded the presence of '12 consecrated and duly adorned altars', which he listed as follows: 'Main altar', 'Altar of the Most Holy Sacrament', 'Altar of St Anastasia', 'Altar of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary', 'Altar of St Ursula', 'Altar of the Cross', 'Altar of St Margaret', 'Altar of St Agnes', 'Altar of St Martin', 'Altar of St Peter', 'Altar of Sts Cosmas and Damian' and 'Altar of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary'.[369]

Of particular interest are the main altar, where the canons of Zadar celebrated daily 'conventual' Mass beneath a wooden tabernacle,[370] and the altar of the Holy Sacrament, where Valier paused in veneration. He noted that it was 'formerly under the title of St Jerome' (olim sub titulo Sancti Hieronimi) and its location was 'on the right side of the church, in the middle'.[371] Bianchi later confirmed both of these details, adding that the altar was originally made of stone before being reconstructed in marble by Antonio Viviani in the 1710s at the request of Antonio Caeran.[372] Consecrated in 1719 by Archbishop Zmajević, a key figure in Zadar's ecclesiastical history, this altar marks the beginning of structural changes in the nearby church of St Donatus, whose furnishings were transferred to the cathedral by 1822, when a new altar dedicated to St Anastasia

368 For the commissions attributable to Casola's testimony, see Petricioli 1966, 207.

369 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 34r–35v: 'duodecim altaria consecrata et debite ornata': 'Altare maius', 'Altare Sanctissimi Sacramenti', 'Altare Sanctae Anastasia', 'Altare Conceptionis B. Mariae', 'Altare Sanctae Ursulae', 'Altare Crucis', 'Altare Sanctae Margaritae', 'Altare Sanctae Agnetis', 'Altare Sancti Martini', 'Altare Sancti Petri', 'Altare Sanctorum Cosmae et Damiani' and 'Altare Annuntiationis B. Mariae'.

370 *Ibid*., fol. 34r: 'habet obligatione annexam missae quotidianae, et haec est missa conventualis, ad cuius celebrationem tenentur Canonici Iadrenses.' The commission document for the aforementioned tabernacle of St Mary Major suggests that Matteo Moronzon also crafted the cathedral's tabernacle, likely around the same time as the wooden choir. Valier's statement about the Mass at the high altar was later confirmed by Bianchi (Bianchi 1877, 99, 103–104).

371 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 34r: 'Die lunae 4 Maii 1579, Reverendissimus Dominus Visitator exordiendo visitationem ecclesiae Iadrensis associatus a Reverendissimo Archiepiscopo, Reverendo Capitulo et ab omnibus sacerdotibus et clericis accessit ad ecclesiam cathedralem sub titulo Sanctae Anastasiae, et genuflexus ante altare Sanctissimi Sacramenti, quod est a latere dextro ecclesiae in medio; everenter adoravit et oravit deinde accepta stola et accensis quindecim cereis funalibus, visit locum in quo asservatur, repertique illud in sex particulis contneri in quadam pixide argeatea cooperta velo sericeo et inclusa in pala honorifica altaris.'

372 Bianchi 1877, 112–113; Petricioli 1985, 18.

was erected using elements from the rotunda's high altar.[373] Finally, the decision in 1806 to erect a new altar dedicated to the souls in purgatory likely reflects the devotional practices previously held in the church of St Donatus before its deconsecration.[374]

3.3 *The Original Core of Relics: the Cult of St Anastasia and the Three Sisters Irene, Agape and Chionia*

The formation of the embryonic relic nucleus of Zadar cathedral can be traced to the early 9th century during the episcopate of St Donatus. According to local tradition, this legendary bishop translated the body of St Anastasia, a martyr who would become the protector of both the cathedral and the city, upon his return from an alleged voyage to Constantinople.[375] During this mission the remains of the three sisters from Thessaloniki, Irene, Agape and Chionia, were likewise translated, again according to Zaratine tradition.[376]

These acquisitions were not incidental, but formed part of a strategic expansion of the cathedral's hagiographic pantheon. The relics of St Anastasia were added to those of Sts Zoilus and Chrysogonus, already present in the city and linked through intertwined *passiones*. A gift from the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros I, St Anastasia's relics arrived at a time of geopolitical tension, as Byzantine control over the Adriatic was being challenged by Charlemagne's ambitions. Her *passio*, closely connected to those of Chrysogonus and Zoilus, their cults coming from Aquileia, helped Zadar to maintain a delicate balance between the Eastern and Western Christian spheres, one inherently shaped by its geographical position.

The *passio* of St Anastasia opens in Rome, where the patrician-born saint met St Chrysogonus, who became her spiritual guide. After a period of seclusion in Rome, during which the two exchanged letters, Anastasia followed him to Aquileia, where he was ultimately beheaded by order of Diocletian. We have already mentioned the passage from Grado concerning St Zoilus, who recovered the body of St Chrysogonus, abandoned near the home he shared with Irene, Agape and Chionia. St Anastasia, along with the three sisters and other Christians imprisoned by the emperor, began a journey to the East, marked by difficult instances: from Sirmium in Illyricum to Thessaloniki, where Irene,

373 Petricioli 1985, 21.
374 *Ibid.*
375 For the dating of the arrival of the relics of St Anastasia, see also Vedriš 2002, 6 and n. 34.
376 Vežić 2002b, 236; Vežić 2002d, 22.



FIGURE 72 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia, crypt, chamber corresponding to the high altar
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Agape and Chionia were martyred, and eventually to the miraculous landing on the island of Palmera, where the saint was burnt alive.[377]

Various hypotheses have been advanced regarding the initial location of Anastasia's remains and those of the Thessalonian martyrs within the cathedral. Valerio Ponte (second half of the 17th century) reported that the relics of the three sisters were housed in the crypt, specifically in a cell located beneath the high altar (Fig. 72).[378] His contemporary, Fondra, also referred to the same location: 'the bodies of the holy virgins and martyrs Irene, Agape and Chionia, in a marble chest under the high altar'.[379] According to Pavuša Vežić, this arrangement likely dates back to the initial phase of relic translation under Donatus. Specifically, the scholar included the construction of the crypt, as

377 Vedriš 2002, 1, 16–17.

378 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 126: 'Fornici inserta est quaedam cellula continens arcam marmoream, in qua condita sunt corpora sanctorum Virginum ae Marytirum, Agapis, Chioniae et Irenis, quae fuerunt s. Zoili discepulae et familiares s. Anastasiae, in cuius actis Surius plura de illis refert. Cellulae innixa est basis altaris maioris in choro positi, et praeterea aliqui dixerunt sub ara maiori carundem Sanctorum corpora quiescere.'

379 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 8.



FIGURE 73 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. Marble sarcophagus of St Anastasia
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

well as St Anastasia's chapel, among the alterations to the episcopal complex initiated by Bishop Donatus.[380]

The cultic focus of Anastasia's chapel appears to have been the still-extant marble sarcophagus bearing votive inscriptions that mention the legendary bishop twice (Figs 73, 74).[381] This material evidence, linking her cult to St Donatus, clarifies that the arrival of St Anastasia's relics in Zadar actually occurred in the 9th century, not in the 5th, as previously thought, when Aquileian relics were introduced.[382]

However, regarding the location of St Anastasia's remains, the hypotheses put forward by Vedriš and Belamarić differ, with Vedriš placing the sarcophagus in the area of the cathedral's high altar and Belamarić in the adjacent rotunda of St Donatus.[383] Belamarić's hypothesis would place the rotunda in

380 Vežić 2002d, 28–30, 62; Vežić 2002b, 236.
381 Vežić 2002d, 28.
382 Vedriš 2002, 8.
383 *Ibid.*, 2002, 9–10; Belamarić 2001, 206. The first conjecture suggests a vertical connection between the bodies of the three saints and that of the martyr of Sirmium; such a setting



FIGURE 74 Zadar, cathedral of St Anastasia. View of the northern nave with the marble sarcophagus of St Anastasia
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

the category of martyrial shrines (*martyria*), a typology not uncommon on the Eastern Adriatic coast. The centrally planned church of St Tryphon in Kotor, consecrated in 809, provides a compelling parallel: a shrine for the relics of a martyr whose cult rapidly spread westwards.[384] Further analogies include an inscribed stone entablature naming Bishop Johannes and a roughly hewn stone sarcophagus, both found in Kotor, which closely resemble the reliquary of St Anastasia brought to Zadar during the same period (Fig. 75).[385] As noted, these saints were part of the trio whose arrival, according to tradition, occurred in the same year; similarly, the remains St Euphemia, which, unlike those of Anastasia, were not translated through clerical initiative, but were miraculously brought by the sea waves, reached the shores of Rovinj in the 9th century.[386]

Late medieval pilgrims, much like in the case of St Euphemia, were familiar with the cult of St Anastasia and frequently mentioned her. These references range from noting the presence of her relics in the city, alongside those of the other protectors of Zadar, to associating her with the cathedral and detailing her *passio*. The first mention dates to 1431, more than a decade later than those dedicated to St Simeon, by Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena: 'And there we saw some noble and beautiful relics, among which was the body of St Simeon, who composed *Nunc dimittis*, with great ornaments and great treasures, and we saw the body of St Chrysogonus the martyr and St Anastasia the martyr and also other holy bodies.'[387] While the Sienese pilgrim listed only the three

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can be envisioned as accompanied by elaborate liturgical ceremonies. It must also be noted – although this architectural configuration was reached *a posteriori* – that access to the crypt was provided by two flights of stairs on either side of the choir. Such solutions, dictated by practical needs, characterised, as we shall see in the case of the relics chapel in the cathedral of Dubrovnik, sacred spaces designed for specific ceremonies and frequented by multitudes of the faithful.

384 Čanak-Medić 2009, 49–50; Živković 2010, *passim*.

385 Jakšić 2009a, 91.

386 Belamarić 2001, 165. A parallel can be drawn with the cult of St Euphemia, martyred under Diocletian, which connects Zadar to Istria and the Veneto. The cult of Euphemia – not the one from Chalcedon, but the local saint of the same name – was associated, like that of St Anastasia, with three fellow martyrs: Dorothea, Thecla and Erasma. While the identity of the Aquileian saint has been questioned in the past by judging her as a naturalisation of the Eastern martyr of the same name, also due to her association with the three local martyrs, there is no doubt about the original Zadar core and the identity of the four saints; D'Antiga 2009, 93–94; Tramontin 1965a, 312; Tramontin 1965b, 145.

387 Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145: 'E ìne vedemmo di nobili et belissimi reliquy fra' quali fu el corpo di Sancto Simeone, el quale compose "Nunc dimictis", con



FIGURE 75 Kotor, cathedral treasury. Sarcophagus of St Tryphon
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

saints' bodies – St Simeon, St Chrysogonus and St Anastasia – Hans Lochner, four years later, provided a precise list of the 'holy bodies' (sancti corpi) that Zaratine tradition claimed were preserved in the city: 'Item, here lie St Simeon, St Chrysostom [*sic*], St Donatus, St Anastasia and St Cyril.'[388]

Although many travellers referred to St Anastasia's remains as if they comprised her entire body, echoing the usual topos,[389] William III, Landgrave of Thuringia (1461), recalled not only the manner of her martyrdom, but also specified that what was venerated were her ashes: 'Also, in the cathedral lies the ash of the holy virgin Anastasia, who was burnt by the pagans.'[390] William Wey noted her feast day on 25 December, a date familiar to Western pilgrims not only as Christmas Day, but also as the occasion of the divine office that honoured her during the second Christmas Mass: 'Her memory is honoured on the day of the Nativity of the Lord, because on that day she endured the martyrdom of burning.'[391]

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grandi ornamenti et grandi tesori, et vedemo el corpo di Sancto Grisogono martire et di Sancta Anastasia martire e anco altri sancti corpi.' See also the contemporary testimony of Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76: 'Qui ci furon mostrati di nobili et belli reliqui, fra' quali fu el corpo di sancta Simeone Yusto el quale ricevè nelle sue braccia el picholino et dolcie Yhesu delle mani della dolcie Vergine Maria et compose: "Nunc dimictis servum" et è con grandi tesori; et vedemo el corpo di sancto Grisogono et di sancta Anastasia et altri santi corpi.'

388 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 209: 'jtem do leit sant Simeon, sant Chrysostomus [*sic*], Saut Donatius, sant Anastasia, sant Cyrillus'.

389 Examples include the following accounts: Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'In eadem civitate in alia ecclesia requiescit corpus sancti Crisogoni et corpus sancte Anastasie vidue.'; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–140: 'In de Cathedrael-kercke, die seer groot ende schoon is, rust het lichaem by-na geheel van St. Anastasia maget.'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373: 'Est etiam ibi ecclesia sanctae Anastasiae martyris et in ea corpus ejus, quod etiam vidimus.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'Reliquie sancte visitate ne la cità de Zarra: 'lo corpo di sancta Anastasia romana.'; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Der turn an der kirchen ist durchsichtig von gehownen bilden, durch howen von grund uff. Es ligt och da santa Donatta und santa Anastassia, me santa Crissogonia.'; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.: 'le corps de sainct Anastasie'; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 322: 'und leidt alda die heilige Jungfraw S. Anesia auch in der kirch'; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59: 'Es ligt auch da S. Anastasij deß Martyrers Leychnam.'

390 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 84: 'Auch liegt da in der Domkirche die Asche von der heiligen Jungfrau Anastasia, die von der Heiden verbrannt war.' The same motif resurfaces in the testimony of an anonymous traveller, who similarly noted: 'Sannct Annastasie, welche verbranndt ist worden, und auch ettliche Gepain von ier.'; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 149.

391 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 78–79: 'memoria habetur in die Nativitatis Domini, quia ut ilia die sustinuit martirium combustionis.'

As anticipated, additional hagiographic details appear in other accounts. Juan del Encina poetically linked the saint and the city patron, St Chrysogonus,[392] while the Franciscan friar Paul Walther Guglingen, citing Roman martyrologies, pointed out the epistolary exchange between the two: 'In the same city, in another church, rests the body of St Chrysogonus and the body of St Anastasia, the widow who wrote to St Chrysogonus while he was in prison, as is devoutly recounted in the legend of this holy martyr.'[393]

Finally, while Antonio da Crema in 1486, as already pointed out, recalled the link between St Zoilus and Irene, Agape and Chionia,[394] it was Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera (1518–1520) who explicitly named the three martyred sisters from Thessaloniki as co-titular saints of the cathedral: 'St Anastasia, and the church is named after her and three Greek martyrs.'[395] The relative unfamiliarity of the Greek martyrs among Western travellers is further reflected in the frequent mispronunciation of their names. An anonymous Parisian referred to them as 'Agapis, Simonis et Irenis virginum', and Pierre Barbatre listed four martyrs in error ('le corps de sainct Agapit, Siurii, Siurius et Yrenis virginum et martirum').[396]

None of the above-mentioned accounts, however, provides precise information on the location of their bodies during the 14th and 15th centuries, except for that of Hans Schürpff, as recorded by Peter Wächter (1497–1498): 'And in a church, there suffered a holy virgin named Anastasia, who lies at the high altar. And at another altar, there suffered the worthy priest, Lord Simeon, who, in Jerusalem, received God into his hands and made the *Nunc dimittis* to praise and honour God in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.'[397] However, this reference appears to conflate the cathedral and the church of St Simeon, a confusion likely based on prior accounts rather than direct observation. At the time of the late medieval travellers' visits, the remains of St Anastasia were fully

392 Juan del Encina, 1519, ed. 1978, 244–245: '[…] y a do está Zara, que puede /con qualquiera competir /donde a Simeón traxeron /y a Anastasia a sepelir, /y a Chrysógono con ella, /por su amor no dividir.'

393 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'In eadem civitate in alia ecclesia requiescit corpus sancti Crisogoni et corpus sancte Anastasie vidue, que scripsit sancto Crisogono, dum ipse erat in carcere, ut devote patet in legenda eiusdem sancti martyris.'

394 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139.

395 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1519, ed. 2001, 311: 'Sancta Anastasia y llámase yglesia / de su nombre y de tres mártires grie/gos.'

396 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113.

397 Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6: 'Vnd jn einer kilchen, da litt ein helge jungfrovw mit namen Eostasia, die litt jm fronaltar. Vnd jn eim andern altar, da litt der wirdig priester herr Sÿmeon, der ze Jherusalem Gott jn sine hend enpfieng, vnd hatt gemacht das "Nunc dimittis" Gott ze lob vnd eren jn Salomons tempel zuo Jherusalem.'

enshrined within the early medieval sarcophagus located at the end of the north aisle, near the apse. According to Bianchi, this location, still in use today, albeit with later modifications, dates back to the 13th century following the cathedral's reconstruction, after being damaged during the crusader siege, in the second half of the century.[398] From the 15th century, specifically following the reconstruction during the time of Lorenzo Venier (1428–1449), the space designated for the safekeeping of the saint's remains became known as the chapel of St Anastasia.[399]

Subsequent alterations took place during the Baroque era, when Archbishop Luca Stella, in 1622, intervened not only on the wooden altar that housed the saint's marble sarcophagus, but also specified the content of the relics during their recognition: 'Here, the body was uncovered and found in ashes, with some bones, all of which were placed in the treasury.'[400] During this recognition, the lower jaw and three teeth were separated from the rest of the ashes and placed in a new reliquary commissioned by the archbishop.[401] This container became the only portable reliquary of the saint in the archdiocese of Zadar, as the sarcophagus had remained sealed until the early 17th century. This ensured that her remains, unlike those of other saints housed in the cathedral, were not distributed to other churches and confraternities in the city.

Over time, the cathedral's relic collection expanded considerably and became well established in the eyes of the Western travellers who visited the church during the late Middle Ages. However, despite a few fixed points, the precise chronology and trajectories of individual relics remain elusive. These relics were associated with saints widely venerated across Christendom. While the relics held in the cathedral and the saints listed in the 15th-century cathedral calendar largely align with those venerated in the Venetian lagoon, it is more accurate to view them as part of a broader Adriatic cultic network, rather than attributing them solely to Venetian influence. Among these, relics originating in the East held a significant place, both in quantity and in cultic importance, within the liturgical and devotional practices of the Zaratine community.

398 Bianchi 1877, 140–141; see also Vedriš 2002, 9.

399 Vedriš 2002, 10.

400 Bianchi 1877, 141: 'Qua aperta et invento corpore in cinere, et aliquobus ossibus, omnibusque repositis in sanctuario.'

401 *Ibid*. On the reliquary that has come down to the present day, see Petricioli 2004, 85; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 251–253.

3.4 *The Cathedral Treasury, 1427–1579*

The earliest known inventory of Zadar cathedral, compiled on 15 January 1427 at the request of the Venetian authorities, provides a precise account of its relics, their means of safekeeping and the first recorded reference to their placement within the sacred space.[402]

The relics were safeguarded in cabinets within a treasury secured by an iron gate.[403] Access to this space, likely restricted for the laity, was tightly controlled through a system of three separate keys, each held by a different authority: the count held the key to the iron gate, the archbishop to the treasury and the procurator of St Anastasia's *fabbrica* (the body overseeing the church's building works and maintenance) to the cabinets. This arrangement, paralleling the safeguarding of the shrine of St Simeon, reflects the intricate balance of power between Zadar's noble families and the Venetian-appointed authorities – the count and the archbishop – with the latter often holding an advantage in overseeing the city's most prized relics.[404]

Further insight into the treasury's location and design comes from Bianchi's *Zara Cristiana* (1877). He identified it with the altar of the Immaculate Conception, situated at the end of the south aisle near the sacristy. Bianchi described an iron gate, adorned with an altarpiece depicting Sts Cosmas, Damian and Anthony of Padua, guarding the niche.[405] This suggests that the space was not a canonical relic chapel, but rather a modestly sized area near the sacristy entrance.[406]

Cross-referencing this information with the 1579 apostolic visitation reveals that Agostino Valier personally inspected both the treasury and the sacristy, individually examining the relics and confirming the security of their location.[407] Apart from this affirmation of safety and the recommendation,

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402 This earliest known record was first published in 1890 by Brunelli and later, in 1987, by Petricioli; for the reference, see Petricioli 1987, 158. The inventory is relatively late compared to the 1335 list of Dubrovnik cathedral. However, in the context of Zadar, the earliest documented inventory also dates to the 14th century and concerns the objects of the Benedictine monastery of St Mary; see Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 5.

403 Petricioli 1987, 164; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 164–165.

404 Biagio Molin, a native Venetian, sat on the archbishop's throne at the time; shortly afterwards, in October of the same year, he became the patriarch of Grado; Petricioli 1987, 158; Guadalupi 2003, 51.

405 Bianchi 1877, 109, 144: 'Un cancello di ferro, a cui era sovrapposta la pala dei ss. martiri Cosmo e Damiano, e s. Antonio di Padova, ne custodiva la nicchia.'

406 However, it could accommodate a certain number of people, as indicated in the description in the inventory of 1427.

407 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 34r: 'Accessit inde in sacristiam et in sanctuarium, ubi osservantur multae venerabiles reliquiae, quas sigillatim

found among the directives in the final part of the cathedral's inspection, to whitewash and adjust the flooring in the area housing the relics, no further architectural or spatial details are provided.[408]

Although less detailed regarding the treasury's location, this unpublished record offers crucial insights into the relics themselves in comparison to the 1427 inventory.[409] Valier's list contains 26 entries, fewer than the 34 recorded in the 15th-century inventory, but this discrepancy does not suggest a loss of relics. On the contrary, in the intervening century and a half new items were acquired that greatly enriched the collection. The lower count reflects Valier's more systematic categorisation, which distinguishes relics from other ecclesiastical objects.[410]

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inspexit, et veneratus est, comperitque locum ipsum esse admodum tutum.'

408 *Ibid.*, fol. 40r: 'Ordinata in Cathedrali Iadrensi [...] Dealbetur locus reliquiarum et pavimentum adaquetur.'

409 The inventory follows the description of the 'suppellectilia ecclesiae' kept in the sacristy and the aforementioned list of the cathedral's altars; Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 35v–36r: 'Crux pacis ex argento/Crucibulum cum frustulo crucis Domini Nostri et particula spongie/ Caput Sancti Grisogoni in theca argentea/ Caput Sanctae Mariae Magdalenae in theca argentea/ Caput Sanctae Martae in theca argentea/ Pars capitis Sancti Georgii in theca argentea/ Caput Sancti Leonardi in theca argentea/ Caput Sancti Iacobi intercisi in theca argentea/ Brachium Sancti Grisogoni in theca aurea/ Aliud brachium Sancti Grisogoni in theca argentea inaurata/ Duo pedes Sancti Grisogoni in thecis argenteis/ Arcula quaedam lignea cum laminis argenteis, ubi est capitulum quod pomulum[...] vocant, manubrii ensis Sancti Grisogonis et eius linea tunica particula/ Arcula lignea cum laminis argenteis continens aliquot ossa Sancti Donati Archiepiscopi Iadrensis/ Theca aurea [...] modum brachii allata ab Urana, circa quam est inscriptio Restantius cum Uxori/ Brachium aureum cum aliquibus reliquiis/ Brachium Sancti Iacobi intercisi in theca argentea inaurata/ Brachium Sancti Donati, cum tribus digitis in thecis argenteis separatis/ Brachium argenteum cum digito Sancti Ioannis Baptistae, quo cum monstravit Dominum dicens Ecce agnus Dei/ Crucibulum cum aure Sanctae Ursulae/ Humerus Sancti Marci evangelistae in theca argentea/ Crucibulum cum parte reliquaie Sanctae Marinae in theca argentea/ Tabula cum aliquibus reliquiis argento coopertus cum imaginibus tricem sanctorum/ Tabula cum aliquibus reliquiis decursus sanctorum cum imagine Sancti Martini/ Caput Sancti Xisti [*sic*] martyris in pisside lignea/ Brachium Sancti Isidori doctoris in arcula lignea/Arcula plumbea cum aliquibus reliquiis Sanctorum innocentium'.

410 In the complex structure Valier employed, he grouped the items into various categories, including: 'pluviali', 'palii', 'pianete e tunicelle', 'camisi', 'paramenti de particolari', 'amiti', 'stole', 'manipoli', 'cingoli', 'pastorale', 'mantili', 'cortine', 'robbe poste nell'armario di sacrestia' and 'altre robbe consignate a sacrista maggiori'; Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 36r–39r. Finally, before the 'Ordinata in cattedrali Jadrensi', there are also the following sections: 'robbe conservate nell'armario maggiore' and 'paramenti dell'arcivescovo'; *ibid.*, fols 39r–39v.

Some items appear in both inventories, while others do not. The archiepiscopal cross, the mitre[411] and the papal bull, listed among the final entries in the Venetian inventory, are absent from Valier's list.[412] Also missing are the three crowns, which are annotated in the Venetian inventory with a late 15th-century marginal note: 'Note that the crowns listed by the procurators of the *fabbrica*, with the bishop's consent, were melted down and used for the construction of two feet of St Chrysogonus and the altar panel in 1496.'[413] The two foot-shaped reliquaries of St Chrysogonus appear in the 1427 inventory with a sceptical, but typical wording: 'they are said to be the feet of St Chrysogonus' (dicuntur esse pedis sancti Chrysogoni).[414] The 1496 note has prompted hypotheses about the reliquaries, which are now preserved in the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar and dated to the 15th (Fig. 76) and 17th centuries. The main theories propose that the 15th-century reliquary was either made before 1427 and later modified (to varying degrees) or created shortly after 1496.[415] The visitation confirms the presence of both reliquaries and the absence of crowns, raising questions about the latter's material – whether it was used exclusively for the altar or also for modifications to the reliquaries – and whether further alterations were made to one of the reliquaries during the Baroque period.

The 1579 visitation sheds light on another relic of St Chrysogonus: the saint's head, listed first in the 15th-century inventory. It was recorded by Valier in 1579 and again in an inventory dated 1 November 1641, thus definitively refuting Brunelli's timeline regarding its alienation, occasionally echoed by modern scholars, which claimed the head was transferred to the cathedral of Kotor by a Franciscan friar around the turn of the 16th century.[416]

A notable distinction between the inventories of 1427 and 1579 lies in the order of presentation. As previously noted in scholarship, the 1427 inventory opens with five items dedicated to St Chrysogonus, totalling seven entries

411 As already pointed out in historiography, the presence of the mitre, commissioned in 1413 by Archbishop Luca da Fermo (1400–1420), was later recorded in the inventory of 1641; cf. Petricioli 1987, 163. Valerio Ponte also referred to it in the second half of the 17th century; it is therefore to be assumed that it was not shown to the Veronese bishop at the time of his visit or that it was an oversight when drawing up the inventory; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 124: 'In eodem sacrario custoditur infula archiepiscopalis, pretiosis unionbus ac lapillis distincta, cum insignibus archiepiscopi Lucae de Firmo.'

412 Petricioli 1987, 163, 166.

413 Author's translation from Petricioli, Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 165–166, 255.

414 Petricioli 1987, 159, 165.

415 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 166, 255.

416 Brunelli 1913, 214; Petricioli 1987, 158–159; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 7; Tomić 2009, esp. 125–153; see also Jakšić 2009b, 114–123; Živković 2010.



FIGURE 76 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Foot reliquary of St Chrysogonus, 15th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

for his relics and associated objects.[417] In contrast, the visitation introduces St Chrysogonus only in the third position, listing just five entries, lacking continuity. However, this variation does not reflect a significant reduction in the number of cult objects. Both inventories mention the reliquary of the saint's head, two foot-shaped reliquaries and two arm-shaped reliquaries.[418] Additionally, the visitation records a silver-covered casket associated with the saint (Fig. 77). By Valier's time the contact relics – the sword hilt and a shirt, kept in separate containers in the early 15th century[419] – had already been transferred into the casket.

A silver-gilt arm (Fig. 78) and the casket are the only surviving objects definitely associated with St Chrysogonus. Both the arm and casket are preserved in the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar and are inscribed with the

417 Petricioli 1987, 158–159, 165; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 7.

418 The two arm-shaped reliquaries mentioned in the 15th-century inventory are distinguished by the material used, as in the visitation: specifically, the first is designated 'cum manu aurea', while the second is 'cum manu aregentea inaureata'; cf. Petricioli 1987, 165.

419 *Ibid.*



FIGURE 77 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary casket of St Chrysogonus, 1326
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 214

saint's name, respectively, *BE/AT/VS GRI/SOG/ONUS* and *SANTI GRISOGONI*.[420] While the arm-shaped reliquary is generally dated to the 14th or 15th century, the casket stands out as one of the few securely dated examples of 14th-century goldsmithing in Zadar, bearing the date 1326 at the end of one of the votive inscriptions.[421] Moreover, it is worth mentioning Conrad Grünenberg's 1486 account, which does not provide further insights into the reliquary itself, but contains the only reference to the relics of St Chrysogonus by late medieval pilgrims that can be directly traced to the cathedral: 'Thereby is a cloth that is still sweaty [or: imbued, *sc.* with blood], which St Chrysogonus was wearing when he was beheaded.'[422]

Comparison of the two inventories reveals that, like the head of St George, created just over a decade after the older inventory was made, Valier recorded

420 Petricioli 2004, 9, 11; Petricioli 1987, 159; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 72–75, 156–157.

421 Petricioli 2004, 9–11; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 72–75, 156–157.

422 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Me ain hemd das noch schwaisig ist, dar inn sant Brÿsogonia enthobtet ward.'



FIGURE 78
Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St Chrysogonus, 14th century
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 218

several cult objects for the first time. These include reliquaries made in the second half of the 15th century or with a *terminus post quem* of 1427, such as the reliquary of St Ursula, the arm of St Donatus and three fingers of the same saint. While the reliquary of St Ursula's ear (Fig. 79), the arm of St Donatus and one of the three finger-shaped reliquaries[423] have survived to the present day and appear in the lists of 17th-century authors, the same cannot be said for other items that Valier listed, such as the following: 'Thurible with a relic of St Marina in a silver case' (Crucibulum cum parte reliquiae Sanctae Marinae in theca argentea), 'Head of St Xystus [*sic*] the Martyr in a wooden pyx' (Caput Sancti Xisti [*sic*] martyris in pisside lignea), 'Golden arm with some relics' (Brachium aureum cum aliquibus reliquiis), 'Arm of St James the Dismembered in a silver-gilt case' (Brachium Sancti Iacobi intercisi in theca argentea inaurata) and 'Lead casket with some relics of the Holy Innocents' (Arcula plumbea cum aliquibus reliquiis Sanctorum Innocentium).[424]

With regard to the Holy Innocents, it is noteworthy that fragments of their relics, along with 'small pieces' of relics of St Martha, are listed in a 17th-century account by Valerio Ponte.[425] These are currently housed in a reliquary in the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar, attributed to the Master of the Serpentine and dated to the second quarter of the 14th century (Fig. 80).[426] Curiously, this reliquary is recorded neither in the Venetian inventory, nor by Valier, though the latter mentioned the remains inside a 'lead casket' (arcula plumbea).[427]

A similar case is the arm-shaped reliquary of St Isidore, which survives and is dated, based on its inscription, to the last quarter of the 12th century. It names its donor, Chiaccia, wife of Prior Dimitri (Fig. 81).[428] The relics of St Isidore, however, are only mentioned inside the silver-gilt arm in an inventory dated 1 November 1641, which also records the wooden box once used to house the arm relics, according to Valier. The 15th-century inventory refers generically to 'Reliquijs sancti sideri [*sic*]' inside an ivory box.[429]

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423 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 175, 190, 197; see also Petricioli 2004, 14, 25.

424 Agostino Valier, 1579, ASV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 35v–36r.

425 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 122.

426 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 122; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 76; see also Petricioli 2004, 24.

427 The annotation by William Wey (1458) in the chapter 'Decima materia e ultima est di reliquiis sanctorum in varie loci per viam a Terra Sancta […]' is significant with regard to the Venetian side; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 52–53: 'item una cista piena ossibus Innocencium Israel'.

428 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 54–55; see also Belamarić 2001, 294, esp. n. 4.

429 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 54–55; Petricioli 1983, 163, 165.



FIGURE 79 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary of St Ursula, 15th century
PHOTO THOMAS KAFFENBERGER



FIGURE 80 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary of the Holy Innocents, second quarter of the 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

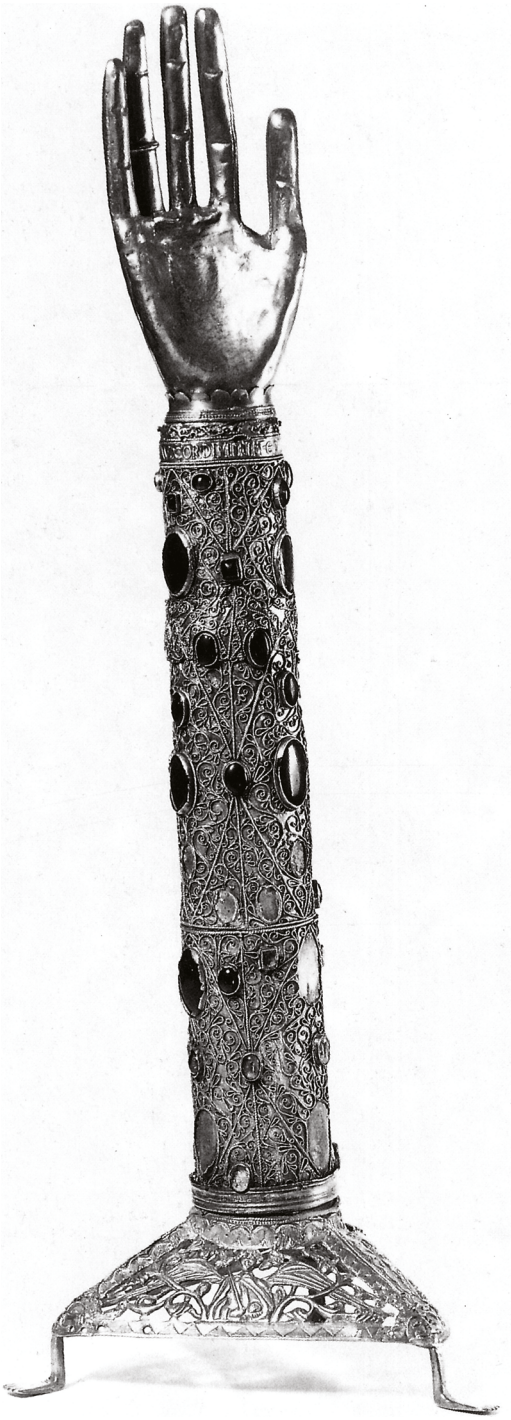

FIGURE 81
Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St Isidore, 12th century
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 178

While the last two examples suggest the repurposing of reliquaries, where cathedral relics, previously stored in modest materials (such as wooden and leaden caskets in Valier's time), were transferred into more precious containers, other instances point to the practice of sacrificing valuable cult objects for financial gain in times of need. In 1780, during the reroofing of the cathedral, the two most valuable reliquaries, crafted from pure gold and studded with precious stones, containing the relics of St Chrysogonus and St Euphemia, were sacrificed.[430] The former, a gift of King Coloman, on which the Zaratines swore oaths at crucial moments in their history, was already described in the 1427 inventory.[431] The arm of St Euphemia, first recorded by Valier and mentioned by 17th-century authors, was inscribed *Restantius cum Uxori* (Restantius with [his] wife) and was later described by Valerio Ponte, who specified its contents: 'The arm of St Euphemia in a case shaped like an arm, crafted from pure gold and adorned with precious stones, around which is inscribed: Praestantius, with his wife, Dobra, had it made.'[432] A further detail in Valier's description stands out: he noted that the reliquary was 'brought from Vrana', indicating that it was originally crafted not for Zadar, but for the nearby Vrana (Aurana). Dated to the 11th century based on the votive inscription recorded by various authors, the reliquary's absence from the 1427 inventory supports a date of arrival between 1427 and 1579, likely preceding the Ottoman siege of the Templar fortress of Vrana in 1538. In the 14th century Vrana was under the jurisdiction of the Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes, who, as noted, claimed possession of St Euphemia's relics.

Furthermore, a third arm, entirely crafted from gold and containing unspecified relics, as recorded by Valier, likely met the same fate. Its absence from the 15th-century inventory places its creation or arrival at the cathedral treasury after 1427, with the latter being the more plausible scenario. Moreover, the lack of references by 17th-century authors indicates that it may have been removed before the destruction of the relics of St Chrysogonus and St Euphemia, reliquaries that were certainly of greater value to the locals. Finally, it is important to note that the still extant blessing arm of Pope St Sixtus (Fig. 82), made

430 Petricioli 1983, 159, 165; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 11.

431 Petricioli 1983, 159, 165; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 156.

432 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 120: 'Brachium S. Euphemiae in theca in forma brachii ex puro auro cum lapillis pretiosis, circa quam leguntur: Praestantius cum uxore sua Dobra fieri fecit.' In the same period a nearly identical description appears in Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 10: 'Il braccio di s. Eufemia, in reliquiario d'oro con pietre preziose in forma di braccio, e con caratteri: *Praestantius cum uxore sua Dobra fieri fecit*.'



FIGURE 82
Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St Sixtus, second decade of the 15th century
JAKŠIĆ AND TOMIĆ 2004, 52, FIG. 006

shortly before the 15th-century inventory and described as 'newly made', is not mentioned by Valier for reasons that remain unclear.[433]

With regard to the remaining cult objects, both inventories align. The head of St James Intercisus, contained within a surviving reliquary dated to the turn of the 12th century (Fig. 83), is noted in both records,[434] along with two silver-gilt icons, each described as bearing the image of St Martin and three other saints. These reliquary icons, one of which held the relics of St Martin and the other of St Peter, St Paul and the prophet Daniel, were lost in the third decade of the 19th century, when their relics were transferred to a new casket constructed using parts from local 15th-century goldsmith work.[435]

Also mentioned by both the anonymous 15th-century author and Valier is the reliquary containing the scapula of St Mark (Fig. 84),[436] now in the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar. Its peculiar shape reflects its contents, with embossed decoration repeated in series, leading scholars to question its dating, which is generally placed in the 13th century.[437] According to Valerio Ponte, when describing the cathedral's crypt, the arrival of the relic references a local tradition that underscores the role of the Dalmatian city as a crucial port of call, not just for people and goods, but also for precious relics arriving from the East. His 17th-century account bears the hallmarks of a *furta sacra* narrative, claiming that the people of Zadar intercepted a Venetian ship on the way to the lagoon, carrying the remains of the Evangelist from Alexandria. While placed temporarily on an altar in the cathedral crypt, the sacristan supposedly removed the scapula, which remains in Zadar to this day.[438]

Unfortunately, no further records survive regarding the arrival of individual relics in the cathedral treasury, unlike the well-established tradition of *translationes* in Venice or the case of the rival republic of Dubrovnik. However,

433 Petricioli 1983, 160, 163; Petricioli 2004, 14.

434 Petricioli 2004, 6; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 53.

435 Petricioli 1983, 161, 165; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 206–207.

436 The 15th-century inventory reads: 'Item spalam vnam argenteam cum tribus pedibus Aureatam in qua est Vnum fustum spali sancti marci'; cf. Petricioli 1983, 165.

437 Petricioli 2004, 8.

438 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 126: 'Extat in recessu sub abside eiusdem Confessionis mensa altaris, in quo tradunt depositum fuisse aliquando corpus S. Marci Evangelistae, dum Alexandria Venetias veheratur, navemque Jadrae divertisse, ac sacrum corpus ibidemque interim deposuisse. Verum quemdam sacristam, indiscreta devotione adactam, arrepta occasione, tunc surripuisse armum seu os humerale sacri corporis, quod adhuc in theca argentea deaureata inter reliquias santuarii asservatur et s. Marci Evangelistae esse dicitur. Huic tradition adstipulatur usus ibidem celebrandi Missam conventualem ac reliqua divina Officia in die translationis s. Marci, die trigesim prima Januari.'



FIGURE 83 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Head reliquary of St James Intercisus, late 11th–early 12th century
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI



FIGURE 84 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary of the scapula of St Mark, 13th century
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI

the evidence presented so far suggests that the sacred collection had already attained a codified structure by 1427 or, more specifically, before the *Santa Intrada* of the Venetians into the Dalmatian city in 1409. Alongside 15th-century acquisitions, such as the relics of St Ursula, St Donatus and St Martha, the treasury housed not only objects linked to patron saints and figures particularly revered by the people of Zadar, but also relics of saints with deep roots in the Venetian and broader Adriatic devotional landscape. This collection, rich in prominent relics, fulfilled the spiritual needs of both locals and foreign visitors to the cathedral, providing tangible access to objects that connected them to the holiness of the land associated with the Gospel narratives.

3.5 *The Cathedral Treasury in Pilgrims' Accounts*

In addition to the aforementioned relics connected to the martyrdom of St Chrysogonus, other sacred items from the town cathedral captivated late

medieval pilgrims. Among the most notable were the Holy Sponge, the right finger of St John the Baptist and the heads of Sts Magdalene, Cosmas, Leonard and George.

Regarding the last, the reports by Paul Walther Guglingen (1481) stating 'Also, in the same city is the head of St George the Martyr' and by Conrad Grünenberg (1486) noting 'Also, there is the head of St George' are linked to the bust-shaped reliquary of St George (Fig. 85).[439] The commission of this still-extant container is attributed by Bianchi to Archbishop Lorenzo Vanier (1428–1449) and bears the prelate's coat of arms and the year 1440.[440] Although the date is no longer legible, it remains plausible. The reliquary was likely produced between 1427 (when it is absent from the cathedral inventory) and the 1480s, with traveller testimonies providing a *terminus ante quem*.[441] Furthermore, pilgrim accounts place the Dalmatian city within the broader network of ports with ships travelling to the Holy Land that hosted relics of St George. As Michele Bacci has noted, in addition to Venice, where the head of St George from the island of Aegina arrived in December 1462, late medieval pilgrims could venerate relics of the saint in Cyprus and on Rhodes.[442]

While the cult of the Eastern martyr in Zadar has yet to receive sufficient scholarly attention, it seems to have been deeply rooted in the region.

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439 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'Etiam in eadem civitate est caput sancti Georgii martiris'; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Item ze Sara ist das hopt sant Jörgen'.

440 It must be emphasised that the 19th-century author later, in his analysis of the individual objects in the sanctuary, contradicted what has been mentioned, stating: 'questo busto, tutto d'argento dorato contiene, giusta l'antica tradizione, una parte della testa di s. Giorgio Martire. Non avvi stemma però ned iscrizione, che ne faccia testimonianza.'; cf. Bianchi 1877, 54, 155; Petricioli 2004, 20. Although Bianchi appealed to tradition, it is possible in this case to identify Valerio Ponte's testimony as the source from which he partly drew in expounding his first conjecture: 'Frustum capitis s. Georgii, causum in theca argentea deaurata in forma capitis; desuper caelatum stemma familiae Veneriae, et forte tempore Laurentii Venerii archiepiscopi fuit opus confectum.'; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 120; see also Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 176–177. Finally, that it is a part of the head is also evident from Fondra's contemporary testimony: 'Parte del capo di s. Giorgio, chiuso in una testa d'argento.'; cf. Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 9.

441 It was first explicitly mentioned by Agostino Valier (1579) and later by 17th-century authors.

442 Bacci 2012, 187; Bacci 2017a, 138. On the head of St George in Venice, see also Setton 1973, 1–12, esp. 9–10. For an extensive list of churches and monasteries in the Christian East (mainly Greek) that possessed the relics of St George, see Meinardus 1970, 182–184; see also the annotation by William Wey in the chapter 'Decima materia e ultima est di reliquiis sanctorum in varie loci per viam a Terra Sancta […]' regarding the Venetian relics; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 52–53: 'brachium sinistrum sancti Georgii'. For the arm of St George on Rhodes, see Zoitou 2020, 96, 99.



FIGURE 85 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Bust reliquary of St George, 1440
PHOTO THOMAS KAFFENBERGER

St George, 'greatly venerated by the Zaratines', as Bianchi repeatedly noted,[443] was honoured with two churches. Local legends also connected him to prominent monuments, as Hans Lochner observed (1435): 'It is said that St George killed the dragon there', referring to the rotunda of St Donatus.[444] The flourishing cult of St George was not unique to Zadar, but extended along the Dalmatian coast, bolstered by a dense network of Benedictine abbeys.[445] A similar tradition is attested in Salona, where Farlati attributed the origins of the saint's cult not to the martyr, but to a local bishop named George, active during Diocletian's persecutions.[446]

Beyond the veneration of St George, the rare pairing of the relics of Sts Cosmas and Leonard reflects a specifically Venetian devotional context. Both were titular saints of churches in the Venetian lagoon, featured in mosaics in St Mark's and linked to the Venetian tradition which claimed the translation of St Cosmas's relics to the Benedictine monastery of St George in 1154.[447]

In 1481 the Franciscan pilgrim Paul Walther Guglingen recorded, near the head of St George, the presence of the heads of St Leonard the Confessor and St Cosmas.[448] The circumstances of their arrival in Zadar remain uncertain, but it is likely that they entered the treasury in the second half of the 14th century. In February 1400 the goldsmith Emericus Krnjić was commissioned to create two head reliquaries, presumably intended for these recent acquisitions.[449]

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443 Bianchi, 1877, 472, 476.

444 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209: 'Man spricht das sant Geörg da hab den Linndwurm todt gestochen.'; cf. Belamarić 2014a, 171; Kužić 2013. It is also worth mentioning in the context of the lagoon that around the same time as the head of St George arrived at the Benedictine abbey of the same name in 1451, the saint was elected, alongside St Tryphon, as the titular saint and protector of the Dalmatian school of the Slavonians in the Castello district. A possible re-evaluation of the saint's cult in Zadar, despite the widespread veneration of St George along the Dalmatian coast, could shed light on the origins of the co-founders of the Dalmatian school in Venice, particularly in relation to the communities from Kotor, as indicated by the choice of St Tryphon.

445 Mužić 2011, 188–189; see also Belamarić 2014a, 171; Kužić 2013, 98.

446 Mužić 2011, 188–189.

447 Candiani 1965, 112–113; Tramontin 1965b, 140, 142–145; Tramontin 1965a, 315, 319.

448 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'caput sancti Leonhardi confessoris et caput sancti Cosme'.

449 For the complete transcription of the contract and reference to the earlier literature, see Belamarić 2001, 297, esp. n. 12. Here, the variant most commonly used in the Croatian literature, namely Emericus Krnjić, is adopted to refer to the goldsmith of unknown origin; for other instances, see *ibid*., 296; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 143.

However, Emericus died in June of the same year,[450] and it remains unclear whether either reliquary was completed.[451]

Soon after, the 1427 inventory records 'two heads, one of St Cosmas and the other of St Leonard' (duo Capita vnum sancti Cosme et Alterum sancti Leonardi) stored together within a small cabinet. It also describes St Leonard's reliquary as new, empty and incomplete, while making no mention of St Cosmas's reliquary, a silence that persists in subsequent sources.[452] Valier, too, made no reference to it, though he confirmed that by his time the head of St Leonard was housed in a silver bust (Caput Sancti Leonardi in theca argentea).[453] This reliquary, still extant today, presents dating challenges due to interventions by multiple hands over time (Fig. 86).[454] In 1440 the nobleman Chrysogonus de Crisauis allocated 50 ducats for the reliquary's completion, a detail well-documented in historiography.[455] As Petricioli has noted, the donor was likely one of the four councillors of the Venetian count, with the archbishop and the abbot of the monastery of St Chrysogonus overseeing the execution of the work.[456]

This raises the question of whether the reliquary of St Cosmas had already been completed by that time or, as seems more likely, whether – despite the saint's integral role in a well-established local cult[457] – the completion of St Leonard's reliquary was prioritised. As Tramontin observed, the latter's cult was one of the 'dearest' in Venice, surpassed only by those of St Mark, John the Evangelist and St Isidore.[458]

Emericus was bound to complete the two reliquaries by August 1400. However, the components attributed to him on St Leonard's reliquary,

450 Belamarić 2001, 295, esp. n. 6.

451 Petricioli 1987, 157, 162; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 143; Petricioli 2004, 21.

452 Petricioli 1987, 157, 162–163, 165–166; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 143.

453 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 35v.

454 For the dating, see mainly Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 143–144.

455 Petricioli 1987, 162, n. 42; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 143–144; Petricioli 2004, 21.

456 Petricioli 1987, 162, n. 42. Although throughout the Middle Ages the Benedictine monastery of St Chrysogonus and its abbots had been at the centre of anti-Venetian resistance, the commission falls within the period of the now firmly established rule of the Serenissima over the Dalmatian city. Furthermore, at that time, the monastery was under the leadership of Pietro de Crissava, a Zadar native who had been educated in Venice at the monastery of San Nicolò al Lido; see Granić 1990b, 154.

457 In addition to the aforementioned altar in the cathedral and the monastery on the island of Pašman, two Zadar churches were also dedicated to Sts Cosmas and Damian during the Middle Ages. One of these churches also served as the seat of the barbers' confraternity, which, similar to the Venetian case, chose the two saints, often depicted with scalpels, as their protectors; cf. Bianchi 1877, 458; Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 504.

458 Tramontin 1965b, 135.



FIGURE 86 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Bust reliquary of St Leonard, 15th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

specifically the face and ears, suggest delays in the project. This implies that he likely struggled to meet the deadline and that the crafting of the second reliquary probably had not even begun before his death. While the question remains open, it can be reasonably concluded that the loss of St Cosmas's relic (though not of its reliquary) occurred between 1481, when it was still recorded by Guglingen, and 1579, when Valier attested only to the reliquary dedicated to St Leonard.[459]

459 While references to the relics and/or reliquary (if it was ever made) of St Cosmas are absent in later sources, it is, on the contrary, possible to trace the information about the reliquary of St Leonard, where it is specified that it contained, contrary to the case of

Focussing on the travelogues of the 1480s, which deviate from the canonical emphasis exclusively on the relics of St Simeon, one finds valuable references to Christological relics and, more broadly, to those associated with key episodes in the life of Christ. These accounts provide a more comprehensive overview of the sacred objects kept in the city. Among the relics of the first order – those related to the Passion of Christ – is the Holy Sponge, described in 1480 by both Pierre Barbatre and an anonymous Parisian pilgrim as 'a part of the sponge with which the Jews gave Jesus Christ vinegar to drink at His Passion'.[460] This testimony closely anticipates Conrad Grünenberg's 1486 description of 'a piece of the sponge with which our Lord Jesus Christ was given to drink at the stem of the holy cross'.[461]

This precious relic was housed in a vase-shaped reliquary, the pedestal of which is adorned with four dragons beneath an identifying inscription (Fig. 87).[462] The same description of the Holy Sponge appears in the 15th-century inventory; however, Valier's 1579 list is the first to pair it with another Passion relic: 'the cross of Our Lord and a piece of sponge' (crucis Domini Nostri et particula spongie).[463] This combined mention was later reaffirmed only in the 19th century by Bianchi.[464]

The reliquary has recently drawn scholarly attention, leading to a more precise attribution to the period of Angevin rule over Zadar in the late 14th century.[465] This context is further supported by Pope Boniface IX's grant

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St George, the entire head of the saint; cf. Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 118: 'Caput integrum sacncti Leonardi confessoris conditum in theca argenetea, aequalis formae com praecedenti.'; Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 8: 'Il capo intero di s. Leonardo, chiuso in reliquiario d'argento'.

460 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113: 'une partie de l'esponge de quoy les juifz baillerent a boyre du fiel a Jésuchrist a sa Passion'; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32: 'Item: une petite partie de l'esponge de quoy les Juifz baillerent du vin aigre et du fiel à boire il Nostre Seigneur'.

461 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Item ain stuk vom schwam, damit unser her Jesus Christus getrenkt ist worden am stamen des hailgen crutz'.

462 + *HIC E[ST] SPONGIA CV[M] QUA POTAT[US] FVIT I[N] PATIBVLO CRVCIS*; see Petricioli 2004, 23.

463 See p. 195, n. 409 above.

464 In the second half of the 17th century Lorenzo Fondra and Valerio Ponte referred to the cult object by confirming that it contained a 'fragment of the sponge used in the Lord's Passion', while at the same time also combining it with another relic of the Passion, namely 'a thorn of the crown'; cf. Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 10; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 122: 'Spina coronae et frustulum spongiae adhibitae in passione Domini nostri Jesu Christi in vasculo crystallino suffulto quattuor draconibus argenteis deauratis, inter se connexis et compactis, egregie effictis'.

465 Kovačević 2009, 225.



FIGURE 87 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary of the Holy Sponge and the Wood of the True Cross, second half of the 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

of indulgences to the cathedral in 1396, part of a broader effort to foster its sanctity, mirroring the developments surrounding the cult of St Simeon under the Hungarian dynasty.[466] The Christological relic was added to a collection of first-order cult objects, connected to key Gospel episodes and figures, such as John the Baptist and St Mary Magdalene, whose relics were already present in the treasury in the first half of the century.

The relics of John the Baptist and St Mary Magdalene are also mentioned in Grünenberg's travelogue, which provides a more comprehensive overview and accurately reflects what can be defined, in a broader analysis, as the 'target' relics in the devotional experience of late medieval pilgrims.[467] The German traveller not only noted the Baptist's relic, but specified that it was the very finger with which he pointed to Jesus, announcing His saving mission.[468] The reference is made even more explicit in Valier's account; he cited the well-known passage from the Gospel of John (1:29), familiar to Western devotees: 'A silver arm with the finger of St John the Baptist, with which he pointed to the Lord, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God."' (Fig. 88).[469]

Although the inscription running along the reliquary and the 1427 inventory refer to the relic more generally as the 'finger of St John the Baptist' (digitum sancti Johannis baptistae) and the 'shaft of the finger of St John the Baptist' (fusto digiti sancti Johannis baptistae), it was the shape of the reliquary, with its outstretched index finger, that conveyed to the devotees that it was indeed the right-hand finger.[470] Externally, it features two cross-shaped openings, which likely allowed not only for visual inspection, but also tactile interaction with the precious Christological relic (Fig. 89). No written accounts of such practices survive, either from late medieval pilgrims or local testimonies, and the origin and arrival of the cult object in the Dalmatian port remain unclear. Nevertheless, the embossed figures of St Anastasia, St Chrysogonus and St Zoilus, arranged around a Deesis in an Eastern Christian iconographic scheme on the pedestal, confirm that the container was crafted specifically for the Zaratine context.[471] Described by Bianchi as 'one of the most beautiful in our

466 Granić 2009, 233; see also the oldest inventory of the cathedral (1427) in Petricioli 1987, 166.

467 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320: 'Item ze Sara ist das hopt sant Jörgen und sant Johans finger, damit er zaigt hăt uff unsern hern Jesum Christum. Me ain hemd das noch schwaisig ist, dar inn sant Brÿsogonia enthobtet ward. Me sant Maria Magtalena hobt.'

468 *Ibid.*

469 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 35v. For the Latin original, see p. 195, n. 409 above.

470 See Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 66–67.

471 *Ibid.*



FIGURE 88
Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St John the Baptist, early 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 89 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St John the Baptist, detail, early 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

treasury', this richly decorated reliquary is widely attributed to the 14th century, with recent research favouring its early decades.[472]

Despite receiving significantly less attention, being mentioned only in Grünenberg's account, than the right-hand relics of the Baptist claimed by Dubrovnik and the Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes, the Zadar relic arrived in the Dalmatian port at least a century and a half earlier, since the Dubrovnik and Rhodes acquisitions date to 1482 and 1484.[473] Given the widespread diffusion of relics of the Forerunner across both East and West,[474] it suffices to mention a nearby case: aside from the head of John the Baptist, added to the collection of St Mark's by Doge Enrico Dandolo in 1204, evidence of the saint's right finger emerges in the Venetian context during the first half of the 14th century. Notably, in 1334, a decade also likely for the Zaratine relic, a finger 'with which he pointed out to the Jews the redeemer of the world, Christ Jesus' was recorded as a new addition to the treasury of the church of St John the Baptist Beheaded in Venice.[475]

The Adriatic and lagoon contexts, though centred on universally venerated saints, also highlight cult objects tied to St Martha and St Mary Magdalene. The relics of St Martha entered the collection of St Mark's in 1453 through Ambrogio Contarini,[476] while the cult of St Mary Magdalene was particularly strong in the southern Dalmatian ports. In Dubrovnik her relics, alongside those of St Ursula and St Margaret, were kept in a 15th-century head-shaped reliquary, complemented by an arm-shaped reliquary added to the Dubrovnik cathedral at the same time. In Boka Kotorska Bay a 14th- or 15th-century locally crafted bust of Mary Magdalene is inscribed with her name.[477]

Both saints were venerated in Zadar, though it remains uncertain whether their relics arrived simultaneously or whether St Martha's remains, given her biblical connection to the Messiah, were later additions meant to enhance the Christological integrity of the collection. Grünenberg's mention of the 'Head of St Mary Magdalene' (St Mary Magtalena hobt) likely alludes to the bust reliquary of 1332 (Fig. 90), while Hans Lochner's 1435 simple reference to St Margaret is less straightforwardly associated with the early 14th-century

472 Bianchi 1877, 161; Cecchelli 1932, 53; Petricioli 2004, 11; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 66–67.

473 Bacci 2012, 193; Lupis 2014a, 432; Bacci 2017a, 144; Sinkević 2014, 125–141, esp. 131; Zoitou 2019, 36–62.

474 Cf. Sinkević 2014, 130. For a list of relics of the Forerunner in the Eastern Christian world, see Meinardus 1970, 98–199.

475 Tentori, 1787, 103; Tramontin 1965a, 303.

476 Tramontin 1965a, 307.

477 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 524; Jakšić 2009b, 147; Živković 2010, *passim*.

reliquary of St Martha.[478] Although Kužić argued otherwise,[479] St Margaret's cult appears to have been well-established locally, even if chronological references are unclear. Fondra mentioned her relics in the church of St Marcella and an altar dedicated to her in the cathedral.[480] The earliest cathedral inventory suggests that the reliquary now associated with St Martha originally contained a 'Part of the head of blessed Ursula, virgin' (pars Capitis beate Vrsule Virginis) rather than Martha's relics.[481] It was only later that Valier explicitly referred to it as containing the head of St Martha.[482]

St Ursula's relics, first recorded in 1427, were transferred in the late 15th century to a vase-shaped reliquary,[483] described by Valier as a *crucibulum*, a term he also applied to the similarly shaped Holy Sponge reliquary. From this point onwards, the earlier 14th-century uninscribed female bust was likely repurposed for St Martha's head. However, the exact date of the arrival of St Martha's relics in Zadar remains uncertain. While Hans Lochner's 1435 reference to St Margaret offers a possible *terminus post quem*, the ambiguity in his account places their arrival somewhere between the 1427 inventory and the late translation of St Ursula's relics.

The efforts of Zadar's local authorities to associate the relics of St Martha and St Mary Magdalene reflect the widespread influence of Jacopo da Varazze's *Legenda aurea*, which, in the West, firmly linked Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.[484] The *Legenda* narrates Mary Magdalene's apostolate in Provence, where she is said to have arrived with Christ's disciples, including Marcella, Martha's servant. While Marcella's identity was not always clearly defined in local tradition, she, along with St Anselm, was venerated as a patron saint in the neighbouring diocese of Nona, serving respectively as the titular saint of the Benedictine women's abbey and the cathedral.[485]

One hypothesis traces the cult's origins to Milan, identifying Marcella with St Marcellina, sister of St Ambrose, and attributing the Benedictine monastery's

478 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209: 'do ist die stadt do sant Margaretha.'

479 Kužić 2013, 89; see Fondra, 1686, 13; see also Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 35r.

480 Fondra, 1686, 13.

481 Petricioli 1987, 160, 165; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 79–80.

482 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 35r.

483 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 190.

484 Vannucci 2012, 13, 28.

485 See Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 47.



FIGURE 90 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Bust reliquary of St Mary Magdalene, 1332
JAKŠIĆ AND TOMIĆ 2004, 77, FIG. 023

dedication to this figure.[486] Another interpretation, rooted in local tradition, suggests apostolic origins for Marcella, identifying her as Martha's servant and emphasising her evangelising role in Sclavonia.[487]

This latter variant was known to two French travellers in 1480. While Pierre Barbatre briefly acknowledged it, the Parisian Anonymous provided the earliest attestation of the story, thereby effectively refuting the view that Nona's patronage only shifted in the 17th century, following the town's destruction and the relocation of monastic communities to Zadar:[488] 'Eight miles from Zadar is the city of Nona, in which is the body of St Anselm and the body of St Marcella, the servant of Magdalene, who, while preaching, said to Our Lord: "Blessed is the womb that bore you."'[489]

4 The Benedictine Monastery of St Chrysogonus

4.1 *Historical Background*

Located near the northern edge of the city, the complex suffered heavy damage during World War II and the subsequent post-war evacuation operations. Today, only the church of St Chrysogonus, consecrated in the second half of the 12th century, and its bell tower, begun in 1485, remain standing (Fig. 91).[490]

Both material evidence and written sources, notably the documents from 918 and 986, the originals of which are now lost, attest to a pre-existing complex that already included a church dedicated to St Chrysogonus. From the late 10th century, generally considered the moment of the complex's foundation or refoundation, the Benedictine monastery benefitted from a series of

486 *Ibid.*

487 Grgić 1973, 162–164.

488 See Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 47.

489 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32: 'A huict milles deça Jarre est la cité de Nove en laquelle est le corps sainct Anseaume et le corps saincte Marcelle, servante de la Magdelaine, laquelle Marcelle dist à Nostre Seigneur en preschant: Beatus venter qui te portauit.' The list of the dioceses under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan see of Zadar, among which is also that of Nona, was recorded by Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 60: 'Under den Ertzbischoff zu Jader oder Zara gehoren die fünff Bischoff/ Arba, die Statt und Insel Episcopus Arbensis, genant Vegium, in Welsch/ Vegia, die Statt und Insel Episcopus Velgensis, Arausa, in Welsch Erezua, Episcopus Ausarensis, Aenona, jetzt Nona, Episcopus Nonensis. Senia, jetzt Segnia, Episcopus Signensis.'

490 The main point of reference to date remains the volume published following the conference held in Zadar in 1986 on the occasion of the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Benedictine complex: Granić, Obad and Petricioli 1990; see in particular Vežić 1990, 163; Petricioli 1990b, 197.



FIGURE 91 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

significant endowments, including land estates and exclusive rights to fishery and salt revenues.[491] These privileges rapidly elevated the institution's status, aligning the abbots with their principal benefactors: the Croatian rulers of the hinterland and, later, their Hungarian successors.[492] During the 13th and 14th centuries, amid the conflicts between Hungary and Venice, the abbey and the local aristocracy consistently supported the Hungarian crown, a position that came to symbolise both Zadar's political autonomy and its resistance to Venetian domination.[493] From 1205 onwards, under Venetian rule, tensions intensified between the abbots and the Venetian-appointed archbishop, reflecting broader ecclesiastical and civic power struggles.[494]

The history of the abbey church, consecrated under Archbishop Lampridius in 1175 as was recorded in a fresco inscription lost in the 18th century, is the most thoroughly studied.[495] Its architectural affinities with the cathedral of St Anastasia extend beyond the works attributed to the first archbishop of Zadar. The Benedictine abbey was completed in the 13th century, coinciding with the cathedral's reconsecration in 1285, and the two buildings have often been compared for their formal and stylistic similarities.[496] The abbey reemerges in the historical record at the end of the 14th century, when foreign masters were engaged for new commissions. In 1389 the stonemason Paolo of Sulmona worked on the site, followed in 1400 by the Venetian master Menegallo, who executed the high altar polyptych. A description of 1579 by Agostino Valier likely refers to this work: 'The main altar has an honourable altarpiece, four wooden and gilded angels, two brass candlesticks, three tablecloths, one pallium of red cloth and a support for the missal.'[497] Around the turn of the century local craftsmen took on major projects, including work on the cloister, construction of a chapel and the church's reroofing.[498]

The *Santa Intrada* of the Venetians into Zadar in 1409 marked the beginning of a long period of institutional decline. The Benedictines were soon compelled to elect abbots from among Venetian citizens, though an exception

491 Peričić 1990, 82–86.
492 *Ibid.*
493 *Ibid.*, 91–103.
494 *Ibid.*
495 Petricioli 1990a, 76–77; Petricioli 1990b, 202; Vežić 1990, 169.
496 Vežić 1990, 169; Vežić 1994, 236; Domijan, Petricioli and Vežić 1990, 36.
497 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 43v: 'Maius consecratum habet palam honorificam quattuor angelos ligneos inauratos, duo candelabra ex auricalcho tres tobalias, pallium ex panno rubeo, et sgabellum pro missali.'; see also Petricioli 1990b, 209.
498 Petricioli 1990b, 209–211.

was made for Pietro de Crissava of Zadar, educated at the Venetian monastery of San Nicolò al Lido, who became abbot in 1420.[499] At the end of his tenure a papal bull of 1447 reduced the abbey to *in commendam* status, a change recorded shortly after by the pilgrim Pietro Casola: 'In the said city, there is a good abbey of the Order of St Benedict, under the name of St Chrysogonus the Martyr; it is held *in commendam* and functions like the others.'[500]

This gradual decline continued into the 18th century, with one striking exception under the rule of Abbot Deodato Venier (1459–1488), when the abbey experienced a notable cultural revival.[501] Building activity resumed, including the construction of the west wing and the erection of a bell tower, completed up to the second storey at the northern corner of the Romanesque façade (Fig. 92).[502] Venier also commissioned four manuscript codices, only one of which survives today in the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar.[503] Apostolic visitor Agostino Valier (1579) described three of them, with particular attention given to a missal whose whereabouts have been unknown since 1921: 'The large missal, a manuscript on parchment, illuminated and bound in red leather with silver-gilt clasps; two other missals on old bambagina paper'.[504] Despite the monastery's progressive decline, sources from this period still record 12 brothers in residence, testifying to the community's continued, if diminished, presence.[505]

499 Granić 1990b, 154.

500 Peričić 1990, 103–106; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121: 'In dicta citade è una bona abbatta de l'ordine de Santo Benedicto, sub vocabulo Santi Grisogoni martiris; è tenuta in comenda; va como le altre.' The following references by pilgrims concern the Benedictine abbey in Zadar: Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252; Stephan III von Gumppenberg, 1419, ed. 1584, fol. 246v; Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145; Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 84; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 113; Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 139; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 39, 139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 121; Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77; Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1520, ed. 2001, 207–208, 311–312; Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 223; Juan del Encina, 1519, ed. 1978, 244–245.

501 Granić 1990b, 153–159; Peričić 1990, 106–107.

502 Vežić 1990, 172. Work on the bell tower continued in the 16th century; see Petricioli 1990b, 215.

503 Petricioli 1990b, 213–214.

504 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 44v: 'Missale magnum ex pergameno manuscriptum, miniatum coopertum corio rubro cum fibulis argenteis inauratis; Duo alia missalia in charta bombacina vetera.'

505 *Ibid.*: 'Ecclesia Sancti Grisogoni est Abbatia ordinis Sancti Benedicti, in qua inserviunt duodecim monachi ex antiqua consuetudine Jadrae oriundi.' This figure is in fact



FIGURE 92 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, bell tower
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Prior to the destructive World War II bombings that deprived the city of the Benedictine abbey, the site had already undergone substantial transformations during the Baroque period and throughout the 19th century. In accordance with the decree issued by the Provveditore Generale for Dalmatia on 30 August 1807, the abbey was to be suppressed and its buildings repurposed for military and educational use.[506]

4.2 *Archaeological Data*

The Romanesque basilica of St Chrysogonus, likely constructed on the foundations of an earlier monastic church, is a medium-sized building. Its eastern end terminates in three semicircular apses, with the central one significantly larger in height, depth and width than the flanking ones (Fig. 93).[507] Excluding the



FIGURE 93 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, interior
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

consistent with the numbers recorded during the monastery's so-called golden age in the 14th century. During the tenure of Abbot Matej Hvalin (1312–1314), for instance, the community counted 14 monks; Peričić 1990, 97.

506 Granić 1990b, 153; Vežić 1990, 176.

507 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 254; Vežić 1990, 169; Petricioli 1990b, 198, 200.



FIGURE 94 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, interior
PHOTO THOMAS KAFFENBERGER

apsidal area, the main body of the basilica measures 30 m in length and 18 m in width (Fig. 94). The nave is separated from the aisles by two arcades of four columns and two pillars, some of which incorporate spolia (Fig. 95).[508] The basilica layout is emphasised by the vertical rhythm of the exterior decoration, in alignment with the central portal;[509] the latter is flanked by a small door on the south aisle, while a third access on the north façade led to the cloister. Particularly striking is the articulation of the central apse, decorated with a lower register of blind arches and an upper section of loggias, features that establish a clear stylistic affinity with northern Italian Romanesque architecture (Fig. 96).[510] Also noteworthy is the south façade (Fig. 97), which Cecchelli

508 Petricioli 1990b, 200.
509 *Ibid.*
510 *Ibid.*, 202.

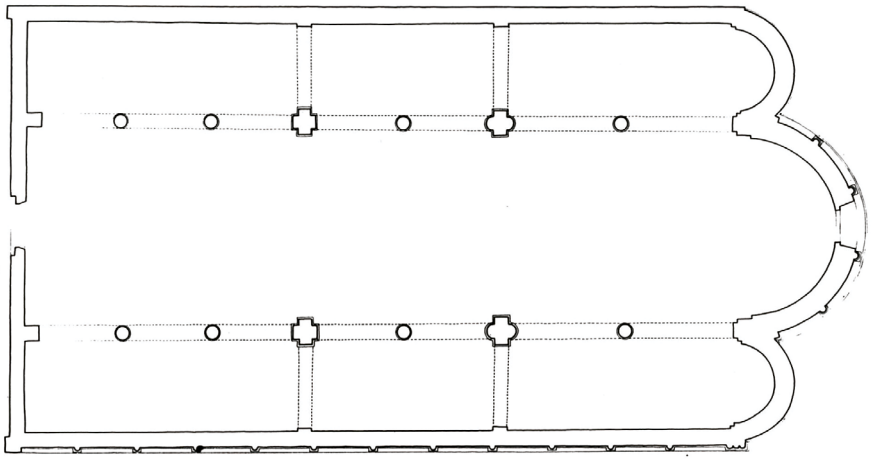

FIGURE 95 Plan of the church of St Chrysogonus in Zadar
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 310

praised in the early 20th century: 'The flank is beautiful in the prominence of its large arches resting on twisted columns.'[511] In 1486 Antonio da Crema, captivated by Zadar's antiquities, transcribed the inscription on a tombstone set on the southern flank (Fig. 98).[512]

The interior was decorated in two phases: the first around the time of the 12th-century consecration and the second in the early 13th century.[513] The traces of frescoes in the north apse are attributable to the earlier phase and are likely contemporaneous with the now-lost mosaic of the central apse. The lower decorative band was surmounted by a row of saintly figures (eight silhouettes remain, due to 14th-century retouches; Figs 99, 100), with St Benedict, flanked by the building's patron saint and an unidentified female saint, in the dome.[514] This register, later overpainted, is poorly preserved. Above the apse, two saints were replaced by a scene of the Annunciation, connected to the Nativity scene on the adjoining north wall (Figs 101, 102).[515] The lower register

511 Cecchelli 1932, 152.

512 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, [fols 13v–14r]: 'Q. DELLIVS. Q. L. FVSCVS, VI VIR. AVGVS[+++]'. On the inscription, see Bianchi's commentary; Bianchi 1875, 28–33.

513 Hilje and Tomić 2006, 79.

514 Djurić 1974, 21–22; Petricioli 1990b, 206; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 80.

515 Hilje and Tomić 2006, 80.



FIGURE 96 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, view of the apse
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 97 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, south façade
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 98 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, south façade, detail
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 99A–B Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Row of saints, fresco in the northern apse, 1175
PHOTOS VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 100 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Sts Cosmas and Damian, fresco in the northern apse, detail, 1175
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 101 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Nativity, fresco on the north wall, detail, early 13th century
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI

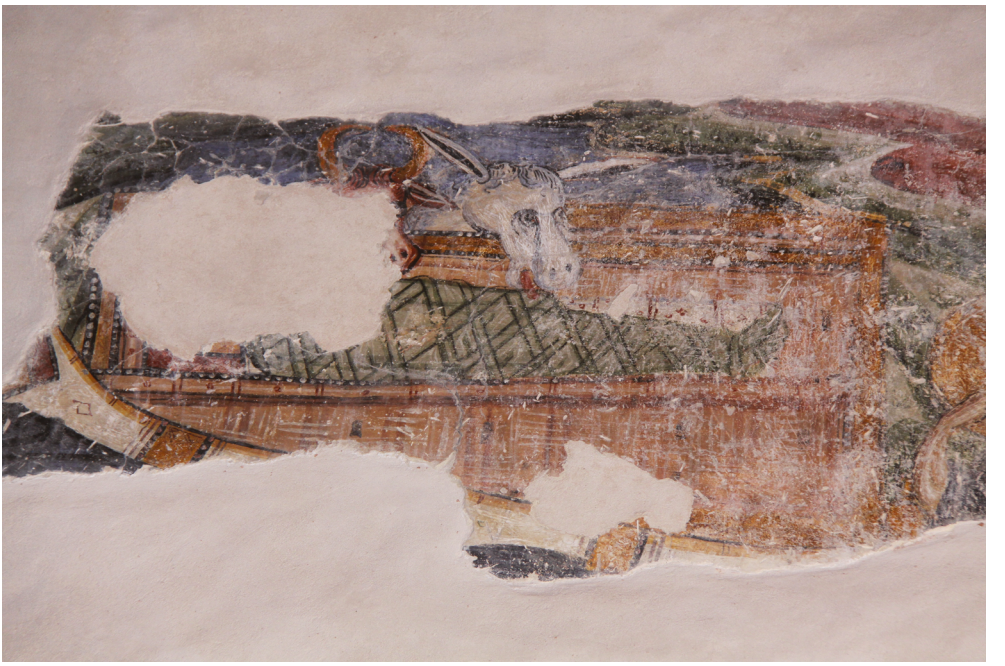

FIGURE 102 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Nativity, fresco on the north wall, detail, early 13th century
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI

of this same wall (Fig. 103), unevenly divided vertically, features a Deesis composition to the right (Fig. 104), executed in a manner echoing Eastern Christian iconographic traditions, with bust figures surmounting the Archangel Michael (Fig. 105).[516] A third layer, dating to the late 15th century, adorned the south apse and a part of the adjacent wall: in the vault St Chrysogonus appears again, flanked by Zadar's patron saints, St Anastasia and St Donatus.[517]

The earliest recorded testimonies of late medieval pilgrims date to the 15th century, though these accounts offer little detail compared to the more frequent and extensive descriptions of Zadar's other Romanesque monuments, notably the church of St Mary Major and the cathedral of St Anastasia. For instance, Stephan III von Gumppenberg, who visited the monastery in 1419 and shared a meal with the Benedictines, offered no commentary on the church

516 Petricioli 1990b, 206–207; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 82–84.
517 Petricioli 1990b, 217; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 85.



FIGURE 103 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus, frescoes on the north wall, early 13th century
PHOTO MICHELE BACCI



FIGURE 104 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Deesis, fresco on the north wall, detail, early 13th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

itself: 'So, a German monk came, who was a prior of the Order of St Benedict. He took us home with him and gave us good wine and fine fish, which he had prepared for us. Afterwards, he showed us the monastery, and then we returned to the galleys.'[518] Similarly, William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, who attended Mass at St Chrysogonus in 1461, left no detailed description of the site.[519]

Particularly significant data about the church of St Chrysogonus prior to the Baroque-era modifications are found in the report by Agostino Valier (1579). In addition to the aforementioned high altar, where the holy sacrament was kept 'in a silver chalice covered with a silk veil and placed in a square wooden tabernacle',[520] he described 11 additional altars, each adequately furnished and consecrated to the Virgin Mary, St Benedict, the Holy Cross, St James, the

518 Stephan III von Gumppenberg, 1419, ed. 1584, fol. 246v: 'Also kam ein Teutscher Munch/ der war ein Prior in sanct Benedicter Orden/ der fuhrt vns miti ihm heim/ vnnd gab vns guten Wein und gute Fisch/ die ließ er vns kochen/ darnach das Kloster besehen/ demnach fuhren wir wider auff die Galeen.'

519 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1866, 291.

520 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap 80, fols 43v–44r: 'in calice argenteo cooperto velo sericeo, et reposito in tabernaculo ligneo quadrato'.



FIGURE 105 Zadar, church of St Chrysogonus. Archangel Michael, fresco on the north wall, detail, early 13th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Holy Trinity, St John, the Assumption, St Anthony, St Mark, St Andrew and the church's titular saint.[521]

4.3 *The Cult of St Chrysogonus*

St Chrysogonus (Krševan in Croatian) was Zadar's primary patron saint throughout the medieval period, particularly from the late 12th century onwards.[522] As noted above he belongs to the group of Zaratine saints including Sts Anastasia, Zoilus and the sisters Irene, Agape and Chionia, whose *passiones* are intertwined and their cults linked to the Aquileian context, specifically to the marshes of Grado, where Chrysogonus was martyred under Diocletian. His cult is closely associated with that of St Anastasia; indeed, their *passiones* often merged, with Chrysogonus's martyrdom appearing in the opening of her Roman *passio*.

521 *Ibid*. For a more detailed understanding, the unpublished information provided by Valier should be compared with the 1449 inventory of the Benedictine church published by Kolanović; Kolanović 1983, 57–84, esp. 78–89; cf. Petricioli 1990b, 212–213.

522 Vedriš 2002, 12–13; Vedriš 2005, 47.

According to tradition, their relics arrived in Zadar by different routes: Anastasia's ashes were transferred from Constantinople in the 9th century, joining Chrysogonus's remains, which, as recorded in Boniface's chronicle[523] and the *Translatio beati Grisogonis*,[524] had been brought directly from Aquileia in the mid-7th century.

The original location of St Chrysogonus's body, whose presence in Zadar remains enigmatic, is unknown.[525] Mentions in 10th- and 11th-century Benedictine documents, once dismissed as apocryphal, are now considered crucial for understanding the early association between the martyr's cult and the abbey. Key sources include a document from 968 on the monastery's refoundation following the donation of the church of St Chrysogonus, which housed his body, and the miraculous *inventio* of his remains in the altar in 1056.[526] While these claims have often been viewed as retrospective constructions, another independent source corroborates the saint's presence in Zadar. In *De Administrando Imperio*, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus mentioned Chrysogonus's relics, like those of St Anastasia, as those of a 'monk and martyr'.[527]

By the 14th century, when the first mentions by pilgrims to the Holy Land begin to appear, the cult of St Chrysogonus had already surpassed that of St Anastasia for over a century. Closely tied to the Benedictine abbey, the cult came to symbolise civic resistance to Venetian domination. Situated strategically along maritime routes and under Venetian influence since the 10th century, the city chose St Chrysogonus as a defender of its identity over the more neutral image of St Anastasia, portrayed with a martyr's palm or cross. From the 12th century on St Chrysogonus shifted from his original monk-and-martyr iconography to being depicted in military attire on horseback.[528]

The earliest known mention of Chrysogonus by travellers appears in the account of Simon Fitzsimons: 'Then we sailed for two days to Zadar [...]

523 This lost text is no longer available to us, but is known through the annotations offered by Bianchi; Bianchi 1877, 297; cf. Strika 2009, 5.

524 The Zadar hagiographic text, which probably reached a completed form in the 11th–12th centuries, is known to us through the transcription made in 1498 by the monk Zoilus; Strika 2009, 1–53, esp. 6. See also the articles by Vedriš, in particular Vedriš 2005, 30; Vedriš 2014, 38; cf. Vedriš 2016, 49–78.

525 Regarding the hypothesis about the original location, see Strika 2009, 18, 27.

526 Granić 1990a, 39.

527 *Ibid.*, 38; Strika 2009, 39.

528 Granić 1990a, 38; Vedriš 2002, 12–13; Vedriš 2005, 35–36.



FIGURE 106 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Reliquary of Pope St Gregory, late 13th century
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where the body of blessed Gregory martyr lies.'[529] This reference, invoking the title martyr, should not be confused with the 13th-century reliquary of Pope St Gregory, now preserved in Zadar's Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art and mentioned in the 14th-century inventory of the Benedictine convent of St Mary (Fig. 106).[530] Similarly, the reference in the Florentine version of the

529 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252: 'Et inde per duos dies navigavimus Iataram [...] in qua requiescit corpus Beati Gregorii martiris.'

530 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 5, 7–8, 84–88; see also Petricioli 2004, 7. The presence at the convent of the reliquary, together with the one dedicated to St Quirinus, would later also be attested by Agostino Valier; Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesco. e Regolari, Visita A 80, fol. 53r: 'Duae thecae argenteae inaurate cum capitibus Sancti Quirini et Sancti Gregorii Papae'. In the 'ecclesia S. Mariae monialium ordinis S. Benedicti' Valier also mentioned the presence of the 'Caput argenteum imaginis B. M.' and the 'Crucibulum argenteum inauratum in quo detinetur Sanctissimum Sacramentum/ Aliud crucibulum ex cristalo

Sante Parole (*c*.1470), in which the Dalmatian port is mentioned in connection with 'San Gregorio di Giara', aligns with this pattern.[531] The invocation of Zadar in the seafarers' prayer sung in times of impending danger, invoking the most revered relics and shrines along late medieval routes, referred not to a secondary cult, but to St Chrysogonus, the city's primary patron. Such confusion typifies the broader misunderstandings surrounding the cult of St Chrysogonus in late medieval accounts. In 1435 Hans Lochner appealed to the saint as 'sant Chrysostomus', while Conrad Grünenberg later mistook him for a female saint, calling him 'Santa Crissogonia', and mentioned his relics alongside those of Sts Simeon, Anastasia and Donatus.[532]

These accounts frequently limit themselves to terse, formulaic mentions of 'holy bodies', as is the case for St Anastasia. Yet Chrysogonus's cult, owing to its wider dissemination across the West, eventually became more recognisable. As previously mentioned, Juan del Encina celebrated the close bond between St Chrysogonus and St Anastasia in his verses, while the Franciscan friar Paul Walther Guglingen emphasised their epistolary exchange, as recorded in the Roman martyrologies. The early diffusion of Chrysogonus's cult in Rome and northern Italy secured his inclusion in major liturgical calendars, including the *sanctorale* of Ravenna and Milan, as stressed by the Anonymous Parisian who visited Zadar in 1481: 'the whole body of Blessed Chrysogonus the martyr, from the sacred canon, and the body of St Zoilus the confessor'.[533]

References to bodily integrity, as in the case of the French traveller, are a recurring motif in pilgrimage accounts. However, detailed and passionate descriptions allow for a distinction between bodies displayed for veneration and those sealed within altars or sarcophagi. The latter were typically framed by an elaborate *mise-en-scène* that reinforced the sanctity of the site and was conveyed to pilgrims through the mediation of the local clergy or the ship's

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cum pede argenteo cum reliquiis […] plurium Sanctorum'. A reference to the treasury of the Benedictine foundation is found in the diary of Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 138–140: 'Binnen de selve stadt staen noch vier Vrouwen kloosters, daer af d'eene genoemt is St. Maria, in de welcke veel schoone Reliquien in reverentie worden gehouden, al in silver besfagen.' According to Bianchi, the relics altar of the convent was dedicated to St Gregory the Great; Bianchi 1877, 325.

531 Bacci 2004, 223–248, esp. 227, 244.

532 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320.

533 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 31–32: 'corpus integrum beati Grisogoni martyris, de sacro canone et corpus sancti Zoli confessoris'; Granić 1990a, 37. On the debate that identifies Chrysogonus, the martyr of Aquileia, and the Roman Chrysogonus as two separate figures, see Strika 2009, 10–14; see also the article on the origin of the cult of St Chrysogonus based on hagiographic investigation and material evidence by Vedriš; Vedriš 2014, 29–42.



FIGURE 107 Venice, church of St Helena. Body of St Helena
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

crew. In Zadar it included the bodies of St Anastasia, St Chrysogonus and St Donatus. Their presence is consistently noted in pilgrimage accounts using brief, conventional formulas, such as in the travelogue of two Sienese travellers (1431) who wrote: 'And we saw the body of St Chrysogonus, martyr, and of St Anastasia, martyr, as well as other holy bodies.'[534]

By contrast, saints whose remains were visibly displayed, such as St Euphemia in Rovinj and St Simeon in Zadar, elicited more elaborate descriptions centred on the orchestrated ostension that facilitated a direct engagement in devotional practices, which were the core of the pilgrims' religious experience. This distinction also appears in Venetian contexts, where emphasis was placed on 'incorrupt bodies', including that of St Helena, venerated as the one who discovered the Holy Cross (Fig. 107).[535] References to the Passion of Christ and the opportunity to view the body of St Helena alongside 'a small cross made from the true wood of the Saviour, which the saint is said to have carried

534 Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 76; Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145: 'et vedemo el corpo di sancto Grisogono et di sancta Anastasia et altri santi corpi.'

535 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 53; cf. Bacci *et al.* 2018, 357–361.

continuously during her life', served as powerful incentives for pilgrims to embark on the often arduous journey, frequently by sea, to the church in the eastern Castello district (Fig. 108).[536] This monument became an essential stop on the Venetian pilgrimage route, which, in the case of monasteries, as Pietro Casola noted, typically began with a visit to the outlying Benedictine church.[537]

Within the broader context of the Venetian lagoon, it is important to consider a Venetian tradition that records the removal of St Chrysogonus's body during the siege of Zadar in 1202. While Dalmatian accounts emphasise the body's swift return once 'the people of Zadar had returned to public grace',[538] Venetian sources are more ambiguous. Francesco Sansovino (1575) reported that 'the body of St Chrysogonus the martyr [is] in the high altar' of the Venetian church of Sts Gervasius and Protasius, whereas Flaminio Corner (1578) placed the return of the relics to Zadar only after the church's collapse in 1583.[539]

Political motivations lay behind the removal of the saint's body in the early 13th century: the relics were removed shortly after the people of Zadar attributed their 1190 victory over the Venetians at Treni to St Chrysogonus. This period also coincides with the last recorded depiction of St Anastasia on the town seal.[540] Following the 1205 peace treaty, Venice appointed both the town's count and archbishop, and the procession marking the saint's feast day from the abbey was abolished.[541]

Nevertheless, the cult of St Chrysogonus remained deeply embedded in the city's fabric throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, and he emerged as a symbol of the local community's resistance to Venetian rule. As underlined above, the town's oligarchy, responsible for the establishment of the Benedictine abbey, supported the Hungarian dynasty in their struggle for dominance over the Eastern Adriatic. By the late 14th century the equestrian

536 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 51.

537 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 91: 'Et el primo che visitassemo fu el monastero de Santa Elena, de l'ordine de Camaldoli. Per quello potemo intendere, fu primo edificato e dotato per uno Alexandro Bonromei al qual, a lato de la giesia, in una capella, è facto una sepultura asai pomposa. Ne fu monstrato el corpo de santa Elena e molte altre reliquie.'; see also Munk 2006, 81–92. With regard to devotional practices, the testimony offered by Felix Fabri is particularly significant; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 97: 'Post lliuam patefecerunt nobis monachi tumbum S. Helenae, et corpus ejus integrum vidimus cum aliis multis reliquiis, et deosculatis ac clenodiis eontactis reliquiis in domum nostram reversi sumus.'

538 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 20–21.

539 See Munk 2014, 185–187, with notes; Jakšić 2014, 100–102, with notes.

540 Granić 1990a, 44–45; Vedriš 2002, 12–13.

541 Vedriš 2005, 41–42.



FIGURE 108 Venice, church of St Helena
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

image of St Chrysogonus appeared prominently on the town seal.[542] In 1456 the Venetian authorities, having consolidated their rule over the city, officially abolished the public festivities in honour of the saint.[543] Despite this, the commission of a panel of St Chrysogonus on horseback (mid-15th century; *in situ*) for the Venetian church of Sts Gervasius and Protasius, executed by Michele Giambono, suggests a concurrent attempt to integrate his cult into the Venetian sacred landscape. Yet neither William Wey (1458) nor Santo Brasca (1480) mentioned the relics in Venice, despite extensively listing other venerated relics in the lagoon.[544] Only later did the Spanish pilgrim Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera (1518–1520) record, among 'many bodies of saints in the monasteries of the city and on the islands' of the lagoon, seeing 'Grisogòno', while clarifying: 'This one they showed me in Zadar, which is in Dalmatia.'[545]

However, de Ribera's description of the Benedictine abbey in Zadar, like other pilgrim testimonies, offers little detail about the *mise-en-scène* of the relics: 'In an abbey of St Benedict, called St Chrysogonus, is his body and other saints besides.'[546] The testimony of William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, who visited the Benedictine complex in 1461 and recorded the presence of the saint's body, also alluded to other sacred attractions without offering more specific information: 'And the body of St Chrysogonus lies in the monastery of St Benedict, along with many other sacred relics.'[547]

The ambiguity surrounding the precise burial location, coupled with the absence of local records, led 17th-century authors to speculate that after St Chrysogonus's body was returned to Zadar following its Venetian abduction, it had been secretly interred by the monks 'for fear of losing it again'.[548]

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542 Granić 1990a, 53.

543 See Marinković 2018, 281–283; Munk 2014, 185–187, with notes; Jakšić 2014, 100–102, with notes.

544 William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 52–53; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 50–51.

545 Don Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera, 1518–1519, ed. 2001, 208.

546 *Ibid.*, 312: 'En vn abadía de Sant Benito, que se llama Sant Grisógano, está su cuerpo e otros sanctos demás destos.'

547 William III, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1461, ed. 1868, 84: 'Und der Leichnam S. Chrisogoni, der liegt im Kloster S. Benedicti nebst vielem andern Heilthum.'

548 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 21. Almost the same concept is expressed by Valerio Ponte, who, while arguing the hypothesis, added specific details concerning the arrangement of the body: 'Et quamvis apud Jadrenses hoc factum modo sit valdem ambiguum, nec ullibi in ecclesia s. Chrisogono indigetetur locus, ubi idem s. Corpus quiescat, attamen crederem tempore eius restitutionis monachos eiusdem monasterii illud in aliquo ecclesiae loco occultasse, ne in posterum eo privari periclitarentur; cui opinioni fovet arca lignea intus forisque picturis exornata, exprimentibus vitam ac martyrium eiusdem Sancti, in qua asserunt conditum olim fuisse corpus s. Chrysogoni, quae in eius solemntitae exponitur. Nam verisimile st, hanc sacri corporis translationem hinc inde non sine ea capsa factam

Indeed, Fondra, listing relics at the church, asserted that 'the body of this saint is supposed to be buried and concealed in the said church', adding that 'the stump, or stone, where St Chrysogonus was beheaded' was also preserved there.[549] Antonio da Crema, in his 1486 list of 'Holy relics visited in the city of Zadar', likewise mentioned both the body and 'the stone on which this saint was beheaded'.[550]

However, these 17th-century speculations are contradicted by Agostino Valier's visitation report (1579), which places the saint's body clearly within the high altar: 'The altar of St Chrysogonus contains the body of the saint himself in a chest, which serves as the altar table and holds an honourable icon of St Chrysogonus, a threadbare cloth, two iron candlesticks, a stand for the missal and a covering made of gilded leather.'[551] Even more striking is the continuation of the report, which, in the section 'Inventarium reliquiarum et suppellectilis dictae ecclesiae' (Inventory of the relics and furnishings of the said church), lists the following objects: 'the head of St Chrysogonus in a silver box; the arms of the saint, one in a golden case of Pannonian craftsmanship, the other in a silver case; a silver-covered box containing some of the saint's relics; the feet of the saint in silver-gilt cases'.[552]

Several details in Valier's list reveal that these were, in fact, reliquaries of St Chrysogonus well-documented over the centuries at the cathedral sanctuary. Beyond the precise correspondence in both the number of objects and the materials used, the description of the now-lost gilded arm is significant. This reliquary bore a well-known inscription commemorating King Coloman, corroborating Valier's reference to it as 'Pannonici operis'. Interestingly, Valier also listed these same cult objects in his description of the cathedral, creating a puzzling overlap that remains without a plausible explanation. One possibility is that these items, though belonging to the abbey, had been temporarily

esse, quae, cum parva non esst, haud facile cum ipso corpore occlutari poterat, quod in minori arcella repositum occultationi aptari potuit.'; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 226–229.

549 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 13.

550 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139.

551 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 44r: 'Altare Sancti Grisogoni continet corpus ipsius sancti in arca, quae est loco mensae altaris et habet iconam honorificam Sancti Grisogoni, unam tobaleam laceram, duo candelabra ferrea, scabellum pro missali et pallium ex corio inaurato.'

552 *Ibid.*: 'Caput Sancti Grisogoni in arcula argentea/ Brachia dicti sancti, alterum in theca aurea Pannonici operis, alterum in theca argentea / Arcula tecta argento cum aliquibus reliquiis dicti sancti/Pedes dicti sancti in techis argenteis inauratis'.

transferred to the cathedral, perhaps for safekeeping or display, during the bishop's visitation, before being promptly returned.

In addition to other objects Valier described, the exclusive property of the monastery included other notable items, such as a 'silver-gilt pastoral staff' (pastorale argenteum inauratum) and a 'mitre adorned with pearls and gems' (mitra ornata margaritis et gemmis).[553] Particularly significant was a banner bearing the equestrian image of St Chrysogonus in the centre, which Valier specified was carried in public processions twice a year.[554] These processions, until they were abolished by the Venetian authorities, took place on two key dates: 19 May, commemorating the local translation of the body, and 24 November, Chrysogonus's feast day, highlighted in red and celebrated with an octave in the 15th-century Zadar calendar.[555]

Finally, the enduring prominence of the cult of St Chrysogonus at the end of the 16th century is affirmed in the words of the Zaratine Archbishop Minuccio Minucci (1599), dedicated to his archdiocese: 'The metropolitan church of Zadar is ancient […]. Its patron is St Anastasia the Martyr, whose body is kept in a restored and well-maintained chapel; however, the city's special protector is St Chrysogonus.'[556]

5 The Rotunda of St Donatus

5.1 *Historical Background*

The rotunda of St Donatus, which piqued the curiosity of Holy Land pilgrims,[557] was constructed in the early Middle Ages in the heart of the city, within the

553 The abbot of St Chrysogonus had received the pope's approval on the use of the pontifical insignia at the turn of the 12th century; cf. Granić 1990a, 45.

554 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 44r: 'Vexillum […] vulto inauratum cum effigie Sancti Grisogoni equestri in medio, quod bis in anno in sacris pompis per urbem gestatum'.

555 Grgić 1973, 135–137.

556 Minuccio Minucci, 1599, ed. 1970, 43: 'La chiesa metropolitana di Zara è antica […]. Il titolo è di S. Anastasia Martire, della quale si tiene il corpo in cappella reparata et decente; ma l'avocato particolare della città è s. Grisogono.'

557 The monument is referred to by the following pilgrims: Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fol. 186r; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 319–320; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 177–178; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken,



FIGURE 109 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

ancient Roman forum, south-west of the cathedral and near the eastern side of the episcopal palace (Fig. 109). Dedicated originally to the Holy Trinity, the monument's primary function and precise construction date remain undocumented, giving rise to varied and occasionally conflicting scholarly interpretations. The most widely accepted theory, supported by Croatian scholar Pavuša Vežić, identifies two main phases: a free-standing rotunda, likely built in the second half of the 8th century, and a substantial 9th-century transformation that integrated the structure into the episcopal complex. As previously discussed, these modifications are attributed to Bishop Donatus, who is thought to have envisioned the rotunda as a residential chapel.[558]

The earliest written reference to the church appears some 150 years after its presumed construction, describing 'A church, a domed one, of the Holy Trinity, and above this church again is another church, like a triforium, domed also,

1495–1496, ed. 1997, 50; Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59.

558 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 124; Vežić 1998, 56–57; Vežić 2002d, 61–62; for the hypothesis that sees the building as a *memorial* to the relics of St Anastasia, see Belamarić 2001, 206.

into which they mount by a spiral staircase.'[559] The anonymous author was not alone in noting the building's distinctive circular form. Its unusual plan and elevation became central to its reception in medieval tradition, as reflected in legends and annotations in late medieval texts. While Hans Lochner in 1435 focussed on the building's round shape, associating it with a bell-shaped form, five decades later Jan Aerts, a pilgrim from Mechelen (a Dutch town not far from Aachen, where he may have had the possibility to admire the centrally planned imperial chapel), stood before the rotunda in Zadar and exclaimed simply: 'Greek church'.[560] It is, nonetheless, unlikely that Holy Land pilgrims failed to notice the building's formal affinities with the most authoritative rotunda of the Christian world: the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed, German pilgrims who visited Zadar in 1495 explicitly made this comparison.[561]

In modern scholarship the rotunda is typically situated within the broader tradition of centrally planned architecture. Bishop Donatus, travelling to both the Frankish and Byzantine courts, is often seen as a mediator of this architectural idiom. Western models include San Vitale in Ravenna and the Palatine chapel in Aachen, both featuring upper galleries.[562] Eastern parallels frequently point to Constantinopolitan monuments, such as Hagia Sophia and the church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus.[563]

Despite the 10th-century document cited above, references to the monument vanish from the written record until the 1430s, when it resurfaces in the accounts of Venetian pilgrims and in sparse local archival sources. During the second half of the 15th century both its original official title of 'Sancta Trinitas',[564] as well as its identification as 'ecclesia Sancti Donati',[565] occur side-by-side. In fact, the latter appellation became predominant in the accounts of late medieval pilgrims, further confirming its strength in the collective imagination.[566]

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559 Cecchelli 1932, 169; cf. Ančić 2014, 73.

560 Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 139: 'Item, in der Griecken kercke, alwaer sy haren dienst doen, rust 't lichaem van den heyligen Donaet.'

561 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 50: 'Auch ist zu Zara eine Kirche, genannt St. Donas, ist da eine Kapelle gebaut nach Form des heiligen Grabes zu Jerusalem.'; see also Belamarić 2014a, 173.

562 Petricioli 1990a, 26; Vežić 2002d, 29.

563 Vežić 2002d, 29–30, 124.

564 See documents from 1452 and 1458, respectively in Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 123, and Runje 2005, 61.

565 Documents from 1458 (Runje 2005, 61), 1476 (Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 123), 1488 and 1499 (Runje 2005, 61).

566 See p. 246, n. 557 above.

The name of the rotunda emerged more prominently in documents from the Baroque period, when the monument underwent a series of structural changes that significantly altered its architectural features. These modifications occurred at the turn of the 18th century under Archbishops Vittorio Priuli (1688–1712) and Vicko Zmajević (1713–1745). They included resurfacing the floor, constructing a new altar, isolating the northern annex from the church's central body, installing new Baroque portals, altering the main staircase to the inner gallery and modifying the original fenestration.[567] Despite these substantial alterations, the centuries-old monument was deconsecrated in 1798 under Austro-Hungarian rule. Following the removal of its furnishings and liturgical objects to the cathedral, the building was repurposed as a military depot.[568]

Less than a century later, Carlo Federico Bianchi still described the monument as surrounded by buildings: 'Almost all of its outer circle remains hidden from the observer's view, except for the dome, which rises high above the city's towers.'[569] This description, corroborated by early 20th-century photographs, presents an image that contrasts sharply with the current state of the rotunda and its setting in the main town square.[570] The building's condition today is largely the result of two major interventions: the first, in the 1870s, lowered the interior pavement by 1 m to align the monument with the ancient forum; the second occurred during the Italian administration of the 1920s, when the southern annex was demolished and the square's level was further lowered, permanently stripping the monument of its original surroundings.[571] These changes coincided with the rotunda's function as the seat of the Archaeological Museum (from the 1880s to the 1950s).[572] The rotunda remains a key cultural landmark in Zadar and has served as the venue for the renowned concert series 'Glazbene večeri u Sv. Donatu' (Musical evenings at St Donatus) for over five decades (Fig. 110), thanks to its excellent acoustics.

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567 Bianchi 1877, 387; Raukar *et al.* 1987, 549; Vežić 2002d, 132–133. In the Baroque period the building also served as a burial site. Among those interred was Archbishop Vittorio Priuli, a central figure in the initial phase of the work, who requested to be buried before the altar he had commissioned; Bianchi 1877, 387, 389.

568 Vežić 2002a, 134; Bianchi 1877, 386, 389.

569 Bianchi 1877, 385: 'quasi tutta la sua cerchia esteriore rimane occulta all'occhio dell'osservatore, all'infuori della cupola, che alta si estolle sopra le torri della città.'

570 Vežić 2002a.

571 *Ibid.*, 41–42; Vežić 2002b, 9.

572 Vežić 2002d; Crnčević 2013, 50.



FIGURE 110 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus, interior
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

5.2 *Archaeological Data*

The monument has been the subject of archaeological surveys on a few occasions since the 1870s. The most recent campaigns, undertaken in conjunction with conservation interventions during the 1970s and 1980s, prompted a new wave of scholarly interest, reaffirming the now widely accepted hypothesis of two distinct construction phases.[573]

The first rotunda was erected within the ancient Roman forum, near but not directly integrated into the episcopal complex. It was a monumental, free-standing building with a circular plan, exceeding 20 m in diameter. On the eastern side it terminated in three radially arranged horseshoe-shaped apses,

573 Vežić 2002a, 41–42, 44. As already pointed out, the most recent and most widely followed approach, albeit with some discordant entries (Belamarić 2001, 24; Belamarić 2014a, 170), recognises the two construction phases as occurring in the second half of the 8th century and the first half of the 9th century, respectively.



FIGURE 111 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus, central apse
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

with the central one larger in both width and depth than the lateral ones (Fig. 111).[574]

Two secondary entrances flanked the lateral apses, while the main portal was located on the western side.[575] The interior likely featured a row of eight marble columns arranged radially, delineating a central nucleus and an ambulatory. The ambulatory's inner perimeter was marked by 11 semicircular niches corresponding to – though more numerous than – the external lesenes.[576] The outer ring was roofed with wood, and its beams were later reused for the upper floor of the second rotunda (Fig. 112). The central core was likely surmounted by a dome, likewise roofed in timber (Fig. 113).[577]

At the beginning of the 9th century the building underwent a series of radical structural transformations, incorporating the original rotunda into a far

574 Petricioli 1990a, 23; Vežić 1995, 151.
575 Vežić 1995, 151.
576 *Ibid.*; Vežić 2002a, 70–72; Vežić 2002b, 13, 17.
577 Vežić 2002a, 69; Vežić 2002b, 16.

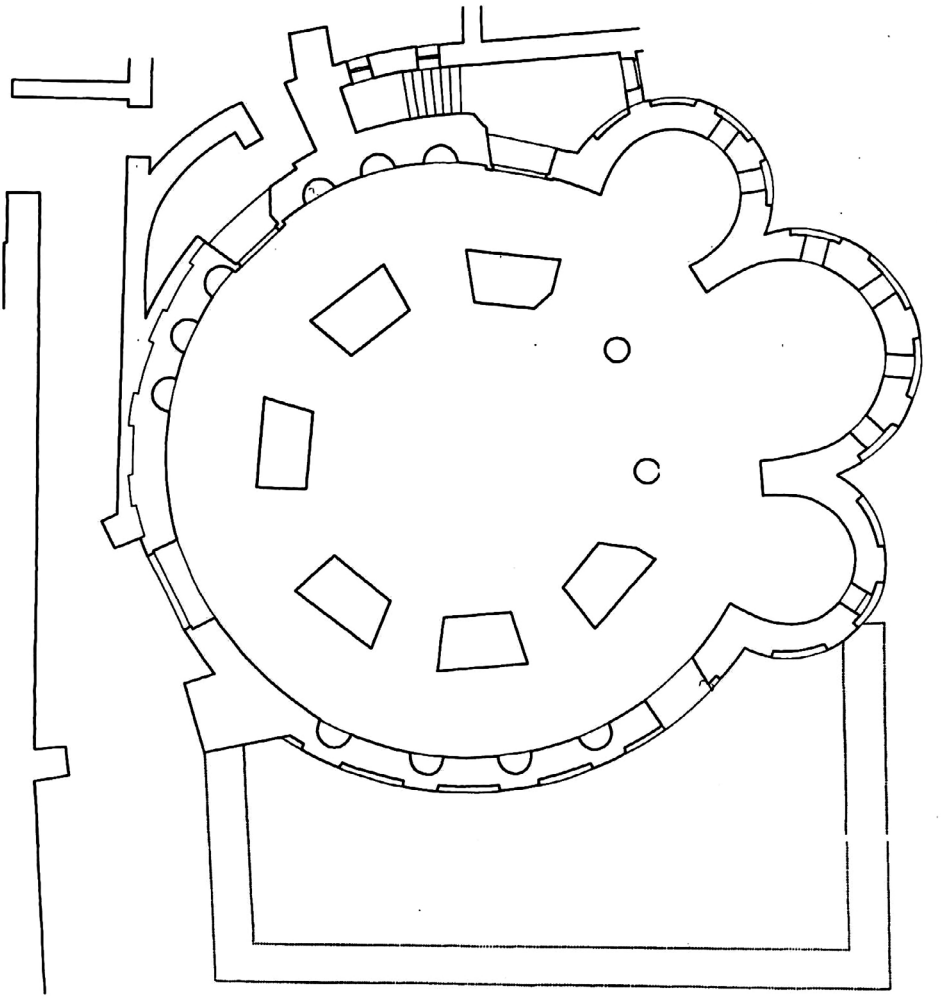

FIGURE 112 Plan of the rotunda of St Donatus in Zadar
DOMIJAN, PETRICIOLI AND VEŽIĆ 1990, 301

more complex architectural composition. Additions included an internal gallery, annexes to the north and south and a narthex on the western façade.[578]

578 Vežić 1998, 56–57; Vežić 1995, 151; Vežić 2002a, 93, 118, 125. The additions, as Vežić has pointed out, should be seen as part of wider interventions that affected the entire episcopal complex, including the construction of a new wing on the east side of the episcopal palace; Vežić 1995, 160. The latter was built against the narthex of the rotunda, which was constructed in the same years, and allowed direct communication between the palace



FIGURE 113 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus, interior
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

The result was a highly articulated interior: the core, matching the perimeter of the first rotunda, embraced the full building height up to the dome, while the outer ring, apses and external additions were divided into two levels, forming a gallery that overlooked the central nucleus (Fig. 114).[579]

The gallery, accessible via both the ambulatory and the adjoining annexes, mirrored the layout of the lower level.[580] Considerably lower in height than the main floor, this upper level, known in local tradition as a matroneum or the oratory of St Donatus, was accessed via a wooden staircase attached to the rotunda's perimeter from the northern annex.[581] The staircase was already mentioned in *De Administrando Imperio* and later recorded by the German pilgrim Johann Meisenheimer, who noted a considerable number of steps, 47

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and the chapel at two points: the first at a portion of the shared wall (just opposite the main entrance to the rotunda) and the second at an intermediate height at the point where the two arms of the staircase joined; Vežić 2002c, 27.

579 *Ibid.*, 83.

580 Vežić 1995, 151; Jackson 1887, 254.

581 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 124; Petricioli 1990a, 23–24.



FIGURE 114 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus, gallery
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

in total, as documented in the apostolic visitation of the Bishop of Vicenza Michele Priuli in 1603.[582]

During the second construction phase pre-Romanesque materials, both wood and stone, were reused.[583] Roman spolia were extensively incorporated into both phases as foundational and load-bearing elements.[584] This led the 19th-century scholar Bianchi to hypothesise the prior existence of a Roman temple dedicated to Emperor Octavian and his wife, Livia, in honour of Jupiter and Juno. According to Bianchi, this temple was later Christianised and rededicated to the Holy Trinity during the time of Bishop Donatus.[585]

582 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 126; Vitezić 1957, 7–8.

583 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 125–126; Vežić 2002d, 99.

584 For example, columns and capitals in front of the sanctuary; cf. Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 124; Petricioli 1990a, 25; Vežić 2002c, 13.

585 Bianchi 1875, 24–26. A more moderate version of this reasoning is found in the late 17th-century account by George Wheler, 1675, ed. 1682, 11: 'Near the Greek Church, dedicated to Saint Helie, are two Corinthian Pillars, whose first Chapters and Bases, are of very good Work. It is jdged to be the Rests of a Temple deicated to Juno, from an Inscription

Due to the extensive modifications in the Baroque period and the further alterations following the rotunda's deconsecration in 1798, little is known about its interior arrangement. The challenge of envisioning its former appearance was aptly captured in 1932 by Giuseppe Praga, who called for a great deal of imagination, urging readers to 'Close your eyes, especially close your eyes to the ruins of the substructures, and reimagine it adorned with altars, an ambo, screens, railings and an iconostasis. Reimagine it with frescoes, mosaics, icons and the crowns between arch and arch.'[586]

This imagined *mise-en-scène*, reconstructed from the few surviving traces of liturgical furnishings and mural decoration,[587] suggests a richly layered and visually dense interior, in sharp contrast to the building's massive architectural form. Additional clues come from the apostolic visitation of Agostino Valier, who, while not stipulating the spatial arrangement of the altars in relation to the gallery, documented the presence of five altars: the main one, surmounted by an icon dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, followed by the 'altar of St Nicholas', the 'altar of St Donatus', the 'altar of St Mary' and another whose dedication remains unspecified (Et aliud altare).[588]

This testimony stands in relative contrast to Bianchi's 1877 account, in which he stated, without providing sources, that 'formerly' three altars were located in the presbytery: the central one dedicated to the Holy Trinity, on the left to St Luke the Evangelist and on the right housing the remains of St Donatus.[589] According to Bianchi, this arrangement was replicated on the upper floor (which he called the oratory of St Donatus or 'upper church'), where the altar

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taken hence, and made part of the Foundation of the Cupula of Saint Donatus his Church by the Dome. The Whole sence may be made out by the beginning and ending of two Inscriptions, which were formely one Stone, by their shapes, but written on two sides. For one line is repeated wice. JUNONI AUGUSTAE/APPULEIA M.F. QUINTA SUO ET L. TURPILII BROCCHI/ LICINIANI FILII NOMINE. It is a dedication to Juno, sirnamed Augusta, meaning Livia, by Appuleia Quinta, Daughter to Marcus, in her own, and Sons name, who was Lucius, Turpilius Brocchus Licinianus. Upon the same Pillar of the Cupolo is a Bass-rilievo of Bacchanal, very well presented.'; cf. Levental 1989, 158.

586 Praga 1932, repr. 2014, 308: 'chiudere gli occhi, chiudere soprattutto gli occhi sui ruderi delle sostruzioni, e ripensarlo ornato di altari, dell'ambone, di plutei, di transenne, di iconostasi. Ripensarlo negli affreschi, nelle opere musive, nelle icone e nelle corone tra arco ed arco.'

587 Vežić 2002d, 119.

588 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 60v.

589 Bianchi 1877, 386; for details on the altar of St Donatus and the icon of the Virgin, see the section below on worship, pp. 258–259. A few timid remarks by Valerio Ponte are also noteworthy; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 209.

of the central apse was dedicated to the Virgin, while the lateral ones honoured St Oswald and St Mary Magdalene, respectively.[590]

Bianchi's testimony, however, presents multiple issues: it lacks chronological specificity, diverges from the records of the apostolic visitor, which is the earliest reliable record of the altars, and offers no documentation to support its claims, making it difficult to incorporate this record into a reconstruction of the monument's liturgical and spatial history.

5.3 *Cult Phenomena and Devotional Practices: St Donatus and Marian Effigies*

Since its initial stages, the bodily remains of the bishop of Zadar and, later on, the devotional practices associated with two Marian effigies of extraordinary local prestige lay at the core of the cultic phenomena in the church of St Donatus. The veneration of one of the latter can likely be traced to the first half of the 15th century, as attested by Hans Lochner (1435), a time that also marks the earliest records of devotional practices inherent to the building's distinctive architectural form: climbing the stairs to the upper gallery was considered a particularly advantageous practice *pro remedio animae*, as pointed out in German travelogues and numerous late medieval testaments that have been published by Petro Runje.[591]

Late medieval pilgrims mentioned all three cultic phenomena associated with the monument, while simultaneously, as mentioned previously, linking the edifice to the name of St Donatus. However, it is probable that the Zadar bishop's precise identity likely eluded Western devotees, due to the existence of saints and blessed ones of the same name.[592] Tradition identifies Donatus as a native Zaratine[593] or, as Farlati put it, 'if not native to Zadar, it is universally believed that he was of Dalmatian descent'.[594]

Donatus represents the ideal bishop, a perfect diplomat skilled in negotiating between the Frankish and Byzantine courts.[595] His name is

590 Bianchi 1877, 387; see also Vežić 2002d, 102, 134.

591 For example, Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496; Runje 2005, 59–65.

592 Consulting the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, one finds more than 30 entries dedicated to namesakes: martyrs, deacons, archdeacons, abbots and no fewer than six bishops named Donatus, including the bishop of Zadar; *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 13 vols, 1961–1970, here vol. 4, 1964, cols 772–799.

593 Vežić 2002d, 25.

594 Farlati, 1775, 30: 'at si non patria Jadrensem, certe natione Dalmatam fuisse communis est omnium opinio'.

595 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 29; Vežić 2002d, 34.

inseparable from the cult of Zadar's patron saints: upon his purported return from Constantinople around 808, he is said to have translated the ashes of St Anastasia and the relics of the three sisters Irene, Agape and Chionia.[596] These acquisitions in the early 9th century completed the corpus of Zadar's patron saints, whose lives were closely intertwined according to their respective *passiones*. Dalmatian tradition further holds that the bodies of two other Zaratine protectors, Zoilus and Chrysogonus, had to have arrived in Zadar prior to Donatus's time.[597]

Donatus's journey to the East was not his sole departure from the diocese. In December 805 he travelled to Charlemagne's court in Thionville, as recorded by Einhard in the *Annales regni Francorum*.[598] He is also commemorated in inscriptions within the cathedral, which likely formed part of its original design to house St Anastasia's relics. Among these is an inscription bearing the formula *DONATVS PECCATVR EPISCOPVS*, suggesting a designated space for the bishop's cult, as noted by Pavuša Vežić.[599] Other inscriptions referring to Donatus as 'archbishop' date to after 1154, when the diocese of Zadar became a metropolitan see.[600] The earliest extant depiction of Donatus, found on the cathedral's counter-façade and dating to the early 14th century, portrays him with a full beard and archiepiscopal insignia, alongside the inscription *DO*[*nat*]*VS IADER*[*e*] *ARCHI*[*episco*]*PVS*.[601] This iconography also appears in later works, such as silver-gilt pieces, where Donatus joins St Chrysogonus, St Anastasia and St Zoilus as one of Zadar's principal patrons.[602]

The feast day of St Donatus and the precise duration of his episcopate remain uncertain. He is listed as the 25th bishop of Zadar, with his tenure generally placed between 801 and 850.[603] Regarding the end of his episcopate, several alternative dates exist, spanning over six decades. The most commonly cited date for his death, found in encyclopaedic works, is 811, while Fondra, following the tradition that emphasises the saint's longevity, suggested his episcopate may have lasted until as late as 879.[604] Fondra also assigned the

596 Vežić 2002b, 236; Vežić 2002a, 22; for the dating of the arrival of the relics of the cathedral's patron saint, see also Vedriš 2002, 6 and n. 34.
597 Grgić 1973, 148.
598 Vežić 2002b, 235.
599 Vežić 2002a, 28–29; Vežić 2002b, 236.
600 Vežić 2002b, 235.
601 *Ibid.*; Hilje and Tomić 2006, 89–90.
602 Vežić 2002d, 33; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 116–119, 126–129, 206–207.
603 Bianchi 1877, 34; Grgić 1973, 158; Vežić 2002d, 33; Vežić 2002b, 238.
604 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 33.

feast day of St Donatus to 25 February,[605] but it remains unclear whether this date was observed from the earliest times and if it originally commemorated the bishop's *dies natalis*.[606]

According to local tradition, the bishop's body has rested in the chapel consecrated to him since its origins. Fondra, writing at the end of the 17th century, mentioned a marble sarcophagus placed 'near the walls in a corner of the church', inscribed with the title of 'archbishop' (archiepiscopi).[607] As Farlati had already observed, this arrangement must date to after the elevation of the diocese to metropolitan status in 1154.[608] The earliest documented reference to an altar of St Donatus in the rotunda dates to 1444, while a testament from 1460 records the bishop's sarcophagus.[609]

Near the end of the 15th century Dietrich von Schachten attested the presence of the bishop's relics next to an altar within a church said to have been built by his own hand. This aligns with the local tradition that attributes the construction of the early medieval rotunda to the saint himself.[610]

The location mentioned by the German pilgrim is corroborated by Agostino Valier (1579) and later clarified by Fondra (1686) and Bianchi (1877).[611] According to Fondra, the bishop's body, long 'neglected and almost unnoticed' in a marble sarcophagus in a corner of the church, was deposited in another more

605 *Ibid.*, 32; Grgić 1973, 158.

606 Celebrating *dies natalis* was a common practice in Early Christianity. In this context Iacopo da Varazze's words are insightful: 'Donatus is, as it were, "born of God", that is, through regeneration, the infusion of grace and glorification. This is a threefold spiritual birth originating from God. For when the saints die, it is said that they are born; the departure of the saints from this world is not called death, but birth.' (Donatus quasi a deo natus, et hoc propter regenerationem et gratie infusionem et glorificationem que est triplex generatio spiritualis a deo. Nam et cum sancti moriuntur, tunc nasci dicuntur, unde obitus sanctorum non mors, sed natale uocatur.); Iacopo da Varazze, 13th century, ed. 2007, 832. As a matter of fact, not even the 15th-century Zaratine codex *Kalendarium, rubricae et orationes Jadrensis Ecclesiae S. Anastasiae*, which assigns the feast day of 'Donati episcopi et martiris' to 7 August, offers any clearer insight into the commemoration of the Zaratine Donatus, whose name has never appeared in the official martyrologies of the Latin Church. The date, along with the designation of martyr beside Bishop Donatus's name, unmistakably refers to the Aretine saint. Meanwhile, as Grgić has pointed out, it is reasonable to assume that the feast of the Zaratine bishop, the author of our rotunda, was included in the now-lost portion of a manuscript which covered the first six months of the year and was likely accompanied by the inscription *duplex maius*, a privilege reserved exclusively for the patron saints of Zadar; Grgić 1973, 129, 139.

607 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 31.

608 This was a 5th volume published posthumously; Farlati, 1775, 38; see also Vežić 2002b, 235.

609 Vežić 2002d, 37; Vedriš 2002, 7.

610 Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 177–178.

611 Bianchi 1877, 67, 149.

'decorous' one and placed above the main altar dedicated to the Purification of the Virgin by the will of Archbishop Stella (1615–1623). The ensemble was surmounted by a miraculous icon.[612] The new placement of the 'marble urn with the bones of the said St Donatus' (urna marmorea cum ossibus dicti S. Donati) is confirmed in the second half of the 17th century by Valerio Ponte in his *Historia ecclesiae Iadrensis*.[613] Later, in 1809, Donatus's body was moved to the cathedral, where it remains today.[614] In order to commemorate the relocation, the saint's feast has been celebrated on the fourth Sunday after Easter, replacing the earlier tradition, which likely marked it on 25 February.[615]

Alongside the marble sarcophagus, the number of cult objects linked to St Donatus in the city's churches was remarkable. Fondra recorded eight reliquaries in the 17th century: three finger-shaped reliquaries, two arm-shaped ones and a silver-covered box containing 'two bones' in the cathedral treasury; another arm-shaped reliquary in the church of St Sylvester / Holy Cross; and a finger reliquary in the church of St Catherine.[616] Likely inspired by the local tradition that St Donatus built the rotunda with his own hands, these reliquaries emphasised the bishop's upper limbs. Of this group, three arm-shaped and one finger-shaped reliquary (Fig. 115) survive today, all dating to the 15th century and originating from the confraternity of St James, the church of St Sylvester (Fig. 116) and the city cathedral.[617]

Fondra's description of the cathedral treasury is supported by key sources documenting its late medieval core. The wooden box containing Donatus's relics is mentioned in the earliest cathedral inventory of 1427[618] and later appears in the apostolic visitation of 1579, described as a 'wooden chest with silver plating containing several bones of St Donatus, Archbishop of Zadar'.[619] However, the 15th-century inventory does not mention the arm-shaped reliquary or the three finger-shaped ones. The extant finger reliquary, brought to scholarly attention only recently,[620] is likely contemporary with the other two presumed-lost examples, reflecting a surge in devotion during the 15th century, which inspired the production of goldsmith's works dedicated to the bishop.

612 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 31; slightly diverging from Bianchi 1877, 386.
613 The work was later published by Brunelli at the beginning of the 20th century: Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 208.
614 Vežić 2002d.
615 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 25.
616 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 9–10, 12, 14.
617 Vežić 2002d, 26; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 157–158, 175–176, 195–196.
618 Although the silver lining is not pointed out; see Petricioli 1987, 162, 165.
619 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap 80, fol. 36r: 'Arcula lignea cum laminis argenteis continens aliquot ossa Sancti Donati Archiepiscopi Iadrensis'.
620 Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 197–198.



FIGURE 115
Zadar, cathedral treasury. Finger-shaped reliquary of St Donatus, 15th century
JAKŠIĆ AND TOMIĆ 2004, 198, FIG. 107



FIGURE 116 Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St Donatus, 15th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

The surviving arm reliquary, also dated to the 15th century, was likely commissioned in Archbishop Lorenzo Venier's time (1428–1449), as suggested by the engraved initials *T.L.V.* on its wrist (Fig. 117).[621] The apostolic visitation mentions this object alongside the three finger reliquaries: 'The arm of St Donatus, with three fingers in separate silver cases'.[622] Over the centuries the number of recorded devotional objects associated with St Donatus gradually declined. While Fondra and Ponte still documented the presence of 'three fingers of St Donatus in the mid-17th century', one had already disappeared by Bianchi's time.[623]

Mentions of St Donatus's relics in 15th-century pilgrimage literature are several, though generally brief and far fewer than those concerning other sacred sites and objects in Zadar. In 1423 Coppart de Velaine, in his brief description of Zadar, mentioned the saint's body immediately after that of St Simeon, the city's most celebrated relic in pilgrim's accounts.[624] Velaine's account is followed by brief references to the body in arbitrary lists of relics kept in the city or without specifying its location within the rotunda.[625] A notable example is provided by Felix Fabri: after describing St Simeon's body and St Anastasia's relics in the cathedral, he tersely noted, 'Similarly, the body of St Donatus' (Similiter et corpus S. Donati).[626] In the account of his return journey in 1519, Dietrich von Kettler followed the same sequence, situating St Donatus inside the chapel near the cathedral after mentioning St Simeon and St Anastasia, thus recalling the monument's original function as an integral part of the episcopal complex.[627]

Bishop Donatus is also the subject of numerous local legends. In hagiographic traditions both within and beyond the Dalmatian region he is associated with the slaying of a dragon, a motif commonly reserved for St George, but also attributed to various Byzantine saints and the broader Mediterranean world. While Hans Lochner's testimony of 1435 places this episode within the rotunda of St Donatus,[628] it was Fondra who preserved the local tradition

621 *Ibid.*, 175; Domijan and Petricioli 2004, 14.

622 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap 80, fol. 36r: 'Brachium Sancti Donati, cum tribus digitis in thecis argenteis separatis'.

623 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 122; Bianchi 1877, 151; see also Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 197–198.

624 Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 301.

625 See p. 246, n. 557 above.

626 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 372–373.

627 Dietrich von Kettler, 1519, ed. 1890, 77.

628 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209: 'item ein stadt heisst Jadra, oder Zara, do ist die stadt do sant Margaretha



FIGURE 117
Zadar, Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art. Arm reliquary of St Donatus, 15th century
JAKŠIĆ AND TOMIĆ 2004, 76, FIG. 080

attributing the deed to Bishop Donatus: 'They narrate that a certain dragon was first confined in a corner of the church itself and then killed by the saint with the sign of the cross, and that through prayer he miraculously made a spring come out.'[629] The Zaratine version of the legend is transmitted in a blurred and confusing manner, likely the result of later interpolations connected to the hagiographies of two earlier bishops with the same name: St Donatus, bishop of Euroea in Epirus, and St Donatus, bishop and martyr of Arezzo.[630] The overlap in their *vitae* is so pronounced that disentangling these traditions poses considerable challenges.

The earliest reference to the Epirote bishop, whose life was set during the reign of Theodosius, comes from Sozomen and already features both of the aforementioned motifs: the slaying of the dragon and the miraculous spring.[631] These also recur in the chronicle of Andrea Dandolo (1306–1354), which, along with Pietro Calò's *Legendae de sanctis*, is the oldest source attesting the presence of the bishop's body in the Venetian lagoon, allegedly transferred there in 1125 under Doge Domenico Michiel.[632]

Southern Italy, particularly Calabria, where a tradition holds that communities from Epirus settled following barbarian incursions, may have served as a conduit for the transmission of these narratives to the Dalmatian coast. St Donatus is the patron saint of Umbriatico in the province of Crotone, although his cult there soon merged with that of the bishop of the same name from Arezzo.[633] Among the miracles attributed to the latter, renowned for his thaumaturgic powers against evil and demonic forces, leitmotifs appear once again. These deeds may have been known to the people of Zadar in the late Middle Ages through Jacopo da Varazze's *Legenda aurea*[634] or through another 13th-century source, that of Bartolomeo da Trento, which contains a version most closely resembling the Zaratine tradition. In his *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum*, which predates Jacopo da Varazze's compilation, Bartolomeo

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ist gewesen. item do leit sant Simeon, sant Chrysostomus, sant Donatius, sant Anastasia, sant Cyrillus, vnnd ist do gar ain wunderliche Kirch. Darin spricht man sey vnser liebe Frau gewesen, vnnd auf dem Vmbganng geruhet, vnnd ist die Kirch gleich als ein Glock, vnnd hat oben viel Vmbgenng. Man spricht das sant Geörg da hab den Linndwurm todt gestochen.'

629 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 32: 'narrano che certo dragone fosse prima relegato in un angolo del tempio stesso, e poscia ucciso dal santo col segno della croce, e che col mezzo dell'orazione facesse miracolosamente scaturire una fonte.'

630 Cf. Brunelli 1913, 189–192.

631 Follieri 1996, 165.

632 Chiesa 1998, 107; Tramontin 1965a, 309.

633 Follier 1996, 170.

634 Iacopo da Varazze, 13th century, ed. 2007, 832–835.

recorded that: 'He slew the monstrous dragon, making the sign of the cross and spitting into its mouth.'[635]

This legend, likely of a late formulation, stands as a *unicum*: none of the other miracles attributed to Bishop Donatus of Zadar bears traces of the earlier hagiographic traditions associated with bishops of the same name. Rather, the posthumous miracles of the Zaratine bishop are deeply rooted in the local devotional context and portray him as the enduring protector of the city and its (arch)diocese.

One such miracle was recounted by Fondra in the late 17th century and later traced by Pavuša Vežić to a 14th-century Hungarian chronicle. According to the vivid account, King Coloman, intent on destroying Zadar in the early 12th century, was deterred when St Donatus appeared to him in a dream with a 'horrid visage', dragged him by the hair and struck him firmly with laurel rods.[636]

Another miracle is linked to the cessation of the plague in 1649, which ravaged Šibenik before spreading to Zadar. In this account, echoing familiar hagiographic topoi, St Donatus, accompanied by the Virgin, appears in a dream to the monk of the church of St Elias. He instructs that the chapel of St Donatus be cleared of the hay stored there by the Venetian cavalry. Once the church is reconsecrated and the ancient Marian effigy and the saint's sarcophagus are returned to the rotunda, the 'bright and burning' flame hovering above the building vanishes, and the plague ceases immediately.[637]

The episode underscores the vitality of Marian devotion in the mid-17th century and is likely linked to Fondra's account of a miraculous image arriving in the rotunda after the demolition of the church of St Mary Major in 1570.[638] However, the precise origins and transfer circumstances of the icon remain unclear. The observations of apostolic visitor Agostino Valier during his 1579 visitation raise further questions. In his report he noted an 'icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary' (icon B. Mariae Virginis) among the main devotional objects

635 Bartolomeo da Trento, 13th century, ed. 2001, 218: 'hec draconem imanissimum, signo crucis facto in os eius expuens interfecit.'

636 Vežić 2002b, 235, n. 6. The Zaratine tradition also links the now-lost arm-shaped reliquary to this episode. The earliest cathedral inventory identifies it as containing the relics of St Chrysogonus, while only later, in the 17th century, was it associated with St Donatus, likely due to the enigmatic inscription *REX COLOMANE HIC RECTOR AMANDEVIAE HOC BENE FECISTI RETRIBUI TIBI QUOD VOLUISIT*; Vežić 2002b, 239, n. 6. See also the testimonies by Fondra and Valerio Ponte: Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 9, 32–33; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1907, 120.

637 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 33–34.

638 *Ibid.*, 31.

in 'a certain old chapel' of the now-destroyed collegiate church.[639] Scrolling through his report, one also finds mention of an icon of the Virgin in the church of St Donatus, adorning the high altar along with 'two candelabra, three cloths and a pallium' (duo candelabra, tres tobaleas et palium). A congregation of 12 priests celebrated there 'on all feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary' (omnibus festis B. Mariae).[640] At least two hypotheses emerge: either the icon in question remained at the site of the collegiate church, suggesting that the cult of the Virgin at the high altar of St Donatus predates the 1570s and is unrelated to the destruction of the collegiate church; or the translation of the miraculous effigy to the rotunda occurred before May 1579. In that case the icon mentioned by Valier at the chapel of St Simeon may have been another image originating from St Mary Major, also venerated locally.

The latter hypothesis and the credibility of Fondra's account, written over a century later, are corroborated by a detail noted by Bianchi: the image was placed on the high altar, initially dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which was subsequently rededicated to the Purification of the Virgin. This suggests that, within the rotunda, the miraculous icon retained the memory of its original cultic and liturgical context, reinforced by the intrinsic connection between the feast of Candlemas and the veneration of St Simeon the prophet.[641]

However, this effigy was not the sole focus of Marian devotion within the rotunda. Another revered image stood on the altar in the central apse of the upper floor. This cult may have predated the arrival of the effigy from St Mary Major, as suggested by Lochner's 1435 account, which, though somewhat improbable, includes a local testimony about the presence of the Virgin Mary in the upper gallery of a bell-shaped church.[642] Later, Valier briefly recorded an 'Altar of St Mary' without specifying its location, while Valerio Ponte added that a congregation called 'oratorii' was associated with this altar and its image, akin to the lower floor.[643] Finally, Bianchi identified this group as a confrater-

639 Agostino Valier, 1579, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fol. 57r.

640 *Ibid.*, fol. 60v. The congregation of 12 priests is also mentioned later by Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 208; see also Bianchi 1877, 483–484.

641 Fondra, 1686, ed. 1855, 31; Binachi 1877, 386.

642 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 209.

643 He noted that the office of the Blessed Virgin was recited there, along with other acts of devotion. It should be mentioned that the final part in Brunelli's edition is omitted in the Latin text and is only present in the translation. However, it should be assumed that this is not an interpolation freely added by the scholar, but rather an oversight in the transcription of the Latin original; Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 208–209.

nity devoted to a 'most ancient and devout image', also known locally as the Blessed Virgin of the Snow, a Marian cult particularly prominent in Zadar.[644]

In any case, both images in the rotunda seem to have followed parallel histories during the 17th century. By the middle of the century it is likely that, in addition to the high altar effigy, the one from the gallery was temporarily relocated to another church. Following the miracle of 1649 both were returned to the rotunda and later received metal revetments, commissioned in 1670 and 1691 respectively.[645]

The image from the lower floor, the *riza* of which was probably commissioned by Valerio Ponte, was transferred to the city cathedral in 1798, when the rotunda was deconsecrated. There, it was placed on the pre-existing altar of the Immaculate Conception and elevated to the high altar on several occasions during the 19th century.[646] A breakthrough occurred in the mid-20th century, when the silver *riza* and layers of overpainting were removed, revealing a 'most ancient image of the Blessed Virgin' (imago B. Virginis antiquissima) in the iconographic type of the Eleousa, datable to the second half of the 13th century.[647]

While this icon, part of the Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar since the 1970s, can be traced to the present day, the history of the oratory's image ends in the late 18th century, with the dissolution of its confraternity.[648] It is reasonable to assume that this image, together with the confraternity's property and important relics of the rotunda, was transferred to the cathedral in 1798. This is supported by the presence, in the second half of the 19th century, of four candelabra originally produced in 1735 for the rotunda altar, which were still present in the cathedral in the second half of the 19th century. These candelabra bear the inscription *Della B. V. dell'Oratorio di s. Donato*, as well as the effigy of the Virgin and Child.[649]

Other devotional practices were associated with the rotunda's second floor, most notably the ascent of the Holy Staircase, as already mentioned. The portal built during Archbishop Zmajević's tenure, which led from the first floor to the staircase and second floor, still bears the inscription: *Ad commodiorem scalae sanctae et excelsae virginis venerationem anno* MDCCXXXIII (Fig. 118).[650]

644 Bianchi 1877, 387; Goja 2011, 149.
645 Goja 2011, 149–150.
646 Bianchi 1877, 108–109, 454; Jakšić and Tomić 2004, 255–256.
647 Valerio Ponte, 17th century, ed. 1908, 208; see Demori Staničić 2017, 251–252.
648 Bianchi 1877, 497; Goja 2011, 150.
649 Bianchi 1877, 256, 497.
650 Vežić 2002d, 133.



FIGURE 118 Zadar, rotunda of St Donatus, portal leading to the staircase, detail, 1733
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

This Baroque arrangement consciously emulated the Scala Sancta of the Lateran Sancta Sanctorum in Rome. The staircase, with clear references to the Passion of Christ, made of red marble from Ferrara and consisting of 28 steps, was, according to Bianchi, endowed with the same plenary indulgences as the original Lateran/Jerusalem model from 1736 onwards. The faithful ascended it on their knees four times a year: on Epiphany, Maundy Thursday, Pentecost and All Saints' Day.[651] As with the most important religious objects in the church of St Donatus, the Baroque staircase was dismantled following the rotunda's deconsecration in 1798 and relocated to the cathedral crypt in 1809.[652] Although its original medieval and late medieval form differed significantly – likely made of wood and consisting of more steps, as Johann Meisenheimer and apostolic visitor Michele Priuli (1603) attested, the latter counting 47 steps prior to the Baroque alterations – the reference to the Roman model from a devotional perspective was already present in the late medieval period. Among the most powerful Christological rituals that drew devotees

651 Bianchi 1877, 387–388.
652 *Ibid.*, 389.

and pilgrims to the City of Peter, the ascent of the Scala Sancta on one's knees for the salvation of one's soul or that of a loved one was particularly significant. Writing in the mid-15th century Nikolaus Muffel confirmed the potency of the practice: 'Each person who ascends or descends with devotion in his heart earns with each step a thousand years of indulgence; people out of devotion use to go up on their knees, and usually above each step a paternoster is said and the step is kissed, and many believe that by going up on one's knees one frees a soul from purgatory.'[653]

A similar practice was documented in Zadar. In 1495 a German pilgrim not only emphasised that the rotunda was modelled on the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, but also stressed that devoutly ascending its long staircase could free a soul from the fires of purgatory.[654] The scribe who compiled this account described a practice widespread among the Zaratines during the 15th and 16th centuries, now corroborated by numerous wills published by Petar Runje.[655] Testators made provisions for designated paid individuals to ascend the steps of the church of the Holy Trinity on their behalf to reduce their time in purgatory.[656] The frequency of this practice varied from a single ascent immediately after death to weekly repetitions for an entire year. Some wills specified as many as fifty repetitions, with up to ten participants (as in a testament dated 10 October 1444), often prioritising women and the poor.[657] The proximity of the rotunda to the hospital of St Donatus, attested since the early 15th century and likely serving the city's needy, like similar institutions during the Middle Ages, may have facilitated such arrangements.[658]

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653 Nikolaus Muffel, 1452, ed. 1999, 43: 'ogni persona che sale o scende con devozione nel suo cuore guadagna con ogni gradino mille anni di indulgenza; la gente per devozione usa salire in ginocchio, e usualmente sopra ogni gradino si dice un Pater Noster e si bacia il gradino e molti credono che salendo in ginocchio si libera un'anima dal purgatorio.' This practice was also later followed step by step by Martin Luther 'in the hope of freeing a soul from purgatory' by opting for that of his grandfather Heine; Gaeta 2011, n. 48; Di Pierro, 2015.

654 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 50; see Kužić 2013, 89, 121; Belamarić 2014a, 173.

655 Runje 2005, 59–65.

656 *Ibid.*, 60–61, n. 1. Testaments were also prepared on the occasion of journeys considered particularly risky, as in the case of someone named Lucia, who was preparing for a pilgrimage to Rome on the occasion of the jubilee of 1475; *ibid.*, 61, n. 4. On the devotional particles *pro remedio animae*, see Bacci 2000a, esp. 258.

657 Runje 2005, 61, n. 4.

658 *Ibid.*, 62, n. 10; see also Raukar *et al.* 1987, 268. The description of the hospital is given ample space in the report of the apostolic visitor Agostino Valier; Agostino Valier, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 80, fols 91r–92v.

CHAPTER 3

Dubrovnik

> Dubrovnik had a new quay; it is a strong, small and beautiful mercantile city, whose people are wealthy, living in freedom without a lord.[1]

1 From Ancient Epidaurus to the Late Medieval Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik

The safe harbour of the Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik was the last major port along the Dalmatian coast before ships ventured into Albanian waters, as the fortresses of Kotor, Budva, Bar and Ulcinj, now in present-day Montenegro, were rarely used as landing sites for the Holy Land pilgrims in the late Middle Ages.[2] Like Zadar, the northernmost Dalmatian outpost, Dubrovnik was

1 Anselmo Adorno, 1470–1471, ed. 1978, 376–378.

2 Coastal towns in present-day Montenegro were often mentioned in relation to the ancient province of Dalmatia. The province's boundaries, sometimes misinterpreted by pilgrims, were noted by Milliaduse d'Este (1440–1441, ed. 2009, 15). By 1420 the region was politically divided: the coastal towns were under the Serenissima, while the hinterland was controlled by the Ottomans. Herzeg Novi was an exception, falling to the Ottomans in the 1480s. Michele da Figline recorded this distinction, noting the 'castelleto' of Budva 'de' vinitiani' and 'uno castello chiamato Castel Nuovo et questo è del turco' (Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154). Joos van Ghistele (1481–1485, ed. 1998 [online DBNL, 2006], 56–57) was the only traveller to mention a place of worship along this stretch of coast, specifically the cathedral of Kotor, dedicated to St Tryphon: 'Zij leden oec voor bij een colf oft eene schoettinghe vander zee, zeer crom ende slom ten lande waert in loopende, up thende vanden welken een zeer schoone stede staet, ghenaemt Cattaro, de welke de Torck noynt, hoe dicwilt hijer vooren ghezijn heeft, ghewinnen en conste, ende es als noch ghehouden vanden kerstenen; daer es eene zeere zuverlicke kercke, inde welke begraven leyt dat lichaem vanden heleghen vriend Gods Sente Trijffon, daer in grooter weerdicheden ghehouden.' For further references to the Montenegrin coastline, see Anonymous, 1308, ed. 1916, 119–121; Luchino dal Campo, 1413, ed. 1861, 80–81; English Anonymous, *c.*1425, ed. 1905, 544; Girnard von Schwalbach, 1440, ed. 1998, 116; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 117–118; Anselmo Adorno, 1470–1471, ed. 1978, 376–378; Alessandro Ariosto, 1476–1479, ed. 2007, 11–12; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 56–58; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 67; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652,

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a key stop along the Eastern Adriatic. References to these two cities appear consistently throughout the period, but Dubrovnik stands out: more than 110 travellers recorded it in their accounts, far surpassing mentions of the first Dalmatian stop.

The city's prosperity stemmed from its extensive trade network, which connected the Balkan hinterland with Mediterranean maritime routes, a system developed since the early Middle Ages. By the time of the *grand voyage* to the Holy Land, Dubrovnik's reputation was firmly established. Unlike other Dalmatian towns, it was well known to Western travellers, who referred to it by its Latin/Italian name, often with variations,[3] and recorded its galleys and merchants in ports far beyond the Adriatic. The toponym 'Ragusa' remained dominant until the late 12th century, when sources also began noting the Slavic name 'Dubrovnik', which appeared only sporadically and much later in travelogues.[4] By contrast, references to ancient Epidaurus, the original

144–145; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 179; Hans Hundt, 1493–1494, ed. 1883, 63; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr, von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 154–156, 244–245; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 11, 73; Georg von Gaming, 1507–1508, ed. 1721, col. 637; Martin von Baumgarten, 1507, ed. 1594, 160; Jean Thenaud, 1512, ed. 1884, 154, 223; Richard Torkington, 1517–1518, ed. 1884, 16–17; Pedro Manuel de Urrea, 1517–1519, ed. 2008, 112; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 59; Anonymous, 1521, ed. 1893, 217–218; Christoph Fürer, 1565–1566, ed. 1621, 115–116.

3 Among the distorted variants, often used inconsistently by the same author, the main ones are: 'Araguise' (Coppart de Velaines, 1423–1424, 1431–1432, ed. 2007, 308), 'Citie Drogonse' (English Anonymous, *c.*1425, ed. 1905, 544), 'Agorus' (Anonymous, 1434, ed. 1881, 66), 'Raguss' (Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach [Hans Lochner], 1435, ed. 1858, 210), 'Arusa' (Pero Tafur, 1436–1439, ed. 1874, 42–43), 'Ragosne' (Gilles Le Bouvier, *c.*1451, ed. 1908, 97–99), 'Arrogussa' (Hans Bernhard von Eptingen, 1460, ed. 1992, 214–215), 'Aragus' (Hans Koppler, 1461, ed. 1998, 207–208), 'Ragugia' (Piero Antonio Buondelmonti, 1468, 1474, ed. 1993, 245), 'Ragaß' (Gaudenz von Kirchberg [Friedrich Steigerwalder], 1470, ed. 1905, 104–105), 'Arghuse' (Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 94–96, 175–179, 176), 'Ragossa' (Ulrich Leman, 1472–1480, ed. 2007, 20–22), Aragose (Anonymous, 1481–1492, ed. 1893, n.p.), 'Aragoza' (English Anonymous, 1480–1526, ed. 1985, 137), 'Ragoussen' (Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 [online DBNL, 2006], 53–54, 56–57), 'Arragouse' (Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 92–95), 'Rancia' (Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–156), 'Rachusa' (Peter Fassbender, 1492–1493, ed. 1880, 250–251); 'Arragonse' (Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10–11), 'Arrogoutzee' (Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 167–168); 'Ranagusy oder Aragusy' (Anonymous, 1521, ed. 1893, 217–218), 'Ragusonna' (Peter Füessli, 1523–1524, ed. 1982, 138) and 'Ragoule' (Greffin Affagart, 1533–1534, ed. 1902, 29–30).

4 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 23: 'A ten den wo poledni przigeli sme do portu k miestu, gemuz wlasky rziekagij raguz [mijesto raguz] A Slowansky dubrawnik.'; Melchior von Seydlitz, 1556–1559, ed. 1584, fol. 271v: 'Auff der höhe Gebirges/sahen wir das Meer/vnd kamen deselbigen Tages/auff den andern seitê in die berühempte Statt Ragusa (Ptol. Epidaurus, von Türcken Dobrouicha geheissen) welche unter mehr gemeltem Gebrige/ am Meer geelgen.'; Aquilante Rocchetta, 1598, ed. 1630, 353 'Ragusa nobilissima Città della Dalmatia, chiamata

Ragusan settlement, were more frequent, often listed alongside Dubrovnik as 'Ragusa Nuova'.

When referring to southern Dalmatian cities, Anselmo Adorno followed the familiar order used by travellers arriving from the Levant, naming the *potentes urbes* of Bar, Kotor and Epidaurus, which he noted was 'sometimes called Old Ragusa'.[5] The legendary past of Old Dubrovnik, identified today with Cavtat, near the modern border with Montenegro, mirrors that of its namesake in the Peloponnese.[6] Louis de Rochechouart even claimed Dalmatian Epidaurus as the birthplace of Aesculapius, suggesting visitors could still see his tomb and epitaph.[7] Furthermore, according to a later account by Jean Palerne in 1581, an overnight stay beside the tomb was thought to possess healing, thaumaturgic power.[8] Felix Fabri, however, was more sceptical:

> This place is also called Epidaurus; yet I do not believe it to be the same Epidaurus where Aesculapius, son of Apollo, once lived and where, after his death, he had a temple in which his image was worshipped in the form of a serpent. When the Romans suffered a devastating plague for

da Turchi Dobronia, et dagli antichi Epidauro'; Jean Zuallart, 1586, ed. 1587, 98: 'En terre ferme sur les riues de la Mer est la fameus cité de Raguse, des Turcs appelle Debronica.'

5 Anselmo Adorno, 1470–1471, ed. 1978, 376–378: 'Primo quidem est Dalmacia, provincia magna, omnium fructuum fertilissima que multas pulchras ac potentes urbes habet scilicet Antibarum, Catarum, Epidaurum dicta aliquando Ragusium vetus, modo omnino in partes divisa atque rupta est, que quasi in insula stetit paucum correspontis cum terra firma in quo situabatur locus. Habuit Ragusium novum que fortis, parva atque pulchra est civitas merchancialis, cujus populus dives est, in libertate absque domino viventes; Turcho tamen annuatim denariorum magnam summam ne eos infestet in vim pacis et concordie tribuunt. Item Stangnum, Corsulam, que omnes supradicte civitates maritime sunt et cathedrales civitates. Item et Lesinam que prope se parvulam insulam jacentem habet.'

6 Frederick III of Saxony seems to have landed in Cavtat after his incognito stay in Dubrovnik; Frederick III of Saxony, 1493, ed. 1851, 79: 'Die Stadt erbot sich auch gross gegen uns Brüdern, dann sich der Herzog nicht kennen wollt lassen. Als blieben wir die Nacht da und kauften was wir durften. Und auf der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit Abend um zwölf im Mittage erhuben wir uns wieder und fuhren bei ein Dorf, heißt Alten Ragus, liegt ein Meilen von der Stadt und ankerten da eine Stund oder vier, und als die Sonne zu Rüste ging, erhuben wir uns und fuhren die Nacht und der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit Tag und aber die Nacht.'

7 Louis de Rochechouart, 1461, ed. 1893, 230.

8 Jean Palerne, 1581, ed. 1606, 515–516: 'Raguse est une ville for antique […] Quelques uns veulent dire, que ceste ville soit celle, qui fut ançienement dite Epidaure, où fouloit eftre le Temple d'Elculape, le quel les malades allouent visiter, & y dorment la nuit, pour être guéris: & les autres tient que ledict Temple esprit vers le Cap de Sicile prés de Napoly de Omanie en Grece.'

> three years, they consulted the Sibylline books, brought the image of Aesculapius to Rome as a remedy and thus overcame the pestilence.[9]

Fabri also recounted a local legend in which St Hilarion slayed a dragon in the region.[10] The lasting impression of Dubrovnik's past on travellers is further evidenced by Antonio da Crema's notes. He recorded another topos of local tradition, which, drawing on classical sources, claims a Roman origin for Dubrovnik's founders: 'We find ourselves in the port of Dubrovnik, which Pliny and Ptolemy and the other cosmographers [*Gosmographes*] want to name Epidaurus and which was a colony of Roman citizens.'[11]

Later accounts by Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo (1511) and Christoph Fürer (1565–1566) attribute the city's refoundation to the Goths, likely a misinterpretation of the fate of Greek Epidaurus, which was destroyed in the 4th century during invasions by Goths.[12] Instead, the depopulation of the

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9 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 360: 'Haec alio nomine dicitur Epidaurum; non credo tamen ipsam illam Epidaurum esse, in qua Aesculapius, Apollinis filius, deguit et post mortem templum habuit, cujus simulacrum io forma serpentis colebatur. Unde, cum Romani tribus annis peste gravi vexareotur, inspectis Sibyllinis libris Aesculapii simulacrum tulerunt et veluti fatale remedium contra pestem Romam duxerunt et convaluerunt.'

10 See Badurina-Stipčević 2004, 27–40, esp. 27–29; cf. Graciotti 2014, 24–25. It must be pointed out, however, that in his discourse Fabri also referenced the events in nearby Durrës: 'Hanc Epidaurum superius Dyrrhachium nominavi Fol. 185, in qua Constatinus coepit aedificare Constiantinopolim. Ab ea civitate Epyros regio nomen accepit, et in ea S. Hilarion mare, quod contra civitatem elevabatur, opposito signo crucis stare fecit, sicut legitur in vitis patrum, et in ea draconem immanem concremavit, ut dicet Hieronymus in ejus vita C. 33. Illa ergo Epidaurus est in Epyro et dicitur Dyrrachium; ista vero est in Dalmatia et dicitur Epidaurus et Ragusium.'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 360. Martin von Baumgarten and Georg von Gaming also later associated ancient Epidaurus with Durrës; Martin von Baumgarten, 1507, ed. 1594, 160: 'Nam, ut ait Pomponius Mela, cum locus ille portus esset ad omnem Graeciam et prius id nomen velut in damnum ituris portendere videretur, Nomine priori abiecto Dyrachium est dicta. Hanc quidam et Epidaurum vocant, estque hodie sub Venetorum imperio.'; Georg von Gaming, 1507–1508, ed. 1721, col. 637: 'Deinde est *Dyrrhachium*, quam vulgus Durazzo vocat. Haec in Epiro condita est tempore Antonii Marci, quae olim *Epidamnos* dicebatur. Nam, ut ait Pomponius Mela, cum locus ille portus esset ad omnem Graeciam, et prius ad nomen, velut in damnum ituris portendere videretur, priori nomine, *Epidamnos* abiecto Durachium dicta fuit. Hanc etiam quidam *Epidaurum* vocant: estque hodie sub Venetorum imperio.'

11 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 41.

12 Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo, 1511, ed. 1886, 11: 'Nel ronper del zorno de quindi dipartimo, et nel declinar del sole applicuamo al molo dil porto di Raguxi, terra di Dalmatia, la quale dapoi la precipupta cittá de Epydauro da' Goti fu edificata, terra assai picola.'; Christoph Fürer, 1565–1566, ed. 1621, 115–116: 'XXVIII. Iun. in Dalmatiam delati, praecipuas regionis urbes eminus conspeximus, ut Cataro, Ragusam veterem, olim Epidaurum, e cuius a Gotthis dirutae ruinis alia postea exaedificata fuit, quam hodie Ragusiam novam vocant.

ancient Dalmatian settlement is generally linked to the early 7th-century Slavic incursions.[13]

Although modern studies suggest an earlier foundation of the new settlement and distinguish the establishment of the new diocese from the decline of nearby Epidaurus, little is certain about Dubrovnik's earliest centuries, as systematic archival records began only in the 1270s.[14] Whether its first fortifications date to the 6th century (as recent theories suggest) or the following century, after the destruction of Epidaurus (the traditional view), its location was undoubtedly on the cliff described by Gabriele Capodilista in 1458 as 'A single rock in the shape of a shell, that is, with mountains on either side and a flat area in the middle, with the sea beating against it on two sides.'[15]

The original nucleus, the so-called Castellum, was later joined by two districts to the east: St Peter and Pustijerna.[16] This expansion was likely completed by the 10th century. The construction of Lovrijenac fortress to the west, named after the church of St Lawrence, probably followed in the 11th century.[17] Though Pietro Casola, writing in the late 15th century, questioned its usefulness ('I do not know how it could be of use to them'), the fortress, strategically positioned over the sea, was integral to Dubrovnik's defence system, which was carefully developed and perfected over the centuries.[18]

As the city expanded northwards in the 13th and 14th centuries, new districts were incorporated through successive extensions of the city walls. By the mid-14th century, when the first Holy Land pilgrims recorded their impressions, Dubrovnik was entirely enclosed by massive fortifications, reinforced

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Est haec civitas, secundum Bodinum, omnium fere totius Europae minima, sed legibus aequissimis constituta.'

13 On the foundation of Dubrovnik, see Živković 2007, 9–25, esp. 11–12. The rumour linking the destruction of Dalmatian Epidaurus to the Gothic invasion also circulated in the Dubrovnik tradition during the 16th and 18th centuries; *ibid.*, 14–15; see also Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 8–9; Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 245–246.

14 Krekić 2007, 19. In addition to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's account, local chronicles and treatises from the 15th century onwards, particularly by Italian foreigners in the Republic's service, are key to reconstructing Dubrovnik's early medieval history. For a full historiographical overview, see Vinko Foretić's introduction (Foretić 1980, 11–14), which remains the main reference for the city's history. Also significant are Bariša Krekić's essays (Krekić 2007) and his summary volume (Krekić 1972); see also Harris 2006.

15 Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 57–58: 'uno saxo in forma d'una concha, videlicet che da l'uno canto e l'altro sono monti et in mezo piano, col mare che gli batte da dui canti'.

16 Krekić 1972, 64–66; Foretić 1980, 24–25.

17 Krekić 1972, 68.

18 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 124–133: 'Io non so quelo li possa giovare.' Numerous pilgrims commented on the fortress; see Kužić 2013, 144.

by no fewer than 13 towers.[19] Their imposing presence was already noted in the early 14th century by Simon Fitzsimons, who described Dubrovnik as 'a very wealthy city, well and decently fortified with tall towers and other military structures' (Fig. 119).[20]

The city's fortification system continued to impress travellers well into the 16th century. In 1517 Richard Torkington called it the strongest city he had ever seen.[21] Michele da Figline, often overlooked in scholarship, also praised its 'many fine walls', highlighting their 'barbacani' structure equipped with 'thick bombards'.[22] The introduction of firearms in 1351 prompted significant adaptations, including the outer wall mentioned by Francesco Suriano in 1480: 'fortified and strong with stone, walls and an outer wall, with abundant artillery'.[23]

Krekić's observation that 'they [the people of Dubrovnik] knew that the walls, together with their shrewd diplomacy, were the only guarantee of their freedom' underscores the city's ability to leverage available means to achieve and maintain the status of *urbs insignis, ac sui iuris* (a notable and independent city).[24] This rank, insistently recorded, as we shall see, by Western travellers, was only fully achieved from the mid-14th century onwards. During the mid-Middle Ages, Dubrovnik's political landscape resembled that of other Dalmatian coastal centres, except in its ability to limit the interference of dominant rulers in commercial affairs. The consequent economic strength, in turn, enabled for greater boldness in forging new alliances.

Following the 15-month Saracen siege of 866–867, endured thanks both to its defensive system and the arrival of imperial fleets sent by Basil I, Dubrovnik, like Zadar and other Dalmatian ports, remained under Byzantine

19 Therefore, what is reported by Antonio da Crema is excessive; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 42: 'serve trenta alte e forte torre, sopra quali; dì e notte stanno vigilanti a bona guarda; e a cadauna di loro si ritrova uno bello, ampio e forte revelino.'

20 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252: 'civitatem opulentissimam, turribus altis ac aliis bellicis ornamentis bene et decenter firmatam'.

21 Richard Torkington, 1517–1518, ed. 1884, 16–17: 'Midsomerday we passed by the most strong and myzghty towne callyd Aragouse […] it ys the Strongest towne of walls, towers, bulwerks, waches, and wardes that ever I saw in all my lyff.' In this vein, the passage from the Parisian Anonymous also points out that Dubrovnik was the place that was the most fortified and best protected by water and beautiful walls among all the cities from Paris to that part of the sea; furthermore, continuing his journey, impressed by 'la grande cité de Raguse', once he arrived in Candia he did not fail to point out that: 'La cité est belle et forte et non pas tant de beaucoup que Raguze.'; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 35–36, 49.

22 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–156.

23 Francesco Suriano, 1480–1484, ed. 1900, 250–251: 'munitissima e forte de roche, mura et antemurale, e d'arteglieria copiosa'.

24 Krekić 1972, 76. The expression is taken from Georg von Gaming, 1507–1508, ed. 1721, col. 463.



FIGURE 119 View of the city of Dubrovnik, *c.*1487
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rule until the early 13th century.[25] However, this connection proved unstable, largely nominal and marked by frequent interruptions. While the fortifications ensured the city's survival during the 9th-century siege, it was exceptional diplomatic skills and strategic foresight that enabled the town to navigate the shifting Mediterranean power dynamics, particularly in its dealings with the Serenissima.

As noted earlier, Venice began expanding its influence over the Eastern Adriatic from the 11th century onwards. Unlike Zadar, however, Dubrovnik was only seldomly the target of direct Venetian military action, as its authorities prioritised diplomacy over confrontation to address tensions with the Venetian Republic. In 1000, recognising the futility of resistance, a Ragusan delegation met the Venetian fleet, led by Doge Pietro II Orseolo, on the islet of Majsan in the Korčula archipelago, negotiating a peaceful settlement before the fleet reached the city's walls. This marked the last major Adriatic stronghold to submit to St Mark's banner before the Venetians advanced into the Ionian Sea.[26]

Although precise data for this period is scarce, the years after the first Venetian interlude, ending with the city's return to Byzantine rule by the late 1020s,[27] can be summarised as follows: between 1081 and 1085 Dubrovnik came under Norman influence, briefly returned to Byzantine control by the early 11th century and in 1171 fell again under Venetian rule. However, this occupation was short-lived: in 1172 and from 1186 to 1192, Dubrovnik, still formally under Byzantine rule, was once more controlled by the Normans.[28]

The long-standing Byzantine dominion over Dubrovnik persisted until the early 13th century,[29] a legacy still echoed in a French pilgrim's account of the 1420s. Describing it as one of the most beautiful cities he had ever seen, the anonymous traveller mistakenly called it a 'tributary to the emperor of Constantinople', long after Byzantine rule had ended.[30] This historically inaccurate claim later resurfaced in an English pilgrim guidebook that referred to

25 Krekić 1972, 6; Foretić 1980, 19.

26 Krekić 1972, 7; Foretić 1980, 25.

27 Foretić 1980, 26–31; Lučić 1973, 55–65.

28 Lučić 1973, 60.

29 *Ibid.*, 60–62.

30 Anonymous, 1419–1425, ed. 1905, 78: 'mais elle est trehutaire à l'Empereur de Constantinople'. That the anonymous pilgrim referred to the members of the Palaiologan dynasty can be deduced from a cross-reading of the passage with the description of the political situation in the Morea: 'Morea lequel pais est du dispost de Rommenie, frère de l'Empereur de Constantinople'; see also the introductory essay, *ibid.*, 71.

Dubrovnik as a 'stronge wallyd towne of the Emperours of Constantinople callyd Aragose'.[31]

Most late medieval pilgrim accounts, however, provide reliable insights into the city's political evolution in the following centuries. Simon Fitzsimons, arriving in 1322, noted that the Venetians were ruling there (in eadem dominantur Veneti), marking the only surviving record of Dubrovnik's longest Venetian interlude.[32] Unlike much of the Adriatic coast, which remained under the rule of the Serenissima until the late 18th century (aside from a brief interruption in the 14th century), Dubrovnik's Venetian period lasted just a century and a half. Yet, despite its brevity, it was a time of significant political, economic, cultural and administrative transformations, shaped by the growing influence of Venetian power within the city walls.

Crucial to Dubrovnik's economic ascent, however, were the 50 years preceding Venetian rule, when key agreements were signed with Italian municipalities[33] and ports across the Istrian–Dalmatian region.[34] Moreover, to safeguard their trade routes, the Ragusans reached a pact in 1190 with the notorious Dalmatian pirate family of Omiš. Earlier, in 1186, they secured free trade with medieval Serbia, then under the expanding influence of the Nemanjić dynasty (1189–1360), followed by an agreement with the ban of Bosnia three years later.[35]

This growing economic power made Dubrovnik indispensable to Venice, which sought to expand its commercial reach into new markets while restraining the autonomy and rapid development of the Adriatic ports it aimed to control. Although the pact of 1205 formalising Dubrovnik's submission to Venice is lost, later agreements, dating as early as 1232, likely reflected its terms. As in other Dalmatian port towns, Venice imposed a count with supreme administrative and judicial authority, alongside an archbishop always drawn from the Venetian clergy.[36]

Although Dubrovnik attained the rank of a metropolitan see from the late 10th century, this status lacked continuity, as the (arch)diocese's jurisdictional power depended on the region's shifting political landscape.[37] From

31 Anonymous, 1481–1492, ed. 1893, n.p.

32 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252.

33 Molfetta (1148), Pisa (1169), Fano and Ancona (1169), Ravenna (1188), Monopoli and Bari (1201) and Termoli (1203).

34 Kotor (1181), Rovinj (1188) and Poreč (1194); cf. Krekić 1972, 12–13; Harris 2006, 38–39.

35 Harris 2006, 39.

36 Krekić 2007, 9–12.

37 On the development of the Dubrovnik (arch)diocese, see mainly the proceedings of the conference held in Dubrovnik in 1998 on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the establishment of the archdiocese: Puljić and Ančić 2001.

the mid-11th century onwards present-day Montenegro[38] – and later the powerful Nemanjić dynasty, which established Kotor as its coastal court – posed a persistent challenge to Dubrovnik, becoming an intrusive and unwelcome neighbour. Despite the tense relations between Dubrovnik and the Venetian authorities, the latter supported the city's metropolitan ambitions in the protracted 13th-century dispute over Catholic dioceses in southern Dalmatia, where Bar, backed by the Nemanjić family, stood as the primary rival.[39]

The awareness that Venetian protection remained an option *in extremis*, though never ultimately exercised militarily, enabled Dubrovnik to navigate its prolonged conflict with the Serbian dynasty. Tensions peaked under Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276), but eased in the early 14th century, paving the way for more cooperative ties shaped by evolving commercial interests.[40] Venetian economic policies further shaped Dubrovnik's trade network trajectory. Restrictions on the number and type of ships permitted in the Venetian lagoon, combined with tax exemptions on goods from Slavonia (then encompassing Dalmatia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia) and higher tariffs on imports from the Byzantine Empire, Sicily, Egypt and Tunisia, redirected Dubrovnik's trade towards the Balkan hinterland.[41] Here, Ragusan merchants, renowned for their linguistic skills, became indispensable intermediaries in commercial exchanges with Italian markets.[42] Such minerals as gold, silver and copper from Serbian and Bosnian mines flowed westwards through Dubrovnik, while Western goods travelled in the opposite direction into the Balkans.

Maritime expansion also accelerated under Venetian rule. In the early 14th century the Serenissima ordered the construction of a new arsenal in Dubrovnik, later expanded multiple times. This shipyard drew the attention of travellers, including Pietro Casola, who, having previously visited Venice's famed naval industry, took note of the active arsenal in Dubrovnik: 'Moreover, the aforementioned Ragusans, in imitation of the Venetian lords, have a place built near their port, which they call the Arsenal, where they also construct galleys and ships; and at that moment, there were four of them, some completed and others still under construction.'[43]

38 Krasić 1999, 22–23; Puljić and Ančić 2001, 27–49; Peričić 2001, 339–354.

39 Krekić 2007, 14; Harris 2006, 52–53.

40 Krekić 1972, 19, 23–24.

41 Harris 2006, 155.

42 Foretić 1980, 61; Krekić 1980, 390.

43 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2011, 96–97, 128: 'Hano insuper dicti Ragusei, ad similitudine de li signori veneziani, uno loco facto verso el suo porto, qual domandano l'Arcenale, unde ancora loro fano fabricare galee e nave, et ora ghé ne erano IIII°, parte de fornite e parte de fornire.' The following pilgrims also dwelt on the subject: Dutch Anonymous, 1472, ed. 1882, 94–96: 'Vnde daer saghen wir eyn scoen wapenhuys wal to gemacht mut

During the Venetian era the city's ruling class and administrative structure were solidified. The merchant patriciate, with its growing economic power, dominated the three councils (*Consilium Maius*, *Consilium Minus* and *Consilium Rogatorum*), advising the Venetian count until 1358, and later the rector, who was elected from the noble Ragusan families.[44] The Venetian model, swiftly integrated into Ragusan society, was also noticed by Western pilgrims more than a century after Venetian rule had ended. In 1521 an anonymous pilgrim highlighted the 'Venetian lifestyle' (leben auf der Venediger art),[45] while earlier visitors had already pointed to the city's well-organised judicial system, shaped in the 12th century and refined under Venetian rule.[46] Pietro Casola, for instance, remarked that the rector was 'like the doge in Venice' (como el duce a Venezia).[47] In 1486 Antonio da Crema provided a detailed description of Dubrovnik's judicial system:

> They do not appoint any foreign officials to administer justice, but elect a rector each month, assisted by twelve companions who serve for a year. All of them hold equal authority in civil matters, with no one having more reason than another, and they render judgments collectively. Six others are appointed as lords of justice, handling initial appeals, while a separate tribunal of seven judges oversees criminal cases and the second level of appeal. For a third appeal, all judges from these three offices, along with sixteen additional elected members, deliver the final and definitive ruling. However, their constitution requires that three-quarters of these forty-two must agree. Detailing the good governance of this Republic in its councils would take too long, but it ensures that freedom is never entirely lost.[48]

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galeyden vnd seer veel gueder bussen vnd alle wapen twich.'; Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo, 1511, ed. 1886, 11: '[…] ornata di assai edifitii, di porto et arsenale'.

44 Krekić 1972, 38.

45 Anonymous, 1521, ed. 1893, 217–218.

46 Foretić 1980, 52–54.

47 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2011, 131.

48 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 43: 'Non conducono alcuno forestero officiale in administrare ragione, ma creano ogni meso une rectore, a' qual danno dodece compagni che per uno anno sono conscripti, e tuti loro in civile, non havendo più voce l'uno di l'altro, rendeno rasone; sei altri conscripti sonno nominati signori di iusticia, a' quali se apresenta per la prima appellatione; sette ne sono ad uno altro tribunale, de' criminali conoscitori; etiam a questi per la seconda appellatione se ricorre: e quando se vole rechiamar la terza, tutti li tribuni de questi trei officii, cum additione de sedece altri electi, pronunciano la ultima e difinita sententia; ma é necesità, per loro constitutione, de questi quarantadui li

Despite some inaccuracies,[49] also characteristic of other accounts, the focus of this narrative on the absence of foreigners in the city's administrative structure, which was firmly held by the local patriciate, is crucial to understanding the policies adopted by the Ragusans during crucial moments in their history. This is particularly evident in the negotiations with the Kingdom of Hungary in 1358, which officially ended Venetian rule and marked the beginning of Dubrovnik's autonomy. These arbitrations secured military protection against Venice and other regional powers while preserving free trade.[50] Crucially, Dubrovnik's independence was solidified by preventing Hungary from appointing a count, a measure imposed on other Dalmatian ports. This ensured the city's self-government, so highly praised by late medieval visitors.[51] By 1358 the rector, elected, as we have seen, from the local patriciate, served a one-month term, as later medieval pilgrims also noted: 'The lords are lords one after another, each for one month.'[52]

Except for Simon Fitzsimons's account, surviving records date from after the end of Venetian rule. Dubrovnik's unique political status, unlike the rest of Dalmatia, which fell under long-lasting Venetian control from the 1420s, drew keen interest from Western travellers.

In 1395 Ogier VIII d'Anglure briefly noted that the city belonged to the king of Hungary, while in 1419 Hans Porner contrasted Dubrovnik's Hungarian allegiance with Zadar and Šibenik, already absorbed into the Venetian dominion (subjugated in 1409 and 1412, respectively).[53] Just over a decade after Venice

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trei quarti siano conformi. Longo descrivere serebe lo bon regimento ha questa Republica ne li suoi consigli per non se anular in tutto de libertà.'

49 The number of members of the Great Council was already set at 11 at the time of Venetian rule. Therefore, the reference by Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2011, 131: 'La signoria, o vero libertate, de quisti Ragusei se governa a questo modo: ogni mese fano uno rectore chi sta in el palazo, como el duce a Venezia; non si parte fora del palazo, durando el dicto mese, s'el non gli è causa urgente e, se pur li accadesse andare di fora, va con VIII cobie de donzeli di nante e, dreto a lui, li altri offitiali; hano X de consiglio, li quali stano sempre presenti al prefato rectore, quando da àudientia, e ciò si fa per li dicti X è facto; e quisti X durano II anni et hano uno suo secretario, el qual ogni cosa pertinente al stato scrive et è cremonese narione; ha uno grande credito; è una piacevoi cosa.' For further details, see Kužić 2013, 155–156.

50 Krekić 2007, 29.

51 Harris 2006, 62–66.

52 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 114: 'Les seigneurs sont seigneurs l'un après l'autre, chacun un mois.'

53 Hans Porner, 1418–1419, ed. 1874–1875, 133. Among the many travellers who noted the Hungarian dominion, see the scholarly, lesser-known accounts: Anonymous, 1400–1499, ed. 1920, 80: 'Et est hec civitas in regno Pannonie sub dominio regis Ungarie.'; Hans Koppler, 1461, ed. 1998, 207–208: 'Darnach für wir fur Aragus, ist des chünigs von Vngernn.';

secured control over the entire Dalmatian coastline, except for Dubrovnik, Pero Tafur (1436) observed: 'Esclavonia belongs to the Venetians, and from there we went to the city of Dubrovnik, which is in Esclavonia, the emperor's chamber and under his lordship.'[54] Pietro Casola also remarked on its distinctive status – 'The *Signoria*, or better freedom' (La signoria, o vero libertate) – while in 1519 Greffin Affagart placed it alongside Genoa and Venice: 'We passed by the noble, rich and powerful city of Dubrovnik, which is a neutral seignory like Genoa or Venice, ruling over several towns and castles, and they are good Christians.'[55]

The first mention of Dubrovnik's governance 'by the people' appears in Milliaduse d'Este's account (1440–1441), in which, for the first time, the city's tribute to the Hungarians, paid since 1358 in exchange for its independence, is recorded: 'And this city is ruled by the people and entrusted to the emperor, to whom they pay tribute.'[56] However, in the 15th century, Dubrovnik was not only a tributary of the Hungarian crown. The Ottoman advance into the Balkans, which had begun in the mid-14th century, became a pressing threat after Serbia's devastating defeats at the Battle of Marica (1371) and the Battle of Kosovo Polje (1389).[57] This marked a turning point not just for Serbia and the Balkans, but for all of Europe, as the Ottomans pushed westwards, leaving Dubrovnik caught in the middle.

While the tribute to the Sublime Porte is often associated with Sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481), under whom the Balkans were finally subjugated,[58] Hans Porner's testimony of 1418 backdates the arrangement: 'Item, 200 miles to Dubrovnik, the Kingdom of Hungary, and a rich state. It gives the Turks 300 ducats per year, has good ships and galleys and lies in Croatia.'[59] The

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Hans von Redwitz, 1467, ed. 1840, 7–8: 'Am 2ten Pfingstfeiertage (18 Mai) erreichten wir die Stadt Ragusa. Sie ist nicht gros, aber gut gebaut und fest, liegt in Kroatien, hält sich an den Konig von Ungarn, und stöst an die Türkei.'

54 Pero Tafur, 1436–1439, ed. 1874, 42–43: 'Esclavonia é de veneçianos, é de allí fuemos á la çibdat de Arusa, que es en Esclavonia, cámara del Emperador é á su señorío se rije.'

55 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2011, 96–97, 128; Greffin Affagart, 1519, ed. 1902, 29–30: 'passâmes auprès de la noble, riche et puissante cité de Ragoule, qui est une seigneurie neutre comme Gênes ou Venise, ayant soubz soy plusieurs villes et chasteaulx et sont bons chrestiens.'

56 Milliaduse d'Este, 1440–1441, ed. 2009, 15: 'E deta citade sì rege a populo et eno aricomandati alo Imperadore et darenno loro trabuto.'

57 Krekić 1972, 44–45.

58 *Ibid.*, 57–59.

59 Hans Porner, 1418–1419, ed. 1874–1875, 133: 'Item ii c myle to Rachgusia, der Ungheren, ok eyn ryke stat. de ghevet den Turken des jares iii c dukaten, de hebbet gude bussen unde galeyden, unde lyt in Cruacien.'

figure of 300 ducats, though seemingly low at first glance, may, in fact, reflect the accuracy of his account. By 1458, and earlier in 1442, Ragusan envoys at the Ottoman court were authorised to offer up to 600 ducats, though this was deemed insufficient. The final agreement set the tribute at 1,000 to 1,500 ducats.[60] These fluctuating sums fascinated travellers, whose estimates varied wildly, from 300 ducats in Porner's report to 40,000 in Claes van Dusen's diary.[61] Regardless of the amounts, the reasoning behind the tribute was clear to travellers. By the 1460s and 1470s Eberhard von Württemberg im Bart (1468) and Anselmo Adorno (1470–1471) acknowledged the tribute as a means of preserving peace, respectively: 'having the Turk nearby, to whom tribute is paid'[62] and 'The Turks annually receive a large sum to ensure peace and harmony.'[63]

If references to the payments made both to the Hungarians and the Ottomans were consistent in early reports, by 1480 pilgrims also claimed that Dubrovnik paid tribute to Venice. Santo Brasca, for instance, asserted that: 'This city is very rich and governed by the people, though it pays tribute to the King of Hungary, King Ferdinand, the Venetian Republic and the Turk, amounting to around 25,000 ducats.'[64] Other travellers echoed this claim, but its accuracy remains doubtful.[65] Although Dubrovnik cultivated friendly ties with Venice from 1358, economic tensions persisted, particularly over navigation rights. These frictions simmered under the shadow of Ottoman expansion, as noted

60 Harris 2006, 84–85, 93.

61 Kužić 2013, 157.

62 Eberhard von Württemberg im Bart, 1468, ed. 1998, 146–148: 'in littore vicinum habens Turcam, cui tributum pendit, et in Turcia negotiator'.

63 Anselmo Adorno, 1470–1471, ed. 1978, 376–378: 'Turcho tamen annuatim denariorum magnam summam ne eos infestet in vim pacis et concordie tribuunt.'

64 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57–58: 'Questa cità è molto richa et se rege a populo, salvo che la fa censo al re d'Ungaria, al re Ferrando, a la Signoria de Venetia et al Turcho, che sono in tuto ducati vinticinquemilia o circa.'

65 An explicit reference can be found in the account of Hans Schürpff and Peter Wächter, which indeed summarises the entire status quo; Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6–7: 'Ragusa ist vast ein starcke, kleine statt mit zweÿen starcken schlossen vnd mit vil kilchen wol geziertt vnd litt jm küngrich, heist Dalmatzÿen; alß denn ein jetlicher keyser oder römscher küng das land jn sinem tüttel oder ubergeschrifften hatt vnd sich des einen heren schribt. Merck aber nun witter, das die statt vor zÿtten ist gsin eins küngs von Vngern. Nun sind sÿ für sich selbs vnd heind keinen hern; denn allein so bekennent sÿ noch den küng von Vngern für jren schirmhern vnd gend jm alle jar xx tusent tuggaten für ein schirmgelt. Vnd gend dem türggischen keÿser ouch xxM tuggaten, das er mit jnen frÿd hab. Etwer vermeint, sÿ gebent den Venedigern ouch ein summ geltz, das sÿ mit jnen frÿd habent.' A later annotation by Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo is more neutral; Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo, 1511, ed. 1886, 11: 'Questa etiam a suo libito regexi per comunità libera de servitù, quantunque al Turco è tributaria, et ad altre potentie si fa benivola.'

by Gilles Le Bouvier in the mid-15th century. He underscored Dubrovnik's wariness of Venetian galleys, despite their regular docking in the port: 'They never allow Venetians into their port, for they fear the Venetians may take their city and claim it for themselves.'[66]

Western pilgrims of the 15th and 16th centuries grappled with Dubrovnik's complex position: a republic under Hungarian protection, possibly a tributary to Venice, certainly to both the Crown of St Stephen and the Sublime Porte, yet firmly Christian.[67] Claes van Dusen's account reflects this tension: 'The Turks and Hungarians come there daily with their goods to trade, also buying other goods. In this city, there are good Christians.'[68] Trade with Muslims required special papal dispensation, first granted to Dubrovnik in 1373 by Pope Urban V for commerce with Egypt and Syria and later reaffirmed at the Council of Basel. This permission allowed Dubrovnik not only to transport pilgrims to the Holy Land, but also to maintain profitable trade with the Muslim world, an arrangement that, while pragmatic, did not go unnoticed by contemporary observers.[69]

The prosperity of Dubrovnik's maritime republic, built up over centuries, continued into this period of pan-European equilibrium. With its solid foundations, the city-state entered its golden age, a time fondly remembered by travellers. Felix Fabri hailed it as the wealthiest city in Christendom,[70] while Michele da Figline remarked on the high cost of living there: 'It is costly to live here for two reasons: first, because everything is traded by sea; second, because they use large silver coins. But I still liked it.'[71]

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66 Gilles Le Bouvier, *c.*1451, ed. 1908, 97–99: 'Et ne laissent jamais entrer en leur pors nulz Venisiens, pour ce que ilz doubtent que iceulx Venisiens ne leur veulent oster leur ville et l'appliquer à eulx.' See also the account by Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 327: 'Item am sunntag der achtzechent tag Junnÿ koment wier gar hart wider gen Ragusa umb ainß nach mittag, und lagent da, warten drig stund uff das glait, denn do mäls was das comun von Venedig und das comun von Ragusa in unainikait mit ain andren. Darnach bließ man uns an mit etlichen trumettern, wier sasent inn die harken und fůren inn die stat.'

67 See again Hans Schürpff (Peter Wächter), 1497–1498, ed. 1957, 6–7, quoted on p. 283, n. 65.

68 Claes van Dusen, 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202: 'De Turcken ende Hongheren komen daer daghelijckx met haer goederen te Koop, oock om ander goederen te koopen. In dese voorschreven Stadt daer zijn goede Kersten Menschen.'

69 Krekić 1972, 42; Harris 2006, 81.

70 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 360–361: 'Ditissimi sunt ibi mercatores; quidam galeota dixit mihi, quod non esset ditior in christianitate communitas, quam illa.'

71 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–156: 'Evvi caro el vivere per dua rispecti: l'uno perché ogni cosa vi si navica; l'altro, perché vi si spende monete grosse d'argento, ma per altro mi piaceque.'

It was precisely this bustling Dalmatian port, where everything was brought in by sea, that exposed the city (despite strict sanitary measures imposed since 1377) to frequent epidemics, at times preventing pilgrims from docking. In 1431 two pilgrims from Siena were unable to land because of 'the great death that was there'.[72] Similarly, Felix Fabri encountered the same obstacle during his second voyage. In the German version of his diary, he recounted that: 'We were at the city of Dubrovnik and we would have gladly gone there to buy what we needed, for we had been lacking many things. But we were told that the plague was raging there, so we left.'[73]

Those who did manage to land in Dubrovnik often described it as not only 'rich', 'free' and 'mercantile', but also 'noble' and 'beautiful'. Their diaries overflow with vibrant images of everyday life, capturing bustling markets where gold and silver were traded alongside hawks, slaves and coral.[74] As they wandered the streets, they admired the beauty of squares adorned with fountains and the rector's palace, which they often attributed to Venetian influence.

Above all, however, it was the abundance of relics housed in the city's churches that captivated them. These collections, curated by the clergy and nobility, served both the devout Ragusans and the pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land. The city's monuments became essential stops on these journeys. The relics were housed in three primary monuments, all under the direct patronage of the republic and local noble families. The typical pilgrimage tour began at the two mendicant monasteries, with the cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary being a central highlight. Even those who never reached Dubrovnik considered the cathedral one of the Mediterranean's most

72 Mariano da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 77: 'A dì 4, fummo a Raugia et è una bella et richa città. Nessuno de' nostri smontò in terra per la grande morìa che v'era; stemma nel porto circha una hora.'; Gaspare di Bartolomeo da Siena, 1431, ed. 1991, 145: 'Item, a dì quatro, fum‹m›o nel porto di Raughia in Ischiavonia: è una bella et richa città. Sono ricomandati al re d'Ongaria. Eravi grande morìa. Stemmovi circa a una ora et nessuno pelegrino ismontò in terra.'

73 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1584, fols 125r–125v: 'wir die Statt Ragus/ und weren gern dahin gefahren/ daß wir kaufft hetten das uns not war/ denn wir hatten an viel dingen mangel gewonnen/ aber man sagt uns/ die Pestilentz regiert da/ darumb fuhren wir für.'; cf. Kužić 2013, 154–155.

74 Regarding the extraction of coral in the waters of Dubrovnik, see the testimony of Emmanuel Piloti, 1420, ed. 1958, 51: 'De Ystria et de la Sclavenie, qui est de Vénitians, ne s'en tire se non soye en petite quantité; aussi du coral, et se le mettent in case, lequel se pesche en les eaues de Ragouse, et celluy se charge quasi sur lez galées vénissiannes; et si se portent en Alexandrie. De l'ysole de Corfu, qui est de Vénissians, se charge miel en bottettes beaucop, et cire; lezquellez choses se conduissent par terre en Albanie et en Grétie, qui et desoubz Turs; et tout sur les galées de Venissians se portent en Alexandrie.'

important shrines. Forty-one pilgrims referred to it during the period under examination.[75] The two mendicant monasteries, founded in the 14th century, were mentioned less frequently, but often together: 27 times for the Franciscan monastery[76] and 22 for the White Friars complex,[77] which was still under

75 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252; Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210; Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–104; William Wey, 1458, 1462, ed. 1857, 52; Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 169; Eberhard von Württemberg im Bart, 1468, ed. 1998, 146; Anonymous, 1469, ed. 2007, 202; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104; Ulrich Brunner, 1470, ed. 1906, 20; Jacob Kreynck and Deryck Vogel, 1479, electronic source, 7; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 355; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 44; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 141–142; Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1483, ed. 1892, 74–75; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 54; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 67; Johannes, Graf zu Solms (?), 1483, ed. 1584 (copy of Breydenbach), fol. 54r; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 88; Jean de Cucharmoys (Cucharmois), 1490–1491, ed. 1889, n.p.; Claes van Dusen, 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 42–43, 139; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 328; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–155; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 178–179; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 24–25; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 154; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126, 131–132; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52; Peter Rindfleisch, 1496, ed. 1880, 324; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10–11; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117, 118; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129; Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1619, fols 19v–20r; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 61–63; Jan Pascha, 1527, ed. 1563, fol. 40r.

76 Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 169; Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–105; Hans von Redwitz, 1467, ed. 1840, 8; Anonymous, 1469, ed. 2007, 202; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104–105; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 44; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 356; Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998, 49–52; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 89; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 250; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 141; Claes van Dusen, 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202–203; Francesco Suriano, 1481–1484, ed. 1900, 250–251; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 178–179; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 23–24; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 153; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126–127; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 118; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 62; Gabriel von Rattenberg, 1527, ed. 1896, 126.

77 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1395, ed. 1878, 97; Anonymous, 1469, ed. 2007, 202; Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104; Alessandro di Filippo Rinuccini, 1474, ed. 1993, 51; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 355; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 44; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 35;

construction in the 15th century. The following sections will delve deeper into the cultic dynamics surrounding the city's relics, the sheer abundance of which led Santo Brasca to remark in 1480: 'Throughout the city, there are so many relics that, when a procession is made, 400 religious people can be adorned.'[78]

2 The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

2.1 *Historical Background*

The history of the cathedral of Dubrovnik should be understood in the context of the two devastating earthquakes that struck the city in 1667 and in 1979. The magnitude of the 1667 earthquake was vividly described by George Wheler, who visited the city shortly thereafter during his journey to Greece:

> The Ragusians have not recovered themselves yet, since the terrible Earthquake, that happened there about twelves years ago; by which the greatest part of their City, and Citizens, were swallowed up by the Earth. I heard a Seaman, that was then in the Port Santa Croce, affirm, that they looked every minute, when their Ship should have been shaken into pieces on the water; a thing not explicable by any Phaenomena in nature that I know of. He told me also, that the water boiled like a pot; which was undoubtedly caused by the vapours rising from the Subterraneous Parts beneath the water.[79]

The new Baroque cathedral (Fig. 120) was built in the aftermath of the earthquake, between 1671 and 1713, on the remains of the earlier monumental

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Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 142–143; Joos van Ghistele, 1481–1485, ed. 1998 (online DBNL, 2006), 49–52; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 89; Johannes, Graf zu Solms (?), 1483, ed. 1584 (copy of Breydenbach), fol. 54r; Claes van Dusen, 1484–1495, ed. 1882, 202–203; Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 250; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.; Anonymous (Ludwig, Freiherr von Greiffenstein), 1494, ed. 2007, 153; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 127; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53; Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 118; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129; Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 62.

78 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57: 'Tra tuta la cità sono tante relequie che quando se fa processione se ne pò ornare 400 religiosi.'

79 George Wheler, 1675, ed. 1682, 27. The city was described as highly seismic by Jean Palerne in 1581; Jean Palerne, 1581, ed. 1606, 516.



FIGURE 120 View of the city of Dubrovnik
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Romanesque complex.[80] Research conducted after the earthquake of 1979 led to the discovery of the remains of an even older building, though smaller in size, which is commonly referred to as the Byzantine basilica.[81] However, the precise construction period and primary function of the pre-existing building remain uncertain. The monument, the remains of which were uncovered in the city's main square, does not seem to have originally served as the city's main church,[82] a role likely fulfilled instead by the church of St Peter the Great or the church of St Stephen, which housed the city's most important relics at

80 Zelić 2014, 31. The primary reference work on the development and succession of monuments in the main town square is a 2014 collection of contributions, which includes an extensive appendix of documentation: Horvat-Levaj 2014a.

81 See mainly Stošić 1988, 15–38; Stošić 1986, 241–248; Stošić 2009, 40–44; Stošić 1989, 326–335.

82 This situation parallels the early development of monuments in neighbouring Kotor, where the church of St Tryphon does not seem to have originally served as the main town church. According to recent research, that status belonged to an Early Christian basilica, the remains of which have been identified beneath the present-day church of St Mary Collegiate; Jakšić 2009c, 85; cf. Živković 2010.

the time.[83] Based on the analysis of the architecture and sculptural remains found on-site, scholars have proposed varying dates for the monument, ranging from the 7th to the 11th centuries.[84]

Due to the absence of written records concerning this undoubtedly significant civic shrine, its dedication remains uncertain. Considering the continuity of places of worship and based on the original title of the Romanesque cathedral, the most plausible interpretation points to a Marian shrine, although some theories also associate the earliest monument with the city's patron, St Blaise.[85]

Nevertheless, the key piece of evidence, being at the same time the only concrete chronological reference, is the discovery *in situ* in the 1980s of the sepulchre of Archbishop Gerard, whose tenure ended in 1132. This provides the *post quem* reference for the transition from the Byzantine basilica to the subsequent Romanesque complex dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and linked by local tradition to the votive offering of an English king.[86] It should be emphasised that this legendary tale did not appear in the reports of pilgrims to the Holy Land during the period under examination (1300–1550). It was only briefly recorded in the last quarter of the 16th century by the Polish pilgrim Lupold von Wedel and, slightly later, by Harrie Cavendish, an English nobleman, on his way to Constantinople.[87] More or less at the same time as these two visits, the core of the account was noted by the apostolic visitor Giovanni Francesco Sormani in 1573:

> The cathedral church was built in the following way: a king of England, on his way, with his wife and family to Jerusalem, to the Holy Sepulchre, encountered a great tempest at sea, a reason why he vowed, in case he

83 The church of St Stephen is the only church in Dubrovnik mentioned by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in *De Administrando Imperio*; cf. Lupis 2003, 36. The most steadfast advocate of the hypothesis that St Peter's was Dubrovnik's earliest cathedral is Željko Peković; cf. Peković 2010.

84 Zelić 2014, 38.

85 Peković 2010, 26; Zelić 2012, 29.

86 Zelić 2014, 38, 43; Fisković 2014, 85. The archaeological data do not clarify the reasons behind the transition from the Byzantine basilica to the new Romanesque complex. This shift is commonly attributed to a catastrophic event that, as mentioned, marked the region's history.

87 Lupold von Wedel, 1578–1579, ed. 1895, 167: 'Nicht weit van des Herzogen Pallatium steet eine Kirche, welche ein Kunnig van Engelant Allewisius genant, welcher nach dem heilgen Lande gewesen und hir auf zu kumen, buwen lassen.' Harrie Cavendish, 1589, ed. 1940, 13: 'In thys toune ther ys a fayr churche the whyche was buylt by ane Inglysh kyng, but the reason why the kyng dyd buyld yt we could not learn.'; cf. Graciotti 2014, 605.

> would escape it, to build a shrine in honour of God in the first place that he would reach; and he arrived at the island of Croma, near the city [of Dubrovnik], where, as he wished to build the shrine in order to satisfy the vow, he was begged by the Ragusan lords of that time to build it in the city; indeed he did, after having had the dispensation by the supreme pontiff to change the location; and he spent 80,000 scudi on it.[88]

While the bishop of Montefeltro summarised the core of the legend, the full narrative appears in two local chronicles, both marked by a complex genesis and debated dating: the *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, composed between 1300 and 1500, and the chronicle of Nicola Ragnina, dating to the second half of the 16th century. The latter is thought to incorporate extensive portions of an older source, the 12th-century *Chronicle of Miletius*, which would have been closer to the events described. According to these chronicles, first published in 1883 by Natko Nodilo, the construction of the cathedral dates to 1116, an improbable date given that the Byzantine basilica, as noted, was still standing.[89] In their contents, the two accounts largely align and do not differ much from the version succinctly reported by the apostolic visitor.

The chronicles recount that the English king, having survived a shipwreck near Dubrovnik, vowed to build not one, but two monuments, as the anonymous author stated: 'one similar to the other in grandeur and in every respect alike'.[90] The king, referred to by the chroniclers as 'Alvisio d'Inghilterra', found refuge on the island of Lokrum (called Croma in both Sormani's and the anonymous author's versions). Following the typical medieval topoi regarding the foundation of maritime sanctuaries, he immediately took steps to begin construction.[91] When the people of Dubrovnik learnt of his survival and intentions, they sent a delegation to pay homage and offer him hospitality in the city. The king agreed, on the condition that the Ragusans undertake to 'build another church on the said island of Croma', adding that the religious order

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88 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fols 186r–186v: 'La Ghiesa nostra catedrale fu edificata in questo modo che un' Re d'Inghilterra andando in Gierusalemme con la moglie tutta la famiglia al Santo Sepolcro, hebbe una fortuna grandissima in mare, onde fece voto se ne scampava di edificare un' tempio a' honore di Dio nel primo luogo che arrivava et arrivo allo scoglio della Croma ch'è appresso la città, dove volendo edificar' il tempio per sodisfare al voto fu pregato dai signori di Ragusi di quel tempo, che volesse edificarlo qui nella città, come fece havuta la dispensa del sommo Pontefice di mutare luogo e vi spese 80 mila scudi.'

89 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 28; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 212.

90 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 29.

91 *Ibid.*

to be established there should commemorate the event by celebrating a great Mass on 2 February, the Feast of the Purification.[92] Before departing aboard a Ragusan galley, the king is said to have allocated 100,000 ducats for the cathedral's construction. Both texts claim that the work took 44 years and consumed 80,000 ducats, while the remainder was reserved for the church ornaments.[93]

As already noted in scholarship, beyond the improbably large votive sum, also mentioned by the apostolic visitor, the timeline does not align with historical evidence. If 'Alvisio d'Inghilterra' were to be identified as King Richard the Lionheart,[94] whose return journey from the Holy Land may have brought him to Dubrovnik, the event would date not to 1116, but to 1192. Yet neither date corresponds to the archaeological record, which places the beginning of construction between 1132 and 1158, lasting more than a century and a half, until the 1340s.[95]

The earliest known document referencing the Romanesque church dates to 1199, recording Eustace, son of *protomagister* Bernardo di Trani, committing to work on the cathedral for a year.[96] The 'cathedral board of works' was first mentioned in the mid-13th century, and works are documented as well advanced by 1312 and completed in 1339 with the addition of a lead-sheet roof.[97]

After the catastrophic earthquake of 6 April 1667, one of the maritime republic's foremost concerns was the erection of a new cathedral (Fig. 121).[98] In 1671 Abbot Stjepan Gradić, a Ragusan delegate in Rome, commissioned the project for the new Dubrovnik cathedral to the architect Pier Andrea Bufalini

92 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 213.

93 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 29; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 213; cf. Zelić 2014, 43.

94 The reference to Richard is found in the work of Junio Restić in the 16th century; see Zelić 2014, 43, n. 49. This reference was later taken up, albeit imprecisely, by Archbishop Nicola Pugliesi of Dubrovnik in his *ad limina* visit in 1768: 'Non mediocri nitor elegantiam Cathedrale Urbis Ragusinae templum haud multis ab hinc annis a [...] excitatus. Nam quod dictus Ricardus hoc nomine secundus Angliae Rex ad Palestinam rediens expeditione, et in hec loca ob tempestates appulsus, votivum condiderat, dirutus Anno MDCLXVII terremotu fuit.'; Nicola Pugliesi, 1768, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, n.p. It should be noted that the *ad limina* visits relating to the Dalmatian diocese are preserved in the 'Sacra Congregatio Concilii, Relationes dioecesium' collection of the Vatican Apostolic Archives; specifically, those relating to the (arch)diocese of Dubrovnik are collected, without following an ascending chronological order, within folder 674A, marked externally as 'ragusin'.

95 Stošić 1988, 30; Zelić 2014, 43.

96 Zelić 2014, 45. The document, signed in Trani on 2 June 1199 and preserved in the Dubrovnik Archives, designates Eustace with the same title (*protomagister*) that belonged to his father; Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 537.

97 Zelić 2014, 46–48.

98 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 542.



FIGURE 121 Dubrovnik, cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

from Urbino (documented until 1688).[99] The endeavour, initiated in the same year and completed in 1713, saw the involvement of several master architects from different regions. The Genoese architects Paolo Andreotti (1671–1674) and Pier Antonio Bazzi (1677–1680) contributed in the early phases, followed by Tommaso Napoli of Palermo (1689–1698) and, finally, the Ragusan architect Ilija Katičić (1704–1713). Each of them introduced modifications to Bufalini's original design.

2.2 *Archaeological Data*

The archaeological surveys that took place in the 1980s allowed for a clearer understanding of the stratification and ground plans of the two monuments that once stood on the main city square (Fig. 122).[100] The Byzantine basilica was a monumental structure, measuring 31 m in length and 16 m in width, with

99 On the Baroque cathedral, see mainly Horvat-Levaj 2014b, 121–179; Premerl 2014, 215–263.
100 Zelić 2014, 32; Stošić 1988; Stošić 1986.

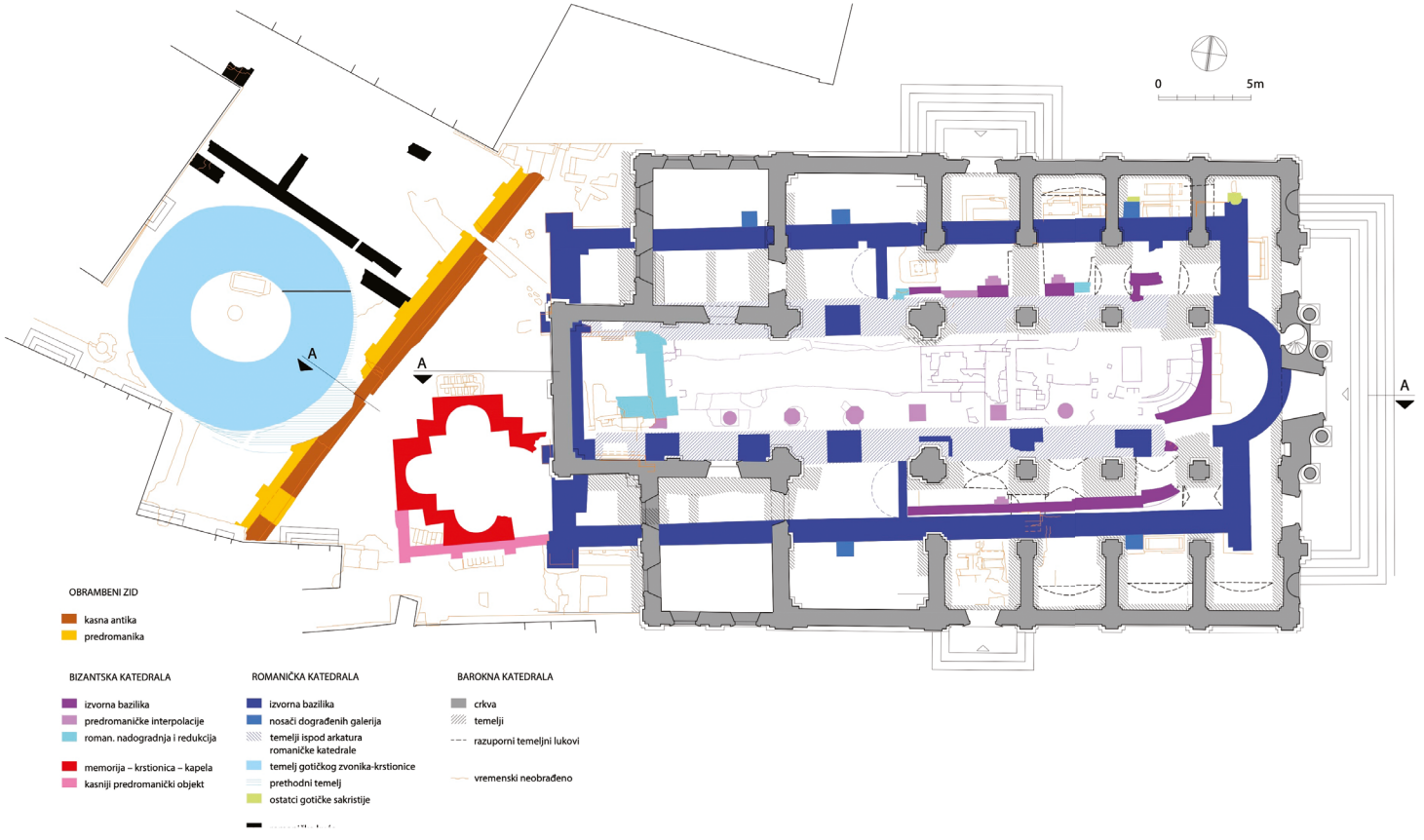

FIGURE 122 Plan of Dubrovnik cathedral with indication of stratifications
ZELIĆ 2014, 30–31

the sanctuary facing east.[101] The main body was composed of three aisles, with the central one separated from the side ones by six massive piers.[102] The aisles terminated in apses, with the central one having a circular interior within a three-sided exterior projection, while the lateral ones were circular on both sides (Fig. 123).[103]

Scholars have identified two main phases of architectural modifications. The first, likely dating to the 10th century when Dubrovnik became an archiepiscopal see, focussed on the construction of the dome.[104] The second, linked to the pre-Romanesque period, involved adaptations to the west façade and the addition of the bell tower.[105]

Excavations also revealed key insights into the basilica's liturgical furnishings. At the junction of the nave and central apse, the base of a large altar was found, with traces of a rectangular structure suggesting an ambo or chamber.[106] Fragments of a bas-relief pluteus, preserved during later construction, indicate the presence of a choir screen separating the chancel from the nave.[107]

Thanks to a height difference of nearly 3 m, both the base and lower load-bearing structure of the Byzantine basilica have been preserved, revealing fragmentary frescoes. This did not occur in the case of the Romanesque cathedral, where the shallower depth, nearly aligned with the Baroque cathedral, caused the complete loss of the figurative artwork.[108]

With regard to the Byzantine basilica, stylistically divergent fragments of mural paintings suggest multiple decorative phases by craftsmen of different provenance. The largest fragment in the central apse likely depicted a central triumphal figure, possibly the Virgin Mary, based on the church's dedication.[109] A standing figure in the south aisle shares similar features, and both are attributed to Greek masters active along the Eastern Adriatic in the

101 Stošić 1988, 16; Zelić 2014, 32.
102 Stošić 1988, 16.
103 Zelić 2014, 32. Alongside the Byzantine basilica, the excavation uncovered another monument in the shape of a Greek cross with four apses, semicircular inside and rectangular outside, that likely served as a martyrium; Jakšić 2009c, 86–87; Vežić 2002a, 94; Zelić 2014, 33.
104 Stošić 1988, 22.
105 Zelić 2014, 35–36.
106 Stošić 1988, 19; Zelić 2014, 34–35.
107 Zelić 2014, 35.
108 *Ibid*., 44.
109 Fisković 2014, 78.



FIGURE 123 Dubrovnik, Byzantine basilica, central nave
ZELIĆ 2014, 37

late 11th century.[110] Later fragments include a depiction of St Peter (identified by the inscription 'veritas') and a young face.[111] A fresco in the lunette of the south wall near an inscription for Archbishop Gerard (d. 1132) points to Western-trained craftsmen.[112]

The Romanesque cathedral, while slightly larger than the pre-existing basilica, overlapped with it in terms of ground plan, except for the elimination of the semi-circular protruding apses in the lateral aisles of the older building.[113] The three-aisled construction, measuring approximately 17 m (north–south) by 41 m (east–west), retained the same orientation as the Byzantine basilica, with the sanctuary facing east.[114] This solution contrasts with the third construction on the same site: the Baroque cathedral is oriented in the opposite direction.

Sources from the 15th century reveal that a complex system of external and internal galleries characterised the Romanesque construction. Filippo Diversi, in 1440, was the first to provide us with information about their presence and to specify that the system of external galleries formed the ambulatory, allowing the monument to be circumnavigated;[115] these data were later confirmed by Pietro Casola (1494).[116]

Prior to the 1667 earthquake all depictions of the Romanesque cathedral show a dome, confirmed by archaeological findings that place it between the third and fourth pillars from the east.[117] However, its exact form remains uncertain: some images show a dome on a round drum, while others on a polygonal one, features akin to those seen in representations of the Franciscan monastery

110 *Ibid*., 80–81. Their presence in later periods, such as the first half of the 14th century, is noted in Kotor's cathedral of St Tryphon and the church of St Mary Collegiate; see Vujičić 2009, 74; Živković 2014, 65–89.

111 Stošić 1988, 18; Fisković 2014, 81–85.

112 Fisković 2014, 85; Stošić 2009, 42.

113 Zelić 2014, 44. As Danko Zelić has already duly pointed out, this variation did not lead to any change in the use by the faithful: the end of the aisles was occupied by the diaconicon and the prothesis, both rooms reserved for the use of those performing liturgical tasks.

114 Stošić 1988, 24; Zelić 2014, 44.

115 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 146: 'Parietes lapidibus non terries, sed, ut communi nomine utar, vivis diligenti cura mensuratis et multo studio prepolitis aedificati sunt, exterius habentes columnulas circum unde facilis est gressus et deambulatio circa templum.'; cf. Zelić 2014, 45.

116 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126: 'ha di fora uno corredore, facto con belle colunnelle per el quale si po' andare in cierco a dicta giesia di fora.' It is unclear whether the original project included the external galleries or if they were added later, most likely towards the end of the 12th century, in which case their presence would be attributed to Apulian craftsmen; see Stošić 1988, 26.

117 Zelić 2014, 44.

(Fig. 124) and the rector's palace, respectively.[118] The latter depiction suggests that the main façade followed a basilica layout with three portals.[119]

The central portal is believed to have featured Christ the Judge,[120] while Archbishop Fabio Tempestivo's *ad limina* report of November 1607 offers additional, albeit somewhat contrasting details. The prelate, originally from Montefalco, recorded the presence of three sculptures 'above the main portal': a figure of the 'Most Blessed Virgin Mary in regal attire and adorned with a crown', alongside the 'equestrian statues of the king of England and his queen'.[121] The lack of chronological references regarding the sculptural ensemble's execution prevents further hypotheses about the interpretation of the aforementioned account about the donation of the cathedral, beyond a mere acknowledgment of its visual consecration. This was achieved through the inclusion of two patrons in equestrian attire at a prominent point on the main façade.

Likewise, no timeline exists for the fresco of St Christopher on the north façade's east side, known from 15th-century documents as the 'banda de San Cristoforo'.[122] Western travellers, whose accounts of Adriatic monuments often focus on just brief aesthetic observations, did not mention the above discussed elements. Descriptions of the cathedral from Santo Brasca (1480) to Antonio da Crema (1486) are similarly sparse, generally praising its beauty.[123] A rare exception comes from Conrad Grünenberg (1486), who admired its richly

118 *Ibid*., 53. For the iconography of the cathedral, based mainly on visual testimonies before 1667, see primarily Vežić 2014, 63–74.

119 Zelić 2014, 52–53. Archaeological investigations have, however, revealed the presence of three entrances, two of which were located on the long flanks of the cathedral; *ibid*., 45. The existence of three entrances is also pointed out by Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 146.

120 Fisković 2014, 88, n. 62. The purely conjectural hypothesis is based on the discovery in the cathedral storerooms of a figure of Christ the Judge, likely placed in the lunette of the main portal. This would have been part of a more complex composition, possibly following the approach seen in monumental European cathedrals, the programmes of which included episodes from the lives of Mary and Christ, as well as references to the Old Testament; cf. Laarhoven 1999, 126.

121 Fabio Tempestivo, 1607, AAV, Congr. Concil, Relat. Dioec. 674A: '[…] super maiori porta statua Beatissimae Mariae Virginis regali habitu, et corona ornata, necnon statuae equestres Regis Anglie, eiusque Reginae, quorum sumptibus eclesia edificta fuesse asseritur'.

122 Fisković 2014, 91–92, with notes; see also Zelić 2014, 57.

123 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57: 'la chiesia cathedrale […] non è molto grande ma bellissima'; see also Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361: 'Ecclesia cathedralis est pulchra.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 42: 'E il dommo loro è bello'; see also Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–155: 'la chiesa principale assai bella.'



FIGURE 124 Dubrovnik, Franciscan monastery. *View of the City of Dubrovnik*, detail of the Romanesque cathedral, *c.*1650
ZELIĆ 2014, 42

decorated exterior featuring statues, portals and polychromed marbles.[124] Moreover, Pietro Casola's famous account also highlights the cathedral's size and exterior: 'The major church [...] is small for an archiepiscopal one, but quite beautiful. The outside is more beautiful than the inside.'[125] Despite this brief remark focussing more on the exterior, the Western pilgrims' descriptions of the Romanesque cathedral's interior and devotional objects are quite numerous and rich in detail, making them valuable sources for reconstructing the decoration of the cathedral's sacred spaces, especially in comparison to other Dalmatian monuments.

2.3 *Decoration of Sacred Spaces and the Worship of Images*

Although the devastating earthquake of 1667 and subsequent fires heavily damaged much of the city's religious buildings, hindering studies on the decoration of sacred spaces and the worship of images, key aspects of the medieval *mise-en-scène* of the cathedral's interior can still be partially reconstructed by cross-referencing textual sources, with the annotations of late medieval pilgrims playing a prominent role.[126] In this regard visitors from Tyrol in 1470 provided a first brief testimony: 'There they showed us one costly polyptych, on which there were a lot of images, and even those in the middle were nicely made of silver and gilded, with a lot of inlaid precious stones. Something similar to this polyptych and so expensive I have never seen.'[127] This vivid description from Friedrich Steigerwalder, a pilgrim in the service of Gaudenz von Kirchberg, when read alongside archival records, specifically the Minor Council's decisions between 1457 and 1468,[128] raises the possibility that this

124 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 328: 'Item wier giengent des ersten inn den tům gar in ain costlich munster von aller farwen marmolstain costlich geziert und důrch hŏwen, das wier des gros verwundren hetten.'

125 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126: 'La giesia maiore, sub vocabulo de Nostra Dona, è picola per esse arciepiscopale, pur asai bella. Di fora è più bella cha dentro.'

126 Regarding the Romanesque cathedral, as mentioned above there is a comprehensive appendix of documentation in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 537–562. Also worth mentioning is Donal Cooper's in-depth study of the silver-gilt altarpieces for the high altars of churches in Dubrovnik, largely based on the Holy Land travelogues; Cooper 2014, 331–358.

127 Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104: 'Do zaigt man unß ain kostliche tafi, darinen stunden etwa vil bilde: die waren, auch das velde darzwischen, gar schön mit guetem sylber gemacht und mit gold überguldt, und was in derselben tafel vil ödels gestain versötzt, der tafel geleich und kostlichait ich nie gesehen haben.'

128 On 12 November 1457 the procurators of the cathedral were entrusted with the creation of the high altar's new altarpiece; Fisković 1949, 202–203; transcribed document in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 540; see also Fisković 2014, 101. Further details in a document of 14 March 1458 reveal that the task was entrusted to the master goldsmith Stefano and his associates; Fisković 1949, 226–227; Fisković 2014, 97; transcribed document in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 540. Additional records from the Minor Council between 1459 and

refers to a newly commissioned altarpiece for the high altar, replacing the earlier one from 1366. If this is the case, it would be the first documentation of it being completed and *in situ*.[129]

Subsequent descriptions are of particular interest concerning the altarpiece's size, arrangement and iconography. In 1480 Pierre Barbatre, comparing it to the silver-gilt altarpiece of the Franciscan church, specified its dimensions and noted that it included 18 figures: 'At the Cordeliers, it is the most pleasant place I know; the chapel of the lords is very beautiful and rich, and there is a fine altar table. But the one in the great church is larger and more splendid, as it is 9 feet long and 6 feet high, entirely silver-gilt, with 18 large silver-gilt figures, each about 3 feet tall, along with several other churches.'[130] A parallel note by the Parisian Anonymous, who travelled with Barbatre, mentions 12 figures, likely due to miscalculation.[131] The presence of 18 major figures (accompanied by smaller secondary ones) was confirmed later in 1480 by Santo Brasca[132] and again in 1481 by Jan Aerts: 'In the main church stands a silver-gilt table, exceedingly precious, adorned with many various excellent gemstones, in which are placed 18 silver-gilt figures, each being 2 feet tall. In my life I have never seen such an exceptionally magnificent jewel.'[133]

Among the subsequent testimonies from the 1480s,[134] that of Antonio da Crema stands out for its detailed account of the arrangement and iconography: 'An altarpiece or *ancona* is in the cathedral in the grand chapel, all gilded in silver, with 16 saints of big size and God the Father and the Virgin Mother in

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1468 indicate ongoing involvement in the project, including the painter Lovro Dobričević; Fisković 1949, 226–227; transcribed document in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 540.

129 This same altarpiece was likely also seen by Sebald Rieter the Younger in 1479; Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 44: 'ein schone silbrene tafel ubergult'.

130 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115: 'aux Cordeliers est le plus plaisant lieu que je congnoisse, la chappelle des segnieurs est fort belle et riche, et y a une belle table d'autel, mais celle de la grant église est plus grande et plus riche, car elle est longue de IX piez et haulte de VI, toute d'argent dorée, et ils sont XVIII grans ymages d'argent dorés long de environ III piez et plusieurs autres eglise.'

131 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37: 'et dessus legrant autel, est une table d'argent doré garnie de belles et grosses pierres precieuses, et y a douze belles ymaiges.'

132 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57: 'et ivi è una anchona tuta d'argento sopradorata con figure de sancti: 18 grandi et altri picoli.'

133 Jan Aerts, 1481, ed. 1652, 141–142: 'In de hooftkerck staet enn silvere vergulde tafel, boven maten seer kostelick, met vele verscheyde exellente gesteenten verçiert, waer in geſtelt zijn achtien silvere vergulde beelden, elck van dese lang wesende twee voeten, ick en hebbe mijn leven sulcken kostelicken uytnemenden juweel noyt gesien.'

134 See also Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 88: 'Auch eyn kostliche sylbere tafel vberguldet'.

Assumption.'[135] This excerpt adds new elements: even though the reference to the Assumption does not match other textual sources, it aligns with the needs of the Marian shrine dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Eight years later Pietro Casola informed us that the typology adopted was familiar to what he was accustomed to seeing at home.[136] By 1495 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig of Nassau-Saarbrücken highlighted another aspect of the altarpiece's craftsmanship: the images, set on a panel almost entirely gilded with silver and adorned with precious stones, were made in relief.[137]

Although the systematic scrutiny of pilgrim's accounts reveals diminished attention towards the main altar's silver altarpiece in the 16th century, it was Melchior von Seydlitz, around the middle of the century, who further specified the presence of the figures of the twelve apostles made in silver gilt on the main altar. He estimated, astonished, the value of the main altar ensemble at 200,000 ducats, an amount that can be clearly considered an exorbitant overestimation.[138]

The observations of late medieval pilgrims are corroborated and further detailed in the 1573 account of apostolic visitor Giovanni Francesco Sormani. He described eighteen saints symmetrically arranged in two rows around the central figures of Christ and the Virgin.[139] He also noted the presence of

135 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'Una pala sive ancona è in lo dommo a la capella granda, tutta di argento indorato, cum sedece sancti di bona grandeza et Dio patre et la Virgine matre in asumptione.'

136 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126: 'al modo nostro, de argento, sopra adorato de parechie figure'.

137 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52: 'Ist nicht zu vergessen, dass die Tafel auf dem hohen Altar ist fast reich aus Silber übergült, alles auf erhaben von großen Bildern und mit viel Edelgestein verziert.'

138 Melchior von Seydlitz, 1556–1559, ed. 1584, fol. 272r: 'Nachmals ein Ctreutz sampt dem Bildtnuß deß Herrn/ Auch eine Taffel auff dem hohen Altar/ in irer fürnembsten Kirchen/ mit der Figur Marie/ und den zwölff Aposteln/von gemischtem güldenem und silbern Ertz gemacht/das man auff zweymal hudert Ducaten schätzet/&c.'; cf. Tadić 1939, 202; Fisković 1949, 202; Fisković 2014, 99, n. 99.

139 Fisković 1966, 70. In the upper register the figure of Jesus was flanked on the right by John the Baptist, James the Lesser, Gregory and Stephen the Martyr and on the left by the same number of saints, in order: Peter, Paul, Michael and Lawrence. The list reflecting the line-up of the most venerated saints in Dubrovnik continues in the lower register, to the right of the figure of the Virgin, with Matthew the Apostle, George, Dominic and Catherine; and to the left with the figure of the city patron Blaise and immediately next to him Jerome, the saint whose cult was particularly dear along the Dalmatian coast, followed by Francis of Assisi and Mary Magdalene. Respecting the scheme imposed on him

the four Evangelists above the main altar, raising immediate questions about whether their number had been reduced in the decades following the German pilgrim's report from the 1550s.[140]

Sormani's account also provides valuable insight into other artefacts and their spatial arrangement. After describing the right-hand altar, he shifted his focus to the altar of the Holy Cross, adorned with a polyptych consisting of two rows of saints around the central figures of Jesus and the Virgin, placed respectively in the upper and lower registers.[141] A noteworthy detail in his description is the mention of the 'image' placed inside a 'wooden box' (capsa lignea), a wooden structure with doors that allowed for a more intricate iconographic programme.[142] The inner panels depicted the Annunciation, while the outer side featured various saints, worked in gold.[143]

This testimony is linked to a document from 27 February 1497, which records that Marino and Vincent, sons of Dobričevic, were creating the wooden structure, with eighteen figures on the exterior and two on the interior, namely the Annunciation with the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin.[144] The document also mentions that this structure was to house the silver-gilt altarpiece previously placed on the main altar.[145] This likely refers to the altarpiece commissioned in 1366 from Benko Cibranov, mentioned by Filippo Diversi in 1440, preceding the new high altarpiece (commissioned in 1457) that was documented from 1470 onwards by late medieval pilgrims. Among them, Michele di Figline's account highlights the richness of the display in the Romanesque cathedral: 'There was a great quantity of silver, crosses and crucifixes and in Madonnas and relics a great and marvellous wealth.'[146]

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by his commission, the visitor also noted the dimensions: '[…] figure autem ultra ornamentum sunt lungitu. dinis ultra brachij et latitudinis fere medij'. See also Fisković 2014, 101, n. 109.

140 Considering the abundance of silver-gilt objects that adorned the cathedral from the 15th century onwards, this conjecture cannot be fully affirmed: six figures of the apostles (used, however, as reliquaries) were recorded by Giovanni Francesco Sormani in the reliquary chapel. In that location the same type of cult object (albeit twelve in number) was recorded in the early 17th century by Julien Bordier, leaving open the question of whether the figures of the twelve apostles used as reliquaries were separate from those previously counted at the high altar; cf. Fisković 1966, 67–68, 74.

141 *Ibid.*, 70–71. The pattern would also be followed, as we shall see below, in later polyptychs in the churches of the two mendicant monasteries.

142 Fisković 1966, 64, 71.

143 *Ibid.*, 71.

144 Tadić 1952, 340–341; Fisković 1966, 64; Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 540–554; Fisković 2014, 103, n. 120.

145 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 540–554.

146 Michele da Figline, 1489–1490, ed. 2010, 154–155: 'Evvi grande quantità d'argento, croci et crocifixi et in nostra donne in reliquie una ricchezza grande et mirabile.'

Two decades later, Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg (1507), offered a broader assessment, noting the presence of six silver-gilt altarpieces among the city's most memorable sights.[147] The German pilgrim's assertion was based on a tour of the city that included three main monuments, as confirmed by a listing made by the Dominican Serafino Razzi: 'Two other silver altars can be seen in the cathedral also of Dubrovnik, and three are in St Francis. And if the one in the main altar of the cathedral is the most modern and most beautiful of all, it is nevertheless the richest in figures of all the others, and they affirm that it is the altar of St Domenic.'[148] The large silver cross, in the sanctuary, flanked by two mourners, also caught the pilgrims' attention, though not Casola's, but that of another Italian traveller to the Holy Land a decade earlier.[149] Besides his description of the silver-gilt altarpiece, Santo Brasca offered a precise account of the silver crucifix and its location: 'And above the choir is a large crucifix, with the Madonna and St John, also made of silver.'[150] Six years later Antonio da Crema provided a more detailed description: a life-size crucifix positioned between St John and the Mother of God, the latter depicted following the scheme of the Virgin Mary of Sorrows.[151] Filippo Diversi's 1440 testimony likely refers to the same artefact and serves as a *terminus ante quem* for its execution.[152]

147 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117: 'Item 6. grosse Silberne taffeln auff dem Altaren, die seint da mit grossen bildern vnd mit vielen die da gantz selber seint vnd gar schön über goltt'.

148 Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 143: 'Si veggono due altri altari d'argento, nel duomo pure di Raugia, e tre ne sono in San Francesco. E se ben quello del maggiore altare del duomo, come più moderno e più bello di tutti, quanto alle figure il più ricco nondimeno d'ogni'altro, affermano essre il prefato di San Domenico.' Considering the entire city, it is plausible to assume that the number of high altarpieces was greater, though this is difficult to determine.

149 It should be clarified that Pietro Casola's reference concerns a different cult object, the silver-gilt altarpiece of the high altar, not the crucifix, as previously suggested in scholarship; Fisković 1966, 68; Fisković 2014, 97, n. 96. The misinterpretation of his passage likely stems from Tadić's 1939 translation, where the term 'majesty' was mistakenly rendered as 'Jesus'; Tadić 1939, 194; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126. Casola's passage clearly refers to a different cult object – the silver-gilt altarpiece of the high altar discussed above – based on both the full passage analysis and comparisons with other instances where he used the same term, such as in his reference to the Franciscan monastery in Dubrovnik, again focussing on a silver-gilt altarpiece.

150 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57: 'Et sopra el choro è uno crucifixo grande, con la Madona et Sancto Giohanne similiter d'argento.'

151 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: '[…] etiam lì è uno crucifixo grande a proportione di compito homo, cum la matre aflicta e sancto Zohanne, tutti di argento.'

152 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 147.

Filippo Diversi also provided important information about the 15th-century fresco decoration depicting the Old and New Testaments.[153] Similar to the previous century's cycle,[154] the frescoes were commissioned to an artist trained outside the region: Antonio di Jacopo from Lucca, who had been present in the city since 1423.[155]

While the lack of attention paid to the two fresco cycles by late medieval pilgrims aligns with observations from other Eastern Adriatic monuments, the scarce attention towards the *Madonna of Porat*, also known as the *Madonna de' Porti*, *della Porta*, *delle Porte* and *de Portu*, is unexpected. The complex history of this image, one of the oldest and most venerated in Dubrovnik and carried in procession from the 15th century onwards, remains an open chapter.[156] Today, a later image of the same name that replaced the old icon, destroyed in the early 18th century, stands on the altar of the Baroque cathedral (Fig. 125).[157]

According to local tradition, the cult of the icon began in 1157, when Venetian merchants, having escaped a shipwreck near the city, offered a votive image to the Ragusans.[158] This tale resembles that of another Ragusan miraculous image: the so-called *Beata Virgo miraculosa de Castello Ragusae* (Blessed miraculous Virgin of Dubrovnik Castle).[159] Both icons share not only the narrative of their arrival, but also intertwining local legends. Some elements suggest that the latter icon replaced the ancient miraculous image destroyed in 1706 during the fire that ravaged the church of St Blaise, where it had been placed after the earthquake that destroyed its original location, the Romanesque cathedral.[160]

153 *Ibid.*, 146: 'In parietibus utriusque alae testamenti veteris hystorias et novi figuras aspicimus.'

154 In the early 14th century Michele da Bologna decorated the cathedral interior. He worked on the cathedral several times in the 1320s and later contributed to the decoration of the church of St Stephen and the rector's palace; Djurić 1963, 12.

155 The decision of the Minor Council regarding the decoration of the main nave dates back to 10 January 1422; transcribed document in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 538. The project, during which the Tuscan master enlisted local apprentices for assistance, lasted until 1428; see Djurić 1963, 35, n. 30; Fisković 2014, 96–97.

156 See mainly Demori Staničić 2017, 289–291.

157 Tomić 2014, 276.

158 Demori Staničić 2017, 289; Belamarić 2014a, 181.

159 For the legendary tale, see Nicola de Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 196: 'Del detto anno a Ragusa fu donata una immagine, o vero figura della madre di Cristo, alla ecclesia di santa Maria de castello Lave, depinta a mano greco, la quale, si dice, costava d. 300, per una nave Venetiana, che veniva da Levante. La quale andava alla volta di Venetia, et havendo havuta una fortuna, fece lo voto, che nello primo loco, dove sará arrivata, donarebbe detta immagine, ed d. 100 per elemosina, per fabricar la ecclesia ad honor della Madre di Cristo.'; cf. Knezović 2005, 82–83.

160 Demori Staničić 2017, 290.



FIGURE 125 Dubrovnik, cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. *Madonna of Porat*
BELAMARIĆ 2014A, 400, FIG. 62

Hans Lochner's account from the 1430s underscores the legendary status attributed to the miraculous icon, reflecting the local authorities' efforts to enhance the cathedral's cultic standing in the early 15th century: 'Here, one finds corals in the sea, and there is a large piece with St Peter, St Paul, St Lawrence and many other relics, a large chest full. Also, St Simeon's relic, St Blaise's body entirely, except for one bone. Also, Our Lady's image, painted by St Luke.'[161] The reference to St Luke's authorship, as already discussed, is not unique to the Dalmatian coast.[162] However, both Grassetto's testimony about the island of Badija and Lochner's concerning Dubrovnik cathedral remain isolated references until after the mid-16th century.[163] In particular, further insights are provided by later accounts, including those of the apostolic visitor Giovanni Francesco Sormani (1573), Julien Bordier (the travel report of Baron de Salignac, 1604) and the Jesuit Wilhelm Gumppenberg in his *Atlas Marianus* (1657–1659). These later descriptions confirm the Marian effigy's strong cult and the image's attribution to St Luke's brush.[164]

Sormani's apostolic visitation provides the most detailed description, specifying the icon's placement on the right-hand altar, its *mise-en-scène*[165] and its enclosure in a wooden polyptych with intricate iconography.[166] He also noted numerous ex-votos and a crown used in processions, both emphasising the object's exceptional status.[167] Three decades later, Julien Bordier partly

161 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210: 'item doselbst finnd mann Korallen in dem Mehr, vnnd ist ein gross stückh von sant Peter vnnd sant Paul vnnd sant Lorenzenn vnnd sonst viel Heilthumbs, ein grosse truhen vol. item sant Simeons Raubt, sant Blasins Leichnamb ganz on ein bein. item vnnser frawenn Bild, das sant Lucas hat gemalt.'; cf. Bacci 2012, 186.

162 On the sacred images attributed to the Evangelist's brush, see primarily Bacci 1998.

163 For Grassetto's remarks, see p. 79 above.

164 See Fisković 2014, 101, n. 112.

165 For the transcription of the passage by Giovanni Francesco Sormani, see Fisković 1966, 71; cf. Tomić 2014, 273.

166 The reference should be connected, similarly to the altar of the Holy Cross, to the 1497 commission. The document, dated 20 September 1497 and well known in historiography, states that the polyptych, including four saints, was entrusted to Nicola, son of Bosidari, a painter. It specifies that the central part, meant to hold the very old effigy, should be designed so that, when needed for a procession, the altarpiece could be removed easily, without damage; Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 54; cf. Tadić 1952, 342–343; Fisković 2014, 102; Tomić 2014, 272; Demori Staničić 2017, 289.

167 The first part of the passage is quoted from the extensive legendary account transmitted through the local chronicler Nicola de Ragnina: 'Del detto anno a Ragusa fu donata una immagine, o vero figura della madre di Cristo, alla ecclesia di santa Maria de castello Lave, depinta a mano greco, la quale, si dice, costava d. 300, per una nave Venetiana, che veniva da Levante. La quale andava alla volta di Venetia, et havendo havuta una fortuna, fece lo voto, che nello primo loco, dove sará arrivata, donarebbe detta immagine, ed d. 100 per

contradicted Sormani. The French traveller placed the Lucan image in the relic chapel above the upper galleries: '[…] a painting, about two and a half feet in length, depicting the face of the Holy Virgin Mary in natural likeness, which they say was painted by St Luke; truly remarkable for its dignity and antiquity'.[168] What is witnessed by Bordier's account was likely a temporary arrangement for distinguished visitors to the Republic of Dubrovnik. In fact, 16th- and 17th-century city archives continued to reference the altar of the *Madonna of Porat*.[169] The same applies to Gumppenberg's description, which places the *Beata Virgo miraculosa de Castello Ragusae* on the cathedral's high altar ('in templi principis summo altari').[170] While previous accounts cautiously reference the claimed Lucan authorship,[171] Gumppenberg asserted it more confidently, presenting evidence that supports its identification as the Evangelist's autograph, such as the icon's antiquity and the skilled hand of the artist.[172]

The icon's Eastern origin also served to support its authenticity. To bolster this claim, the people of Dubrovnik linked it to the Eastern patriarchate prototype, as noted by Nicola Ragnina regarding the effigy of the castle as the work of a Greek hand and brought from the Levant.[173] According to his account, the effigy arrived in Dubrovnik in 828 and was moved to the cathedral in 1160, soon becoming the focal point of Marian devotion. The chronological references and reaffirmed Lucan authorship reinforce the cultic link between the two images, suggesting assimilation between the original castle effigy and the *Madonna of Porat*.[174]

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elemosina, per fabricar la ecclesia ad honor della Madre di Cristo.'; cf. Knezović 2005, 82–83.

168 Baron de Salignac (Julien Bordier), 1604–1610, ed. 1888, 23: 'Qui fust le premier, un tableau longt de quelques deux pieds et demy, dans lequel est la figure du visage au naturel de la Ste Vierge Marie, qu'ils disent avoir esté représanté par St Luc; qui à la vérité est fort remarquable pour sa dignité et ancienneté'; cf. Tadić 1939, 262; Belamarić 2014a, 178.

169 Demori Staničić 2017, 290; see also Tomić 2014, 274.

170 Knezović 2005, 91.

171 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, transcribed in Fisković 1966, 71: 'dicitur pictà à divo Luca'; Baron de Salignac (Julien Bordier), 1604–1610, ed. 1888, 23 (see n. 168 above).

172 Knezović 2005, 91: 'Hoc omnibus indubitatum est, Divi Lucae opus esse: nam praeterquam quod antiquitatem spirat, et artificis doctam manum, alio adhuc argumento se probat, quo vox pleraeque aliae possent.'

173 Nicola de Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 196.

174 *Ibid*., 196–197: 'La opinione de molti e, che la ditta immagine fu dipinta per mano di santo Luca evangelista, lo quale essendo esperto alia pintura, per la famigliarità continua, la quale ebbe con la gloriosa Vergine, dipinse più volte a ponto la sua propria imagine, della quale si dice che fu portata la presente a Ragusa. Proceduto poi in el tempo della nostra salute 1160, fu translata all'ecclesia del domo con grande honore, et collocata ivi alio lato

Moreover, it should be noted that another exceptional effigy in Dubrovnik cathedral, distinguished by its antiquity and origin, must have been the one located behind the high altar. Shielded by a veil woven with gold thread and covered with ex-votos, it clearly attracted the attention of the devotees.[175]

Today none of the described Romanesque cathedral's extensive collection of cult objects remains. Skilfully orchestrated and accompanied by topoi emphasising their miraculous nature, these objects contributed to the Marian shrine's popularity and its rise as an international pilgrimage destination. Alongside the cathedral's relics, which were preserved thanks to timely intervention after the 1667 earthquake, they represented a major religious attraction for late medieval pilgrims visiting the city and its principal monuments in a seemingly pre-arranged tour.

2.4 *The Chapel of Relics (14th Century – 1667)*

More than 200 relics from Dubrovnik cathedral are now housed in the cathedral treasury (Fig. 126). Built between 1713 and 1721,[176] as confirmed by the date carved above the entrance and records of a solemn procession held the day after St Blaise's feast, the treasury became the repository for these relics after their transfer from the Dominican monastery chapter, which had served as a temporary shelter following the great earthquake.

Regarding the Romanesque cathedral, Filippo Diversi, in his *Situs aedificorum, politiae et laudabilium consuetudinum inclytae civitatis Ragusii* [Description of the buildings, political administration and commendable customs of the glorious city of Dubrovnik] (1440), informed us that the relics were kept in a special chapel, later known as the 'chapel of relics'.[177] In the third chapter, 'De ecclesiis Ragusii et primo de templo S. Mariae', the humanist from Lucca also specified its location as being 'on the columns of the aisles'.[178] The location of

manco dello altare maggiore; la quale levano spesso, portandola con la processione per la città, per la intercessione della quale si impetrano grazie infinite dallo suo fiolo. Ma simile fo quella dipinta, lasciata per memoria dell'ecclesia, in honor d'essa fabbricata, alia quale laude gloria in saecula saeculorum.'

175 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, transcribed in Fisković 1966, 71: 'Post vero altare mains adest vetus figura beatissime Virginis panno aureo ac serico penè cooperta ac quibusdam argenteis laminibus ornata transportataque (ut omnes asseruerunt) à civitate Bizancij.'

176 Premerl 2014, 233–239; Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 551–552.

177 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 147; cf. Zelić 2014, 56.

178 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 147: 'Nam navis architecti magni et alti usque ad velamen ecclesiae videntur. Sed super alarum columnis aedificati cernuntur architechti, super quorum altero structa strecta (!) est quaedam non tam pulchra quam devota capella.'; cf.



FIGURE 126 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Reliquary, second decade of the 18th century
PREMERL 2014, 232

the chapel of relics in the eastern part of the gallery above the north aisle is confirmed and better specified in a document dating back to 1440, the year in which Filippo Diversi composed his account.[179] A deliberation of the *Consilium Rogatorum*, the governing body responsible for safeguarding the relics of the Republic's cathedral at the time, reports the need to protect all the openings facing the chapel of relics with metal gratings or new wooden doors.[180] Furthermore, the document reveals that access to the gallery was via two round staircases and that the relics chapel had two windows on the exterior elevation (specifically on the north side overlooking the square), as well as two interior windows towards the choir.[181] The pilgrims' diaries are a valuable source for the cult of Ragusan relics, but unfortunately they provide few clues as to their location in the cathedral: the only fleeting mention was offered in 1507 by Martin Wanner, author of the account of the voyage of the Duke of Legnica and Brieg: 'And one finds there excellent holy things, as there is a beautiful upper vaulted space [for them] in the cathedral.'[182]

The above is confirmed in Sormani's report,[183] while further corroboration came, two decades later, from another Italian scholar, Serafino Razzi. In his section on city festivities, he provided a precise description of the procedure for handling relics on solemn occasions. The Florentine Dominican reported that after the liturgical office, the relics were carried in procession through the streets of Dubrovnik and were finally brought back to their point of departure, that is, to 'their own chapel', which, as the friar specified, 'is above certain loggias of this church' (istà sopra certe loggie di essa Chiesa).[184] He gave us further information about the two flights of stairs mentioned above that led to the chapel: 'and one goes up [and] another one goes down'; this solution was most likely dictated by purely logistical needs, specifically linked to the large flow of faithful during festivities. Indeed, Razzi recounted in amazement what he experienced at the feast of St Blaise in 1588: 'And the writer of this narrative was greatly surprised to find himself present, in the year 1588, at the crowd and the tumult that was taking place, especially by the so-called Zaghi, that is, clerics, in order to bring back more of these relics, and to make more trips up

Zelić 2014, 56. The realisation of the space probably dates back to the previous century, specifically to the seventh decade; see Belamarić 2014b.

179 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 539; Zelić 2014, 56.

180 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 539; cf. Zelić 2014, 56; Lupis 2014a, 403.

181 See Zelić 2014, 55–56.

182 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117: 'vnd findet man trefflich Heiligthumb alda, wenn in der Thumkirchen oben empor ist ein schön gewölbe.'

183 Fisković 1966, 73.

184 Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 138.

there […] when he later learnt that, in the chapel above, for each relic brought back, a small white candle of two or even three ounces was given.'[185]

The itinerary leading to the chapel of relics, this time in connection with the visit of prominent figures, was also documented by Julien Bordier in 1605:

> We heard Mass in this church; after which the clergy, along with their assistants, lined up with three church procurators. The priests, dressed in surplices, each holding a lit candle, and all of us as well, to see the relics and holy bodies, of which there is such a great quantity in Dubrovnik that it surpasses all other places in Christendom. We were led into a high gallery that surrounds the heart of the church, in which there is a kind of chapel, where there are two large coffers, six to seven feet long and four feet high, in which there is a marvellous quantity of relics, which were shown to Monsieur the Ambassador and his people, with the appropriate ceremony for such devotion, chanting hymns and canticles for each reliquary that was displayed.[186]

We thus learn that the relics shown to visitors during solemn rituals were kept inside monumental boxes within the chapel above the galleries. Bordier's mention of the church's procurators is hardly incidental: Sormani's account, which also confirms the presence of the two monumental boxes, indicated as wooden, reveals that the keys were held exclusively by the procurators appointed by the Republic to safeguard the cathedral's most precious relics.[187]

185 *Ibid*., 138: 'E si maravigliava grandemente lo scrittore di queste narrazioni l'anno 1588 ritrovandosi presente, della calca, e del tumulto, che si faceva, e massimamente da certi Zaghi, o vero Chierci, per riportare più di dette reliquie, e per fare più viaggi la suso […] quando poi intese che la suso alla Cappella si donava per ciascuna reliquia riportata, una candeletta bianca di due, ò vero tre oncie.'

186 Baron de Salignac (Julien Bordier), 1604–1610, ed. 1888, 23; cf. Belemarić 2014a, 178.

187 This passage from Sormani's *visitatio* is transcribed in Fisković 1966, 74. It seems, however, that storing relics in a wooden case was a common practice in Dubrovnik, as evidenced by Sormani's excerpt on the church of St Stephen, where he used almost identical wording to that found in reference to the cathedral; Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fol. 638v: 'reliquiae condite in capsa lignea duabus clavibus munita et clausa'. Expanding the scope to a wider region, the same practice is evident in the treasury of nearby Kotor, as emphasised by the words of the apostolic visitor Michele Priuli in 1603; Michele Priuli, 1602–1603, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, vol. 100, fol. 431r: 'Visitavit Thesaurariam Existentem in quadam Capella ipsius ecclesiae a parte superiori in capella est reposita capsa magna ab interiori parte velo serico rubei coloris circumornata in qua extant reliquie infrascripta pro ut inventario exhibito et […] transcripto prohibuit celebrari super dicta capsa […] mandavit poni mensam lapideam capsaque aperiri ab interiori parte pro extrahendis reliquiis in reliquis decenter est ornatum altare.' On the Ragusan

Their role as guardians of the Republic's wealth was further underscored by Archbishop Fabio Tempestivo in November 1607: 'They [the relics] are kept in a chapel above the church, but most ineptly in a certain wooden chest, one on top of the other, without any decency or order. The keys to the chests are held by the lay treasurers of the city, who also keep another chest in the same chapel containing money or, as they say, the treasury of the Republic.'[188]

It thus becomes evident that the two chests mentioned in sources from the 1570s onwards were designed to secure the Republic's treasures – both relics and monetary assets – ensuring their placement in the most secure location available. This may explain why earlier pilgrims' accounts refer to a single container, probably intended solely for relics. As early as the late 14th century Ogier VIII d'Anglure recorded its presence, further implying that some relics were likely exhibited outside the chest: 'First, in the church of Monsignor St Blaise [*sic*], his head, most nobly encased in silver. Likewise, his right arm with his hand, which remains intact, including the nails. Nearby, there was also a chest full of other relics, all most nobly encased in silver, though we forgot their names.'[189]

This reference persists in the following century in Hans Lochner's account, as well as two decades later, at the time of Count Roberto da Sanseverino's visit in 1458.[190] The author of the diary confirmed the continued presence of a single arch as the main cultic focus, adding that, before leaving the cathedral, the entourage composed of Sanseverino and other leading figures of the Milanese ducal court were gifted with a highly prestigious souvenir: a very large bunch of candles that had come into contact with the relics.[191] This custom, which, according to the sources, was recurrent in relation to illustrious visitors, was

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treasury, documented archivally from the second half of the 13th century onwards, see Lupis 2014a, 399–403.

188 Fabio Tempestivo, 1607, AAV, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, fol. 1v: 'Conservantur in sacello super ecclesia sed ineptissime in quadam capsa lignea, una super aliam sine aliqua decentia vel ordine. Capsae claves retinentur a thesaurariis civitatis laicis, qui in eodem sacello retinent aliam capsam pecuniarum sive thesauri, ut dicunt, Reipublicae.'

189 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97: 'Et en celledicte cité, en l'eglise de monseigneur Saint Blaise, nous furent monstrées les dignes reliques qui s'ensuivent: Premiers, en l'eglise de monseigneur Saint Blaise, le chef d'icellui moult noblement envaissellé d'argent. Item, son bras destre avecques sa main, laquelle est encores entire atout les ongles. Avec ce y avoit tout près d'illec une huche plaine d'autres reliques toutes envaissellées d'argent moult noblement, desquelles nous obliasmes les noms.'

190 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210; Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–104; Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 169.

191 Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–104: 'Il che facto, volendo il prefato signore Ruberto et compagni partirse, gli fu presentato per quelli religiosi che sono lì, uno grossissimo mazo di candelle de cera che havevano tochate tute dicte reliquie.'

also corroborated by Baron de Salignac: 'The priests gave each one of us a white candle with which they had touched all the relics, which each one of us preserved as a memory of this pious day.'[192]

Another document, dated 10 March 1607, once again addresses decisions made by the *Consilium Rogatorum* concerning the need to proceed with the construction of a new reliquary to house the Ragusan treasury.[193] This raises the question of whether such works were actually carried out and, if so, what they entailed. According to the testimony of the aforementioned Archbishop of Dubrovnik Fabio Tempestivo in November of the same year, the relics remained carelessly stored, without any decency or order.[194]

Thus, based on the two testimonies from 1607, it is reasonable to assume that the arrangement of the chapel of relics was no longer considered suitable for housing Dubrovnik's most important sacred relics. Regarding the implementation of these changes, the *ad limina* visits in the Vatican Apostolic Archives offer some clues.[195] While most references simply confirm the elevated position of the 'Dubrovnik sacellum', an aspect not questioned by the deliberations of March 1607, the clearest evidence came from Tommaso Cellesi's visit in 1632. His tone is notably different from the disappointed one expressed by his predecessor, Tempestivo, in 1607:

> There are numerous relics of saints deposited in a special chapel in the upper part of the church, a work of great generosity built by the Most Excellent Senate. There, within silver reliquaries placed in dedicated compartments, distinguished relics are venerated, especially a very large portion of the Most Holy Cross, the cloth renowned for its miracles in which Simeon wrapped our Redeemer when he received Him into his arms and the arm of St John the Baptist.[196]

192 Belamarić 2014a, 178.

193 Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 542: 'de exequi faciendo odinem alias datum dominis thesauriis Sanctae Mariae erigendi unum reliquiarium in loco ecclesie cathedralis ubi ad presens permanent reliquiae sanctorum prout dictis dominis thesauriis melius ubi ad presens permanent reliquiae sanctorum prout dictis dominis thesaurariis melius videbitur ad honorem Dei omnipotentis et dictorum sanctorum reliquiae quorum protegunt hac nostrum civitatem.'

194 Fabio Tempestivo, 1607, AAV, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, fol. 1v.

195 See, for instance, Bernardino Larizza, 1641, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, n.p.: 'Eadem eccelesia habet fornices columnis marmoreis innixos, super quibus ad Laevam est perpulchrum Sacellum refertum multis sacris Reliquiis, maxima cum veneratione asservatis habet quam plures Cappellanos qui quotidie in eodem sacra peragunt.'

196 Tommaso Cellesi, 1632, AAV, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, fol. 724v: 'sunt in ea plures reliquiae sanctorum repositae in speciali sacello in superiori parte ecclesiae, opus quidem summae munificentiae per excellentissimum D. Senatum extructum, ubi thecis argenteis

It is therefore plausible to deduce that the renovation of the medieval chapel of relics took place between its commission in 1607 and Cellesi's visit in 1632. Moreover, the new Baroque reliquary, replacing the old wooden boxes, likely featured a refined, compartmentalised design, as Cellesi described. This arrangement appears to prefigure the extant treasury, which, based on this new evidence, can now be identified as the second Baroque reliquary, built between 1713 and 1721 following the cathedral's collapse in 1667.

2.5 *St Blaise, the City's Patron*

While travelogues gave little attention to the sanctuary of Zadar cathedral, the treasury of the Ragusan cathedral emerged as the premier sacred attraction for late medieval pilgrims arriving at the Dalmatian port.[197] A visit to the medieval chapel of relics, home to an impressive collection of Christological relics, was essential for travellers eager to appropriate biblical memories.

From the earliest accounts, travellers accorded a prominent place to St Blaise,[198] the 'city's principal patron, just as St Mark is in Venice',[199] often mistakenly identified as the cathedral's titular saint.[200] The earliest record of his feast dates to 1158, while the chronology of the relics' arrival in Dubrovnik and their consolidation into a corpus remain more elusive.[201]

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in speciales cellulas venerabiliter asservantur insignes reliquiae et praecipue pergrandis portio Sanctissimae Crucis et panniculis celebris miraculis, quo intus Simeon involutum Redemptorem nostrum in ulnas suas recepit, et brachium Sancti Iohannis Baptistae.'

197 Cf. Belamarić 2014b, 37. Vincije Lupis has long examined the layered collection housed in the present-day cathedral treasury, a repository that, by the 19th century, had also absorbed relics from other city churches. His work, beginning with his 2003 doctoral dissertation (Lupis 2003), highlights Mediterranean parallels among these cult objects, the origins of which range from Palermo workshops and Jerusalemite makers of staurothekes to local productions and Baroque commissions by prominent Italian masters. Building on Lupis's insights, this discussion will focus primarily on the relics that captivated travellers *en route* to and from the Holy Land, considering how these pilgrims valued each object of worship.

198 Notably, the saint is mentioned 31 times in connection with the city.

199 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37: 'sainct Blaise principal patron de la ville, comme fait sainct Marc à Venise'.

200 However, unlike Zadar's collegiate church of St Mary Major, referred to in pilgrims' texts solely as the church of St Simeon due to the prophet's relics, Dubrovnik cathedral is consistently mentioned by its proper name. See Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37: 'La grant eglise archiepiscopale est fondée de l'Assumption Nostre Dame.'; Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115: 'La mere eglise est fondée de Nostre Dame de l'Asumption.' Pietro Casola's annotation is more generic; Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126: 'La giesia maiore, sub vocabulo de Nostra Dona'.

201 Alongside numerous contributions, a catalogue edited by Vilać (2014) was dedicated to the Ragusan patron saint, following an exhibition held at the rector's palace in 2012.

Local chronicles primarily preserve two accounts that, despite their stated dates, suggest a time frame for their composition. The first, set in 971, depicts the elderly bishop as an anti-Venetian protector from his very first apparition, credited with thwarting the Venetian siege.[202] The second, placed in the 11th century, reflects the complex ecclesiastical dynamics of the southern Dalmatian archdiocese and links the arrival of St Blaise's head, the first of his relics to reach the city, to its miraculous *inventio* near Kotor.[203]

A chronological anchor for this relic, also with respect to local testimonies, appears in the 1322 travel diary of the Franciscan friar Simon Fitzsimons: 'It is indeed said that in it [there] is the head of St Blaise the martyr.'[204] At the turn of the century Ogier VIII d'Anglure further illuminated the relics of the saint from Sebaste preserved in the cathedral, but mistakenly identified as the church of St Blaise. He listed the head encased in silver and the right arm with the hand still intact.[205]

This remains the key reference for analysing his cult. For the feast of St Blaise, see Lonza 2014, 44–79.

202 Belamarić 2014b, 36; *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 20–22, 39; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 199–201.

203 See Belamarić 2014a, 176–177. The story, linked to the *furta sacra* carried out by the Ragusans in the territory of neighbouring Kotor and based on the *Chronicle of Miletius*, was handed down by Nicola de Ragnina (16th century, ed. 1883, 210–211, 227). It should be noted that in the same episode, also recounted by Giovanni Francesco Sormani, there is no mention, however, of the *inventio* of the head of St Blaise alongside the remains of the martyrs from Kotor, as we shall see in detail; Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fols 655r–655v. Ragnina himself, moreover, relying on what is reported in the *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, also recounted the second version regarding the arrival in Dubrovnik of the first object of worship of the city's patron saint; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 211: 'Appare etiam nell'istoria preditta, che con preditti martiri fu trovato lo capo dello glorioso martire santo Biagio, protectore et advocato della città di Dubrovnik, et con essi fu portato a Ragusa; benche alcuni dicono esser portato el capo preditto per uno Greco di Levante, alio qual fu donato d. 500.'; cf. *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 27. In summary, and following the chronological order, the arrival of St Blaise's head was connected to the *furta sacra* in Kotor by Miletius, whereas this possible connection was later omitted by the anonymous Ragusan chronicler, who instead dated the arrival to the year 1012. Ragnina, for his part, recorded both traditions, while around the same time Sormani, despite providing an extensive account of the Kotor martyrs, remained silent on the matter.

204 Simon Fitzsimons, 1322–1324, ed. 1919, 252: 'In ipsa siquidem dicitur esse caput Sancti Blasii martiris.'

205 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97. The misinterpretation of the cathedral as being dedicated to St Blaise, a consequence of the popularity of the saint's cult, can also be found in the following diaries: Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 44: 'Auch ist in einer kirchen alda, zu Sant Blasius genantt, Sant Blasius haubt und hende.'; Hans Tucher, 1479–1480, ed. 2002, 355: 'Jst auch aldo ein kirchen zu Sant Blasius genant. Do ist Sant



FIGURE 127
Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Reliquary of the right arm of St Blaise, 12th century
LUPIS 2014A, 410

In the oldest inventory of the cathedral, dating back to February 1335, preserved in the Dubrovnik Archives and well known in scholarship, the precise set of reliquaries dedicated to the saint is indexed. The list opens with the aforementioned 'head of St Blaise, bishop, in a silver basin' (Capud Beati Blasii episcopi in bacino argenti), followed by 'the leg with the foot of St Blaise, bishop' (gamba cum pede Sancti Blasii episcopi) and 'the arm of St Blaise' (Brachi Beati Blasii), appearing in positions 9 and 12, respectively, each time at the beginning of the folio.[206] At the end of the index there is an annotation, likely from a later hand, reading: 'The arm with the left hand of St Blaise' (Brachium cum manu sinistra sci Blaxij).[207] This refers to the reliquary donated in 1346,[208] recorded in 1507 by Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg,[209] and preserved to this day, alongside the right arm (Fig. 127) and the head (Fig. 128), in the monumental Baroque-era architectural reliquary.

While there are several references to the complete set of relics, such as those made by German pilgrims at the turn of the 15th century ('the head, both arms and one leg of St Blaise'),[210] the head and arm reliquaries – stylistically dated to the 11th and 12th centuries, respectively, though partly altered by 17th- and 18th-century interventions – are the most frequently mentioned parts of the set by Western travellers.

Among the many reports the mid-15th-century account by Roberto da Sanseverino stands out. Like Ogier VIII d'Anglure, he emphasised the integrity of the relic: 'the whole arm with the whole hand, on which his rings are still present'.[211] Meanwhile, a 16th-century testimony by Friar Antonio of Lisbon focusses on the materiality of the silver-gilt container: 'an arm of the blessed

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Blasius haubt vnd hende vnd.'; Konrad Beck, 1483, ed. 1916, 67: 'It. Sant Blasius hapt und hend ligend zů Rogus, ist mir gesagt, jn Sant Blasius kirchen.'; Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 88: 'Jn der selben statt Raguß syn vil loblicher kyrche auch herlich closter besunder prediger vnd barfußen ordens. Do selbet yn sant Blasius kyrch.'; Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 328: 'Item wier giengent des ersten inn den tům gar in ain costlich munster von aller farwen marmolstain costlich geziert und důrch hŏwen, das wier des gros verwundren hetten. Inn dem genanten munster rastat der hailig bischoff santus Blassius also gantzer.'

206 Liepopoli 1908, 26–27; cf. Lupis 2014b, 445–450.

207 Liepopoli 1908, 26–27.

208 Lupis 2014b, 450.

209 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117.

210 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 57.

211 Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–104: 'lo brazo intero con la mane intera, nela quale sono anchora le sue anelle'.



FIGURE 128 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Reliquary of the head of St Blaise, 11th century
LUPIS 2014A, 408

St Blaise (which is very richly set in gold and is held in great reverence by the Ragusans, because they consider St Blaise their patron)'.[212]

Additionally, given the diversity that characterises the set of relics dedicated to the saint, it is not surprising to find references to his entire body. While many pilgrims employed the standardised formulas already associated

212 Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129: 'un braço del bienaventurado Sant Blas (lo qual está muy ricamente engastado en oro, y es tenido de los aragusanos en gran reverencia porque tienen por patrón a Sant Blas)'.

with other Dalmatian places of worship,[213] a few noteworthy exceptions stand out. Alongside Hans Lochner's peculiar annotation (1435), which emphasises the presence of the entire body, except for the absence of a bone,[214] Pierre Barbatre's later mention is also of interest: it describes 'the body of Monsignor St Blaise, or most of it, like the head, arms, foot and other parts'.[215]

Both the French pilgrim's note and the more cautious testimony of Felix Fabri, who referred to 'many relics of St Blaise [...] here and there' (multae reliquiae de S. Blasio [...] ibi et alibi),[216] can also, with the benefit of the doubt, be linked to the saint's relics kept at other city monuments. These include the fragments of the saint's throat, preserved not only in the nearby church dedicated to St Blaise, as is well known in scholarship,[217] but also, according to apostolic visitor Sormani, in the rich collection of the church of St Stephen.[218]

2.6 *The Cult of St Simeon and the* Sacer Panniculus Christi

Alongside the body of St Blaise, the people of Dubrovnik also claimed the remains of St Simeon, whose translation vicissitudes, already discussed extensively in regard to Zadar, drew attention to both the Zaratine port and the Venetian lagoon. According to Dubrovnik tradition, the arrival of St Simeon the Prophet's body dates to the early 1160s,[219] thus diverging chronologically from the accounts in Northern Adriatic ports. However, notable similarities emerge at the legendary level between the two Dalmatian tales: as in the Zadar tradition, the miraculous arrival was guided by divine providence. Once again, the point of departure was the land of the Gospels, with foreign visitors, referred to as 'certain Germans' (Tudeschi), arriving on the Dalmatian coast, only to find themselves unable to depart from Ragusan territory with their ship.[220] When the nature of their precious cargo was revealed, negotiations with the local clergy ensued, leading to an agreement that would allow the foreigners to reclaim the body within a year, should they return.[221]

213 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25: 'a Swateho blazege tielo lezij tu czelee w temz miestie. A Swaty blazey gest gich raguzskych patron a diedicz yako Swaty waczlaw nas Czechuow.'

214 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210: 'sant Blasins Leichnamb ganz on ein bein'.

215 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115: 'est le corps monsseigneur sainct Blese ou la plus part comme le chef, bras, pié et aultre partie'.

216 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361.

217 Lupis 2014b, 453.

218 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fol. 639r: 'Frustum gutturis Blaexii argenti tegmini circundati'.

219 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 215–216; Belamarić 2014b, 38.

220 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 215–216.

221 *Ibid.*, 216.

Initially placed in the church of St Vitus, rather than the cathedral (just as in the Zaratine story), the body was later moved to the high altar of the city's main church.[222] Despite the repeated claims of 'miracula multa' performed by the prophet at his new location, Western pilgrims' diaries make no mention of the body itself, and the oldest inventory of Dubrovnik cathedral records only the 'head of the holy prophet Simeon' (cap[ut] s[an]c[t]i Symeonis prophetae).[223]

While this relic, still housed today in a 13th-century locally crafted reliquary (Fig. 129),[224] received only a passing mention in Hans Lochner's 1435 diary,[225] another relic associated with St Simeon fully captured the devotion of late medieval pilgrims on their final Dalmatian stop.[226] This was, in Antonio da Crema's words, 'the cloth in which St Simeon received our Lord Jesus Christ wrapped in the temple',[227] a tangible, first-class relic that came into direct contact with the infant Jesus.

The prominence of this relic, which pilgrims heading east perceived as having the most direct link to their journey's destination, is evident in the account of an anonymous Italian pilgrim from 1469: 'We desired to see many worthy relics in this city, especially one cloth upon which the Lord was presented at the temple, when Simeon took Him in his arms. Most worthy relic. They say it continuously works great miracles. We could not have the grace to see it, since the citizens who have the keys to these relics were not in town.'[228] This

222 Miletius, 12th century (?), ed. 2016, 20: 'De crucis signatus Teutonicorum unus procerum ad Hierosolymus urbe Attulit Simeonis Rhagusam honorabile corpus Prophetae, qui dixit: Vos rogo, fratres, audite: Nunc, Deus, dimitte servum tuum in pace; Quod sancti Viti cum honore locarunt in aede. Incognito sic nomine, multo tempore stetit Usque Leonardi tempus archipraesulis: inde Nobili Damiano Zaide narravit proprium nomen, Quem et curavit coecum et a plasmate mutum: Sum Simeon, dicens, qui Christum in ulnas recepi, Quem Virgo peperit et post partum Virgo permansit. Post modicum tempus translatum in Virginis aede Telluris arcano est sub altare maiori Temporibus nostris, qui fecit miracula multa.'; cf. Liepopoli 1934, 19–20; Gyug 2003, 62.

223 Liepopoli 1908, 26–27.

224 Lupis 2014a, 414–415.

225 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210.

226 *Ibid.* In the early 17th century the head of the Prophet is also recorded by Baron de Salignac (Julien Bordier), 1604–1610, ed. 1888, 24: 'Après fut monstrée la teste de St Siméon profète, enchassée en argent doré.'; cf. Belamarić 2014b, 38.

227 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'drapo nel quale sancto Simeone hebe involto il nostro signor Iesu Christo nel tempio'.

228 Anonymous, 1469, ed. 2007, 202: 'Dexideravemo videre molte reliquie degne sono essa citade, maxime uno faciolo sopra il qualle fo presentato il Signore nel templo, quando Simeone el prexe ne le braze. Reliquia dignissima. Continue, dicono, fa di grande miracoli.



FIGURE 129 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Reliquary of the head of St Simeon the Prophet, 13th century
LUPIS 2014A, 416

Christological relic, with its direct reference to the Presentation at the Temple, bypassed the centuries-long struggle for the possession of the prophet's body between the Adriatic's two shores,[229] while establishing an ideal connection with the remains venerated in Zadar, which, as noted, gained prominence through a well-orchestrated *mise-en-scène*.[230]

Encapsulated in the sources discussed above, the narrative is steeped in Mediterranean topoi and mirrors key elements found in the accounts of

No potemo avere la gratia de viderla, però ne la cità no erano alcuni citadini qualli teneno le clave de esse reliquie.'

229 Cf. Bacci 2012, 194; Bacci 2017a, 144–145.

230 A comprehensive overview of Ragusan sources on the subject is offered by Gyug 2003, 65–67.

St Simeon's body arriving in both Dalmatian ports. Local legends stress once again that these relics originated not from Constantinople, a common stopover for many holy bodies bound for Venice, but directly from Palestine.

The cloth relic was reportedly brought to Dubrovnik in 843 by a foreigner, John, an Albanian priest, returning from a Holy Land pilgrimage. It was initially deposited once again in the church of St Vitus, with provisions for its reclamation within an unspecified period.[231] The casket containing the precious relic passed through several St Vitus parish priests, until one, before embarking on a journey to Jerusalem, buried it for safekeeping. Upon his return he found the church in ruins and was forced to disclose the relic's nature to the archbishop, who kept the secret. On his deathbed the archbishop entrusted the cloth to his sister, the abbess of the convent of St Simeon.[232]

The relic remained safeguarded by the nuns for many years, demonstrating its exceptional nature by regenerating and growing each time a piece was cut for the faithful. However, when a portion was given to the 'schismatic' queen of Bosnia, 'that cut piece no longer grew as it used to grow'.[233] This incident spurred a new translation, this time to the city cathedral, where Western pilgrims recorded the relic's history, adding fresh layers to the local narrative as it had been known until then.

The continuous documentation of the relic, starting with Ogier VIII d'Anglure's mention in 1398,[234] allows us to dismiss 1424, cited by an anonymous chronicler and later by Nicola Ragnina, as the date of its translation to the cathedral and to accept instead local proposals that place the event between 1379 and 1380.[235] This earlier time frame supports the theory that the notorious 'schismatic' queen of Bosnia might have been Elizabeth Kotromanić, who, according to Zaratine tradition, also attempted to steal St Simeon's remains, a claim echoed in local legends and pilgrim accounts.[236]

Regarding devotional practices, according to Gabriel of Pécsvárad, who composed his account around 1519, direct contact with the Christological relic was not allowed: in fact, the Hungarian Franciscan friar had to limit himself to

231 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 19; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 197–198; Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 19; cf. Gyug 2003, 67.

232 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 19–20; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 197–199; cf. Gyug 2003, 67.

233 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 198; cf. Gyug 2003, 71–72.

234 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97.

235 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 54–55; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 249; cf. Gyug 2003, 60, 67, 72–73; Belamarić 2001, 513–514.

236 Belamarić 2001, 513–514.

kissing the 'glass box' (capsam vitream).[237] Gabriel offered us further details concerning the now-lost case of the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*: 'I saw that cloth through the glass panels with which the case itself is made'; this was already confirmed at the end of 14th century by Ogier VIII d'Anglure, who noted that the relic was encased in a chest framed with fine crystal.[238] These indications were supplemented by Jan Hasištejnsky (1493), from whose account it is possible to argue that the lower part of the chest had the shape of a rectangular-based prism, of one cubit in length and half a cubit in depth.[239] It can therefore be assumed that the extant 18th-century crystal reliquary housing the Christological relic (Fig. 130), with its parallelepiped-shaped base, was most likely modelled after the earlier case (probably destroyed during the 1667 earthquake), though larger in size and differing in proportions.[240]

Pilgrims were captivated by two intertwined qualities: the relic's unspoiled integrity and the miracles it performed. Ogier VIII d'Anglure noted that the people of Dubrovnik cherished the relic due to the many miracles they witnessed.[241] While he relied on well-worn formulas and left the miracles largely undetailed, Hans Lochner, writing decades later, provided one of the variants: 'If one throws it in a little fire, it cannot burn.'[242] Miraculous fireproof

237 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 19v. The author of the text was long believed to have been Nicholas de Farnad in 1490; however, Galateri di Genola's publication has anchored the account to *c.*1519, attributing it to a Franciscan friar named Gabriel of Pécsvárad; see Galateri di Genola 2017, 53–194, esp. 83.

238 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97: 'Et est icellui digne drap moult noblement envaissellé en ung coffre frestré de fin cristail.'; Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 20r: 'quem pannum ego qui hec scripsi vidi mediantibus tamen tabulis vitreis: cum quibus circumcirca ipsa capsa est compaginata'. In the 15th century the form of the case was confirmed by another foreigner present in Dubrovnik; Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 147: 'Hic pannus santissimus in quoddam tabernaculo cristalino tenetur'. At the end of the 16th century what has been said above was reiterated by Serafino Razzi, who indirectly confirmed the practice of the limited approach to the relic; Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 19: '[…] e si da loro à basciare il tabernacolo di cristallo, dentro di cui, detto velo sta rinchiuso.' In the same time period further details on the structure of the case came from the pen of the apostolic visitor Sormani: 'arca vitrea inclusum lingo aurato circumdata'; see Fiskovic 1966, 74.

239 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25: 'A potom nam vkazali Truhliczy krzisstalowu, snad lokte z delij a puol lokte na wyss.'

240 The entire reliquary measures 77 × 66 × 48 cm; Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 519; Lupis 2014a, 429–430.

241 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97: 'sachiés que ceulx de la cité le tiennent moult chier, et ilz ont bonne cause selon les miracles qu'ilz en avoient veuz appertement, comme ilz disoient, et plusieurs fois, lesquelz seroient trop longs a escripre'.

242 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210: 'vnnd ist das tuch ganz do, do Simeon Gott ein empfing, do er zu dem tempel



FIGURE 130 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Reliquary of the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*, 18th century
LUPIS 2014A, 431

properties, often attributed to objects believed to be completely resistant to flames, are similarly celebrated in the case of St Helena's cult in Venice, as noted by Santo Brasca: 'The body of St Helena with a small cross made from

geopfert ward, vnnd ist des Keysers, vnnd wenn man es in ein fewer würfft, so mag es nit verbrennen.' This tale was quite popular at the time, as evidenced by the nearly contemporary words of Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 147: '[…] qui proiectus in igne comburitur et combustus inde tractatus albior et mundior et intergerimmus invenitur'.

the true wood of the Holy Cross of the Saviour, which the said saint continually carried with her in life, and it has this virtue that if placed in the fire, it never burns, nor would it lose its colour.'[243] The relevance of the chromatic aspect also surfaces in Ogier VIII d'Anglure's description of the Dubrovnik cloth, noting that it was 'very white and thick, velvety as are the textiles woven on a high-warp loom, in the manner of Frise, which would be very finely made'.[244] This final motif, focussed on the tangible aspect of the relic, was revisited by later authors.

While Dietrich von Schachten (1491) simply described the cloth, folded to the height of a palm, as rough,[245] Friar Antonio of Lisbon approached the matter with some hesitation, grappling with the materiality of the miraculous object: 'It is true that in the sight of this blessed cloth, much singular devotion is received, but it cannot be determined whether it is made of linen, silk or something else.'[246] Gabriel of Pécsvárad's account offers more insights into the cloth's features:[247]

> Regarding the cloth of Christ in which the Virgin Mary, his mother, wrapped him when he was born from her virginal womb, see the [following] five points. First, the sacred Gospel itself attests that the Virgin Mother wrapped him in cloth. The cloth, however, is considered a humble

243 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 51: 'El corpo de Sancta Elena con una croxeta facta del vero legno de la sancta croce del salvatore, la quale in vita portava continuamente adosso la dicta sancta, et ha questa virtute che a mettere nella fuocho non brusa mai, né se smarissebbe di colore'.

244 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97: '[…] parmy lequel l'en peult veoir icellui drap tresclerement, et est tresblanc et espès, velus comme sont les ouvrages tissus a haulte lisse en la maniere de Frise qui seroit bien deliée'; cf. Graciotti 2014, 231, with bibliographical references.

245 Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 178–179: 'das ist zusammengelegt, wie eine handt zwell, undt ist vonn fast grobenn Tuche undt viel anders heilthumb.' The cloth was also described as white and rough by Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25.

246 Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129: 'Es verdad que en la vista deste bendicto paño se rescibe mucha & singular devoción, el qual no se puede determinar si sea de lino o de seda, o de qué sea.'

247 Notably, contrary to modern scholarship, Gabriel of Pécsvárad's account was well known to Stefano Mantegazza in the 17th century. In fact, Mantegazza introduced the Hungarian friar's narrative with these words: 'Hora rimane ci dire con questa si bella occasione della Città di Bethelemme, la quale non voglio tralasciare, una divotissima, et curiosissima Historia cavata d'un libro antico d'un Padre Fra' Nicolao Franciscano, Osservante, di natione Ongaro, stampato nella Città di Vienna, la quale è l'infrascritta.'; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 285–286. The Milanese Dominican reproduced the narrative almost verbatim, with the exception of the opening and closing sections; the final part was likely omitted due to the challenges posed by its ambiguous interpretation.

> and worn garment. For this reason, the poor who wear old tunics sewn from various pieces are called ragamuffins. The cloth is double, namely linen and wool, and it is believed that the pious mother first wrapped Christ's limbs with linen cloths, which are softer; and finally, over the top, with woollen cloths, which are stronger, due to the winter cold. In this way, other mothers behave similarly with their little children, wrapping them first in soft cloths inside and then in coarser woollen cloths on the outside.[248]

It can be deduced that Pécsvárad's account associates the relic to Christ's swaddling bands from the Nativity, rather than to the subsequent Gospel episode of the presentation of the newborn at the temple.[249] In contrast, other pilgrims associated the relic with St Simeon, often invoking the opening words of the famous canticle *Nunc dimittis* uttered during the Presentation at the Temple.[250] However, contradictory references to the nature of Jesus' cloth

248 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 19v: 'Pannus Christi in quo involutus fuit per virginem Marriam matrem eius. dum natus fuit ex utero suo virgineo. de quo vide quinque. Primum quod ipsum sacrum evangelium testatur: quod virgo mater pannis eum involuit. Dicitur autem pannus vestimentum vile et inveteratum. propterea pauperes qui tunicas veteres et diversis peciis consutas deferunt. dicuntur pannosi. Et pannus est duplex, scilicet lineus et laneus, et credendum est quod ipsa mater pia prius involuit membra Christi pannis lineis, que sunt molliores; tandem desuper laneis qui sunt duriores ob frigora que fiunt tempore hyemali. hoc modo etiam faciunt cetere matres suis infantulis, ut prius involuunt ab intra mollioribus tandem ab extra durioribus scilicet pannis aliquibus laneis.'

249 Continuing the collation, it is worth noting that the idea becomes even more explicit with Mantegazza's version, which directly quotes the passage from the Gospel of Luke; Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 285: 'Ritrovandosi l'Arcivescovo della Città di Ragusa in Terra santa per sua divotione, a visitare quei Santi luoghi, et giunto in questa di Bethlemme, gli capitò alle mani (non saprei dir' come) uno di quei panni, ne'quali la Betaissima Vergine il Santissimo Bambino involgeva, come dice S. Luca, et pannis eum involuit, et reclinavit cum in Presepio.'

250 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1398, ed. 1878, 97: 'Item, avec ce y veismes cellui digne drap ou touaille sur lequel le bon saint Simeon receut Nostre Seigneur Jhesu Crist entre ses bras, au Temple, le jour de la Purification, quant ledit saint Simeon dist: Nunc dimitis, etc.'; Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210: 'vnnd ist das tuch ganz do, do Simeon Gott ein empfing, do er zu dem tempel geopfert ward.'; Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 169: 'Item in citade si vede in una archa infinite reliquie adornate richissimamente de oro e de argento; e fra le altre preciose cosse zè lo panno ne lo quale fo rivolto el nostro Signore miser Ihesu Christo quando fu da Symeone nel tempio apresentato, dove luy prophetizando disce: Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, etc.'; Eberhard von Württemberg im Bart, 1468, ed. 1998, 146: 'Archiepiscopus ibi est. In templo reliquiae sunt: pannus, quo Symeon putum Iesum excepit ulnis suis.'; Ulrich Brunner, 1470, ed. 1906, 20: '[…] und do selbst ist das tuch und windel, dor inn

persisted over the centuries. Nicola Ragnina's 16th-century account associates the relic with the Nativity, marking a key discrepancy from the anonymous 15th-century Dubrovnik chronicle, in which the relic's identity is likely deliberately concealed.[251]

At any rate, Friar Gabriel of Pécsvárad reaffirmed the identity of the relic ('the swaddling bands of Christ in which the Virgin Mother Mary had wrapped her son') in his continuation of the story, particularly when recounting the miraculous events said to have occurred in Dubrovnik. The Hungarian

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Christus in den tempel geopffert wart.'; Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57: 'Quivi sono molte relequie tute poste argento tra quale è lo panicello nel quale fu volto el dolce nostro redemptore, quando essendo presentato nel templo, da Sancto Simeon fu tolto in braze.'; Jan Aerts, 1481, ed. 1652, 141: 'In de selve kercke wordt met groote reverentien bewaerdt het selve lijnwaedt- kleedt, waer in den voorschreven Simeon het kindeken ontfing, seer vremt ende wonderlick gewrocht, wit van coleur, maer bruyn, seer groot wesende.'; Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1849, 361: 'Ecclesia cathedralis est pulchra, in qua vidimus mappam, cum qua Simeon senex. recepit puerum Jesum in ulnas suas.'; Dietrich von Schachten, 1491–1492, ed. 1880, 178–179: 'Item da liess mann uns sehenn das heiligthumb, so daselbstenn ist, undt sahenn das duch, darienn S.Simon Gott denn Almechttigenn ihnn dem Tempel opfertte.'; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1483, ed. 1902, 25: 'A prawili nam, ze gest to ta rucha, yako panna maria pana krysta byla w nij obwinula, kdyz gey obietowala do Chramu wedlee obyczege zakona Stareho.'; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52: 'ein großes Stück von dem Leinentuch, darinnen unser Herr Jesus Christus gewickelt war, so er St. Simeon in den Arm gegeben ward'; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10–11: 'the clothe that seynt Symyon receyued our Sauyoure upon in his armes whan he was psented into the Temple'; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129: 'un paño que se dize ser aquel mesmo sobre el quale el sancto viejo Simeón rescibió en sus manos a Nuestro Redemptor, en la presentación del templo.'; Jan Pascha, 1527, ed. 1563, fols 39r–40r: 'En dat selue cussen end eden doeck daer Symeon Justus onsen heer mede in synen armen nam. Daer is oock slincken arm van sint Jan Baptist/ sonder den duym. Daer is dat hooft sint Simeon den Apostel/ ende dese reliquien syn te visiteren/ door eenen ganck te gaen tusschen twee muren soo enghe/ datter naueeen mensche ruym door en kan. Ende is wel xxxii. trappen hooghe'.

251 Cf. Gyug 2003, 69, 74. The parallel reading of the local sources and those composed by foreigners certainly includes what Sormani highlighted: 'Pannus in quo involutus fuit D.N. J.X.^{s} cum natus fuit ab eius santissima matre'; Fisković 1966, 74. Julien Bordier's account in the early 17th century unequivocally points in the same direction; Baron de Salignac (Julien Bordier), 1604–1610, ed. 1888, 23–24: 'Nous vismes pareillement le linge ou drapeaux dans lesquels le Sauveur fut mis à sa naissance; luy ayant esté donné par les bergers qui l'adorèrent en Bethelem, laquel est presque tout entire.' See also the depiction of the Virgin bowing over the manger that surmounts the 18th-century reliquary in which the relic is now kept (see Fig. 130); cf. Lupis 2004, 169. The adoption of this latter iconographic solution can probably be linked to the Roman provenance of the Baroque reliquary, since the relics of the manger and the swaddling bands of Jesus were kept in Rome since the 7th century. On the reliquary in more detail, see Lupis 2003, 322.

pilgrim, along with chroniclers and even the Duke of Legnica and Brieg,[252] also emphasised the relic's miraculous ability to self-regenerate and recounted two additional episodes attesting to its divine nature. This activity, conducted secretly and intended only for the archbishop's relatives, was abruptly halted when a recipient, caught committing a crime, made a public confession. His miraculous resistance to torture, attributed to the fragment he carried, rendered denial impossible.[253] The second episode describes the cloth occasionally coming alive, miraculously rising from the shrine in which it was kept, signalling to the people of Dubrovnik that the coming year would be fertile and prosperous: 'That cloth of Christ is miraculously sometimes lifted in the glass case where it is kept and it stretches out and then withdraws itself back into its original place. And whenever this happens, that year will be fertile, and the people of Dubrovnik will have good fortune.'[254]

In addition to the new details, Friar Gabriel's account is also significant for pinpointing the time frame of the relic's transfer to the Dalmatian port. According to the Hungarian pilgrim, this event occurred 'a few years after the year 1000'. Moreover, the key figure in this story is not the Albanian priest

252 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117: '[…] dass zu zeiten gross mechtige Herren sein kommen gen Ragus vnd dass tuch gesehen vnd haben daruon etzliche stücke begehrt sie seint ihnen gegeben, Auff den andern tag hat man sehr wunderlich dasselbe Heilige stücke gantz vnuersehrt funden vnd vnss ist dass vor ein gantze warheit gesaget, auch findet man dass heute gantz.'

253 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 20r: 'Quartum est quod defuncto archiepiscopo quidam de illis quibus prefata abbatissa de panno Christi donaverat. ob suis sceleribus. est deprehensus. habens apud se illam particulam panni; et postquam cepisset tormentari, nil doloris sentiebat quali acunque tormenta eidem illata fuissent. inquirentes eum. unde hoc beneficium haberet ut tormenta minime sentiret. At ille fassus est ut de pannis Christi in quibus virgo mater Maria filium involuerat haberet apud se, et exinde tormenta non sentiret. At cives Ragusienses inquirunt eum unde et a quo istam panni particulam habuisset. Rem ille pandens quod abbatissa illa habuisset. cives adeunt abbatissam, requirentes si res esset vera, ut de pannis Christi ipsa aliquid haberet. Tunc illa rem tam preciosam preciosiorem thesauris totius mundi non celans. Ostendit eis et seriem qua ad eam per dominum Archiepiscopum venit seriose declaravit. Ex tunc cives inde accipientes deferunt ad ecclesiam Cathedralem Ragusiensem ubi nunc servatur honore decenti.'

254 *Ibid.*: 'Quod ille pannus Christi miraculose aliquando elevatur in illa capsa vitrea ubi conservatur. et se extendit et iterum submittit se in locum suum pristinum et subintrat. et quandocunque hoc fit. tunc ille annus erit fertilis. Et Ragusienses habebunt bonum eventum.' The spontaneous animation of the relic, which would unfold and then close back upon itself, was also reported by Jan Hasištejnsky, following the story told to him by local clergy and devotees; Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25: 'a tu nam przi tom take prawili za gisto duchownij y swietsstij, kterzij tu tehdaaz s nami przi tom byli, ze taaz rucha w teez truhliczy sama se czasem swym rozwigije ruozno A sama se zase w hromadu swine.'

mentioned in local chronicles, but a Ragusan archbishop, who is said to have brought the valuable relic back to his archdiocese from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[255]

This timeline points to Archbishop Vitale as the key figure, like Donatus of Zadar (as noted by Belamarić), in the cultic launch of the Ragusan metropolis.[256] In tracing the local elucidation of this legendary narrative, it is worth noting that both the date (1040) and Archbishop Vitale's name appear in the 18th-century *Chronica Ragusina* by Junio Restić. However, Restić connected them not to the relic's arrival (which he dated to the 9th century), but to the *inventio* of the box following the destruction of the church of St Vitus.[257] Nonetheless, the explicit consecration of this tale is recorded in the later scholarly tradition, appearing in Serafino Maria Cerva's *Prolegomena in Sacram Metropolim Ragusinam* (1759).[258]

Thus, during Archbishop Vitale's time, alongside the arrival of St Blaise's head, the acquisition of this Christological relic, associated with the Presentation at the Temple and identified as the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*,[259] should also be dated. The relic enabled the development of a complex liturgical programme

255 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fols 19v–20r. 'Secundum est quod post domini annum millesimum et aliquibus annis ultra, dum adhuc in Terra Sancta habitabant fideles Christiani. Quidam archiepiscopus Ragusiensis devotionis causa visitavit Terram Sanctam Hierusalem. qui de pannis Christi in quibus fuit involutus unum pannum exportavit in suum archepiscopatum Ragusiensem. Ignoratur tamen si prece aut aliquo aliomodo illum panniculum obtinuerit. Pro eo quod digitus etiam sancti Ioanni Baptiste quo ostendit dominum circa Jordanem ad se venientem dicens. Ecce Agnus Dei ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Furtim de Terra Sancta fuit sublatus in Ragusium. Et nunc est Ragusii. quem ego qui hoc scripsi vidi. et capsam vitream in qua stat osculatus sum. Tertium quod postquam dictus archiepiscopus pannum domini Ragusium attulisset. non fuit ausus propalare. nec in ecclesia sua Cathedrali tenere. Sed tradidit cuidam sanctimoniali abbatisse incluse. que erat soror sua consaguinitate ad tenendum sive servandum. que clam aliquibus suis cognatis sive consanguineis de illo panniculo Christi ex devotione minutas particulas distribuebat. absque tamen scitu archiepiscopi. Hoc tamen erat valde mirabile. Quod quamtumcumque et quotienscunque per supradictam abbatissam de panno ad distribuendum incideretur. Nunquam pannus diminuebatur: sed miraculose excrescebat. et fiebat tantus sicut prius.'

256 Belamarić 2001, 171–174, 513–514.

257 See *ibid.*, 172, n. 172; Gyug 2003, 70, 78.

258 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 466: 'De sacro Iesu Christi panniculo consule commentarium nostrum in Vitale Pecorario archiepiscopo referendum.'

259 In Cerva's work the relic is not assigned a specific identity; the author merely enumerated the most precious relics from Jesus' childhood; Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 466: 'Interea scias sacrum panniculum facile servari potuisse cum alia multa servata fuerint pueruli Iesu crepundia, uti sunt cunae ipsae et incunabula quae in Liberiana basilica Romae servantur et sportula palmae foliis contexta qua infans usus est Christus et

that coupled St Blaise's feast day on 3 February with the Feast of Candlemas on the previous day.[260] Its acquisition was unmistakably a strategic move by local authorities. This first-class relic complemented the Christological mementos already held in Dubrovnik's treasury, through which the authorities, via a redefined narrative, sought to assert undisputed supremacy in the region.

2.7 *'Reliquiae Domini nostri Iesu Christi'*

The section 'Reliquiae Domini nostri Iesu Christi', which opens Serafino Maria Cerva's 18th-century list of relics in Dubrovnik cathedral, lists 14 objects of worship, including the 'sacer Christi panniculus'.[261] Nevertheless, a comparison between the 14th-century inventory and the 1573 apostolic visitation of Giovanni Francesco Sormani reveals that, during the Middle Ages, the number of first-order relics, those believed to have come into direct contact with the Saviour, was smaller, though the collection was still remarkable.

Namely, an entire section of the 14th-century inventory is dedicated to Passion relics, grouped on the verso of the seventh folio. These include four fragments of the True Cross, alongside 'an icon-reliquary of the Sepulchre's stone' (una icona de lapide Sepolchri). Leaving aside the exact number of fragments of the True Cross, which, according to Cerva, were five in the now-lost 1350 inventory,[262] it must be emphasised that the difference found in the apostolic visitation concerns the addition of the fragment of the Column of the Flagellation[263] and the absence of the Marian relics found in the 14th-century list.[264] Cerva noted that the column relic was added in 1564, while he emphasised that the Marian relics were missing from later inventories, suggesting

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quam divus Gregorius Magnus papa Theodolinde reginae misit teste Ripamontio apud Ughellium Italia sacra tom. 4 Mediolanenses in Constantio Cittadino antistite pag. 60.'

260 Belamarić 2001, 173. It must be emphasised that, based on Serafino Razzi's account, Belamarić referred to the year 1060, during the tenure of Archbishop Tribunio, Vitale's successor, as also marking the arrival of St Simeon's body, thereby completing the complex design attributed to the legendary Ragusan prelate. See Belamarić 2001, 174, particularly n. 25. Cerva, meanwhile, attributed the event to Prelate Tiburio II, who lived a century later, thus maintaining consistency with the chronological references found in earlier sources, for example, Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 473: 'Simeoni Iusti prophetae qui Christum in ulnis receipt corpus Ragusium delatum anno 1159 dicemus in Tribuno Michaelio antistite.'

261 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 452.

262 *Ibid.*, 468; cf. Skurla 1868, 60.

263 Fisković 1966, 73.

264 *Ibid.* The 'Reliquiae Beatae Virginis Mariae' are also treated separately, although immediately below the Christological ones; Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 452.

their early (and obscure) removal, probably before 1350.[265] The remaining objects listed by the Dominican from Dubrovnik, as indicated by their dates, were added later, particularly from the 18th century onwards.[266]

An analysis of the Ragusan treasury shows that during the Middle Ages local authorities pursued a *pars pro toto* strategy, collecting various fragments of the True Cross. However, this approach did not resonate with pilgrims, who consistently recorded only a single fragment, emphasising its conspicuous size: 'a large piece of the trunk of the True Cross, one foot long' (et grant partie du fust de la vraye croys longue d'ung pié), 'a large piece of the Holy Cross' (ein großes Stück von dem heiligen Kreuz) and 'a large part of the wood of the Cross of Our Redeemer, measuring one and a half palms' (una gran parte del madero de la cruz de Nuestro Redemptor en que ay palmo & medio).[267] While these testimonies remain rather vague, it was the Czech pilgrim Jan Hasištejnsky who provided explicit details regarding its dimensions: 'And earlier, we were shown a large piece of the Lord Christ's cross, about half a cubit in length, one and a half fingers in width and roughly a finger in thickness, set in silver and gilded.'[268] Examining Rohault de Fleury's *Mémoire sur les instruments de la Passion*, a key study on the dimensions of True Cross fragments (including those in Dubrovnik), none of the fragments listed in the inventories matches the size reported by the Czech pilgrim.[269] Indeed, we can only speculate which among the Ragusan fragments was promoted at the time of the pilgrims' visits. Most likely it was one among the three patriarchal crosses recorded in the 14th-century inventory; it lists 'three icons with three crosses from the wood of Christ' (tres icone cum tribus crucibus de ligno Christi),[270] of which two 'twin' staurothekes survive today (Figs 131, 132).

The patriarchal crosses (one dating to the 10th century and crafted in Constantinopolitan workshops) are set in silver-gilt plates adorned with two angels at the top and mourners at the bottom, the style of which, as Lupis's research demonstrates, points to the workshops of the Adriobyzantine area.[271] While

265 *Ibid.*, 466–467, 469.

266 *Ibid.*, 452.

267 See respectively Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115; Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129.

268 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25: 'A naprzed nam bylo vkazano kus weliky krzize pana krysta yako na puol lokte z delij a na I a puol prstu z Ssirzij a dobrze prstu z tlusstij, w Strziebrze pozlaczeny.'

269 Rohault de Fleury 1870, 142–145; cf. Frolow 1961, 274; see also Frolow 1965.

270 Liepopoli 1908, 27; Liepopoli 1934, 29; cf. Lupis 2005, 135.

271 Lupis 2005, 136–137; Lupis 2014a, 405.



FIGURE 131 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Staurotheke, 10th and 12th–13th centuries
LUPIS 2014A, 404



FIGURE 132 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Staurotheke, 12th century
LUPIS 2014A, 406

Rohault de Fleury described the relics in these two crosses as 'small' and 'very small' (or, in other words, fragments so small as to be specified as such), the dimensions of the third patriarchal cross are reported.[272] This monumental Jerusalemite cross, dating to the 12th century, features openings at both crossbars, allowing the faithful to view the relic (Fig. 133).[273] It is possible that this impressive cross, brought from overseas on crusader ships,[274] was revered by the people of Dubrovnik and pilgrims alike as exceptionally worship-worthy due to its connection to the Holy Land. Could it be that local authorities promoted this relic during the peak years of Western pilgrim arrivals at the Dalmatian port?

Pilgrim testimonies also raise questions about timing: mentions of the True Cross begin in the 1480s and are concentrated within the following three decades. Explaining this requires a multifaceted analysis. Broadly speaking, we have seen that detailed pilgrim accounts along the Dalmatian coast emerge from the 1480s, a time when some diaries gained widespread popularity, akin to modern bestsellers. This explains the increase in references in the following decades. Conversely, the earlier absence of such mentions mirrors the phenomenon observed in Zadar, where testimonies overwhelmingly focussed on St Simeon's remains. As a result, references to other Gospel-linked relics, though present in the cathedral treasury since the 14th century, appear only in the 1480s. In Zadar this phenomenon involved two distinct monuments, whereas in Dubrovnik it concerned relics housed within the same cathedral treasury. Early pilgrim references focus on St Blaise, the city's patron, and relics associated with Christ's infancy narrative, with detailed accounts highlighting their miraculous nature. Only later did other relics in the cathedral treasury attract attention.

From 1486 onwards pilgrims also mentioned a relic of St John the Baptist in the Ragusan treasury, though local accounts conflict regarding both the nature of the object and its date of arrival. Serafino Maria Cerva listed this high-ranking Christian relic only in his fifth section, 'Manus et Brachia', but gave it the opening place within that section, accompanied by a detailed note recounting its arrival in Dubrovnik, brought by the Bosnian Franciscan Friar George ('Frater Georgius Bosnensis Minorita') in 1482.[275]

This account, with some variations, appears in the Ragusan chronicles. Nicola Ragnina added that the relic, an arm, was originally destined for

272 Rohault de Fleury 1870, 143–144; cf. Skurla 1868, 61–62.
273 Lupis 2012; Skurla 1866, 63.
274 Lupis 2014a, 411–412; Lupis 2012.
275 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 455, 476.



FIGURE 133 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Cross, 12th and 14th centuries
LUPIS 2014A, 412

Florence,[276] which later demanded its return through diplomatic channels, offering a substantial sum.[277] Subsequent sources mention a scandal involving Pope Innocent VIII and Sultan Bayezid II,[278] details that immediately recall the story of the arrival of the St John the Baptist relic on Rhodes.[279] Although both Cerva and Farlati (to whom we owe this last piece of information) referred to the 'left arm of St John the Baptist' (sinistrum brachium Joannis Baptistae),[280] contradictory accounts, both local and from foreign visitors, complicate the relic's precise identity and, consequently, its prestige. This inconsistency is already evident when comparing Ragusan chronicles: the anonymous chronicler in the *Annales Ragusini Anonymi* stated that the 'right hand of St John the Baptist' arrived in 1482,[281] while Nicola Ragnina, writing in the following century, claimed it was his left arm.[282]

Pilgrim testimonies confirm the coexistence of these conflicting traditions throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1507 Martin Wanner, chronicler of Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, was told by Dubrovnik's inhabitants that it was the Forerunner's left arm.[283] A decade later Gabriel of Pécsvárad identified the relic as John's index finger, which had pointed to Jesus, proclaiming His saving mission.[284]

Although the period in which the pilgrims' accounts are set (from 1486 onwards)[285] does not contradict Ragusan tradition regarding the relic's arrival

276 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 73; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 267.

277 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 267.

278 Farlati and Coleti, 1800, 191–192; Skurla 1868, 16; Liepopoli 1934, 16; cf. Lupis 2003, 115; Lupis 2014a, 432.

279 For the history of the hand of St John the Baptist, see in detail Zoitou 2020, 36–62.

280 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 476; Farlati and Coleti, 1800, 191–192.

281 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 73.

282 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 267. The detailed account compiled in the mid-16th century was almost entirely taken up by Serafino Razzi at the turn of the century, including the reference to the left arm. On the dependence of Razzi's text on that of Ragnina, see Lupis 2005, 132.

283 Frederick, Duke of Legnica and Brieg, 1507, ed. 1878, 117: 'wenn in der Thumkirchen oben empor ist ein schön gewölbe, da haben sie den lincken Arm mit der hand vnd mit den fingern des Heiligen teuffers S. Johanniss.'

284 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 19v: 'Pro eo quod digitus etiam sancti Ioanni Baptiste quo ostendit dominum circa Jordanem ad se venientem dicens. Ecce Agnus Dei ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.'

285 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'Reliquie sancte visitate ne la città di Ragusa: ossa dil brazo dil glorioso sancto Giohanne, adornato dignamente di argento'; Richard Guylforde, 1506, ed. 1851, 10–11: 'an hade with part of the arme of seynt John Baptyste, some what scorcherde with the fyre as it was brente'; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129: 'un braço con la mano de Sant Juan Baptista, la cabeça de Sant Pedro Mártyr'.

in 1482, it was once again the Hungarian Franciscan who provided us with unrecorded details on the subject:

> A certain archbishop of Dubrovnik, moved by devotion, visited the Holy Land in Jerusalem. From the cloths of Christ in which He had been wrapped, he brought one piece back to his archbishopric in Dubrovnik. However, it is unknown whether he obtained this small cloth by request or by some other means. Likewise, the finger of St John the Baptist, with which he pointed to the Lord as He approached him near the Jordan, saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world', was secretly taken from the Holy Land to Dubrovnik. It remains there to this day.[286]

Therefore, according to Gabriel of Pécsvárad, the relic did not arrive in 1482, nor was it brought by Friar George. Instead, the archbishop of Dubrovnik secretly transported it, along with another precious relic, shortly after the year 1000. Although it is difficult to verify this isolated testimony, another clue suggests that the Precursor's relics may indeed have been present in the cathedral before the 15th century. The 1335 inventory, which categorises relics based on their anthropomorphic nature, lists it as the 'arm of St John the Baptist' (Brachium Sancti Johannis Baptiste).[287]

If the reliquary was present as early as the first half of the 14th century, this mirrors the phenomenon in Zadar. The 1480s, in turn, recall the well-known story of the Constantinopolitan reliquary that arrived on Rhodes in 1484.[288] Notably, Dalmatian tradition consistently omits the Constantinopolitan connection, both in Ragusan chronicles and in Friar Gabriel's account. In the

286 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 19v: 'Quidam archiepiscopus Ragusiensis devotionis causa visitavit Terram Sanctam Hierusalem. Qui de pannis Christi in quibus fuit involutus unum pannum exportavit in suum archepiscopatum Ragusiensem. Ignoratur tamen si prece aut aliquo aliomodo illum panniculum obtinuerit. Pro eo quod digitus etiam sancti Ioanni Baptiste quo ostendit dominum circa Jordanem ad se venientem dicens. Ecce Agnus Dei ecce qui tollit peccata mundi. Furtim de Terra Sancta fuit sublatus in Ragusium. Et nunc est Ragusii.' In parallel, see also the version by Stefano Mantegazza, 1600, ed. 1616, 285: 'Non starò cercando se il sudetto Arcivescovo ottenesse gratis il detto panno, ò pur'à forza de'denari col mezo de'fauori ò con fortiuo infanno, nel qual modo à quest'istessa Città di Ragusa, oltra il detto Santo panno, fù portato ancora l'indice del Percusore San Giovanni Battista, intendo quell'istesso dito col quale accennò, e mostrò immaculato Agnello Christo nostro Signore, quando disse, Ecce Agnus Dei etc.'

287 Liepopoli 1908, 26. The circumstances had already attracted the attention of Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 476.

288 Cf. Sinkević 2014; Zoitou 2020, 45–62.



FIGURE 134 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Casket, 18th century, and arm reliquary of St John the Baptist, 1624
LUPIS 2014A, 432

excerpt dedicated to Sebaste and the remains of the Baptist, Pécsvárad reiterated that the saint's relic was transferred 'from Jerusalem to Dubrovnik, where it is now venerated with due reverence'.[289]

Today, the Ragusan relic is housed in an 18th-century shrine, crafted in Roman workshops specifically to hold a new, arm-shaped reliquary, an anthropomorphic container produced in Dubrovnik in 1624 (Fig. 134).[290] Due to the remodelling of the older reliquaries – most likely two, the arm and the

289 Gabriel of Pécsvárad, *c.*1519, ed. *c.*1519, fol. 28r; see also Farlati and Coleti, 1800, 191–192.
290 Lupis 2006, 101; Lupis 2014a, 432; Lupis 2015, 96.

shrine – no further information can be gleaned from their appearance regarding the origin or time of arrival of the relic. Moreover, none of the descriptions provided by Western travellers can be considered reliable for reconstructing the original appearance of the lost reliquaries.

However, Valier's account allows us to infer, much like with the Dubrovnik cloth, that the 18th-century case-shaped shrine housing the arm of the Baptist may have been modelled on the original reliquary described by the apostolic visitor in 1579: 'The arm and hand of St John the Baptist, enclosed in a glass reliquary covered with silver plates' (Brachium et manus Sancti Io. Baptistae in arca vitrea argenteis laminibus tecta conditum).[291]

If the 18th-century shrine in Dubrovnik was indeed based on the earlier version, its parallelepiped shape with a rectangular base and pyramidal lid would resemble the renowned Sienese reliquary commissioned in 1465 from Francesco d'Antonio, a prominent goldsmith from Siena.[292] This piece was ordered by Pope Pius II (Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini) of Siena to house the relic of the right arm of St John the Baptist in the cathedral of his hometown, where it remains *in situ*. The relic had been gifted to him in 1464 by Thomas Palaiologos, despot of the Morea, in exchange for a substantial sum.[293]

Additionally, the practice of housing relics within two reliquaries, a smaller one imitating the morphology of the hand or arm, allowing a partial view of the relic, encased in a larger, sumptuous monstrance with glass walls, is attested in accounts concerning the arrival of the relic on Rhodes. The Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson, much like the Sienese pontiff, promptly commissioned a lavish monstrance to enshrine the relic of the Precursor, which arrived on the island in the 1480s.[294]

The number of mentions of the relic in Dubrovnik by pilgrims (only four), while greater than those for the Zaratine relic, is still significantly more reduced than in the well-known case of Rhodes, where the Baptist's cult as protector of the Order received far greater attention. In Dubrovnik, however, the period during which references to the relic of one of the key figures in biblical history appear, alongside the almost concurrent prominence of the fragments of the True Cross, suggests a deliberate effort by local authorities to promote objects with direct connections to the Holy Land. Thus, in addition to strictly Christological relics, such as the fragments of the True Cross and the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*, the people of Dubrovnik also claimed possession of

291 Transcription in Fisković 1966, 74.

292 See Cioni 2010, 498–499.

293 On the history of the relic, see Popović 2017.

294 Zoitou 2020, 50–57.

the right arm of St John the Baptist, with which he not only baptised Jesus, but also pointed to Him as the Lamb of God.

Overall, systematic scrutiny of the late medieval travelogues reveals that the cathedral treasury was conceived and promoted, by virtue of Christological and evangelical references, following the *pars pro toto* strategy of collecting the mementoes that enjoyed the greatest cultic popularity along the pilgrimage route. The promotion of St Luke's authorship in connection to one of the oldest Marian effigies in Dubrovnik cathedral should also be read keeping in mind the latter interpretation. Thanks to pilgrims' testimonies, we know that the oldest icon in the cathedral, the *Madonna of Porat*, enjoyed similar veneration from the early 15th century onwards. All these elements support the hypothesis that the Dubrovnik cathedral treasury was curated not only to satisfy local devotional practices, but also to meet the spiritual needs of pilgrims *en route* to the Holy Land.

2.8 *The Collection of the Church of St Stephen in Pustijerna as an Alternative to the Cathedral Treasury*

The anonymous chronicler of the *Annales Ragusini Anonymi* mentioned the transfer of numerous relics from the church of St Stephen in the Pustijerna district to the cathedral after its construction. However, a significant collection of religious objects still remained in the sacristy of the church dedicated to the protomartyr in the 16th and 17th centuries. Documents from the Vatican Apostolic Archives confirm this, with Giovanni Francesco Sormani's inventory of 1573 offering additional details that refine local sources.[295]

295 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fols 638v–639v: 'Pes et crus Sancti Nerei et Archelai argento tegmine cooperti; Pes et crus Sanctae Petronille argento tegmine pariter cooperti; Tibiae parvae Sancte Domicillae argento tegmine reconditae; Pes et Tibia Sancti Nerei […] argento tegmine cooperti; Bina Brachia Sancte Petronille […] argento tegmine cooperti; Brachium sine nomine sancti argento coopertum; Brachium alterius sancti sine nomine argento coopertum; Tibia Sancti Achilei argento tegmine cooperta; Brachium Sancti Stefani argento tegmine coopertum; Brachium Sancte Domicellae argento tegmine coopertum; Tibia Sancti Archilei argento tegmine cooperta; Brachium Sancti Nerei coopertum […] argento; Tibia Sancti sine nomine argento tegmine cooperta; Brachium parvulus Sancte Petronille argento tegmine coopertum; Frustum capitis Sancti Stefani argenteo tegmine coopertum; Brachium Sancti Pancratii argenteo tegmine munitum; Frustum capitis unius Sancti sine nomine argento coopertum; Frustum gutturis Sancti Blaxii argento tegmine circundatum; Frustum capitis Sancti Pancratii argento tegmine circumdatum; Tibia Sancti Pancratii argenteo tegmine cooperta; Maxilla inferiori cum dentibus nonnullis Sancti Nerei super tabernacolo argenteo posita; Fusus fili nexi a Sancta Petronilla in tabernacolo argenteo positi cum pede aureo cereo; Maxilla inferior cum quatuor dentibus Sancte Apoloniae super colomna argentea parva posita; Frustum capitis Sancte Domicille argento tegmine circumdatum;

It is worth noting that Sormani's list includes 34 items, while Serafino Razzi, shortly afterwards, mentioned 50 cult objects,[296] and a 1493 document preserved in the Dubrovnik Archives mentions 38.[297] Nonetheless, the testimony of the apostolic visitor seems reliable when compared with Cerva's list of the relics transferred from the church of St Stephen ('Reliquiae ab aede divi Stephani translatae')[298] and especially when assessed with the objects still preserved today in the treasury of the Baroque cathedral.[299] These were transferred after the 1667 earthquake, passing through intermediate stages, along with the cathedral's relics, at the Revelin fortress and the Dominican monastery, before the two collections were merged into the new cathedral treasury.[300] In fact, the section of Cerva's list drafted after the transfer of both collections to the new location is, in view of the discovery of Valier's account, incomplete. Missing from the list are items connected to the titular saint of the church, such as the arm and fragments of his head (noted twice by the apostolic visitor), as well as the relic of St Blaise's throat, the head fragment of St Pancras, St Apollonia's jawbone and St Nicholas the Pilgrim's tibia. These relics were included in Cerva's treatises, but appear in other sections, among the relics of the Baroque treasury, where they are still stored nowadays.[301] It should also be noted that a group of reliquaries cannot be traced with certainty within the cathedral's collection, partly due to the large number of unidentified reliquaries. Based on

Frustum capitis Sancti sine nomine argenteo tegmine circumdatum; Tibia Sancti Nicolai peregrini argento tegmine cooperta; Brachium et manus Sancti Nerei argenteo cooperti; Frustum capitis Sancte Petronile argenteo circumdatum; Frustum capitiis Sancti Stefani argenteo circumdatum; Brachium Sancte Domicillae argenteo coopertum; Frustum capitis sine nomine sancti argento circumdatum; Frustum capitis Sancte Petronille argento circumdaum; Frustum capitis Sancti Sine nomine argento cicumdatum; Petium ligni Crucis santissimi Domini Nostri Jesu Christi longitudine unius palmi et latitudine quatuor digitorum in cruce argentea magna conditum in cuius crucis capitibus ab omni latere sunt multe figure argentee sculptae et mirificae laboratae. Quarum reliquiarum omnium Tegmina argentea sunt mirificis figuris ornata, aliisque variis ornamentis indicantibus magnum magisterium ac antiquitatem; Paramenta deinde ostensa fuerunt videlicet.'

296 Lupis 2015, 25; Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 175.

297 See Lupis 2015, 37.

298 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 452–453.

299 See the catalogue in Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 512–530.

300 Skurla 1868, 10–11.

301 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 452–456. The same applies to Lupis's research: regarding the group of reliquaries in the current cathedral collection identified by the Croatian scholar as originating from the church of St Stephen, the reliquaries CXXI, V, LXXII, XXXVII, CXIII, CXVI, CXXI and XXXVIII should also be added, following the nomenclature of the 1844 inventory, primarily used in scholarly publications; Lupis 2015, 100–101. For the 1844 inventory, see Skurla 1868, 20–27; cf. Horvat-Levaj 2014a, 512–530.

Sormani's account, many of these likely came from the church in Pustijerna. Among the objects now lost is the jawbone of St Apollonia, included in the section of Cerva's account dedicated to the relics transferred from the church of St Stephen. In addition to Sormani's list, the head of St Domitilla, the spindle and foot of St Petronilla and the arm of St Nereus are also recorded.[302]

Assessing the reliquaries that have survived from St Stephen's contributes to a better understanding of the church's significant role in the early Middle Ages, as well as its importance in Dubrovnik's sacred topography during the late Middle Ages, when the new Romanesque cathedral aimed for supremacy within the city walls. Ragusan chronicles mainly record two facts about the church: its foundation by Radoslav/Pavlimir Bello, great-grandson of the Serbian king exiled to Rome,[303] and its subsequent reconstruction under the Croatian King Stephen. According to the sources, Radoslav/Pavlimir Bello (described as belonging to a female line of Roman linage)[304] brought relics of the martyrs Achilleus, Nereus, Pancras, Domitilla and Petronilla to Dubrovnik. Margaret, the wife of King Stephen (also hailed as the queen of the Roman lineage), donated two prominent fragments of the True Cross to the church, along with a considerable amount of silver for the relics.[305]

Though the legendary nature of this narrative may be somewhat confused and chronologically imprecise, archaeological findings from the site of the Romanesque-Gothic church of St Stephen, destroyed by the 1667 earthquake, attest to two distinct construction phases, dating to the 8th–9th and 10th–11th centuries.[306] This material evidence complements written sources, as Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus referred only to St Stephen's church in Dubrovnik and as the repository of St Pancras's relics.[307] The features of the

302 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 452–453. These are mostly anthropomorphic reliquaries, with the exception of the 'Petronillae fusus' (Petronilla's spindle), which according to Cerva was kept in 'argentea pyxide chrystallis munita'; cf. Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 453, 471. A pyxis reliquary, made in the period of our interest, is not known to me to be in the present cathedral collection.

303 Živković 2003, 9–23.

304 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 16; cf. Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 270–277.

305 A summary concerning the Ragusan translation can be found in Skurla 1868, 5–7, although the issue is considerably more complex on a legendary level by analysing the Ragusan chronicles; see esp. Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 173, 193; see also Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 10, 16–17. On the Roman saints cycle in Dubrovnik, cf. Janeković-Römer 2019, 9–28, esp. 10.

306 Peković 2012, 341–375; Topić *et al.* 2019, 55–143.

307 Peković 2012; Lupis 2015, 23.

surviving reliquaries further support these accounts, aligning with descriptions in the Ragusan chronicles. The group of reliquaries, centred on bodily relics of saints from the Roman circle, includes two foot-shaped reliquaries attributed to Sts Petronilla and Domitilla. Their 15th-century refurbishment preserved key elements from the 10th century, such as the medallion depicting Constantine VII (Fig. 135).[308]

The church's central role in the city extended beyond Ragusan early history, especially in relation to relics not strictly tied to the Roman circle. A notable example is the controversial legend of the translation of the martyrs of Kotor, Andrew, Peter and Lawrence (known locally as the 'Petilovrijenci'), to Dubrovnik.[309] The earliest written mention appears in the 14th-century cathedral inventory, listing their relics,[310] while evidence of their cult's promotion in the early 15th century comes from Western pilgrims. In 1435 Hans Lochner mentioned 'a large piece of St Peter, St Paul and St Lawrence', and in 1481 Jan Aerts was the first to refer to miracles linked to the martyrs of Kotor: 'the venerable bodies of the holy martyrs Peter, Lawrence and Andrew, which were discovered through wondrous miracles, too many to recount here'.[311]

These miracles were later detailed by an anonymous chronicler, recounting the theft of the relics from Kotor, likely a version referred by Ragusans to the apostolic visitor Giovanni Francesco Sormani in 1573:

> This church was built out of devotion by the city's lords after the miraculous arrival of the relics of Sts Peter, Lawrence and Andrew in Dubrovnik. According to tradition, the martyrs, who were killed near Kotor by a member of the Zaguri family, revealed their location to a woman. Following her account, the lords sent a galley to retrieve the relics. When the ship initially could not depart, the crew discovered a missing body part left behind; once recovered, the galley sailed smoothly back to Dubrovnik. In honour of the saints, the lords constructed this church, and each year their relics are carried in procession from the cathedral for a Mass

308 Lupis 2014a, 407–408.

309 Gyug 2002, 200–212.

310 Liepopoli 1908, 26–27; cf. Ivić 2016, 19.

311 Johann Markgrafen and Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Hans Lochner), 1435, ed. 1858, 210: 'ein gross stückh von sant Peter vnnd sant Paul vnnd sant Lorenzenn'; Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 141: 'Item, de weerdige lichamen der heylige martelaren Petri, Laurentij, ende Andreae, die door wonderlicke mirakelen zijn gevonden geweest, te lang vallende, om hier te verhalen'.



FIGURE 135 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Foot reliquary of St Petronilla, 10th and 15th centuries
LUPIS 2014A, 407

> before being returned, accompanied by the archbishop, city lords and the people.[312]

His account broadly aligns with local chronicles, but key differences among sources concern the time frame and location of the relics' deposition following their miraculous arrival in Dubrovnik. Sormani did not explicitly state where the relics were placed; however, this excerpt is part of the description of the church dedicated to the three saints from Kotor, which he noted was built at the request of the Ragusans who retrieved the bodies.[313] He also mentioned that the heads of the saints from Kotor are carried in procession on 7 July from the cathedral to the church dedicated to them. This detail mirrors the anonymous Ragusan chronicle, which confirms the procession on the saints' feast day,[314] dates the translation to 1249 and claims the relics were initially deposited in the church of St Mary.[315] Serafino Razzi also placed the event in this period, specifying that the relics were housed in the cathedral, while the church built in their honour is simply identified as dedicated to St Peter.[316] A divergent version appears at the end of the 16th century in

312 Giovanni Francesco Sormani, 1573, AAV, Congr. Vesc. e Regolari, Visita Ap. 28, fols 655r–656r: '[…] questa ghiesa è stata fatta per devotione da questi signori e loro pagano, come ho detto di sopra, perché gli Santi martiri Piero, Lorenzo et Andrea furono portati miracolosamente nella città di Ragusi per una rivelatione fatta a una donna, el cui nome non so, da detti Santi Martiri, quali furono martirizati nel territorio di Cattaro lontano dodici miglia da detta città appresso un'acqua viva, dolce, fresca nella state, nel qual luogo poi fu edificata una capella da i cattarini e furono martirizati detti santi da uno signore di quei paesi della famiglia de' Zaguri, et al presente è qui un console de' Venitiani qual è di detta famiglia, dove i signori, vedendo questo miracolo intesolo da detta donna quale gli disse mandate a torre [sic] questi santi che sono nel tal luogo, armarono una galera e la mandarono a loro spese con molte torcie et altre solennità che si ricercono e, gionti quei che erano sulla galera al luogo rivelato, levorono i detti santi corpi e gli portarono sulla galera; e volendo far vela e partirsi con essi, la galea non si poteva muore [sic], onde ritornarono al luogo di dove havevano levati detti corpi santi e ritrovorono un membro d'un corpo di detti santi, quale tolsero e portarono appresso i corpi nella galera, che subito si levò e venne al suo viaggio e gionta a Ragusi i signori fecero edificare la presente ghiesa a honore e riverenza di detti santi, et ogn'anno si portano le teste de detti santi in processione dal domo sino a detta chiesa alli 7 di luglio, dove il Pievano che è pro tempore canta la messa e dopo si riportano dette relliquie al domo pur in processione, alla quale intervengono monsignore reverendissimo arcivescovo et i signori della città e tutto il popolo quasi.'

313 On the church dedicated to Sts Peter, Lawrence and Andrew, built in the 14th century and almost completely destroyed in 1667, see Ivić 2016, 17–25.

314 The feast day is also confirmed in Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 441.

315 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 33.

316 Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 35.

Nicola Ragnina's account, which dates the relics' arrival to 1026, in the time of Archbishop Vitale.[317] Ragnina connected their arrival with that of St Blaise's head and claimed that the relics were deposited in the church of St Stephen.[318] Therefore, as already pointed out by Belamarić, during the time of Archbishop Vitale the relics of the *Sacer Panniculus Christi* and St Blaise were added to the Ragusan collection, along with the three bodies from Kotor.[319]

Given that the anonymous chronicler reported the transfer of relics from the church of St Stephen to the cathedral after its construction, these could hypothetically have included the remains of the Kotor martyrs, the arrival of which Ragnina dated to the 11th century and placed in the protomartyr's church. Additionally, despite the absence of a census in the earliest cathedral inventory, it is worth investigating whether the translation also included relics from the Roman circle. In 1480 Pierre Barbatre recorded at the cathedral 'a baptised girl named Petronille', while in 1507 Friar Antonio of Lisbon listed 'a leg of St Pancras' at the same site.[320] While the reliquary of St Pancras is listed in the cathedral by Giovanni Francesco Sormani in 1573,[321] the relics of St Petronilla require closer scrutiny of today's cathedral collection, which preserves no fewer than five arm-shaped reliquaries of the Roman saint, compared to the three listed in the apostolic visitor's inventory for St Stephen's church.

The analysis of reliquaries definitively traced to the church of St Stephen reveals a near-continuous production of cult objects over the centuries for the church in Pustijerna. The reliquary of St Stephen dates to the 13th century; the foot-shaped reliquaries of St Nereus, St Pancras and St Nicholas the Pilgrim to the 14th century; and the head-shaped reliquaries of St Petronilla, St Domitilla and St Achilleus were likely commissioned by the municipality following a resolution of 19 January 1314.[322] The rest of the ensemble, produced by 15th-century workshops, confirms the exceptional status of the place of worship in the 15th century, regarded as worship-worthy due to the healing

317 This was confirmed later on by Serafino Maria Cerva, who stated explicitly that they arrived in 1026 during Vitale's tenure and also referred to the older inventories; Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 361.

318 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 210.

319 Belamarić 2001, 165–199, esp. 166–167; cf. Lupis 2012, 4; see also Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 361, 438, 466, 472.

320 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 11: 'une fille baptisée nommée Petronille dont Jésus, etc.'; Friar Antonio of Lisbon, 1507, ed. 1998, 129: 'una pierna de Sant Pancracio'.

321 Fisković 1966, 74.

322 Lupis 2015, 37.

properties associated with the chapel housing the Roman cycle martyrs' relics. Filippo Diversi's testimony corroborates this:

> There is also another church of St Stephen the Protomartyr, very devout, where the bodies of Sts Petronilla, the daughter of St Peter, and Domitilla, as well as a large collection of relics of other saints, are kept, adorned with silver gilt. In the chapel where they are preserved, those afflicted with the falling sickness and troubled by evil spirits are often freed through the merits and intercessions of those saints and holy women, and many are sometimes healed of various ailments, as I have often been told by trustworthy nobles, ancient and learned canons.[323]

At this point, it is worth questioning why Western pilgrims made no note of St Stephen's relic collection in their travel diaries. Could this omission – and the lack of promotion for a church located near both the ship landings and the main town church – somehow be connected to the fragment of the True Cross, traditionally said to have been donated by the Croatian queen in the 11th century?[324]

Seemingly, some of the Ragusan chronicles suggest a different story. They mention two fragments of the True Cross arriving in Dubrovnik, not brought by the Croatian queen, but by Radoslav/Pavlimir Bello.[325] This version was later echoed by Razzi,[326] who depended on the earlier Ragusan sources. Only in the 18th century did Cerva associate the relic with Queen Margaret, dating its arrival to *c.*1053.[327] Archival records from 1493 confirm the presence of 'two good-sized pieces of the Lord's wood' (duae petiae bonae quantitatis Ligni Domini) at the church of St Stephen.[328] Skurla, the first to study the relic,

323 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 148: 'Habetur et aliud templum Sancti Stephani prothomartiris valde devotum, ubi servatur sanctorum Petronillae filiae Sancti Petri et Domitelae(!) corpora et aliorum sanctorum copia grande reliquiarum argento inaurato ornatum. In capela conservationis earum saepius morbo caduco aegroti et spiritibus malignis vexati illorum sanctorum et sanctarum meritis et intercessionibus liberantur et aliis diversis lanuoribus interdum multi sanantur ut mihi a fide dignis nobilibus et antiquis ac doctis canonicis multotiens dictum extit.'

324 Skurla 1868, 42–44.

325 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 4; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 173.

326 Skurla 1868, 59.

327 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 471; cf. Skurla 1868, 43.

328 Lupis 2015, 77.

suggested that one fragment was alienated within three years, as only one gilded cross with a relic enclosed in it appears in a document of 1496.[329]

Fisković's later research connected this relic, moved to the cathedral after the 1667 earthquake and first listed in the 19th-century inventory of the metropolitan collection, to the Ragusan goldsmith Jerolim Matov, who in 1536 received a payment to make a silver cross with a piece of the True Cross, which is in St Stephen's ('pro faciendi cruce argentea uno frusto ligni Domini, quod est in Sancto Stephano').[330] If accurate, this would be at least the second reliquary crafted in Dubrovnik for this precious relic. Fisković also published a resolution of 1606 from the Council of Pregadi calling for the adornment with crystal, gold and silver of the fragment of the True Cross at St Stephen's church. He interpreted the document, taking into consideration a subsequent resolution of 23 October of the same year, as being linked to the creation of a tabernacle.[331] However, Fabio Tempestivo's *ad limina* visit in November 1607 clarifies that this was not a tabernacle, but rather a new cross-shaped reliquary to be crafted in Venice to house the relic directly:

> In the church of St Stephen, known as the parish church, many relics are kept, but particularly a large piece of the wood of the Holy Cross, namely a fragment about half a palm in length and a quarter in width, enclosed in a rough silver cross and covered only with a net, so that it could be touched by people, who often proposed to kiss it. However, at the persuasion of the archbishop, a new and splendid silver cross is being made in Venice, in which these relics will be more decently and magnificently preserved. The said relics are currently kept in a box, somewhat haphazardly, and the keys are held by two noble laymen. The senate does not allow the archbishop to interfere in the care of these relics. Although the senate, the treasurers and others who are responsible for them have been repeatedly reminded to provide suitable and well-ornamented reliquaries for the decent and orderly preservation of the relics, to date nothing has been done.[332]

329 Skurla 1868, 53–54. Although the two transcriptions do not match, Lupis probably also referred to the same document; see Lupis 2014b, 476.

330 Fisković 1949, 205, 240; see also Lupis 2014b, 476.

331 Fisković 1949, 205, 240; cf. Lupis 2014a, 424.

332 Fabio Tempestivo, 1607, AAV, Congr. Council, Relat. Dioec. 674A, fols 1v–2r: 'In ecclesia Sancti Stephani Plebania nuncupata asservantur quamplures Reliquiae, sed praecipue frustum ligni Sanctae Crucis notabilis magnitudinis, nempe di midii palmi longitudinis, et

Several points emerge from this account. First, the cross described by the archbishop, which allowed contact with the relic through a net, corresponds to the 16th-century (?) reliquary still preserved today, suggesting the Venetian cross was never acquired for unknown reasons (Fig. 136). Second, the archbishop's dimensions for the fragment of the True Cross (half a palm in length, a quarter in width) match the description of the prominent fragment in the cathedral, as noted by Jan Hasištejnsky.[333] Fisković linked the Czech pilgrim's description to the fragment at St Stephen's church,[334] but this remains problematic, since the aristocrat's description is clearly associated with the cathedral. On the other hand, it is also clear from published (those dated 1493, 1496 and 1606) and unpublished documents (Sormani's and Tempestivo's visitations) that the fragment remained at St Stephen's treasury for centuries, moved to the cathedral only after the earthquake occurred on 6 April 1667, as the poet and diplomat Nikola Bunić suggested in his speech on 14 April in the aftermath of the catastrophic event.[335]

Despite these considerations, the prominence of the large fragment of the True Cross in the cathedral remains an open question, especially since it was not part of the main collection until the 18th century. Does this suggest an unexplained, undocumented overlap with the fragment at St Stephen's or was the relic perhaps temporarily moved to the cathedral for display to foreign visitors, particularly high-ranking ones, when their ships landed? In this scenario, I would opt for the latter hypothesis, which also suggests the possible temporary translation of the relics related to St Chrysogonus in Zadar during the notable visit of the apostolic visitor (as I have assumed). Nonetheless, the exclusion of St Stephen's church from the pilgrims' tour, despite its impressive collection, remains unresolved.

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quarti latitudinis in rudi Cruce argentea inclusum, et solum reticula opertum, adeo ut ab ominibus tangi posset, quibus sepius deosculandum proponi solebat, sed Archiepiscopi persuasione Venetiis paratur nova Crux argentea insignis, in qua decentius et magnificentius conservabitur, dictae Reliquiae eodem modo in capsa quadam confuse conservantur et a duobus laicis nobilibus claves retinentur, et senatus non permittit Archiepiscopum aliquo modo se intromittere in cura dictarum Reliquiarum et licet senatus Thesaurarii et alii qui earum curam habent pluries fuerint moniti, ut providerent de reliquiariis comodis et ornatis quibus decenter et ordinate asserventur, usque modo nihil actum fuit.'

333 Jan Hasištejnsky, 1493, ed. 1902, 25.

334 Fisković 1949, 205.

335 Skurla 1868, 54–55.



FIGURE 136 Dubrovnik, cathedral treasury. Cross, 16th century (?)
LUPIS 2014A, 427

3 Ragusan Mendicant Houses

3.1 *Historical Background*

'Finally on Sunday [...] we reached the port of Dubrovnik, and they disembarked the pilgrims, and we entered the city of Dubrovnik, and I went to the monastery of our friars, by whom with great charity I was received and refreshed, because I needed it.'[336] In 1474 the Dominican pilgrim Alessandro di Filippo Rinuccini, on his second attempt to reach the Holy Land, found hospitality with the Ragusan brethren shortly after stepping ashore, walking a few hundred metres and crossing Ploče Gate.[337]

The arrival of the members of the Dominican friars in Dubrovnik dates back to 1225, while the construction of the still-extant (although much-altered) complex began in the early 14th century (Fig. 137). The suburban settlement of Ploče, located near the port, was incorporated within the extension of the city walls towards the east around 1378. By the time of the pilgrims' visits, the Dominican complex stood as the counterpart to another mendicant complex, built on the north-western outpost near Pile Gate (Fig. 138). However, both the arrival of the preaching friars in the area (*c.*1225) and the commencement of work on their church (1301) appear, based on limited evidence, to have preceded the establishment of the Franciscans in Dubrovnik.[338]

Although tradition links the arrival of the Franciscans to the founder of the order, who is said to have landed at the Dalmatian port during one of his attempts to reach the Holy Land in the early 13th century,[339] the first confirmed mention of the Friars Minor in the area dates to 1235.[340] Their arrival is assumed to precede this date slightly, likely around 1230. The initial Franciscan settlement was outside the city walls in the western suburb of Pile, but due to threats from Serbian King Stefan Uroš II, they relocated within the fortified

336 Alessandro di Filippo Rinuccini, 1474, ed. 1993, 51.

337 Concerning the Dubrovnik monastery, the primary reference is the brief work by the Dominican historian Stjepan Krasić (2002), while more recently a catalogue of an exhibition held in Zagreb (2007–2008; see Fisković 2011) has addressed various aspects of the Ragusan monastery. Cvito Fisković's volumes on goldsmithing (1949) and on Dubrovnik's architecture and sculpture (1947) remain foundational, alongside contributions by Fisković (2005), Cooper (2009), Krasić (2011) and Lupis (2017) on both monasteries. The primary reference volume on the Franciscans in Dubrovnik is the one edited by Velnić (1985c), commemorating 750 years of Franciscan presence in the region. For a detailed historiographical background, refer to Velnić's introductory contribution (Velnić 1985a, 85–94). Equally essential are the subsequent volumes dedicated to the Dalmatian Franciscan province of St Jerome: Fisković 2010; Sopta and Fisković 1999.

338 Fisković 2011, 293; Cooper 2009, 86.

339 Velnić 1985b, 95–96; Škunca 2010, 15; Matanić 1985, 29–30.

340 Lučić 1985, 7; Velnić 1985b, 97–98.



FIGURE 137 Dubrovnik, Dominican monastery, view from the north-west
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FIGURE 138 Dubrovnik, Franciscan monastery, view from the north-east
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 139 Dubrovnik, church of St Dominic, south portal
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

centre in the early 14th century. Around 1317 the old settlement was demolished to prevent occupation by Nemanjić troops,[341] a time frame noted by Nicola Ragnina in the late 16th century.[342] The first archival reference to the new Franciscan church's construction dates to two years later and indirectly concerns the building of that church.[343]

The construction of the two Ragusan complexes, following mendicant order customs, began with the conventual churches. While no details survive regarding the consecration of the Franciscan church,[344] the Dominican church, dedicated to the order's founder, was consecrated on 14 November 1314, just over a decade after work commenced.[345] The works, however, unfolded gradually over several decades, with the nave remaining under construction until the mid-14th century. This long process culminated in the completion of the south portal in 1363, which faced the public street and served as the main entrance until the west portal was opened in the mid-15th century (Fig. 139).[346]

341 Velnić 1985b, 100–102.
342 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 224.
343 Velnić 1985b, 105–106.
344 *Ibid.*, 105–106, 112.
345 Krasić 2002, 32; cf. Cooper 2009, 86.
346 Fisković 2011, 288, 293.



FIGURE 140 Dubrovnik, church of St Francis, view from the west
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

During this period the construction of the Franciscan church was also in progress, as is evidenced by documents from the 1320s and 1340s. A resolution of 1342 by the Council of Pregadi concerning the construction of stairs for easier access suggests the 14th-century phase of the church's main building was nearing completion.[347] However, this document can be misleading, as it places the works on the western façade, while the entrances, similar to the Dominican church, were actually on the southern side, facing the street.

Both mendicant churches were built along the main city thoroughfare: the Franciscan church near Pile Gate at the start of the Stradun (Fig. 140) and the Dominican church at its north-eastern turn on St Dominic Street.[348] This strategic positioning not only encouraged attendance, but also required expansion to the north side of the Stradun. The full length of the complexes did not exceed the east–west span of the main buildings, each measuring over 40 m.

The two monumental churches, each with a single-nave layout, also mirrored each other in proportions. St Dominic measured 42 m east–west and

347 Velnić 1985b, 106–107.

348 The location of the Franciscan monastery was accurately described by Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126: 'Una via comenza, intrando da la porta che vene dal porto et andando di longo, fino a la porta dove è el monastero de Santo Francesco.'

14 m south–north, with a spacious sanctuary leading to a large polygonal apse on the east side, separated from the nave by a typical triumphal arch.[349] The Franciscan church, severely damaged in the 1667 earthquake, is believed to have retained its original dimensions after a 17th-century restoration: 45 m in length and 13.8 m in width.[350]

The sacristy and bell tower were attached to the north-east sides of both churches as separate structures. The precise appearance of the Franciscan bell tower remains unknown due to its collapse in the 17th century, but the mention of a bell from 1370 suggests[351] construction preceded that of the Dominican bell tower, which began in 1390, continued into the 1530s and underwent considerable alterations in the 17th and 18th centuries.[352]

While the Franciscans completed three additional buildings and a cloister, crafted by Mihojle Brajkov from Bar (present-day Montenegro),[353] during the 14th century, the Dominican complex developed along a different timeline. Up to the mid-15th century, next to the bell tower, the works affected the first floor of the conventual wings, which developed on the church's northern side; during this period the sacristy and the conventual hall were also carried out.[354] In the second half of the 15th century the construction works on the arcades of the cloister began: between 1450 and 1456 local masters, following the design of the Italian master Maso di Bartolomeo, carried out the southern ones. The eastern ones were accomplished between 1460 and 1462, and the ones of the opposite side between 1464 and 1469. Finally, between 1479 and 1483 the northern porticoes were completed, when the portal on the north façade of the church, leading to the cloister, was also opened (Fig. 141).[355] Starting from 1492 up until the first half of the 16th century it was the turn of the second storey of conventual wings, which hosted dormitories, rooms for foreign diplomatic visitors and a library.[356]

Despite 22 recorded mentions, none of the Western pilgrims visiting the Ragusan monasteries in the 15th and 16th centuries noted the ongoing

349 Fisković 2011, 288; Krasić 2002, 32–33.
350 Velnić 1985b, 110.
351 *Ibid.*, 113.
352 Fisković 1947, 112–113; Krasić 2002, 52–55; Fisković 2011, 293.
353 Velnić 1985b, 113–119; Cooper 2009, 90.
354 Fisković 2011, 293.
355 Fisković 1947, 118–119; Fisković 2011, 293.
356 Fisković 2011, 293. No archival documentation exists regarding the construction of the second floor of the Franciscan complex. In the past this absence led some authors to suggest a later elevation, though now largely disproved, undertaken after the great earthquake; Velnić 1985b, 119–120.



FIGURE 141 Dubrovnik, Dominican monastery, cloister
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

construction works. This is partly explained by the general brevity of the entries, which mostly praise the beauty of the complexes, and by the fact that most entries (17) date back to the 1480s, a time of significant stagnation in the work, which did not resume until the 1520s, when the upper floors were elevated, except for the northern porticoes, completed in 1483. In 1395 Ogier VIII d'Anglure did not mention the monastery, only the church,[357] while in 1495 German pilgrims visiting Dubrovnik after the long, intermittent construction process described it as a new monastery.[358] Nevertheless, during the final, fervid phase of construction, two 15th-century pilgrims from the Dominican order found hospitality at the complex: along with Rinuccini, Felix Fabri stayed there

357 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1395, ed. 1878, 97: 'l'église des Jacobins de Raguise'.

358 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53: 'Danach sind meine G.H. gegangen in das Predigerkloster, da ist ein hübsches neues schönes Kloster.'; see also the commentary on the two conventual churches by Georges Lengherand of Mons, 1485–1486, ed. 1861, 250: 'Nous alàmes veoir les églises des Jacopins et de saint Franchois qui sont très belles églises et sont nouvellement faictes. En une chappelle ou bourg de la ville trouvay escript: Gilles Vinchent.'

and continued his journey to the Holy Land with Friar Francesco of Kotor and Friar Domenico, brothers entrusted to him by the prior.[359]

A comparative historical analysis of the two mendicant monasteries reveals that pilgrims visited the Franciscan complex more frequently, despite its greater distance from the docking site. In 1458 Roberto di Sanseverino and Gabriele Capodilista attended Mass at 'sancto Francischo' and dined twice, at the expense of the 'signoria', with the Friars Minor.[360] In 1470 Gaudenz von Kirchberg, after visiting the cathedral and the Dominican monastery, noted that there was no other lodging in the city for pilgrims and foreign visitors. As a result, he stayed overnight at the Franciscan complex and took his meal in the cloister, beneath a magnificently executed vine pergola.[361] A decade later the Parisian Anonymous praised the Franciscan cloister and gardens, planted with olive, orange and pomegranate trees, as well as palms, sycamores, laurels and 'all sorts of other foreign trees', calling it the most beautiful in the country.[362] His companion, Pierre Barbatre, likewise remarked that it was the most pleasant place he had ever known (Fig. 142).[363] The pinnacle of praise for the Friars Minor complex came from Pietro Casola, who exclaimed: 'The monastery could not be improved.'[364]

However, the mendicant friars of Dubrovnik had a different view, continuing to commission new works for the altars of their two churches at the end of the 15th century and throughout the 16th.[365] Like the rest of the city's monuments, the two complexes suffered significant damage in the 1667 earthquake. The conventual churches had the worst fate: the devastating natural catastrophe, followed by fires, destroyed more than three centuries of *mise-en-scène* orchestrated within the church interiors. Additionally, restorations pursued in the following decades gave a new Baroque face to the church interiors.[366] However, the latter operation, contrary to medieval practices, was not sponsored by the

359 Felix Fabri, 1480, 1483–1484, ed. 1843, 35; cf. Krasić 2001, 162, with notes.

360 Roberto da Sanseverino, 1458–1459, ed. 1999, 103–105; Gabriele Capodilista, 1458, ed. 1966, 169.

361 Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104–105: 'Und hörten in demselben closter mess und giengen darnach in sant Franzischgencloster und heten da unser hörberg, wann in der stat ist kain hörwerg, darinen man pilgrein oder frembde leit behörwergt. Und assen in demselben closter auf dem creytzgang das mal. Dariber was ain cöstliche pergel von we röben gezogen nach lust gebawt.'

362 Anonymous, 1480, ed. 1882, 37.

363 Pierre Barbatre, 1480, ed. 1974, 115.

364 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126–127: 'El convento non si potrebbe megliorare.'

365 Velnić 1985b, 109.

366 *Ibid.*, 121, 123–127; Cooper 2009, 86, 90.



FIGURE 142 Dubrovnik, Franciscan monastery, cloister
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

local authorities: the maritime republic, on her knees after the great earthquake, was unable to react.

Later on the complexes suffered considerable damage that was, once again, followed by a new wave of restoration works. These losses took place during the French occupation (1806–1814), which brought about the definitive fall of the Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik, yet again in the times of the city's annexation to Austria (1815–1918) and finally during the war among the states of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, which had devastating repercussions for the historical centre of Dubrovnik. Heavy artillery marks of the Serbian-Montenegrin army of the Yugoslav People's Army (1991–1992) are still visible on the buildings of the Franciscan monastery.

3.2 *The Churches of St Dominic and St Francis: Interior Settings and Relic Collections*

Serafino Razzi described a widespread European practice, established in the 13th century, among mendicant orders: '[...] it should be known that almost all of the dead of Dubrovnik are buried in the monasteries of St Dominic and St Francis. Therefore, their fathers keep full of burials, not only in the church,

but also in the sacristy: the cloister, the chapter house and even the cemetery or, rather, the passage in front of the church.'[367] In Dubrovnik the two monasteries at the heart of the city's religious life became privileged burial sites from the outset. The oldest tomb in the Dominican complex, located in the church's apse, dates to 1315,[368] only a year after the building's consecration. As for burials in the church of St Francis, the first testamentary provision dates to 1329.[369]

The choice of burial within sacred space reflected the social standing of the testators, whose prestige followed a strict hierarchy in the eyes of premodern society. The most sought-after location was the Dominican choir, where, in 1315, members of the noble Ragusan Cerva family chose to be buried, in a space frequently occupied by the friars and positioned closest to the liturgical rites. The same logic later drove the construction of private chapels in the 15th century: one in the southern corner of the apse, reserved for the Lukarević family, and another in the sacristy, commissioned by Johannes Sparterius, the Aragonese consul in Dubrovnik.[370]

Beyond securing burial in prominent locations,[371] donors also financed reliquaries, altars and sacred images, shaping the visual and devotional landscape of the two complexes. Both mendicant settlements housed not only the tombs of Ragusan patrician families and confraternities, but also a profusion of richly decorated side altars, associated with the performance of *pro anima* Masses. However, much of the 14th- and 15th-century ornamentation was lost in the 1667 earthquake (Fig. 143). To grasp the richness of their *mise-en-scène*, one must turn to the churches of St Francis and St Dominic, which once held, respectively, 21 and 22 sumptuously adorned altars. Yet, for pilgrims the focal point was almost always the high altar. The earliest known reference dates to 1470 in a report by Gaudenz von Kirchberg: 'Afterwards we went to the monastery of the Dominican Order, where we were shown a beautiful altarpiece containing 16 silver figures, finely crafted and gilded. However, no precious

367 Serafino Razzi, 16th century, ed. 1595, 122: '[…] è da sapere, come quasi tutti i morti di Raugia si sepeliscono nei conventi di San Domenico e di San Francesco. Onde suoi padri tengono piena di sepulture, non solamente la Chiesa, ma eziando la sagrestia: il claustro, il capitolo, et anco il cimitero, ò vero andito avanti alla Chiesa.'

368 Krasić 2002, 15.

369 Velnić 1985b, 112.

370 Krasić 2002, 39; see also the catalogue in Fisković 2011, 290. On the subject of intercessory practices in medieval society and the placement of tombs within specific areas of the sacred building, see the indispensable studies by Michele Bacci (Bacci 2000a, Bacci 2003).

371 Also noteworthy in this regard is a clause on family burial with the Dominicans, established in 1228 by a noble donor of the Palmotić family in exchange for granting the garden and the church of the Assumption, which temporarily housed the White Friars; Krasić 2002, 14, 25.



FIGURE 143 Dubrovnik, church of St Dominic, interior
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stones were set into it, though it was still very costly. We attended Mass in the monastery and then proceeded to the Franciscan monastery.'[372] Like the references to the 15th-century altarpiece of the cathedral (commissioned in 1457), this account moves beyond local records to provide the first known on-site testimony of the silver-gilt high altarpiece in the Dominican church, a work commissioned in 1432 from Pietro di Panfani da Sermoneta.[373] By 1440 Filippo Diversi still noted its absence from the altar, mentioning ongoing work and anticipating that the final result would not be inferior to that of the Franciscan monastery.[374]

The Franciscan altarpiece was, in fact, the first of Dubrovnik's three great altarpieces to be commissioned. In 1388 Bartolomeo de Domno, whose

372 Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104: '[...] Darnach giengen wier in das closter sant Daminicen orden, do zaigt man unß aß auch ain schene tafel, darinen stuenden sechzöhen sylberene pilder und waren sehen gemacht und übergult, aber kain ödelgestain waz darinen versötzt, und waß doch gar kostlich. Und hörten in demselben closter mess und giengen darnach in sant Franzischgencloster.'

373 Fisković 1949, 208; cf. Cooper 2009, 88.

374 Filippo Diversi, 1440, ed. 2004, 148; cf. Fisković 1949, 208.

Venetian origins were explicitly stated in the documents, was entrusted with its execution, underscoring the influence of lagoon models on the altarpieces that became prevalent in 15th-century Ragusan churches.[375] Though these works were lost, as already noted in the 17th century, their appearance can be partially reconstructed by considering the only surviving altarpiece from the region: that of the cathedral of St Tryphon in nearby Kotor (Fig. 144).[376]

The three monumental altarpieces that once adorned Dubrovnik's principal churches followed a shared scheme, as already discussed above regarding the cathedral,[377] featuring two tiers of saints symmetrically arranged around the central figures of Christ and the Virgin. What set them apart was the number of sacred figures included and the overall scale of the work. For the Franciscan altarpiece in particular, its arrangement is detailed in a passage by Pietro Casola: 'Its altar has a Majesty, made of silver, gilded with gold, with two tiers, featuring life-size figures and 12 figures per row. In the upper row, in the middle, there is a God the Father; in the lower row, in the middle, there is Our Lady, holding the Child in her arms.'[378]

That the complex programme included at least 26 figures is also evident, as Fisković has pointed out, from the contract signed in 1402 with two Dalmatian masters. They were entrusted with completing the work after the death of Bartolomeo de Domno in 1394, by which time the project had stalled, still featuring only 21 saints in relief.[379] The Dominican altarpiece also passed through different hands: after Pietro di Panfani left Dubrovnik, its completion was assigned in 1443 to Živko Gojkanovic and a certain master of German origin, Giovanni 'Todescho'. This document is particularly valuable as it sheds light on the technical execution of these complex silver-gilt altarpieces. Their creation required expert craftsmen proficient in multiple techniques, as reflected in the commission: 'To supply, gild, enamel and set onto the panel the silver altarpiece, which was crafted by master Piero de Serinona. This altarpiece must be completed and finished in the manner that we, the prior and the procurators, will indicate. Whatever is needed for the said altarpiece, namely silver, gold, refined silver and glass stones, shall be provided by us, the prior and the

375 Fisković 1949, 200; Velnić 1985b, 108; cf. Cooper 2009, 91.

376 On the altarpiece from Kotor, see Jakšić 2013, 53–66; cf. Cooper 2009, 88; see also Živković 2010, *passim*.

377 See pp. 300–301 above.

378 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 126–127: 'El suo altare ha una Maiestà, de argento, sopra aurato, de dui ordini, de figure cubitale e XII figure per ordine, in l'ordine superiore; in el mezo egli uno Dèo Patte; in l'ordine inferiore, in el mezo, egli. una Nostra Dona, col Fiolo in brazo.'; cf. Cooper 2009, 91.

379 Fisković 1949, 200.



FIGURE 144 Kotor, cathedral of St Tryphon. Silver-gilt altarpiece of the high altar, 14th–17th centuries
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

procurators.'[380] Despite these specifications, the document does not mention the size or composition of the work. The first indication came from aforementioned account by Gaudenz von Kirchberg in 1470,[381] who confirmed that it comprised 16 figures. In the 1490s German pilgrims specified that 'The altarpiece of the high altar is made of gold, silver and precious stones, in size and shape like the one in the cathedral.'[382] In the following century Serafino Razzi offered a clearer picture of its arrangement: in the upper tier, the risen Christ stood in the centre, flanked by four saints on each side. Below, the Madonna and Child were similarly surrounded by an equal number of figures, among them St Peter, St Paul, St John, St Dominic, St Peter the Martyr, St Thomas Aquinas, St Blaise and St Mary Magdalene.[383] According to Razzi, the Dominican altarpiece, 'for the number of figures in silver and gold', was considered the richest compared to 'two other similar altars', namely those in the main city church and the Franciscan church.[384] This judgment differs from that expressed by Antonio da Crema, who in 1486 described the Franciscan altarpiece as 'the most beautiful, richest and of finest silver among all those in the city'.[385]

Regardless, it is certain that the prestige of the two mendicant churches was directly reflected in their furnishings, which were often mirrored in each other. Both churches featured monumental crucifixes. While the contentious history of the lost Franciscan crucifix is still debated, especially concerning its presumed date of creation and its exact appearance,[386] the historiographical

380 Transcription edited in *ibid.*, 208, 222–223: 'di fornire e indorare e smaltare e ficare ala tola la pala darzento la qual fo lavorada per maistro peiro de serinona, la qual pala dieno lavorare e fornirla a quel modo come noy prior et li prochoradori li mostraremo e quello bisognara per la detta pala zoe darzento e doro e de arzento vino e de pietre de vetro che tuto questo nuy prior e li procuratori li siamo tegnudi de darli.'

381 Gaudenz von Kirchberg (Friedrich Steigerwalder), 1470, ed. 1905, 104. The following pilgrims also dwelt on the Dominican altarpiece, without, however, offering significant insights: Jan Aerts, 1481–1484, ed. 1652, 141: 'In't selve Convent van St. Dominicus staet oock een silvere vergulde tafel.'; Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'In Sancto Domenico gi è una altra tabula di argento.'; Nicholas le Huen (de Ponteau), 1487, ed. 1488, n.p.: 'Belles esglises; tresnobles monasteres. De freres minneurs et de predicateurs les conuens magnifiques. Des predicateurs vint avec nous ung frere aage de .xxvi. ans. An leur maison au grant autel a une table dargent doree.'

382 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52: 'Die Tafel von dem hohen Altar ist gemacht von Gold, Silber und Edelgestein in Maß und Form wie die Tafel im Thumb.'

383 Krasić 2002, 37.

384 *Ibid.*; cf. Cooper 2009, 88.

385 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'più bella, più ricca e de più fino argento de tutte quelle sonno in questa cità'.

386 See Cooper 2009, 90–91.



FIGURE 145 Dubrovnik, church of St Dominic. Crucifix by Paolo Veneziano, 1348–1352
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

understanding of the 14th-century Dominican crucifix, now displayed under the triumphal arch and considered a symbol of the Dubrovnik complex, is undoubtedly clearer.[387] This is due to the work's attribution to Paolo Veneziano, supported both by stylistic analysis and archival evidence (Fig. 145).

Although we lack the original deed by which the Dominicans commissioned the imposing crucifix (measuring 5 m in height and 4.07 m in width), some contemporary documents suggest that the Venetian master may have been in the Dalmatian port around the mid-14th century.[388] The first definitive reference to the work's creation is found in later testimonies, with the Dominican Serafino Maria Cerva in the 18th century linking it to the year 1358.[389] Cerva also claimed that, thanks to the crucifix, the plague that had ravaged the city ceased.[390] Ragusan chronicles from the mid-14th century record

387 *Ibid.*, 86–87.
388 *Ibid.*
389 *Ibid.*
390 *Ibid.*

plague outbreaks in 1348 and 1361;[391] however, 1358 remains a key date in the city's history, as it marked the end of Venetian rule over Dubrovnik, as noted by Nicola Ragnina, who stated it was the year the 'Ragusans were freed from the Venetian counts.'[392]

In any case, it was common to associate the cessation of plagues and other calamities in the bustling Dalmatian port with cult objects believed to have miraculous powers or with the intercession of certain saints, as elsewhere. This phenomenon is well-documented: in 1466 the Republic funded the construction of a votive church dedicated to St Sebastian, which, according to Ragnina, caused the plague to end immediately after its foundation (Fig. 146).[393] Similarly, the votive church of St Saviour, opposite the west façade of the church of St Francis, was built in 1520 in response to a vow made after an earthquake struck the city.

Returning to the arguments connected with the Dominican crucifix, it must be pointed out that other late medieval testimonies seem to attest to its exceptional status: German pilgrims visiting the complex in 1495 were told of a cross flanked by angels holding censers, who on feast days would miraculously animate and swing their thuribles to incense the crucifix: 'Their lordships were assured that the monastery houses a crucifix, on either side of which an angel hangs, holding a censer in its hand. On all high feasts – Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the eve and day of Our Lady – the angels move, as if offering incense to the holy crucifix, which is indeed a marvellous sight.'[394] Although this excerpt is seemingly linked to the Dominican monastery, it is, rather, a misunderstanding by the scribe Johann Meisenheimer, who documented the travel account of Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken. As Krešimir Kužić has pointed out, the note indirectly confirming the early attestation of this cult phenomenon actually refers to the crucifix at the Franciscan church. This can be seen in a 17th-century vernacular letter which reproduces the story extensively and is part of the canonisation process of Friar Giacomo della Marca

391 *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 1300–1500, ed. 1883, 38–41; Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 227, 233.

392 Nicola Ragnina, 16th century, ed. 1883, 230.

393 *Ibid.*, 262; Krasić 2002, 133–134.

394 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53: 'Es ist meinen G.H. für wahr zugesagt, dass im Kloster sei ein Kruzifix: Auf einer jeglichen Seite hänge ein Engel mit einem Räucherfass in seiner Hand. Alle hohen Feste als Weihnachten, Ostern, Pfingsten und unser lieben Frauen Abend und Tag bewegen sich die Engel, eben als geben sie dem heiligen Kruzufix Rauch aus ihrem Räucherfass, welches dann ein köstliches Ding ist.'



FIGURE 146 Dubrovnik, churches of St Sebastian (left) and St Dominic (right)
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

(1393–1476), who, according to the epistle, is credited with installing the angels and predicting the miraculous episodes.[395]

Further new details emerge from pilgrims' accounts of the cult of relics at the two mendicant churches, shedding light, in the absence of inventories (a documentary gap that would continue until the early 18th century), on the composition of the earliest nucleus of relics preserved there. By the end of the 14th century the annotation of Ogier VIII d'Anglure reveals that the White Monks of Dubrovnik already boasted an impressive collection with Christological references: 'Item, in the church of the Jacobins in Dubrovnik, we were shown one of the fingers of Lord St Stephen and the True Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ and several other relics of saints, which were very well encased in silver.'[396] The French pilgrim's mention of 'several other relics of saints', although it is not possible to establish the exact timing of their arrival, was clarified a century later by Johann Meisenheimer:

> There, [in the Dominican monastery,] my lords saw the holy remains as follows: a large, beautiful piece of the Holy Cross; the hand of St Leo the holy pope; then, a bone of St Luke the holy Evangelist; a bone of St Theodore the Martyr; a head of one of the Holy Innocents; the finger of St Dominic; a thorn from the crown of our Lord; and a piece of our Lord's robe. There, a lady, who had been ill for 12 years, was healed as soon as she touched that robe. Then the finger of St Ursula. Further a chest full of many other holy relics, all framed in gold and silver.[397]

This testimony, which indirectly confirms the custom, similar to that examined in relation to the other places of worship in Dubrovnik, of keeping the relics

395 Kužić 2013, 99; see also Velnić 1985b with annexes.

396 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1395, ed. 1878, 97: 'Item, en l'eglise des Jacobins de Raguise nous fut montré l'un des dois de monseigneur saint Estienne, et de la vraye Croix de Nostre Seigneur Jhesu Crist, et plusieurs autres reliques de sains et de sainctes, qui estoient tresbien envaissellées en argent.'

397 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53: 'Danach sind meine G.H. gegangen in das Predigerkloster, da ist ein hübsches neues schönes Kloster, da ihre G. haben gesehen das Heiligtum: ein großes hübsches Stück von dem heiligen Kreuz; St. Leonis des heiligen Papstes Hand; von St. Lux des heiligen Evangelisten Bein; von St. Theodoricus Märtyrers Bein; ein Haupt von einem der unschuldigen Kindlein; St. Dominikus Finger; ein Dorn von unseres Herrn Krone; ein Stück von unseres Herrn Rock. […]; St. Ursula Finger; eine Kiste voll viel anderen Heiligtums, alles in Gold und Silber gefasst.'

in a chest, is reliable when compared with some of the objects still preserved in the Dominican monastery exhibition and, above all, when read in parallel with the section dedicated to the monastery ('Reliquae quae in divi Dominici servantur') in Serafino Maria Cerva's *Prolegomena*.[398] The latter, accompanied by annotations regarding the arrival or first attestations at the site, allows for a better clarification of certain inaccuracies inherent in Meisenheimer's account. The arm reliquary associated with Pope St Leo should instead be linked to the bishop-saint and martyr of the same name ('Leo episcopus et martyr'), as indicated by an inscription on the reliquary recorded by Cerva.[399] Moreover, the reference to the presence of the relics of St Theodore the Martyr, correctly marked by Cerva as the arm of St Theodore the Martyr, should be also considered misleading.[400] This is the case as well concerning the bodily remains of St Luke, counted by the pilgrim as the bone of the Evangelist: the latter cultic object was indexed by Cerva in the section 'Hands and Arms' ('Manus et Brachia').[401] In contrast, the reference to the presence of the two finger-shaped reliquaries of St Dominic and St Ursula, as well as the Sacred Thorn of the Passion, is faultless. In the details concerning the presence of no less than 'four thorns of the Lord's crown' (quatuor spinae coronae Domini), Cerva pointed out that only one of them was mentioned in the 1490 inventory (now lost) and that it was kept in a crystal vase.[402]

In fact, all of the relics analysed so far can be traced back to the Dominicans through the 1490 inventory, which was still preserved at the beginning of the 18th century. Following this source, the presence of the remains of St Titus, Sts Cosmas and Damian, the pope and martyr St Marcellus, St Petronilla, St Thomas Aquinas and St Stephen the Martyr, whose finger had already been mentioned by Ogier VIII d'Anglure, was omitted by Meisenheimer.[403]

The *de visu* examination of the Dominican collection, which is nowadays decimated, contributes little in defining the time frame of each relic's arrival. The exceptions are the finger-shaped reliquary of the founder of the order, the stylistic features of which allow dating to the mid-14th century (Fig. 147); and the head-shaped reliquaries of St Damian (Fig. 148) and St Luke the Evangelist (Fig. 149), dated to the late 16th century.[404]

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398 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 458–460.

399 *Ibid.*, 458, 489.

400 *Ibid.*, 458; cf. Kužić 2013, 91, 398.

401 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 458.

402 *Ibid.*, 484–485; see also Lupis 2003, 84–85.

403 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 458–459.

404 Cerva traced the first mention of the late 16th-century head-shaped reliquary of St Luke the Evangelist; Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 458, 486; cf. Lupis 2003, 85–89.



FIGURE 147 Dubrovnik, Museum of the Dominican monastery. Finger-shaped reliquary of St Dominic, mid-14th century
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FIGURE 148 Dubrovnik, Museum of the Dominican monastery. Head-shaped reliquary of St Damian, late 16th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Summing up, in regard to all of the relics listed above, in the absence of further testimonies the *ante quem* is the date 1490 indicated by Cerva. Thanks to the testimony of Ogier VIII d'Anglure, we can assert that the relic of St Stephen the Protomartyr and the fragment of the True Cross were already present in the Dominican collection *ante* 1395.[405]

405 Ogier VIII d'Anglure, 1395, ed. 1878, 97.



FIGURE 149 Dubrovnik, Museum of the Dominican monastery. Head-shaped reliquary of St Luke, late 16th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

The question concerning the Christological relic of the fragment of the True Cross is particularly significant. According to Skurla's account of 1868, the arrival of this precious object in Dubrovnik is typically dated to 1618,[406] when the sacred item was transferred to the Dominican monastery; this was in order to ensure greater protection for the object, which, as Cerva noted, had been kept at the Dominican monastery in Gruž since 1465.[407] However, this claim is problematic, as the fragment was mentioned as early as 1395 by Ogier VIII d'Anglure as being in the Dominican church. The neighbouring Gruž monastery, on the other hand, was only founded in 1437.[408] In addition

406 Lupis 2003, 83–84.

407 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 484; Lupis 2003, 83–84.

408 Ogier VIII d'Anglure's passage about the cross and the relic of the finger of St Stephen is related in Ana Munk's contribution about the collection of St Stephen. That the reference instead relates to the Dominican church is already clear from the French pilgrim's reference to 'l'eglise des Jacobins', as well as from the circumstance that the church in Pustijerna did not possess the relic of the martyr's finger, the presence of which, on the contrary, is confirmed at the Dominicans by Serafino Maria Cerva's discussion; Munk 2016, 26, n. 46.

to the French pilgrim's annotation, Meisenheimer's relic repertoire of 1495 also mentions 'a large, beautiful piece of the Holy Cross'.[409] Therefore, it is plausible that the evidence suggests the arrival of the relic could date back to the 14th century, without, however, clarifying the exact circumstances surrounding the eventual arrival of the patriarchal cross from the Gruž monastery to Dubrovnik.[410] Perhaps, for reasons now unknown, the latter object replaced an earlier cult. However things unfolded, the Dominican monastery could still proudly promote the remarkable fragment of the True Cross, a relic of significant importance for pilgrims visiting the Dalmatian port.

Analysis of the Franciscan relic collection, on the other hand, is more difficult due to the lack of temporal references in Cerva's treatment of the objects preserved in the monastery (in his section 'Reliquiae quae in divi Francisci [aede] servantur'), which includes 55 objects of worship.[411] The first annotation by Western travellers was made in 1480 by Santo Brasca, who, among 'the many relics' that were shown to him, mentioned: 'the bones of St Catherine, St Margaret and St Elizabeth and the head of St Ursula, all bound in silver'.[412] This ensemble was partially mentioned eight years later by Antonio da Crema (1486): 'Also, among these religious [men], there are the following holy relics: bones of the leg of St Margaret; bones of the arm of St Blaise; bones of the leg of St Catherine; bones of the head of St Ursula.'[413]

While the two previous testimonies align to some extent, Meisenheimer's later reference takes a completely different turn, though it does share the mention of the head of St Ursula: 'Afterwards, my lords visited the Barefoot Friars monastery, where they saw the treasury of relics: the head of St Ursula, a piece of the body of St Peter the Martyr and also parts of St Agnes, St Lawrence and St Thomas.'[414] However, this annotation presents some issues. Among the few

409 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53: 'ein großes hübsches Stück von dem heiligen Kreuz'.

410 See Kužić 2013, 90.

411 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 460–462.

412 Santo Brasca, 1480, ed. 1966, 57.

413 Antonio da Crema, 1486, ed. 1996, 139: 'Etiam apresso de questi religiosi sonno le infrascripte reliquie sancte: ossa di la gamba di sancta Margarita; ossa dil brazo di sancto Blasio; ossa di la gamba di sancta K‹a›terina; ossa di la testa di sancta Ursula.' It should be emphasised that in addition to Pietro Casola, Antonio da Crema also mentioned the presence of a noteworthy psalter among the Franciscans; *ibid.*: 'Etiam ditti religiosi hanno uno psalterio bellissimo, ampiamente e cum sutieza inminiato, qual costete ducati cinque-cento per la gran manifatura li è acaduta.' On the illuminated codices in the Franciscan library, see Badurina 1985, 517–562.

414 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 52–53: 'Danach sind meine G.H. gegangen in der Barfüßer Kloster,

available sources, there is no mention of the relics of St Agnes, St Thomas or St Peter the Martyr at the Franciscan monastery. These relics are conspicuously absent from Cerva's treatise, which instead lists the remains of St Lawrence, St Blaise, St Margaret, St Catherine and St Ursula.[415] The arm-shaped reliquaries of St Lawrence (Fig. 150) and St Catherine, along with the two foot-shaped ones of St Margaret (Fig. 151) and St Blaise (Fig. 152), date to the last quarter of the 14th century, while the head of St Ursula (Fig. 153) dates back to the turn of the 15th century.[416] This suggests that the Friars Minor were swift to equip their monastery with intricately decorated altars and cult objects designed to captivate visiting foreigners. Among these treasures was the reliquary of St Elizabeth, also highlighted by Ludwig Tschudi in 1517, echoing the observations of Santo Brasca.[417]

Finally, both mendicant collections certainly offered a significant addition, in the eyes of pilgrims, to what they could experience in Dubrovnik cathedral. The two monasteries were under the protection of the Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik and were supported by its most powerful families. As a result, the entire city, rather than just its individual monuments, was promoted as a vast repository of sacred relics, offering a remarkable quantity, size and variety of first-class cult objects, whether linked directly to the Holy Land or not. Pilgrims eagerly embraced familiar cults, as well as those unique to this liminal region.

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da ihre G. haben gesehen das Heiligtum: St. Ursula Haupt; einen Teil von St. Peter des Märtyrers Leib; auch von St. Agnes, St. Laurenz und St. Thomas Leib.'

415 Serafino Maria Cerva, 1686–1759, ed. 2008, 460–462.

416 Lupis 2003, 70–71. On the Franciscan collection as a whole, see also Lentić 1985, 563–570.

417 Ludwig Tschudi, 1519, ed. 1606, 62.



FIGURE 150
Dubrovnik, Museum of the Franciscan monastery. Arm-shaped reliquary of St Lawrence, 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 151
Dubrovnik, Museum of the Franciscan monastery. Foot-shaped reliquary of St Margaret, 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 152
Dubrovnik, Museum of the Franciscan monastery. Foot-shaped reliquary of St Blaise, 14th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ



FIGURE 153 Dubrovnik, Museum of the Franciscan monastery. Head reliquary of St Ursula, late 14th–early 15th century
PHOTO VESNA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

Conclusions

> Thus we experienced that the wise man is right, he who says: Those who travel by the sea have many horrendous things to tell, in case they manage to escape them.[1]

⁘

Pilgrims' tales, whether horrific or not, are remarkably numerous, offering a rare opportunity to immerse oneself in the medieval experience of travel as recounted by firsthand witnesses. This privileged perspective allowed such deep engagement with their accounts that it went beyond a mere flat-screen reading experience. Rather, it became a rollercoaster of sensations, accompanied by an array of sounds – the rain, the thunder roaring, the waves crashing violently against the galley during storms, and, in contrast, the soaring tones of the flute, played with remarkable skill by Nicolas Blomnacque, servant to Baron Claudin de Haussonville. His music, we are told, was listened to with great pleasure.

Then, the tension rises again, so intense that it induces unease, as we read of two mariners beaten to death by their captain for attempting theft; or of two men lost at sea, cast away by a storm. Bernhard von Breydenbach recalled this moment as one in which they 'were about to face death'.[2] And then, peace returns: the chirping of birds on the islet of St Nicholas in Poreč, the Mass chanted in honour of the sailors' patron saint. The rolling of drums swells anew – a terrible storm, prayers intensifying, voices raised in every language, a deafening chorus joined even by Jewish pilgrims. Then, as the drumming subsides, we follow a German pilgrim on a tour of the ship, imagining the captain's quarters. The patron, Andrea Laurendano, had a fine cabin with a bed so comfortable it was said to be fit for a prince, even gilded.[3] Laurendano had ordered

1 Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 87: 'So machten wir die Erfahrung, dass der Weise recht hat, der sagt: Die, die auf dem Meer reisen, haben wohl von besorgniserregenden Vorkommnissen zu berichten – selbst wenn sie ilinen entrinnen.'

2 See Nicolas Loupvent, 1531, ed. 1976, 40, and Bernhard von Breydenbach, 1483–1484, ed. 2010, 87.

3 Arnold von Harff, 1496–1498, ed. 2004, 60–62: 'Item in den eirsten was dese bartze hundert vier ind seuentzich foesse lanck ihd seessinidryssich foesse breyt. item der patroyn was eyn sentiloman van Venedich monscheir Andrea Laurendano geheysschen. hee hadde eyn

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a striking image of St Christopher on the mainsail, beneath which large letters proclaimed: 'But Jesus, passing through the midst of them, went on his way; thus, I too shall pass through the midst of them and go.'[4] This propitious message, drawn from the Gospel of Luke (4:28–30), invoked safe passage through the perils of seafaring.

Rituals on board were manifold – some solemn, others steeped in superstition. Beyond the *Salve Regina*, recited on various occasions, Michele da Figline led a full repertoire of prayers, chanted each evening before the *Ave Maria*. Yet, as Jan Want recounted, moments arose when prayer yielded to more immediate concerns: 'That evening, we faced a rather strong storm, with winds so fierce that while we were singing *Salve Regina*, we had to stop because of the sailors' shouts; they needed to hear one another.'[5] Meanwhile, Arent Willemsz must have felt a chill upon learning that many crew members had dressed in their finest clothes, for among sailors it was customary, when sensing death approaching, to don their best attire, ensuring they would meet the shore, if not alive, then properly clad for burial.[6]

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schoyn kamer in desem schyff myt eyme bedde zoe gerust as in eyns fursten hoeue, oeuen oeuerguldet. item deser patroyn liesse sich essen ind dryncken vur dragen in oeuerdeckten sylueren ind gulden schottelen ind drynckfasseren. item he hayt eecht trumpter, der tzweyn waeren duytzschen die yeme wan er essen sulde ind wanne hee gessen hatte blaessen moesten. ouch des morgens wann der daich off gynck ind des aeuentz wan hee vnden gynck. ouch wanne dat man at groysse siegell off dede ind as man by eyne stat quam moisten sij alle trumpten. item hait der patroyn seestzich bussenmeyster ind tzymmerlude smede ind allerleye bantwerckslude, soe dat hee hadde vonffhundert man in dem schyff die hee vertzulde. item dit schyff hayt bynnen drij heufft massboume, dar zo tzweyn vur viss ind noch eynen boeuen in der merstzen. item der myddelste ind der groesste konten vier man nyet vmbgryffen. hee was neit aber eyn houltz, dan mit vil stucker gelympt gepecht ind mit seylen zo samen gebunden. der seluyge mastboym was hoygh van dem vndersten bys oeuen an die merssche tzwey hundert vier ind tzwentzich voesse hoych. daer off stunt die merssche daer inne wael tzwelff man zo wer moechten gayn. item der mersse hayt sijnen mastboym ind sijnen eygen siegell, myt deme waeren seess siegel in deme schyff, wan dat schyff vur windtz gynck ind guden wint hatte.'

4 *Ibid.*: 'off deme groyssen siegen stoynt koestlich gemaelt sent Cristofferus ind vnder sijnen voessen mit groyssen litteren geschreuen: Jhesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat, sic ego autem transibo per medium illorum ibo.'

5 Jan Want, 1519, ed. 1896, 60–61.

6 Arent Willemsz, 1525, ed. 1884, 50–51: 'Alst nv frydach gheworden was, twellick den .xxiij. dach van Junio was op sinte Johans Avont rekende wij mit onse waert ende betaelden hem eerliken ende vueren mit onse boghaetgie te schepe mit eenre barcke Ende den .xxv. in Junio teghens den Avont soe ghinghen wijt tzeyl ende vueren voorts op die goods ghenade. Nota. Desen nacht ende denn eersten nacht waren wij in groten perikele overmidts dat grote onweder datter opstack, alsoe dat wij niet en wisten waer dat wij waren Want daer veel platen laghen. aldus soe lyeten wij ons ancker sincken ende bleven desen nacht an ons

Suspended in this liminal space, we come to understand that a good wind could quickly turn into a bad one, that too much wind or wind that was too strong was dangerous, but equally that the absence of wind was disastrous. Finding anchorage was a demanding, yet vital task. We learnt to search with the travellers for signs in the landscape, marking safe harbours or treacherous waters. Thus, following the pilgrims' 'anchorages of faith', this study embarked on an exploration of a vast and varied sacred landscape along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts. What follows is not a set of definitive conclusions, but a reflective snapshot of key insights, observations that (hopefully) capture the complexity of medieval pilgrimage and invite further discussion from a comparative perspective.

A systematic analysis of pilgrimage reports from 1300 to 1550 has defined a corpus of sanctuaries that shaped the sacred topography of the Istrian–Dalmatian region, a crucial segment of the route to the Holy Land. Seen in geographical sequence, this network begins in Istria, with the monuments of Poreč – the Euphrasian basilica, the church of St Mary of the Angels and the Benedictine church of St Nicholas – and extends to Rovinj's church of St Euphemia. It then encompasses key sanctuaries in the Zadar stronghold, including the church of St Mary Major, the cathedral of St Anastasia, the Benedictine abbey of St Chrysogonus and the church of St Donatus, as well as churches in smaller towns of central-southern Dalmatia, such as the church of Our Lady of Mercy on the islet of Prvić, the church of St John on Punta Planka and Franciscan churches on the islands of Hvar and Badija. The itinerary culminates in Dubrovnik, where travellers visited the city's cathedral and the mendicant monasteries of St Francis and St Dominic before setting sail towards Albanian waters.

This study is thus not limited to major ports of call; it also considers smaller towns along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts, focussing on peripheral sanctuaries where the maritime dimension is so pronounced that one may speak of a well-established phenomenon of the *peregrinagia maritima*, which took shape in the late 15th century in Istria and Dalmatia, as elsewhere. Among these

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ancker legghen rijden twellick seer periculoes was, wantter een seer groff water ghinck Ende Alsoe die patroon mijn selver seyde mondelinck, en soude niet tzeil gegaen hebben om twee hondert ducaten en hadde hijs niet gedaen om den roop van die pellegrums. Item Des anderen daghes werden mijn gheseyt als datter veel van onse patroons vollick haer beste cleyderen aen ghedaen hadden Want dat haer luyder maniere is, dat soe waneer sij den doot voer horen oghen syen als dat sij alsdan meynen te sterven, soe trecken sij hoer beste cleyderen an mits hoer beste hemde mede, dat soe waer sij ant lant ghevischet werden, daer doer openbaer is dat sij voersichtich gheweest sijn in hoeren doot Ende dat mense hyer doer beghraven soude oppet ghewijde.'

sites are the Benedictine church on the islet of St Nicholas in Poreč and the Franciscan churches dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy on the islands of Prvić, Hvar and Badija in the Korčula archipelago. These sanctuaries vividly illustrate how seafaring devotion intertwined with the religious practices of Western travellers, who, in moments of peril, joined sailors in prayer, entrusting the fate of the entire crew to the Virgin Mary and St Nicholas.

Both the departure and arrival of the long open-sea journey to the Holy Land were marked by Benedictine churches dedicated to St Nicholas – at the monastery of San Nicolò al Lido in Venice and its associated counterpart on the islet of Istrian Poreč. Pilgrims' testimonies suggest that the latter was not only the first, but also the most frequented shrine along the Eastern Adriatic coast explicitly tied to maritime life.

The stretch of coast leading into and out of the Venetian lagoon, which we can refer to as St Nicholas's passage, was considered the most perilous leg of the journey, as late medieval authors repeatedly stressed. Travelogues confirm that pilgrims placed particular faith in the intercession of the patron of mariners at this liminal point. A 15th-century illustrated manuscript preserved in the British Library depicts this departure point in the lagoon as entirely submerged, devoid of solid ground (Fig. 154).

This initial maritime passage undoubtedly made a lasting impression on pilgrims, shaping their expectations of the uncertainties ahead. In this threshold space, travellers recorded extraordinary encounters; among them, the body of a pilgrim, known simply as the 'Pilgrim', over a century old yet still intact and undecayed. The pilgrimage experience itself may have been so transformative that travellers aspired to resemble the very holy bodies at the heart of their devotional journey.

Pilgrims, however, were not passive spectators of the maritime cultic landscape, but active participants in the devotional life of mixed crews. For many, it was their first time at sea, yet moments of distress often led them to adopt maritime piety swiftly, following the customs of seasoned sailors. This was a two-way process: European pilgrims, many from elite circles or learned religious orders, both absorbed and reshaped devotional practices, influencing shipboard rituals and shaping the choice and use of worship-worthy sites.

The pilgrim's selection now comes into focus. From this mixed pilgrim–seafarer perspective, we can discern a pattern in which lesser-known local cults, often viewed from a distance and not considered particularly effective for seafarer intercession, were frequently noted only in passing, without much interest. This follows the theatrical logic that what remains unseen fails to capture attention. Such is the case with St Domnius, patron of Split, and St John,



FIGURE 154 View of Venice, 15th century
© BRITISH LIBRARY

the local bishop of Trogir, figures whose cultic significance remained obscured by the curtain of the Split–Trogir archipelago.

At the same time, the exquisitely local cult and legend surrounding St John's intercession, whether recognised as St John the Baptist or the local bishop, drew considerable attention from foreign travellers. According to tradition, his intercession averted a shipwreck, prompting the construction of a votive chapel using lime mixed with Malvasia wine. Yet this chapel at Punta Planka stands apart from similar structures along the Dalmatian coast. Rather than marking a safe anchorage spot, it served as a navigational landmark for late medieval sailors, signalling a treacherous stretch of coastline between Šibenik and Trogir, an area considered perilous and best avoided since antiquity.

In common with other shrines, the votive 'Malvasia wine' chapel had a distinctive aspect; namely, its connection to specific cult objects was less pronounced. Pilgrims did not necessarily expect shrines to house notable relics or images; the monuments themselves were sufficient and could be invoked to request benevolence directly from the saints to whom they were dedicated. This was true for the series of Marian shrines, such as Our Lady of Mercy on the islet of Prvić and the Franciscan church on the island of Hvar. Even Our Lady of Loreto, which became fully integrated into the extended pilgrimage circuit from the 1480s onwards, saw its strong association with the icon fade into the background. The sanctuary was frequently invoked, especially when drifting away from the coast between Dubrovnik and Ancona, even when it lay far beyond the horizon. Thus, the principle that sanctuaries left unseen fail to capture interest does not apply to well-established pilgrimage destinations, particularly those dedicated to sacred figures regarded as especially powerful intercessors for seafarers, such as the Virgin and St Nicholas.

However, the presence of an icon coded as a Lucan autograph in one of the Marian maritime shrines in the southern Dalmatian ports added a layer of complexity to the pilgrims' experiences, particularly in the case of the Badija islet near Korčula and again within the walls of the mighty Maritime Republic of Dubrovnik. This latter case introduced a completely different scenario: the experience of Western travellers shifted significantly when we turn to the monuments they visited in major ports. Here, pilgrimage took on a different dynamic, as the formation and evolution of cults were shaped by the constant influx of foreign visitors. In these urban centres we observe a deliberate quest for localised sanctity, centred on key elements of medieval piety: incorruptible saints' bodies, miraculous images and sacred relics housed in cathedrals, collegiate churches and Benedictine and mendicant monasteries.

A systematic study of Holy Land travelogues reveals distinct devotional patterns and highlights Western travellers' marked preferences for specific cult objects. Even in the case of the Ragusan treasury, where we find interest in

exquisitely local cults, such as the relics of the Kotor martyrs Andrew, Peter and Lawrence, the overarching principle remains the 'nobility of sacred remains'. This concept, centred on the ability to establish either a direct or indirect link between relics and the ultimate goal of pilgrimage – the Holy Land as the setting of the Gospel events, emerges as a crucial factor, alongside the accessibility of relics. The latter played a decisive role in the cultic prominence of the sanctuary of St Euphemia in Rovinj. The public display of the martyr's body was perceived as essential in defining its aura of exceptionality, as attested by numerous traveller accounts focussed on the devotional practices surrounding physical access to the saint's remains.

Additional elements reinforced the cultic promotion of St Euphemia, such as the Latin inscription (an addition recorded and transcribed exclusively by pilgrims) commemorating the arrival of St Euphemia's remains. Moreover, pilgrims could read the same legend directly from a Latin codex, a tale centred entirely on the miraculous journey of her massive, monumental stone sarcophagus as it floated from Chalcedon until it reached the shores of the Istrian coast. This very sarcophagus, aniconic and inscribed, became the focal point of devotional practices. It occupied a prominent place in pilgrims' diaries, and the spot where the sarcophagus landed became integrated into the local sacred topography. Overall, pilgrims' narratives often emphasised not only the relics themselves, but also the materiality and legendary tales concerning their containers, whether empty or not.

Further examples of this phenomenon can be found in the sarcophagus of Sts Maurus and Eleutherius within the Euphrasian basilica in Poreč, which was violated by Paganino Doria's Genoese troops during the sack of the town in 1354. Even after the relics were removed and taken to the Ligurian coast (the remains would only return to Istria in 1934), the empty container became a focal point in pilgrims' narratives. This sarcophagus reliquary, though devoid of its contents, continued to sustain the cult, as pilgrims viewed the container itself as a surrogate for the holy remains.

Similarly, the legendary tales surrounding the sarcophagus and shrine of St Simeon the Prophet in Zadar, along with the impressive arrangements for his remains, were meticulously described in medieval pilgrim accounts. In contrast to the more austere setting of St Euphemia's body in Rovinj, the *mise-en-scène* in Zadar featured a series of visually striking elements designed to captivate and stimulate devotees' attention. These elements emphasised, in a somewhat redundant manner, that one was in the presence of holy remains imbued with extraordinary thaumaturgic powers: standing one atop the other, two human-sized effigies of the saint, one carved in stone and the other embossed in silver gilt. The latter was surrounded by narrative scenes rich in

images of the saint and his sarcophagus, narrating his arrival and miraculous deeds in the Dalmatian port.

This *mise-en-scène* created for the prophet's body was largely determined by specific political contingencies, particularly by the Venetians' claim to the possession of the same body. A parallel reading of the available data from both shores, the Dalmatian and the Venetian, provides valuable insights into the cultic dynamics at play. By comparing the cultic practices, we can speculate on key factors and strategies that may have influenced the establishment and promotion of the cultic site, expanding it from a local to a pan-European scale. One decisive advantage of the Dalmatian setting, making it clearly more attractive, was that, unlike in Venice, the images surrounding the relics did not replace the visual experience of the relic itself. Instead, they complemented it, contributing substantially to the affirmation and success of the holy site beyond the immediate confines of Zadar.

In this direction, it should be noted that, alongside the visual and spatial strategies adopted locally, attention has also focussed on the impact of the unstoppable process of appropriation of local places of worship by Western travellers. The inclusion in travelogues of detailed descriptions of these settings, the holy remains and the thaumaturgic powers attributed to the relics certainly contributed, by acting as an oral and textual sounding board, to the spread of the fame of the sacred relics scattered along the Eastern Adriatic and to the rise of many local shrines to the status of international pilgrimage destinations.

Pilgrim testimonies also raise questions of timing: for instance, mentions of the True Cross within Dubrovnik cathedral begin in the 1480s and peak over the next three decades. This aligns with the broader emergence of detailed pilgrim accounts along the Dalmatian coast, a period when some travel diaries gained widespread popularity. The earlier absence of such mentions mirrors the case of Zadar, where testimonies focussed almost exclusively on St Simeon's remains, despite the presence of other Gospel-linked relics since the 14th century. Early accounts of Dubrovnik emphasise St Blaise and relics associated with Christ's infancy, with other objects in the cathedral treasury gaining attention only later. The near-simultaneous rise in references to the True Cross and St John the Baptist's right arm suggests a deliberate effort by local authorities to promote relics linked to the Holy Land. Alongside such Christological relics as the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*, Ragusans claimed possession of the arm that baptised Jesus and pointed to Him as the Lamb of God.

Systematic scrutiny of late medieval travelogues reveals that Dubrovnik cathedral's treasury was curated to reflect Christological and evangelical themes, following a *pars pro toto* strategy. This perspective also clarifies the

promotion of St Luke's authorship in connection with one of Dubrovnik's oldest Marian effigies. Pilgrim accounts confirm that the *Madonna of Porat* was venerated from the early 15th century, reinforcing the notion that the treasury served both local devotees and pilgrims *en route* to the Holy Land. More broadly, the entire city functioned as a vast treasury, with obligatory stops at the cathedral and two mendicant monasteries, both under the direct patronage of the maritime republic. In this way travelogues not only document, but also shape sacred topographies, becoming both recipients and indirect co-creators of these spaces' *mise-en-scène*.

The promotion of Christological relics in Dubrovnik closely parallels that of Zadar's cathedral, yet the city's political status influenced pilgrims' perceptions. Dubrovnik is described as mercantile, free and expensive, with a level of solemnity reflected in its cultic practices. St Blaise, the city's patron, is consistently invoked in parallel with St Mark in Venice. Relics were displayed with great pomp, with striking descriptions of silver-gilt reliquaries kept in wooden chests. In contrast, Zadar's treasury elicited a more restrained tone from pilgrims, with fewer details recorded and a noticeably different reception.

Further parallels emerge in the legendary traditions surrounding relics claimed by multiple ports along the route to the Holy Land. A defining characteristic of Istrian and Dalmatian *translationes*, often transmitted orally until the late medieval period, is a pronounced tendency to trace the origins of relics directly to the places where the saints had lived and suffered martyrdom, bypassing intermediary stages. This strategy reinforced the prestige of local cults: not only in the case of St Euphemia's relics, traditionally said to have arrived directly from Chalcedon, but also for numerous relics that, disregarding their passage through Constantinople, were presented as having come straight from the lands of the Gospel narrative. Among them were the body of St Simeon in Zadar and the *Sacer Panniculus Christi*, the arm of St John the Baptist and fragments of the True Cross, all venerated by Western travellers in the cathedral of Dubrovnik.

Yet the sea was unpredictable, and one had to be cautious of the dangers that could turn such a difficult and perilous journey into a fatal one. Pilgrims often had to forgo the much-desired stop in Dubrovnik, Zadar or Rovinj, though they still recorded the relics or noted the names of St Simeon and St Euphemia in their diaries. Their attitude was not solely driven by the intention to document the holy bodies marking the sacred topography of the ports they passed, but rather by the belief that their written notes themselves constituted a means of appropriating the sacredness inherent in these first-class relics. The spiritual benefits derived from them could, after all, be 'at hand', reproposed and reactivated through the devotional reading of the diaries, even long after the journey had ended and far from those ports.

In this context the tactile dimension that emerges from a systematic reading of pilgrims' travelogues reveals a similarly enduring mnemonic potential. This relates to the precision with which the rituality of the haptic experience is described, showing how pilgrims engaged with the relics based on vivid accounts of their appropriation. This tactile engagement extended to objects carried in pilgrims' pockets, often referred to by German pilgrims as *Kleinodien*. These small, yet precious items – golden chains, rings and various types of prayer beads (with a distinction between the less-used rosary and the long-established paternoster) – were likely touched repeatedly, especially in moments of distress. Through meditative, repetitive gestures, they provided reassurance, allowing pilgrims to maintain a tangible connection with the sacred even when far from the shrines.

It is thus not surprising to find prayer beads around the neck of a pilgrim depicted in 1554 in one of the versions of Arnold von Harff's account (Fig. 155) or hanging from the bag of St James as a pilgrim in a limestone sculpture from Burgundy (Fig. 156), dated to the last two decades of the 15th century and now housed in Paris at the Louvre. As an attribute in pilgrim iconography, prayer beads are also depicted held in the right hand in Werner Rolevinck's *Fasciculus temporum* from the 1490s (Fig. 157). The proliferation of images featuring prayer beads from the second half of the 15th century mirrors their widespread use in daily devotional practices. These tactile aids were not only part of everyday routines, but also actively engaged in various cultic contexts, including caressing the holy bodies found in the Venetian lagoon or along the Eastern Adriatic.

However, beyond the tactile dimension, pilgrims' narratives capture a nearly full spectrum of sensorial experiences. At the outset of this sensorial approach, we encounter certain interpretive challenges. Although we may be tempted to regard sight as the first means of approaching holy remains, given the oft-recurring definition of Christianity as sight-based, pilgrims' descriptions caution against this assumption. Aside from the kinetic, their visual experience was frequently preceded by an aural one. The sound of church bells first summoned the pilgrims to the church, where, as German pilgrims emphasised in 1494, they would first hear the Mass before viewing the holy body of St Simeon.[7] In reference to such auditory experiences, one rare medieval representation of the five senses avoids the conventional depiction of bodily parts

7 Herzog Alexander von Pfalz-Zweibrücken and Johann Ludwig von Nassau-Saarbrücken, 1495–1496, ed. 1997, 50: 'Haben meine G.H. da Messe gehört und gesehen des heiligen Mann St. Simeons Leichnam.'; *ibid*., 101: 'Haben meine G.H. zu St. Simeon Messe gehört und St. Simeons Leichnam wieder gesehen.'

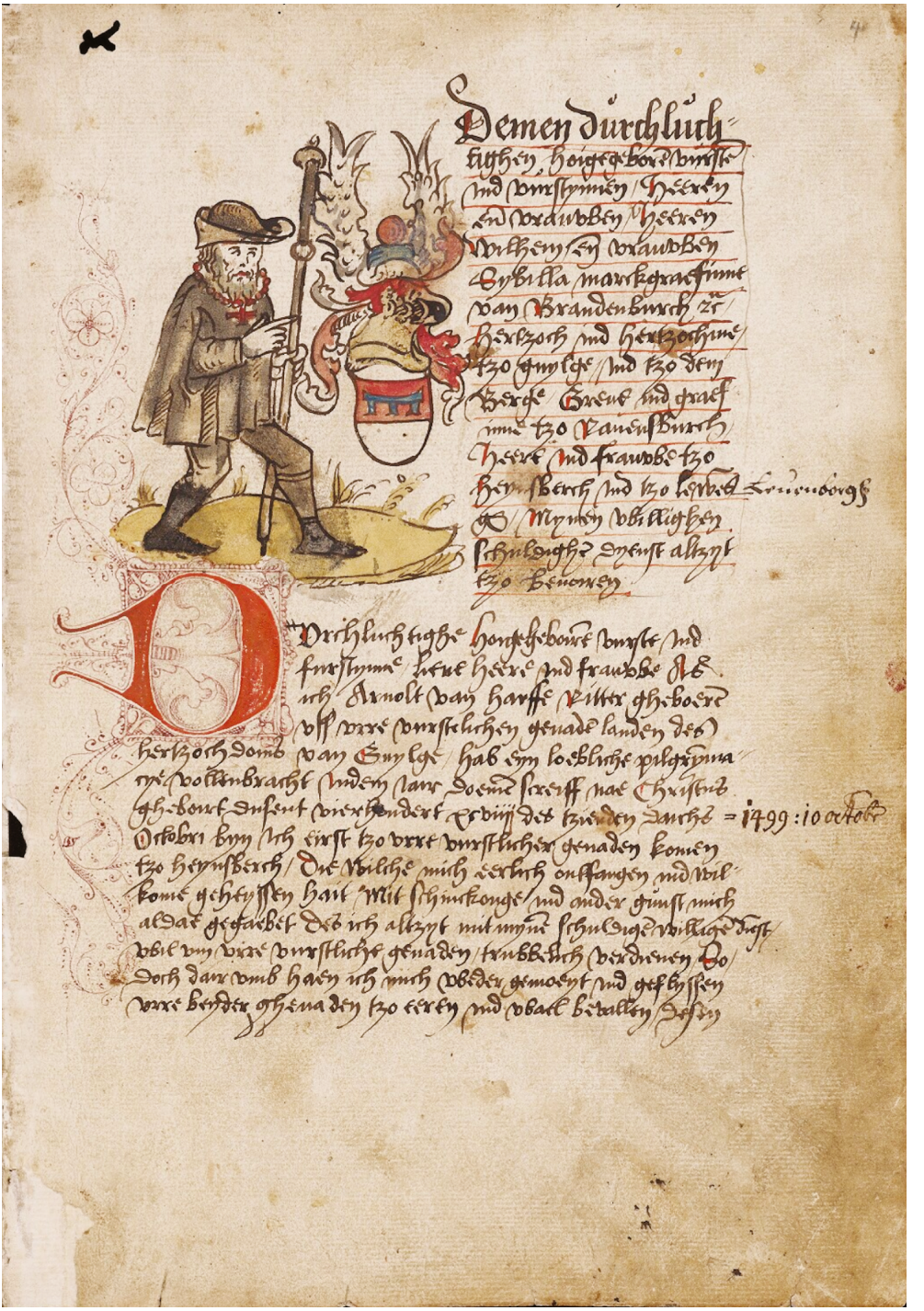

FIGURE 155 Pilgrim, 1554
© BODLEIAN LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



FIGURE 156 Sculpture of St James as a pilgrim, Burgundy, 1480–1500
© 2017 GRANDPALAISRMN (MUSÉE DU LOUVRE). PHOTO MICHELE BACCI



FIGURE 157 Pilgrim, *c.*1490
© BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK

(e.g., the ear for hearing, as in the Cambridge example; Fig. 158). Instead, it personifies sound through the image of a church bell (Fig. 159).[8] This particular representation, hastily sketched by a non-professional hand in 1496, is contemporary with the analysed travelogues.

Returning to the pilgrims' descriptions, Pietro Casola's account also underscores the aural dimension, emphasising the experience of hearing the Mass before observing the same body. His narrative reveals how the sight of the centuries-old mummified body was experienced through the eyes of the devotees:

> I went with the other pilgrims, as it was arranged, to a church of St Simeon, where, after vespers were sung, the body of St Simeon, a most worthy relic and the most beautiful ever seen, either in Rome or elsewhere, was shown. For it was seen entirely intact, lacking nothing in the world, neither in the face, nor in the hands, nor in the feet; the mouth is open, and there are no teeth on top; I am not amazed at this, because he was very old when he died.[9]

It was not just Casola; many accounts describe the initial amazement at the body's integrity, highlighting its exceptional preservation with detailed descriptions of its bodily features.

The travellers' experience was shaped by visual signs, not only in the elaborate settings of St Euphemia's body in Rovinj and St Simeon's in Zadar, but also in Poreč's Euphrasian basilica. There, the precise naming of saints and the location of their remains were reinforced by a combined reading of 5th-century mosaics and a 13th-century ciborium, visual markers likely far more intelligible to medieval pilgrims than to modern tourists nowadays.

However, as highlighted, pilgrims did not merely observe the saint's body; they sought to intensify their experience through direct or indirect contact with the holy remains. In the 1480s Paul Walther Guglingen had a complete haptic experience by having direct contact with the body and touching it

8 Nordenfalk 1985, 1–22.

9 Pietro Casola, 1494, ed. 2001, 119–121: 'Andai con li altri peregrini, però che cossì era ordinato, ad una giesia de Santo Symeone, unde, cantato lo vespero, fu monstrato lo corpo de santo Symeone, reliquia dignissima e la più bella che mai vedesse, né in Roma né altroe. Nam se fe vede tuto integro non li manca cosa del mondo, non in el volto, non in le mane, non in li pedi; tene la boca aperta e di sopra non li sono denti; de questo non me ne maraviglio, perché era vegissimo, quando moriti.'



FIGURE 158 The five senses, 13th century
© TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE O.7.16

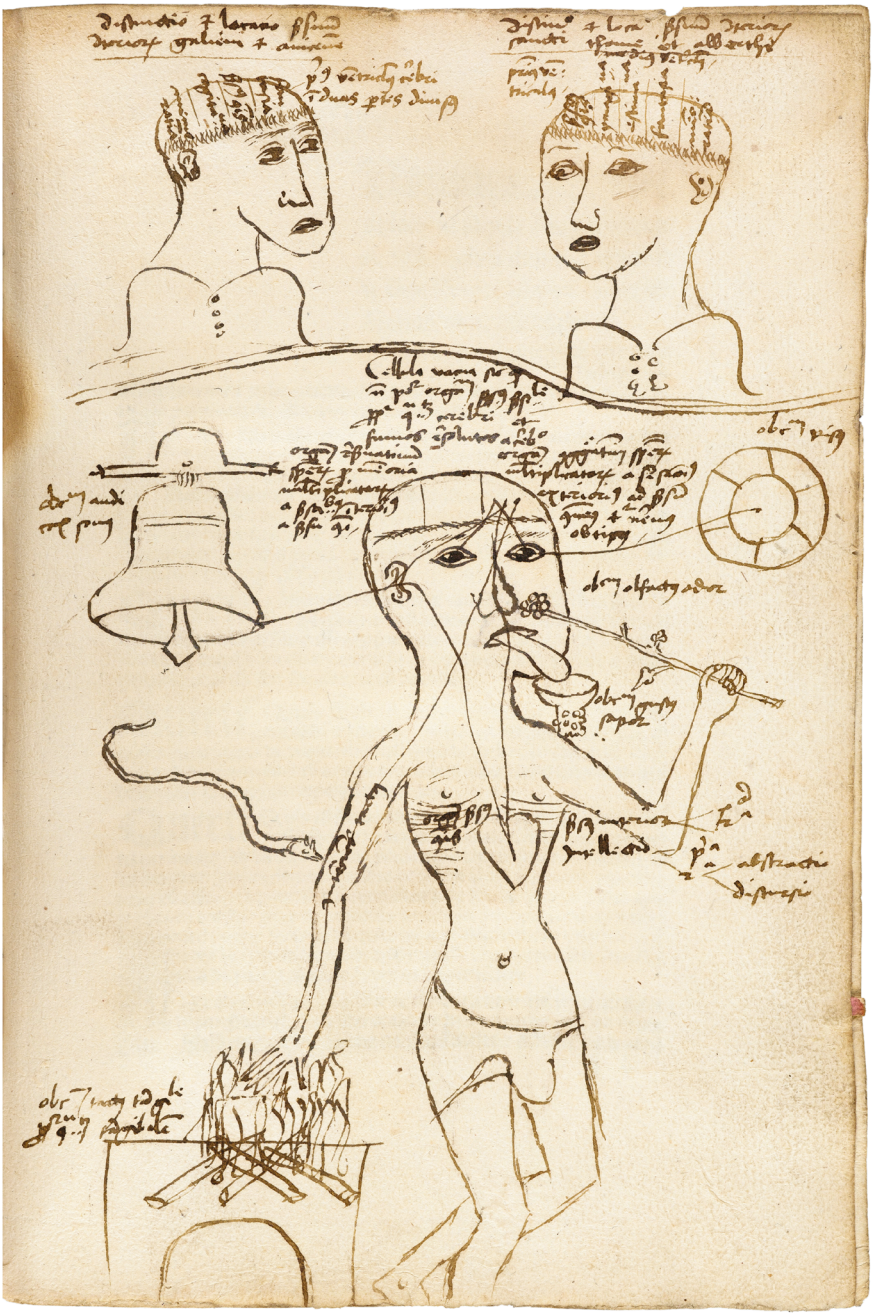

FIGURE 159 Illustrations of the senses, 1496
© WELLCOME COLLECTION

with his paternoster.[10] Touch was often represented by an image of a hand in the Middle Ages, but haptic experiences could also involve other types of skin-to-skin contact, such as kissing the relics. This was the case especially with whole bodies, such as the relics of St Euphemia in Rovinj, St Helena in Venice and St Simeon in Zadar, as well as with the container that housed another relic, directly connected to the Presentation at the Temple: the *Sacer Panniculus Christi* in Dubrovnik cathedral, kissed by pilgrims.

One further example brings together both smell and taste: the account of Sebald Rieter the Younger. Upon arriving in Zadar, he and his companions were shown St Simeon's body, which was entirely intact and uncorrupted, an incorruptibility unlike any they had ever encountered. He added that a pleasant smell and noble taste emanated from the body, which those near the grave perceived and marvelled at.[11] This passage likely reflects a form of synaesthesia, in which sensory experiences merge.

While some accounts are limited to a single sense, most describe a multisensory experience in which the senses complement rather than exclude one another. These sources stand out for their vivid, firsthand engagement with sensory perception, in stark contrast to the detached, schematic nature of other primary sources, such as apostolic visitations or *ad limina* reports. However, both involve visits to churches, whether formal or informal, offering valuable and complementary data for art historical research.

These accounts also include striking aesthetic judgments, from praise of incorrupt holy bodies and silver-gilt altarpieces in Dubrovnik cathedral to descriptions of entire cities and beautiful women. In some cases they may contain embryonic forms of art historical commentary, as seen in Pietro Casola's

10 Paul Walther Guglingen, 1481–1484, ed. 1892, 73–74: 'In eadem civitate est monasterium fratrum minorurn de observantia; ibi intravimus, et valde caritative nos receperunt; alii peregrini hinc inde in civitate. In Sara civitate sunt multe et notabiles reliquie sanctorum. In summa ecclesia requiescit integrum corpus sancti Symeonis, qui dignus fuit dominum nostrum Ihesum Christum in templo Iherosolimis suscipere et portare in ulnis suis, prophetavitque puero et matri eius et demum fecit canticum: Nunc dimittis etc. Hunc sanctum viderunt omnes peregrini, et ego tetigi eum meis heu indignis et nudis manibus et cum Pater noster.'

11 Sebald Rieter the Younger, 1479, ed. 1884, 136: 'Item am 12ten tag Marcy sontag Letare umb mittag kom wir gen Zara in dy port und bliben furter den halben tag da still ligen und gingen der capitaney und patron, auch wir alle anss land in dy statt, also weyst man uns Sant Symeons leychnam gantz ploss und unverwesen, von der gleychen unverwesenlicheyt aynichs heyligen leychnams unser kayner vor nye gesehen oder gehortt hett, es kumpt auch zu maniger zeyt im gar, das gar ein lyplicher ruch und edler geschmacken von dysem leychnam reücht, des dy menschen, so ye zu sölcher zeyt nahet bey dem grab sind, entpfinden und sich des gross verwundern.'

frequent comparisons of altarpieces to those in his homeland. Whether his observations reflect formal, iconographical, stylistic or technical considerations, or a combination thereof, remains an open question. A different perspective emerges in Conrad Grünenberg's account, which leans towards *Bauforschung*, focussing on the sculptural programmes of St Mary Major in Zadar and the cathedral of Dubrovnik. The same author went even further when describing the doge's palace in Venice, judging it so well executed that it resembled a work by Praxiteles, assisted by Euclid.[12]

Despite their richness, pilgrimage sources are often underestimated or dismissed as repetitive, unreliable or stereotyped. Yet, when read systematically and in parallel with other primary textual and material sources, they prove to be first-class evidence for art historical research, whether addressing sensory perception or material aspects or offering a more traditional approach to dating artworks (i.e., providing crucial *termini ante quem* and *post quem*). Ultimately, they shed much light on the multisensory cultic dimensions of religious materialities and sacred topographies along the Eastern Adriatic.

12 Conrad Grünenberg, 1486, ed. 2011, 295–296: 'Item zů nächst rürend an ain andren stost des hertzogen palast an das minster sant Marx. Der ballast ist as costlich aso ainer inn der welt lit och von aller farwen marmelstain durch buwen, alle massollrig und kunst in im habende vom grund uff, von bassament, violla, windbergen, gestreben und aller laig lobwerk, pfillern, kapitelen, schönnen bilden, tiern, fogelnn und gewürns aller durch feldiert, thabernakeln, gragöln, gesimps und glennen und mit holkeln und steben baide schlecht und gewunnden durch ain andren schlieffend, das versammet von costlichen uszugen aso wärklich, as ob es der verrümptest maister der obgenanten künsten Praxitelles mit aigner hand gemacht het mit aler hilff Euclides.'

Bibliography

Since historical textual evidence lies at the core of this volume, a chronological order has been adopted for the primary sources to facilitate easy retrieval of the quoted material. The secondary sources are listed in the classic alphabetical order.

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MEDITERRANEAN ART HISTORIES

This book traces the network of sanctuaries that marked the sacred topographies of the Istrian–Dalmatian coast, a key segment of the maritime pilgrimage route to Jerusalem. By combining rich Holy Land travelogues with other primary sources and material evidence, the shaping of cultic spaces emerges as a gradual, multifaceted process, in which pilgrims appear not as passive narrators, but as active recipients – and co-authors – of the sacred landscapes they visited. This study offers fresh insights into the dynamic interplay between local and new actors, devotional practices and the sensory experience of religious materialities along this pivotal medieval route.

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