

Doctoral Dissertation

**The Birth of a National Saint: The Cult of Saint Jerome in Late
Medieval Dalmatia**

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ASV | Archivio Segreto Vaticano |
| ASPF | Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide |
| DAD | Državni arhiv, Dubrovnik |
| DAZD | Državni arhiv, Zadar |
| NAS | Nadbiskupski arhiv, Split |
| NSK | Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica, Zagreb |
| PL | Patrologia Latina |
| BHL | Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina |

1 INTRODUCTION

*Parce mihi, Domine, quia Dalmata sum.*¹

(“Forgive me, Lord, for I am a Dalmatian.”)

1.1 PRESENTATION OF THE TOPIC AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR SCHOLARSHIP

The year 2020 is the one when the Christian world marks the 1600th anniversary of the death of Saint Jerome (c. 345–420). This trilingual Biblical scholar, ferocious catholic controversialist, zealous moralist and belligerent defender of the ascetic life, occupies a special place in the pantheon of saints. His intellectual and theological work stands at the foundation of Christian theology together with the other Church Fathers: Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory I. Without hesitation, we can call Jerome, as elaborated further in this dissertation, “the pillar of the whole Church”. This metaphor primarily refers to his translation of the Bible into the Latin language, the Vulgate, by which the Bible was made available to those who did not read Greek or Hebrew.

The anniversary is especially celebrated in Croatia, where this universal saint is unofficially considered one of the national saints of Croatia and a patron saint of Dalmatia.² The reason for this

¹ “Parce mihi, Domine, quia Dalmata sum,” in *Enciklopedija.lzmk.hr (Hrvatski obiteljski leksikon)* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2005), <http://enciklopedija.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=29845> (last accessed 17 June, 2020).

² Among already held conferences are: *International Conference on the 1600th Anniversary of Jerome’s Death–The Master and His Female Disciples. Women, Gender and Authority in Jerome: New Perspectives* (Zagreb, 24–25 October, 2019) organized by the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Theology and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Research Centre for Humanities, and *The International Symposium on the 1600th Anniversary of Jerome’s Death–Hieronymus noster* (Ljubljana, 23–26 October, 2019) organized by the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana. During the year, three more conferences were planned in Croatia: *Croatian Culture and Saint Jerome* (Zagreb, 21–22 April 2020, postponed) in the organization of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb and the Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb, under the auspices of the Department of Literature of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Sanctus Hieronymus Dalmatiae Vir Illustris* (Split, 24–25 September, 2020) organized by the Književni krug Split and the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Split, and *Saint Jerome through the Centuries: Cult and Monuments* (Zagreb, 22–23 October, 2020) organized by the Institute of Art History and the Croatian Catholic University. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, most of the conferences and the publications were postponed and its contribution could not be used in this dissertation.

lies in the long-lasting veneration of Jerome that has been ongoing since the Middle Ages.³ The first and most potent reason for the appropriation of Jerome by the people living on the territory of medieval Croatia—Dalmatians and Croats, Slavs or Illyrians, depending on the definition of the ethnic group—is based on his own words about his birthplace. In his work *De viris illustribus*, Jerome relates that he was born in Stridon, a small oppidum that once stood at the borders of the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia.⁴

Regardless of the uncertainty of the location of Stridon today, this one sentence has triggered a centuries-long debate on where it once stood, although the modern consensus has narrowed in on locations in Croatia and Slovenia. This dissertation does not have the aim to explore the possible locations of Stridon, but rather to analyze what was the outcome of the prevailing belief in Dalmatia, and Croatia during the Middle Ages, that it was somewhere on its territory. By presenting the complex process of the formation of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, in comparison and connection with its rise in the Apennine peninsula, where the saint also gained significant recognition during the Late Middle Ages, I argue that Jerome's present-day appropriation as a Croatian saint should not be connected only to Stridon, but found in the importance which his saintly figure had for the development of Croatian cultural and national identity through the centuries, with its origins in the culturally advanced, but politically unstable, period of the fifteenth century.

Although it would be expected that the discussion on the cult of a saint would be primarily reduced to a study of hagiographic material—saintly lives, numerous prayers, hymns, and miracles created by his intercession—this research shows that the veneration of Jerome in Dalmatia and other Croatian medieval lands speaks more about the time in which the cult developed, and the people who venerated the saint as their special advocate. The aspect which has already received much attention in the scholarship is the adoption of Jerome in the early literary narratives of the proto-national and patriotic discourse, emerging among the Dalmatian humanist circles from the end of the fifteenth century.

His figure was readily adopted, not only as of the most prominent individual of the presented *natio* but also as the symbolic representation of the language they spoke, together with the ancient

³ This dissertation comes as a result of an MA research “The cult of Saint Jerome in Dalmatia in the Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries” conducted at the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, Budapest under the supervision of prof. Gábor Klaniczay. Some preliminary studies have been already published: Ines Ivić, “Jerome Comes Home: The Cult of Saint Jerome in Late Medieval Dalmatia,” *The Hungarian Historical Review* 5, no. 3 (2016): 618–644; Ines Ivić, “The “Making” of a National Saint: Reflections on the Formation of the Cult of Saint Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic,” *Il Capitale Culturale Supplementi* 7 (2018): 247–278.

⁴ Saint Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, trans. Thomas P. Halton (Washington: CUA Press, 2010), 167.

origin of the peoples who spoke that language.⁵ Before elaborating further on this aspect, and describing why Jerome became the “national saint” and which “nation” appropriated him, it necessary to give a general overview of its position in the present-day scholarship and elaborate why a study such as this one is necessary for understanding different aspects of Croatian Late Middle Ages.

From the twelfth century, the Kingdom of Croatia, under its diplomatic name Kingdom of Croatia and Dalmatia (*Regnum Dalmatiae et Croatiae*) was incorporated within the Kingdom of Hungary, still retaining some administrative and ruling rights. The name referred to a state entity covering the territory of Dalmatia and its islands, Croatia, which included the hinterlands of Dalmatia, Kvarner islands, regions of Lika and Krbava up to the territory of Slavonia defined by the rivers Una, Vrbas and Sava on the south and Drava up on north. These three lands—Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia—are usually referred to as the Croatian historical lands.

Although Slavonia was territorially and administratively considered an integral part of *Regnum Dalmatiae et Croatiae*, it did not form its political identity until the Late Middle Ages, when the name Sclavonia was added to the name of Kingdom, during the reign of Vladislas II of Hungary (1490–1516). The non-existence of a single state space of the Kingdom of Croatia was expressed in the existence of two parliaments— the parliament of Slavonia and the parliament of Croatia and Dalmatia—and two Bans—one for the southern parts of kingdom (Dalmatia and Croatia) and another one for the northern parts (Slavonia). It was only by the end of the fifteenth century, in 1476, when both titles were united in the same person, mainly to improve the joint actions against the Ottomans’ threat to those lands.

Still, territorial integrity was abrupted several times through the centuries, where the most profound one was in 1409 when Venice started to establish its government over the Dalmatian coast and its islands, leaving the hinterlands under the rule of Croatian-Dalmatian Ban. The mutual

⁵ Zrinka Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma* [Illyrism before Illyrism] (Zagreb: Golden marketing; Tehnička knjiga, 2008); Iva Kurelac, “Funkcija svjedočanstva i konstrukcije u tradicionalnoj i predkritičkoj historiografiji hrvatskog humanizma: od Jurja Šižgorića do Dinka Zavorovića” [The function of testimony and construction in traditional and pre-critical historiography in Croatian humanism: from Juraj Šižgorić to Dinko Zavorović], *Acta Histriae* 19 (2011): 263–80; Iva Kurelac, “Modaliteti recepcije glagoljaške tradicije u dalmatinskoj historiografiji 16. i početka 17. stoljeća” [Modalities of the reception of Glagolitic tradition in Dalmatian historiography of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th Century], *Ricerche slavistiche* 13, no. 59 (2015): 341–65; Luka Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni i povijesno-liturgijska knjižica u čast sv. Jeronima Ilira iz 1498. Godine” [The Venetian Schiavoni and the 1498 historical-liturgical booklet in the honor of Saint Jerome the Illyrian], *Colloquia Maruliana* 27 (2018): 43–71; About the visual representations of Jerome as a national saint, see: Jasenka Gudelj, “Visualizing past in a foreign country: image(s) of Schiavoni/Illyrians in Early Modern Italy,” *Il Capitale Culturale Supplementi* 7 (2018): 9–21; Daniel Premerl, “Nacionalni sveci u ranom novom vijeku – Ikonografija identiteta” [National saints in the Early Modern Age - Iconography of identity], in *Moć Slike - Simbolika zavjeta, zaštite i zahvale u Hrvatskoj likovnoj umjetnosti od 1400. do 1800. Godine* (Zagreb: Klovićevi dvori, forthcoming).

dependence on the same figure of Ban and the parliament, and the idea of the shared past and the common territorial presence—regardless of the economically potent narrow strip of Dalmatia being ruled by Venice—has resulted in the expression of multilayered senses of belonging, not defined by the actual political borders.

The strongest was the communal or the civic one, where the attachment to the communes was seen in the addition of this type of determinant to the personal names. For example, Georgius Sisgoreus (Giorgio Sisgoreo, Juraj Šižgorić, 1442–1509) has signed himself also as Georgius Sisgoreus *Sibenicensis*, emphasizing his local origin from the town of Šibenik. As this thesis discusses, the local aristocracies and the humanist circles, mainly in Dalmatia, gradually started to overcome the ideas of *campanilismo*. The sense of belonging slowly began to take on wider horizons, regional—just to mention that some artists signed their works emphasizing their origins in the same manner as Georgius Sisgoreus, like Giorgio Dalmata (Giorgio Orsini, Giorgio da Sebenico, Juraj Matejev Dalmatinac, c.1410–1475) or Giovanni Dalmata (Ioannes Stephani Duknovich de Tragurio, Ioannes Dalmata, Ivan Duknović, c. 1440–c.1514)—and even those that we would characterize from today’s point of view as proto-national, visible in the emphasis on Illyrian origin, promoted in the literary production of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists. The development of Jerome’s cult is parallel to the development of these notions—from the personal and civic affiliation, over the veneration as the regional patron saint to the formulation as a national patron saint.

Although the crucial period for the formation of Jerome’s image as the patron saint of Dalmatia and the national saint of Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs, and Illyrians—depending how they were named in the sources—was the fifteenth century, the roots of the veneration of the saint can be found already in the thirteenth century. While by the fifteenth century, Jerome’s saintly figure was universally present all around the Eastern Adriatic Coast, the Glagolitic monks were the ones who first appropriated him two centuries earlier. Among the Glagolites, Jerome was given a mythical role as the inventor of the Glagolitic script. Further appropriation of the saint occurred a century later when the newly founded Franciscan province of Dalmatia chose Jerome as their patron saint. Both traditions were absorbed and expanded with the development of humanism and the Renaissance. Jerome’s cult was adapted within the local humanist circles based on the pre-existing notion of his Dalmatian origin nurtured through the Glagolitic and Franciscan tradition.

However, it is noticeable that in those publications dealing with Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia during the discussed period, the growing attention given to the saint has very often been seen only through the monolithic prism of the prevailing Glagolitic tradition. The rise in popularity and

eneration has been observed primarily as an isolated phenomenon based on the belief in his regional origin and alleged invention of Glagolitic letters, without positioning the development of the cult in the broader picture of the rich and diverse Renaissance and humanist cult blooming simultaneously in the urban centers of the Italian peninsula. This oversight has meant that Jerome's humanist appropriation, as witnessed by possession of devotional literature, and the commission of the artworks and the chapels or altars to the saint, has been largely neglected when discussing the formation of the cult in Dalmatia.

On the other hand, the Franciscan veneration of Saint Jerome was very often reduced to the simplified explanations of the presence of Jerome's image merely to his role of the patron saint of the Franciscan Province of Dalmatia, without deeper exploration of how this adjoining of one more aspect to Jerome was expressed in the artistic, cultural, devotional and liturgical production of Franciscan provenance in Dalmatia. However, such state of scholarship is understandable. The reason for this lies in the lack of basic studies questioning the different dynamics of relations within the province—from structural to economic—that would serve as the main reference work in the discussion of the importance of Jerome for the Dalmatian Franciscans.

Therefore, I present the Franciscan production in this dissertation for two reasons. First, because it is necessary for understanding of the existence of various actors which contributed to the establishment of popular piety to the saint in medieval Dalmatia. And second, because of the role of Franciscans as the transmitters of cultural expressions and literary production, and as the commissioners of artworks which represent points on the dense map of the expressions of Jerome's cult in the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the Late Middle Ages.

Regardless of the widespread impact of the cult of Saint Jerome for the development of Croatian piety, cultural and national identity through the centuries, there has been no study, until now, which has observed the development of his veneration in the Eastern Adriatic Coast and which has questioned different factors—religious, cultural, political and historical—in the formation of Jerome as a national saint, and which has applied an interdisciplinary approach through the analysis of different types of sources. Precisely because of the importance of Jerome's character in various aspects of Croatian history, from the formation of cultural identity to the formation of a national identity, it is necessary to present a study that will serve as a basis for further research into the adaptation of Jerome's cult over the centuries to the present day, and which will point out different research questions for the further assessment.

An example that conveys the mythological position of Jerome in present-day Croatia, built over the centuries, is the sentence most often attributed to the saint: *Parce mihi, Domine, quia Dalmata sum* (Forgive me, Lord, for I am a Dalmatian). This research did not manage to trace its origins and first use, but with certainty, we can conclude that it does not have a historical basis as there is no trace of these words in any work written by Jerome. The meaning of the phrase is explained by the fierce nature of the saint, which he allegedly justified with his native mentality, and is often interpreted as the expression of his connection with his native Dalmatia.

Accordingly, the depiction of Jerome hitting his chest with a stone in penitential ecstasy has often been misinterpreted as a reflection of Jerome's alleged words, rather than as an expression of his penitent character described in detail in a letter to his female disciple Eustochium. On the other hand, this contemporary example, illustrates how strong the appropriation of Jerome was by those who considered him, and still consider him, their compatriot, and in one sentence reflects Jerome's prominent place among the saints venerated in Croatia.

Notwithstanding the general acceptance of this apocryphal phrase, it is necessary to point out that in the popular piety of present-day Croatia, Jerome does not have the same place as he had at his peak during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While the belief about Jerome's local origins is generally accepted and he often stands out as "our saint" among Croatians, particularly in Dalmatia, expressions of private and collective piety dedicated to him are not present in the general religious setting. There are several reasons for this. From the veneration of Saint Joseph as the patron saint of Croatia, to the general weakening of Jerome's image from the nineteenth century, to the non-existence of a church dedicated to the saint which could serve as the central place of veneration. I emphasize the current situation, given that it could be mirrored to the situation in the period before the fifteenth century when in the Croatian lands, the same awareness of Jerome being of Dalmatian origin existed, but the popular cult, outside narrow ecclesiastical or monastic circles did not.

This dissertation does not focus only on the origins of the narrow idea of Jerome's adoption as a national saint and the way he was used in the construction of the "symbolical configuration of the collective identities" during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period.⁶ Further, its objective is not to deconstruct the complex identity questions present in the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the centuries but rephrasing Anthony Smith, "to open the windows in the inner world of

⁶ Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 37.

nationalist ideas and relations through the research into the cult of national heroes and saints”.⁷ To paraphrase it even further, this research into the cult of Saint Jerome opens the window to view the many different changes—cultural, political, historical and intellectual—happening along the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the period.

This study looks at Jerome’s cult in new ways, identifying the urban centers as the focal points of changes, supported by the urban intellectual elites, clerical and humanist, in the process of the adoption of the Italian manifestations of the cult, but also by its subsequent adaptation to reflect Jerome’s prominent position among those who considered him a compatriot. In this discussion, I contextualize many elements already known to scholars but never before observed in the broader perspective. For that reason, I believe that many of the hypothesis raised in this work will hopefully inspire new discussion on the aspects which could not be elaborated here in detail.

Until now, Jerome’s cult has been primarily observed through its national component and its presence in the history of ideas, together with the intense Glagolitic veneration of the saint. In contrast, the fundamental components of the veneration of the saint—the devotional practices and the cultural production related to it—have been largely neglected or subordinated to the national component. Throughout this dissertation, I emphasize that the veneration of Jerome mirrors three broader perspectives, all equally important. The first one is a cultural one, where the expressions of the cult present in Dalmatia—the devotional literature, the transcription of manuscripts of Jerome’s letters, the presence of the iconographic types established in the Apennine peninsula and the commonality of the devotional practices—should be observed as cultural commodities exchanged between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, through political, economic and personal networks.

The second one relates to the new devotional practices where the veneration of the saint should be observed in the broader shift of religious sentiments, where the lay, or better to say personal devotion, and the inner spiritual experience, became the focal point of devotional activities.⁸ It is here where Jerome’s penitent character became the element of identification for devotees. Finally, the last one, relates to the already mentioned adoption of Jerome into the intellectual production of Dalmatian humanists, mainly in the polemic discussion on his origin between Dalmatian and Italian humanists,

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 70. See the footnote 15.

⁸ Richard Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion,” *Christian Spirituality*, 1987, 75–108; André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. Daniel Ethan Bornstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

and in the narratives on national history, where the development of Jerome's veneration contributes to the notion of the development of the history of ideas.

It is not possible to discuss the position of Jerome in such an elaborate and complex theoretical and philosophical framework as that of national discourse through the centuries, without observing what preceded to the formation of Jerome's image as a national saint in literary production. This dissertation focuses on the beginnings of the veneration of Jerome as the patron of Dalmatia and identifies its particularities which gradually led to his formation as a national saint by the end of the fifteenth century. Furthermore, I argue that without the cultural influence of humanism which promoted Jerome as the patron saint of pious and intellectual individuals, the sweeping changes of the devotional practices during the Late Middle Ages, and the unstable political and historical context, the existing traditions of veneration would never have elevated Jerome to such a high position.

Given the totality of production, written and visual, related to the cult of Jerome during the last few centuries in Croatia, but the scarce amount of research on the foundations of veneration, this study is limited to the period of the formation of Jerome's cult in the Dalmatian communes during the Late Middle Ages. The main research questions explored in this work are: Why did Jerome begin to be celebrated as the patron saint of Dalmatia and Croatia during the fifteenth century? Who were the main initiators of the transformation of his image from a universal church father to Jerome the Dalmatian? Can we discuss specific regional expressions in the written and visual media that distinguish Jerome's veneration in Dalmatia from veneration in other areas considering primarily Italy, where a great revival of his cult took place during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries?

I am focusing on artworks representing Jerome as the primary sources, exploring their commission, iconography, and the place in the overall cult of the saint. By exploring the correlation between the text and the image, and the different influences on the production of such works, this thesis aims to explore the portrayal of Jerome as Dalmatian, but also to offer a picture of the cultural sphere in which such an image was formed. Special attention is placed on the expressions of collective piety in which the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin and prominent status is embedded, two monumental reliefs; one in Šibenik (1465–1468), the *Šibenik Tondo* (Fig.56) and another in Trogir (1467), the *Relief of Saint Jerome* (Fig.73) with the iconography of the latter—present also in the twelve reliefs of smaller dimension modelled upon the one in Trogir—proposed as a unique variation of the iconographic type “Saint Jerome Reading in Wilderness” particularly present only in Venice, transformed into the local variety, “Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto”.

Due to the number of sources, mainly those visual, and the occurrence in the secondary literature, I have focused my research on the communes of Zadar, Šibenik, and Trogir, together with the Republic of Ragusa. The reason for focusing on these communes lies also in the available discussions of Jerome in the secondary literature—like it was for the commune of Split—where it was impossible to rely on the earlier publications since they do not bring material which could be contextualized within this framework. The extensive archival research on a matter could not be performed within the limits of this work.

This work aims to serve as the base for future research on the topic, not only on the development of the cult of Jerome in Dalmatia, but also more generally by drawing new conclusions on some segments of the development of the cult in Italy. Furthermore, it indicates directions for further research into Renaissance culture in Dalmatia, especially in terms of adoption and adaption, underlining the necessity of observing artistic representations in the broader historical context.

1.2 SAINT JEROME AS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER

Among the many other saints in the *communio sanctorum*, Saint Jerome stands out in notable ways.⁹ Indeed, Christianity is indebted to this Church Father as no other, primarily for his translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate. As well, his fundamental contribution to the building of the Church as an institution lies in the biblical commentaries he wrote about church books, particularly the Gospels, and thus significantly contributed to the formation of early theological thought. Unlike other important people of the early Church however, not much is known about the historical Jerome, and most of what is assumed has been reconstructed from his writings: a short autobiography included in his *On Illustrious Men* and the letters he exchanged with friends all over the Roman Empire.¹⁰ As opposed to other Church fathers, Jerome's life was not written by a contemporary, as in the case of Ambrose or Augustine. This might be explained by the intense

⁹ On Jerome's life and literary production in detail, consult: Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1922); J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998); Susan Weingarten, *The Saint's Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005); Josef Lössl and Andrew Cain, *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009); Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (Ann Arbor: Taylor & Francis, 2013).

¹⁰ Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, chap. 135.

antagonisms towards Jerome both in Rome and in the Holy Land, and his aggressive temper due to which he often quarreled with his contemporaries, even his close friends.¹¹

At an early age, he went to pursue his studies in Rome, in what was then known as one of the best grammar schools in the empire, led by the famous grammarian Aelius Donatus, where he acquired, among other things, the basics of the Greek language. His early twenties were marked by constant traveling; he spent some time in Trier, the imperial capital at the time, for career reasons, where he might have held an administrative post.¹² His journey then took him to Aquileia and other cities of Northern Italy as well as back to Dalmatia, a trip which probably included a visit to his birth city. At that time, Aquileia was a regional religious center boasting a recently built basilica and was among of the places where the earliest monastic communities were formed. It was there that Jerome became familiar with ascetic practices and soon joined a circle of ascetic clerics formed by his friends, practicing fasting and devotional prayer. There, he also started to expand his theological knowledge transcribing books and writing his theological commentaries.¹³

The milestone in Jerome's youth life was a pilgrimage to Jerusalem when he was around 27, which could be described as Jerome's pilgrimage to the "seat of wisdom". On his route, he stopped in Antioch, where he stayed longer than planned and began to work on improving his Greek, learning from the Christian priest Evagrius, under whom he studied Aristotle and Christian theology.¹⁴ Staying in Antioch contributed to his linguistic skills and allowed him to read and study a wide range of ancient authors. The Antioch period was relevant not only for his education, which later helped him translate the Bible, but also for his spirituality. It is assumed that a decisive event in Jerome's spiritual life took place in Antioch, where he had a dream, in which he saw Christ as a judge, accusing him of being Ciceronian because of his strong affection for pagan classics.

Feeling torn between his love for the Classical authors and the Scriptures, he postponed a journey to Jerusalem and as a sign of penance, went to live as a hermit in the desert of Chalcis around 374–375. His life was not easy, living among beasts, sleeping on the ground, drinking only water, and fighting temptations while remembering the pleasures of Rome. In a later letter to Eustochium, one of his female followers, he expressed his ascetic doctrine, remembering and describing his

¹¹ E. Gordon Whatley, Anne Booth Thompson, and Robert Upchurch, "Saint Jerome: Introduction," in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), 20–26. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 1.

¹² Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 2; Kelly, *Jerome*, 25.

¹³ Kelly, *Jerome*, 32.

¹⁴ Weingarten, *The Saint's Saints*, 12; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 3.

struggle with his bodily urges and passions, recounting how he had imagined Roman parties and women dancing while fasting.

The ascetic period in the desert was crucial for the construction of the image of the penitent saint, and part of the letter to Eustochium became an essential part of the saint's *officium*. Jerome's rejection of materiality and his minimization of carnal needs, food and water, was his way to salvation, to perceiving Christ through the mystic visions he had. On the other hand, it was also a way to redeem himself for the sins that he had committed during his adolescent years. The days in the desert were filled with prayer and intellectual work, since he took his library with him, and it is possible that he spent time interacting with Syrian anchorites, dispersed across the desert.¹⁵ Jerome's commitment to the ascetic way of life is further reflected in his two *vitae* of desert saints, the *Vita Pauli* (The Life of Saint Paul the First Hermit) written around 376 and the *Vita Malchi* (The Life of Malchus the Monk) written around 390.¹⁶

After four years in the desert, Jerome went back to Antioch and then travelled on to Constantinople. Finally, he ended up back in Rome around 382, where at the persuasion of Pope Damasus, whose secretary and friend he became, he started to revise the Latin translations of the Bible, comparing them to the Greek original, which resulted in a new translation, today known as the Vulgate.¹⁷ Although his reputation in Rome was growing—he was considered one of the most likely candidates to be the next pope—he soon encountered his first opponents. Jerome himself wrote: “Once, people called me holy, humble, and learned, and said that I was worthy to become pope. Now they think me a scoundrel, trickster, liar, and criminal allied to the devil.”¹⁸ The members of the Roman clergy were offended by his criticism of their corruption, abundance, hypocrisy and false piety, beside whom he served as an example of the ascetic and monastic life.

The antagonism against Jerome grew when Roman aristocratic women joined his circle, most famously Paula and her daughter Eustochium, who followed Jerome to Antioch in 385 when he was forced to leave Rome. Jerome settled in the Holy Land, followed by Paula and other admirers with whom he established a monastery near the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Daily life in the monastery was a combination of religious contemplation with daily labor. Jerome continued his intellectual work, writing commentaries on the Bible and other theological works until he died, still

¹⁵ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 11.

¹⁶ Yorick Schulz-Wackerbarth, *Die Vita Pauli des Hieronymus: Darstellung und Etablierung eines Heiligen im hagiographischen Diskurs der Spätantike* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

¹⁷ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

in Bethlehem on September 30, 420 and was buried in a tomb carved near the entrance to the cave where Jesus was born.¹⁹ There is not much evidence of the first cult of the saint in Bethlehem. It is assumed to have developed around his grave, where the chapel of Saint Jerome stands today, but it did not become a wide spread cult, and he was not recognized as a saint until the Early Middle Ages when the first *vitae* of Saint Jerome were written.

In the introduction to his edition of Jerome's letters, Andrew Cain gives an excellent portrait of Jerome's image in the Late Antiquity as well as his reception by his contemporaries. Even though from the present-day perspective, Jerome's intellectual work, especially his translation of the Bible, is seen as fundamental to the formation of ecclesiastical theology and structures, in his own time, Jerome was not regarded as such an authority. The reason for this, should be sought in his unconventional way of life, which in many ways crossed the boundaries established by the contemporary theological authorities. However, the reasons why he was condemned in his time were the same reasons for his being praised several centuries later, when during the period of humanism and the Renaissance, his cult re-emerged.

In the first place, it was his practice of an extreme form of ascetic Christianity, which resulted in his departure to the deserts of Syria and the formation of the monastery in Bethlehem. In his actions, it is evident that Jerome was following the rule "back to the origins" where his extreme lifestyle could be seen as an imitation of the life of Christ, but also as an imitation of the life of the most famous Christian ascetic, Saint John the Baptist. As Cain concludes, the historical Saint Jerome, "was an extremely marginalized figure in his own time and therefore a far cry from the Saint Jerome construct of medieval hagiography that heavily influenced most scholarly traditions down to the twentieth century and some even down to the present day."²⁰

1.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULT

Although Jerome was made a saint in the Early Middle Ages, he did not receive the same level of acclaim as other early saints until the Late Middle Ages. As stated above in the quote from Cain, the image of Jerome as we now know it, was mainly a product of Middle Ages, when in moments of particular need for a strong theological authority, Jerome's image was adapted to a different context,

¹⁹ Thomas F. Head, *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 192. The day of his death was noted in the *Martyrology* by Saint Bede the Venerable.

²⁰ Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 3.

with the reconstruction of his vita and even a forgery of the material related to him. For that reason, the evolution of his cult and the construction of his saintly image can be narrowed to four critical periods.

The Carolingian Period

The first significant rediscovery of Jerome occurred during the Carolingian period, although some earlier examples of appreciation for Jerome exist, as seen in the ivory diptych kept in Brescia and known in the historiography as the *Boethius diptych*, made in honor of the Consul Manilus Boethius, the father of the philosopher Boethius.²¹ Inside the covers, the two painted miniatures depict the *Raising of Lazarus* on one side, while the other gives the first known representations of the church fathers Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory, and with it the earliest depiction of Saint Jerome. The first significant change in the perception of the saint occurred in the Carolingian period when interest in Jerome was closely connected with the edition and the translation of the Bible and the patristic texts, which became one of the uppermost tasks of Carolingian scholars.²² Not only was the edition a preoccupation, as can be seen in the example of *Alcuin's Bible* presented to Charlemagne, but great attention was given to its distribution and production.

With the development of monasteries and the rise of the monastic life during the period, the need for Bibles became acute, since one of the primary tasks of the monks involved the reading of sacred scripture. In an atmosphere like that, which sought the origins of biblical scholarship, Jerome became regarded as a great role. As Alcuin said of him: “Be mindful of the most blessed Jerome, the most celebrated teacher of divine scripture in the Holy Church.”²³ For that reason, the Carolingian Bibles, the *First Bible of Charles the Bald* (also known as *Vivan Bible*), copied at the monastery of San Martin of Tours around 845, and the *Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura*, presumably composed in Reims around 868, have the earliest narrative of Jerome translating the Bible and sending its copies

²¹ Anna Strümpell, “Hieronymus Im Gehäuse,” *Marburger Jahrbuch Für Kunstwissenschaft* 2 (1925): 37; Alan Cameron, “Consular Diptychs in Their Social Context: New Eastern Evidence,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 11 (1998): 384–403; Kim Bowes, “Ivory Lists: Consular Diptychs, Christian Appropriation and Polemics of Time in Late Antiquity,” *Art History* 24, no. 3 (2001): 338–57. The three fathers are depicted in a standard fashion of the time dressed as deacons holding a book in front of them. Their representations do not differ much since, at this period, saints did not have attributes developed, but we differentiate them by the inscriptions above their heads – Geronimus, Augustinus, and Gregorius.

²² Bernice Martha Kaczynski, “Edition, Translation, and Exegesis: The Carolingians and the Bible,” in *The Gentle Voices of Teachers: Aspects of Learning in the Carolingian Age* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 171.

²³ *Ibid.*, 173.

to the monasteries.²⁴ Among the earliest representations of Jerome as the great translator and editor of the Bible is from the cover of the *Dagulf psalter*, where he is paired with King David.²⁵

Jerome's intellectual production and his translation of the Bible could be understood as a miraculous work which brought the Bible to monastic communities, but it was not something that could appeal to miracle seeking believers. The lack of a hagiography from Jerome's days left behind sufficient space for later invention and construction of his *vita*, based on his own words, in a more limited and modest manner, accentuating only elements that fit into set hagiographical patterns, in order to endorse his sanctity. The two hagiographies of Jerome known in the Middle Ages and attributed to ancient authors were *Hieronymus noster* and *Plerosque Nimirum*, which formed the base of all the medieval hagiographies of Saint Jerome.²⁶

The Revival of the Thirteenth Century

The renewal of appreciation for Jerome's life, accomplishments, and miracles, started at the end of the thirteenth century when his relics were translated to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.²⁷ From that moment, it is possible to trace the compound progress of Jerome's cult in the Western Church, accompanied by the manifestations of any cult: hagiography, liturgical celebrations, and visual portrayals. In his masterful book on the cult of Saint Jerome in the Renaissance, Eugene Rice has acknowledged how the development of the cult in Rome had two stages. The first one, connected with translation of Jerome's relics to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore at the end of the thirteenth century, and the second one related to the invention of the new hagiographical material in the first half of the fourteenth century which elaborated on Jerome's life and death, and enlarged the list of his miraculous powers.

I have published a paper in which the process of reviving Jerome's cult in Rome was shown to be directly connected with the appointment of the first Franciscan pope, Nicholas IV (1288–1292) and the refurbishment of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore by the Roman Colonna family.²⁸ Furthermore, that research shows that the introduction of Jerome's cult in the church occurred during

²⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 26.

²⁵ Thomas Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 229.

²⁶ Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*, 140; Alberto Vaccari, "Le antiche vite di S. Girolamo," in *Vaccari, Scritti di erudizione e di filologia 2*, 1958, 31–51; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 209. See footnote nr. 2. Both version are published in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*. The first one under the number *BHL* 3871, and the second one under *BHL* 3870.

²⁷ Giovanni Biasiotti, "Le memorie di S. Girolamo in Santa Maria Maggiore di Roma," in *Miscellanea Geronimiana. Scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920), 237–44.

²⁸ Ines Ivić, "'Recubo Praesepis Ad Antrum': Reviving the Cult of Saint Jerome in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome at the End of the 13th Century," *Il Capitale Culturale* 21 (2020):87-119.

the process of the Franciscanization of the Roman basilica and its ideological positioning as the “second Bethlehem” after the fall of Acre and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem in 1291.

Jerome’s image only reinforced this idea, which had existed in the church from the Early Middle Ages when the relic of the crib of Jesus was given to the church and placed in a separated Chapel of Nativity, the same one where Jerome’s relics were placed after their translation from Bethlehem. Accordingly, new hagiographic material was composed in the fourteenth century, bringing more information on Jerome’s life from the letters attributed to Pseudo-Augustine, Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem, and Pseudo-Eusebius of Cremona, known under the joint name *Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi*.

The first letter is attributed to Eusebius of Cremona and is known under the title *Epistola beati Eusebii de morte gloriosissimi Hieronymi doctoris eximii* and contains a description of Jerome’s death. The second letter is attributed to Saint Augustine of Hippo to Cyril of Jerusalem *Epistola sancii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi ad Cyrillum Jerosolymitanum episcopum de magnificentiis beati Hieronymi*, informs Cyril of his vision of Jerome’s soul appearing to him at the moment of his death. He glorifies Jerome’s greatness, accentuating his holiness and intellect. The last letter, *Epistola ad beatum Augustinum de miraculis Hieronymi*, contains alleged Cyril’s answer to Augustine and contains a list of Jerome’s miracles, performed during his life and after his death. The importance of these letters is not only in bringing more details on Jerome’s life and filling out his hagiographies but also in the fact that these letters were the most important element upon which the cult in later centuries, specifically in the fifteenth century as this thesis presents, has developed.

Jerome as a Sainly Superstar during the Renaissance

The peak of veneration of Saint Jerome occurred during the Renaissance when his saintly image was adopted into different contexts of veneration. Spurred on by humanist interest in Classical literature and Biblical studies, he was transformed into the emblem of the pious intellectual. Meanwhile, within the monastic reform *milieu*, his ascetic and monastic lifestyle was advocated as a model for the monastic orders. It was during the Renaissance that his cult became widespread across Europe, disseminated through the written copies of his *vita*, *Transitus Sancti Hieronymi*, and other devotional works, hymns, and prayers. As this thesis shows, his saintly image became multifunctional and easily adaptable in the different modes of veneration. The biggest shift that occurred during this period was the adoption of Jerome into the sphere of private devotion, where his acts of penance became an element of identification for the devotees with the saint. His status as a saintly superstar

during this period is supported by numerous visual representations of the saint and elaborated iconography formed out of the written works about his life.

Erasmus and the Council of Trent

The last important point in the perception and development of Jerome's cult arose at the beginning of the sixteenth century when the first complete edition of Jerome's letters and treatises was prepared for print in Basel by Johannes Froben in 1516.²⁹ Among the editors was Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), who at the beginning of the nine-volume edition included a new *Life of Jerome*. Erasmus's work represents the first critical approach to Jerome's life and work, where he reconstructs the details of the saint's life: he was not a cardinal, he was only baptized in Rome, and he could not be taken as an example of chastity since he himself mentions how he had sinned when he was younger.

Erasmus's work was the first attempt to differentiate the historical Jerome from the legends and errors accumulated over time. While, building on reliable sources like Sulpicius Severus and Rufinus, Erasmus drew most of his information from Jerome's own writings, claiming: "For who could know Jerome more accurately than Jerome himself? Or who could portray him more faithfully?"³⁰ All the same, Jerome was included as a church father in the official counter-reformation program after the Council of Trent. His image was used in the promotion of the reform ideas—returning to the practices of the early church, which he embodied as a hermit, a theologian and a church father.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

General Literature

Due to the importance of Jerome to the Church in general, the literature on him is vast. The earliest scholarly publications focused primarily on his written production, while the first comprehensive studies on the veneration of the saint through the Middle Ages were published only

²⁹ On Erasmus' edition of Jerome' works and his personal devotion to the saint, see chapter 5 *Hieronymus redivivus: Erasmus and Saint Jerome*, in: Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 116–36.

³⁰ On Erasmus' biography of Jerome consult chapter 3 *Portraying Jerome*, in: Hilmar Pabel, *Herculean Labours Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 178.

towards the end of the last century.³¹ The cult of Saint Jerome has been a topic of several individual studies dealing with different aspects of his veneration, and many of them have not been used or quoted as much as they deserve. These include works by Ansgar Pöllmann, Anna Strümpell and Renate Jungblut.³² Due to the interdisciplinary approach in this thesis, I will reflect here only on the essential studies quoted extensively throughout the text.

In the present-day scholarship on Jerome, his cult and artistic representations, the three studies which comprise all the previous scholarship, present the starting point for this research. The first two studies, Eugene Rice's *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (1985) and Daniel Russo's *Saint Jérôme en Italie: Etude d'iconographie et de spiritualité (XIIIe–XVe siècle)* (1987), appeared almost at the same time. However, their influence on the historiographical development of research of Jerome's cult was different, a fact largely conditioned by the languages in which they were written. The earlier published study, by Eugene Rice focused on the period of the Renaissance when Jerome's cult flourished.³³

In it, he comprises the development and the manifestations of the cult from the early days, Late Antiquity, until the seventeenth century and his use in the counter-reformation movement. Down to this day, Rice's work remains the most fundamental research for the understanding of Jerome's position through the centuries. Despite the complexity of the research, which necessarily covered a broad timeframe and the immersion into different scholarly disciplines such as art history, theology, biblical and religious studies, Rice managed to bring together various "Jeromes" that were constructed in different contexts offering a comprehensive portrait of the saint.

The depth of the detailed study that Rice conducted is evident in the extensive bibliography, where he lists many historiographical works that were often out of the scope of other scholars. Rice not only observes the role Jerome had in various contexts—the reform movements of the Late Middle Ages, the rise of humanism, the Counter Reformation, and personal devotion, but his conclusions are supported by a wide range of the primary written sources, as well as with artworks representing the saint. However, his most significant contribution is a discussion on the appropriation of Jerome by the humanists as one of their own, as the perfect model of the erudite Christian.

³¹ The earliest comprehensive publications were: Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*; Vincenzo Vannutelli, ed., *Miscellanea Geronimiana. scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920).

³² Ansgar Pöllmann, "Von der Entwicklung des Hieronymus-Typus in der älteren Kunst," *Benediktinische Monatsschrift* 2 (1920): 438–521; Strümpell, "Hieronymus Im Gehäuse"; Renate Jungblut, "Hieronymus: Darstellung und Verehrung eines Kirchenvaters" (Bamberg, K. Urlaub, 1967).

³³ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*.

Two years after Rice's study, in 1987, Daniel Russo published a book on the development of the iconography of Saint Jerome in Italy.³⁴ He focused on the cult of Saint Jerome in Italy in the period between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, and almost exclusively on the visual material and the iconography without much reference to the extensive written humanist production about Jerome as presented by Rice. The scope of both books is different. While Rice's book offers the general picture of the emergence of the cult and different aspects through several centuries, mainly relying on the written production, Russo's book explores Jerome's image in Italian painting.

This was done with good reason, as all of the iconographic types of the saint were established in Italy in different contexts, and it offers an insight into the many aspects of the cult overlooked or not explored thoroughly by Rice. The work by Russo, primarily explores the adoption of Jerome by the monastic orders and their promotion of the saint within the Observant reform. Another aspect noted by Russo explored further in this thesis is the reliance of Jerome's *vita* and the visual representations on the *vitae* of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. Due to the number of the presented artworks, the book by Daniel Russo stands as a compendium of visual primary source material, useful for the comparisons, and a primary reference for the analysis of the Dalmatian examples due to the detailed analysis of the emergence of the iconographic types and the chosen examples.

Preceding these two works was Bernhard Ridderbos' *Saint and Symbol: Images of Saint Jerome in Early Italian Art* (1984).³⁵ The book can be put in the same circle of fundamental books for the development of the understanding of Jerome's cult, together with Russo and Rice. For this research, it is of extreme importance because the author gives more attention to some aspects of Jerome's cult, which are not addressed by the others, and includes excerpts and English translations of the devotional material on which the visual representations were based.

In the first place, it observes the cult in Venice, which was the emerging point for the cult in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The biggest contribution of Ridderbos' work is a discussion on the influence of the pseudo-letters by Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem and Eusebius of Cremona—also known as *Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi*—on the iconography of the saint. Added to this is a useful contribution on the development of the iconographic type of the penitential Jerome in Siena and Florence, by observing the broader context of the emergence of the reform groups which chose Jerome as their representative model, such as the Hieronymites.

³⁴ Daniel Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie: étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité (XIIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris; Rome: Découverte ; Ecole française de Rome, 1987).

³⁵ Bernhard Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol: Images of Saint Jerome in Early Italian Art* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1984).

For research on the artistic representations of Saint Jerome and its iconographic types, Herbert Friedmann's *Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art* (1980) brings a comprehensive corpus of numerous representations of Saint Jerome with reproductions that serve as comparative material for further research.³⁶ However, his primary interest was not Jerome, even though he gives an extensive overview of scholarship and history of cult but rather, the representations of animals as companions to Jerome. The biggest contribution of his work is the catalog of animals—the bestiary—with possible symbolical meanings, together with a list of the artworks where they are represented. The author admits that some of the representations of animals are not entirely explainable, mainly because his research did not consider the possible meanings derived from the Bible and Biblical exegesis being the basis of such representations. Still, it represents a valuable contribution not only for the research of Jerome's artistic representations, but also for research into animalistic representations in art. The study makes another useful contribution in the form of an appendix with a list of all the relevant artworks representing Jerome, listed by their creators.

Some individual studies have significantly changed the scholarly perception of the visual production of Jerome. The first one is an article by Millard Meiss "Scholarship and Penitence in the Early Renaissance: The Image of St. Jerome" (1974), which explores the emergence of the "Penitent Saint Jerome" iconographic type in Tuscany among reform congregations such as the *Hieronymites* during the fifteenth century.³⁷ Another is an article by Hans Belting, "St. Jerome in Venice: Giovanni Bellini and the Dream of Solitary Life" (2014), in which the author points out the specific iconographic type "Saint Jerome in the Wilderness" which emerged among the educated circles of devoted humanists in Venice, as a result of growing private devotion, the reform movement, and the humanist movement, all of whom Jerome was adopted as the model figure.³⁸

Where is Stridon?

None of these comprehensive studies, however, acknowledge the existence of the intense veneration in Dalmatia during the Late Middle Ages. Even when they do, as in Russo's book, which mentions Vittore Carpaccio's *Zadar Polyptych* from the end of the fifteenth century, they discuss it

³⁶ Herbert Friedmann, *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980).

³⁷ Millard Meiss, "Scholarship and Penitence in the Early Renaissance: The Image of St. Jerome," *Pantheon* 32, no. 1 (1974): 134–41.

³⁸ Hans Belting, "St. Jerome in Venice: Giovanni Bellini and the Dream of Solitary Life," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17 (2014): 5–33.

within the context of Italian production, and without mentioning the specific local veneration of the saint. They are not to blame, however. The reason for this lies in the lack of comprehensive research on the cult of Jerome in Croatian scholarship, where so far no study has dealt with the reasons for the veneration of Jerome, let alone provided an overview of artistic production depicting the saint. Nevertheless, there are valid reasons for this situation. Research into the cult of Jerome, which was at its peak during the Renaissance, necessarily requires an interdisciplinary approach because of the ambiguity of his saintly character.

Therefore, research of this magnitude necessarily encompasses various fields of interest—patristics, Observant reform, iconographic studies, issues of pre-modern identities, cultural studies—in which numerous editions used in this research have been published only in the last few decades. Therefore, I can say without hesitation that this type of research could not have been made on such a scale before, due to the lack of secondary literature that provided comparative material for the development of the cult of Jerome in Dalmatia.

Another reason why Croatian scholarship has not acknowledged that the essential meaning of Jerome's cult lies in the complexity of the topic, but also in its focus on the location of Stridon. Writing his *De viris illustribus*, Jerome probably had no idea that a single sentence in his book would cause a centuries-long dispute over the exact location of his birth town. The town he mentions was a small *oppidum*, which makes it harder for the historians to come to definite conclusions about since there is little archaeological or historical evidence of it. Whereas in the international historiography the question of Stridon have not been the focus of the scholarly studies, Croatian scholars have provided new explanations on Jerome and his relationship to his homeland.³⁹

Stridon has been identified with many places, a location near Aquileia in Italy, with Zrenj, Štrigova, with the surroundings of Skradin in Croatia, and even with Grahovo Polje in Bosnia.⁴⁰ Yet, these appropriations of the saint's birthplace have never resulted in such a strong local and civic cult in the towns involved, which could have position them as the undoubted place of Jerome's birth, and thus become a regional center of the pilgrimage, except maybe for Štrigova in later centuries. For the present account, the most relevant explanations are the Istrian and Dalmatian theories, which have

³⁹ The last comprehensive discussion on a topic was offered by: Mate Suić, "Hijeronim Stridonjanin - Građanin Tarsatike" [Jerome of Stridon-A The citizen of Tarsatica], *Rad JAZU* 426 (1986): 213–78.

⁴⁰ On the development of the local veneration in Štrigova during the fifteenth century and the subsequent tradition on Štrigova being Stridon see: See also: Josip Florschütz, "Stridon i Zrin" [Stridon and Zrin], *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* 6 (1902): 87–98; Joseph Bedekovich, *Natale solum. Sancti Hieronymi in rudibus Stridonis occultatum cum vita ejusdem* (Neostadii: Typographeo Mülleriano, 1752); Frane Bulić, *Stridon*, 50.

been strongly promoted in the fifteenth century and directly fed the dispute between the Dalmatian and Italian humanists.

The Istrian theory locates the saint's birthplace at the site of present-day Zrenj (Sdrigna), a village in northern Istria. During the Middle Ages, the inhabitants of Istria believed that Jerome was born somewhere within their peninsula, a belief that is evident in the presence of Jerome's cult in liturgical books and smaller churches consecrated to him. This explanation was popularized by Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) in his *Italia illustrata* printed in 1474.⁴¹ He classifies Istria as an Italian province, concluding that Jerome could not be anything but Italian, since, in his opinion, Istria had been a Roman province even before the time of the Emperor Augustus.

The Dalmatian hypothesis on the other hand, developed from the commonly accepted idea of the saint's regional origin. Marko Marulić (Marcus Marulus, 1450–1524) was one of the most fervent proponents of this hypothesis. Although not the first to defend Jerome's Dalmatian origin, he was the first to infer from written sources that Stridon was located somewhere in the area of Skradin.⁴² Most of the representatives of this theory agreed only that Stridon was in Dalmatia, but could not reach a consensus concerning the precise place.⁴³ This is the explanation that still features most commonly in Croatian and international historiography.

This research does not aim to explore the question of the location of Stridon since I believe that Jerome's immersion in Croatian culture through the centuries represents the more persuasive argument for the Croatian appropriation than proving that Stridon was on its territory. Furthermore, for the research on the development of Jerome's cult in medieval Dalmatia and Croatia, it is not essential where Stridon was, as much as it is important what the people who lived there during the Middle Ages believed. Regardless of the different interpretation of Jerome's words by Croatian humanists, as seen in the chapter 8, for them, the location of Stridon was somewhere in the territory of Dalmatia or Croatia. The structural core of Jerome's veneration in medieval Dalmatia and Croatia, even until the present day, are all of those expressions of the devotion to the saint that have its origins in one simple sentence Jerome wrote long time ago.

⁴¹ Flavio Biondo, *Roma ristavrata et Italia illustrata* (Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1543), 197. Bulić, *Stridon*, 25–27.

⁴² See: Darko Novaković, "Novi Marulić: Vita diui Hieronymi" [A new Marulić: Vita diui Hieronymi], *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): 5–24. Darko Novaković, "Svetac sa sretnog dalmatinskog žala: Marulićev životopis sv. Jeronima" [Saint from the Dalmatian shore: Marulić's biography of St. Jerome], in *Marko Marulić: Latinska manja djela II*, ed. Vedran Gligo et al. (Split: Književni krug, 2011), 11–39.

⁴³ Bulić, *Stridon*, 27–31. Among them were Vinko Pribojević, Tomko Marnavić, Sebastiano Dolci, Ignjat Đorić and Daniele Farlati.

Croatian historiography

In Croatian historiography, the cult of the saint has been addressed sporadically, generally within broader topics and not exclusively focused on Jerome. For that reason, the questions on the presence of Jerome's cult in the Eastern Adriatic were answered with the vaguely positioned papers, very often offering unfounded conclusions based on the limited bibliographical survey. To date, no study has united all known aspects of the veneration of the saint and interpreted it through the perspective of historical, cultural, and artistic contexts. The research that has so far to some extent dealt with Saint Jerome, can be separated into three groups.

The first, mentions Jerome in light of the Glagolitic tradition and the attribution of the invention of the Glagolitic script to him. Works by Petar Runje, Marija Pantelić, and Vesna Badurina Stipčević deal with the cult of the saint in the liturgical Glagolitic manuscripts, and they draw together the comparative material and transcriptions of the saint's office contained in Glagolitic breviaries.⁴⁴

The second group includes articles dealing with the artistic features of the representations of Saint Jerome. The developed iconography of the saint had been present in Dalmatia in different types and forms, but art historians have mostly focused on only one type of visual source and the iconographic types present within them. This source, is a series of small-scale reliefs that were executed during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, modeled upon the relief in Trogir. Even though this series has been discussed at length, scholars have focused largely on the question of the attribution between two great names of the Croatian Renaissance, Andrea Alessi (Andrija Aleši, 1425–1505), and Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino (Nikola Firentinac, 1418–1506), rather than offering a comprehensive analysis of the iconography or its function.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Marija Pantelić, "Odras sredine u hrvatskoglagoljskim liturgijskim kodeksima 14. i 15. stoljeća" [The reflection of the milieu in the Croatian Glagolitic codices of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskog instituta* 21 (1971): 324–32; Marija Pantelić, "Kulturno-povijesni značaj hrvatskih glagoljskih kodeksa" [Cultural and historical importance of Croatian Glagolitic codices], *Crkva u svijetu* 11 (1976): 237–46; Petar Runje, "Sv. Jeronim i glagoljica u Hrvata" [St. Jerome and the Glagolitic script among Croats], in *O knjigama hrvatskih glagoljaša* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1998); Vesna Badurina Stipčević, "Legenda o svetom Jeronimu u hrvatskoglagoljskom Petrisovu zborniku (1468.)" [The legend of St. Jerome in Croatian Glagolitic Petris Miscellany (1468)], *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 47 (2016): 337–50; Vesna Badurina Stipčević, "Legenda o Jeronimu u starijoj hrvatskoj književnoj tradiciji" [The legend of Jerome in the older Croatian literary tradition], *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 85 (2013): 17–26.

⁴⁵ Kruno Prijatelj, "Andrija Aleši u Splitu", [Andrea Alessi in Split], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 5 (1948): 45–59; Ivo Petricioli, "Prilog Alešijevoj i Firentinčevoj radionici" [Contribution to Aleši's and Fiorentino's workshop], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 15 (1963): 67–74; Cvito Fisković, "Alešijev reljef u Londonu" [Alessi's relief in London], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti* 10–11 (1967): 47–49; Anne Markham Schulz, "Nepoznati reljef sv. Jeronima iz kruga Andrije Alešija" [Unknown relief of Saint Jerome from the circle of Andrea Alessi], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 20 (1976): 113–18; Ivo Petricioli, "Alešijev reljef Sv. Jeronima u Zadru" [Alessi's relief of St. Jerome in Zadar], in *Tragom Srednjovjekovnih Umjetnika* (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 1983), 139–51; Samo Štefanac, "Osservazioni sui rilievi di S. Girolamo nel deserto dalla cerchia di Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino e Andrea Alessi," *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 36 (1996): 107–19.

The last group, mentions Jerome in the context of humanists' writings, focusing on the presence of the saint as the symbolic representation of Dalmatia and discussing the presence of some devotional material to the saint, but mostly observing the linguistic aspects of the works, and not the devotional ones. Most of them are focused on the literary production of Marko Marulić and the circle around him.⁴⁶ Another perspective which have been observed in these works is that of Jerome's position as a national saint in the literary production within the national histories and the patriotic discourse.⁴⁷

1.5 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE TIMEFRAME

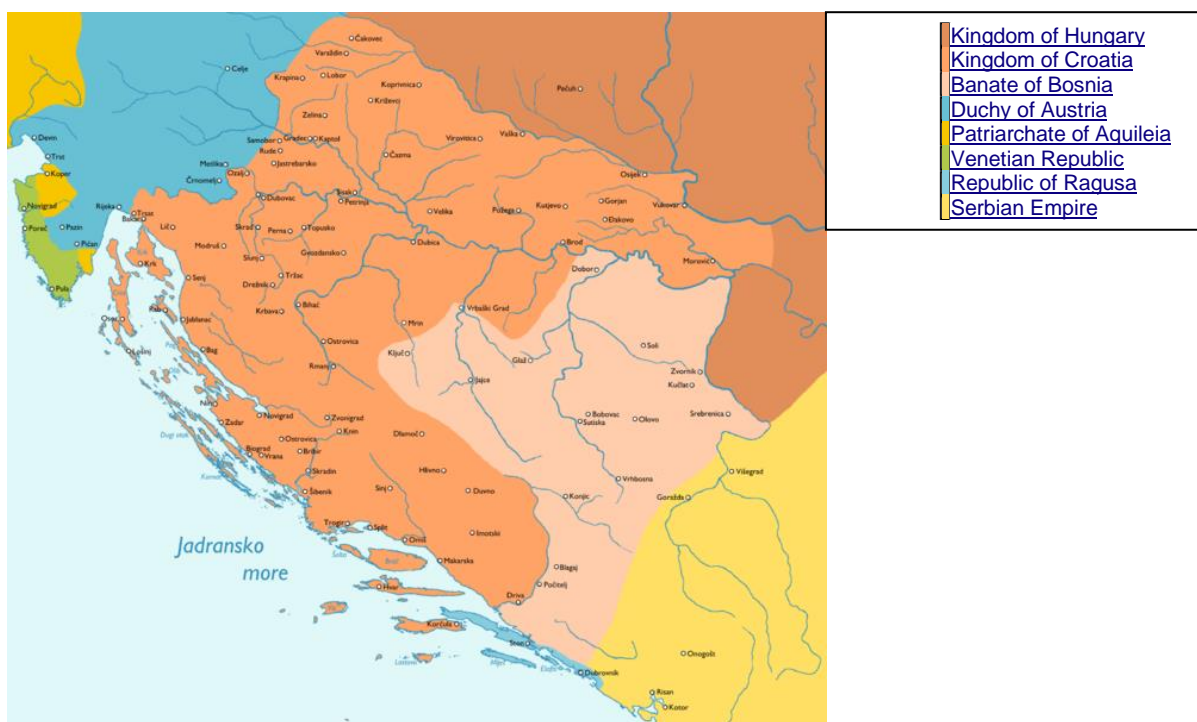


Figure 1 Map of the Croatian Lands after the Zadar Treaty in 1358. Source: Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0, author: IoannesII
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Zadar#/media/File:Zadar_Treaty_1358.png (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

One of the main reasons why Jerome's cult has not received more scholarly attention lies in the complexity of the formation of his cult along the Eastern Adriatic Coast, which arose during one of the most challenging periods, when it comes to historical research, of Croatian history. The

⁴⁶ Novaković, "Novi Marulić"; Darko Novaković, "Svetac sa sretnog dalmatinskog žala"; Josip Bratulić, "Trogirski (Jagićev) Život svetog Jeronima: u spomen na Vatroslava Jagića u povodu 90. obljetnice smrti" [Trogir (Jagić's) Life of St. Jerome: in memory of Vatroslav Jagić on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of his death], *Zadarska smotra* 1–2 (2014): 27–41; Pavao Knezović, "Sv. Jeronim u hrvatskom latinitetu renesanse" [St. Jerome in Croatian Latinity of renaissance period], *Kroatologija* 6 (2016): 1–26.

⁴⁷ See footnote 5.

autonomies of Dalmatian communes, leading urban and economic centers, like Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik, had been granted by the Croatian-Hungarian kings who were recognized as the sovereign of the Croatian Kingdom from the beginning of the twelfth century. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, sovereignty over the communes changed hands numerous times, juggling between the Venetian Republic and the Hungarian king or Croatian feudatories in the service of the Hungarian king. However, the communal laws and statues represented the legal fundament of the functioning of these city-states and largely contributed to the formation of their civic identity, regardless of the official sovereign.⁴⁸ The first significant period of political stability in the region arrived occurred at the middle of the fourteenth century when the Hungarian Kingdom and the Republic of Venice signed the *Treaty of Zadar* in 1358.

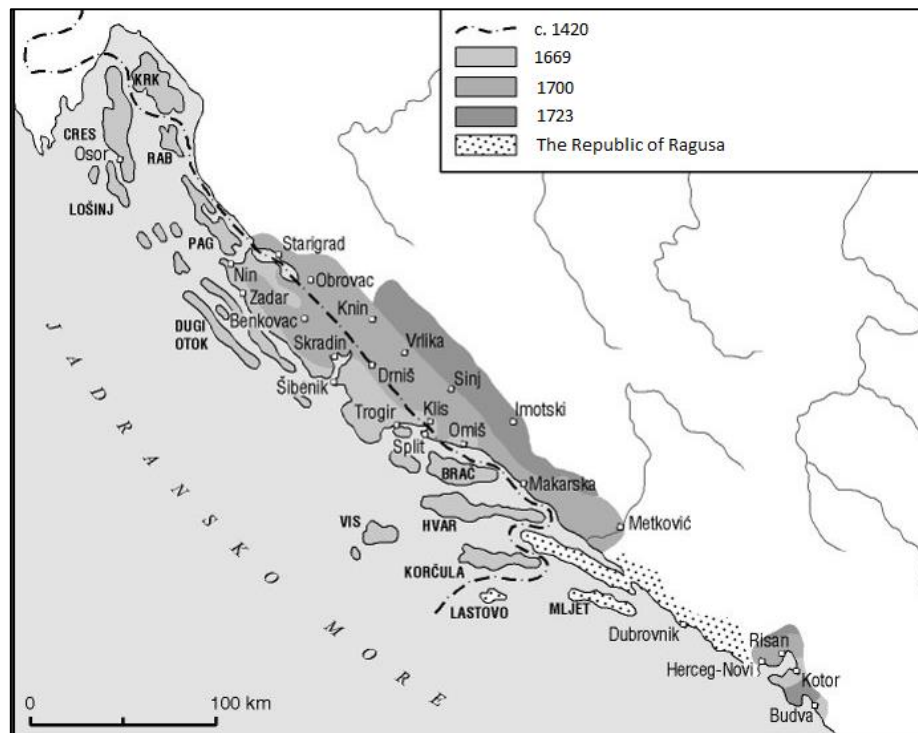


Figure 2 Map of Venetian acquisitions in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. Source: Hrvatska enciklopedija, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, https://www.enciklopedija.hr/Ilustracije/Dalmacija_u_doba_mlecana.jpg (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

With this treaty, Venetian ambitions for the hegemony in Dalmatia were put on hold for the next half a century. With it, the *Serenissima* was forced to surrender their territories along the Eastern Adriatic Coast, from the Kvarner region to the Bay of Kotor, to the Hungarian king.⁴⁹ Tomislav

⁴⁸ See: Nada Klaić, “Značenje vladavine Anževinaca za hrvatske zemlje, napose za Dalmaciju” [The significance of the rule of the Angevin dynasty in the Croatian lands, especially in Dalmatia] *Radovi. Razdio društvenih znanosti* 23, no. 10 (1984).

⁴⁹ Vinko Foretić, “Pogled na zadarski mir 1358. godine” [A reflection on Zadar Treaty of 1358], *Radovi Filozofskog*

Raukar points out that “in the Croatian Middle Ages there is neither peace nor truce with such a strong influence on the development of Croatian lands,” keeping in mind that after more than two centuries, the Kingdom of Dalmatia (*regnum Dalmatiae*) had been territorially integrated into the Kingdom of Croatia (*regnum Croatiae*), and with that under the Hungarian crown of Saint Stephen.⁵⁰ Due to the easier communication between the regions, and more importantly, due to the new political stability, the communes thrived economically. Even though some Dalmatian communes had their political autonomy restricted during the reign of Louis I of Hungary (1342–1382), in economic terms, they managed to strengthen and develop trading communication with the hinterland and Italian cities, especially those on the opposite side of the Adriatic.⁵¹

This favorable situation was interrupted in 1409, when Venetian rule was established first over Zadar and its islands. This turn came as a consequence of the internal struggles for the Hungarian throne at the turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century, between Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437) and Ladislas of Naples (1377–1414). The crisis was resolved with the sale of the hereditary rights of Dalmatia to the Venetian Republic by Ladislas of Naples in 1409. By 1420, the Venetian presence was confirmed in all the communes on Dalmatian Coast, except the Republic of Ragusa.⁵² Gradually, the unification of the legal system in the newly conquered lands, where many medieval communes lost their privileges and autonomy, caused dissatisfaction in the communes, particularly amongst the aristocracy.⁵³ The reasons for dissatisfaction with Venetian rule lay in the fact that the

fakulteta u Zadru 23, no. 10 (1984): 233–42; Milko Brković, “Isprave o Zadarskom miru 1358. godine” [Documents concerning the Zadar Peace Treaty from 1358], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 51 (2009): 69–107; Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje. Prostor, ljudi, ideje* [Croatia in the Middle Ages. Space, people, ideas] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1997), 80–83.

⁵⁰ Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*, 80.

⁵¹ Klaić, “Značenje vladavine Anžuvina,” 230; Tomislav Raukar, “Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u anžuvinskom razdoblju” [Communal society in Angevin Dalmatia], *Radovi. Razdio društvenih znanosti* 23, no. 10 (1984).

⁵² The changes in the communal system after the establishment of the Venetian rule had been discussed in: Maja Novak, *Autonomija dalmatinskih komuna pod Venecijom* [The autonomy of the Dalmatian communes under the Venetian Rule] (Zadar: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1965); Marko Šunjić, *Dalmacija u XV. stoljeću* [Dalmatia in the Fifteenth Century] (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1967), 338; Irena Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir: prostor i društvo* [Medieval Trogir: Space and society] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2009), 208. Most of the communes were not satisfied with the new political arrangement, which caused many difficulties in implementing Venetian rule in Nin, Šibenik, Split, and Trogir. In other cities such as Zadar, which accepted their new rulers in 1409, all the noble families close to the Hungarian king were forced to leave the city. In Trogir, most of the Venetian opponents were expelled from the city, including the captain and the bishop, who was close to the Hungarian King Sigismund. The same situation occurred in Zadar, where some people spent as much as 20 years as prisoners in Venice.

⁵³ Zdenka Janeković-Römer, “Grad i građani između kraljeva, velikaša i premeta – pogled Nade Klaić na srednjovjekovnu trogirsku komunu” [City and citizens between kings, noblemen and prelates – Nada Klaić’s view of the medieval commune of Trogir], in *Nada Klaić i njezin znanstveni i nastavni doprinos razvoju historiografije. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa s međunarodnim sudjelovanjem održanog u Zagrebu 29-30. studenog 2013. godine*, (Zagreb: FF Press, 2015), 207–28; Tomislav Raukar, “O nekim problemima hrvatske povijesti u 15. Stoljeću” [Some problems of Croatian history in the fifteenth Century], *Historijski zbornik* 21–22 (1969–1968): 534. Šunjić, *Dalmacija u XV. stoljeću*,

local aristocracy could not participate in the communal government as they had before. In Trogir, the members of the city council rarely met, being excluded from the actual making of decisions, which was now made primarily by a designated Rector appointed by Venice.⁵⁴

After the establishment of Venetian rule, the economic development of the Dalmatian communes began to stagnate, and in some cases, even decline. The reason for this was the inclusion of the communes into the centralized economic and trading system of the Republic of Venice, which tried to limit the trade on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, by imposing high taxes and the obligation that all the surplus of goods must be exported to Venice.⁵⁵ The members of those families who resisted the Venetian rule, were forced to leave the city or were forcibly taken in Venice as hostages, as a pledge to keep the peace in the communes. In Trogir, most of the Venetian opponents were expelled from the city, including the captain and the bishop, who was close to the Hungarian King Sigismund.⁵⁶

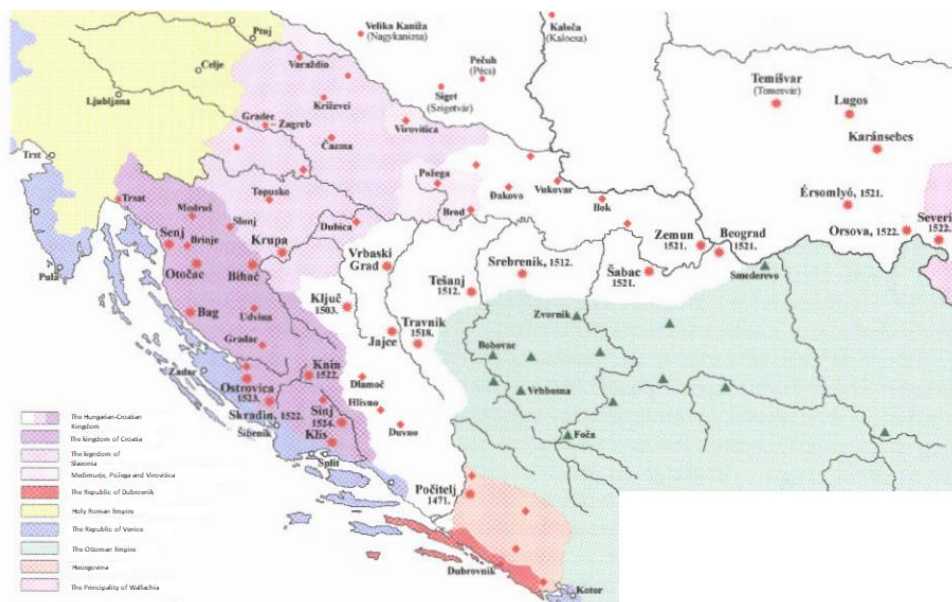


Figure 3 Map of the Croatian Lands around 1480. Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 8, author: Ivan Jurković

190. Raukar argues that for the medieval communes it was not significant whose authority they had to comply with, as much as how the relations between the commune and the government was managed. Not all social strata had the same attitude towards the new government. The peasants did not really care who their ruler was. The commoners in the towns meanwhile, were more satisfied and supported the Venetian government as they extended their rights and privileges. When discussing the local aristocracy, it is not possible to draw a definite conclusion about their attitude towards the new political situation as it varied. Šunjić argued that for the patricians it was difficult to get accustomed to the new political situation, and the fact that the commoners obtained greater rights. He gives an example of the Zadar aristocrat Federicus de Bartolatis, who said to the Hungarian ambassador in Rome that the Dalmatian aristocrats were not pleased with the Venetian government, and that the Hungarian king would not find any obstacle in his attempt to regain Dalmatia.

⁵⁴ Janeković-Römer, "Grad i građani," 223.

⁵⁵ Raukar, "O nekim problemima," 537.

⁵⁶ Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 208.

Gradually, the level of coexistence between the Venetian rules and the local nobility was reached, with many of them enjoying special privileges even after 1420, such as the Cippico family in Trogir, whose members have held offices in the local government, and in the Venetian army.⁵⁷ Unlike the Hungarian kingdom, where the royal privileges and communal autonomy were mostly respected, the Venetian government has limited those rights, leaving most of the decisions upon the Rector elected in Venice, Doge, and the Venetian Senate. While the existing communal institutions continued to exist, their actions and the jurisdictions were significantly limited.⁵⁸

The dependence of the communes on a centralized system of administration and decision-making, largely conditioned by decisions made in Venice, greatly changed the balance of power within and between the communes, where previous antagonisms which had existed in the fourteenth century were minimized. The political, administrative, and economic system of the communes becomes dependent on the Venetian system rather than the arbitrary actions of the communes themselves. Another external factor also influenced the equal position of the communes. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans was experienced by all the communes as a threat, while their common defense was ensured only by the Venetian military to which they were obliged to contribute with the ships and people.

The looming Ottoman danger, whose sporadic looting hordes were encountered by Dalmatian villages and communes as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, largely determined the position of Croatian lands over the next few centuries.⁵⁹ Even before the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, Catholic Europe feared a possible conquest as evidenced by the unionist approach of the Councils of Florence and Ferrara. In Dalmatia, however, the Ottoman threat was direct and strong only after 1463 and the fall of the Bosnian kingdom, when the Ottomans became present at the very hinterland of the communes (Fig.3).

There are several reasons why the timeframe of this thesis is limited to the period of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The beginnings of the widespread veneration are connected with the emergence of humanism in Dalmatia at the beginning of the century, and its transformation with

⁵⁷ Ibid., 36–37.

⁵⁸ Tomislav Raukar, “Venecija i ekonomski razvoj Dalmacije u XV. i XVI. stoljeću” [Venice and the economic development of Dalmatia in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries], *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 10 (1977): 203–25; Tomislav Raukar, “Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u XV. i prvoj polovici XVI. stoljeća” [Communal societies in Dalmatia in the 15th and the first half of the 16th century], *Historijski Zbornik* 35 (1982): 54–56.

⁵⁹ On the early encounters with the Ottoman raids in the districts of Trogir and Split, consult the pp. 54–60, and see the table on the p.60 in: Meri Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas: utjecaj osmanske opasnosti i kužnih epidemija na ikonografiju zavjetnih slika : primjer splita i trogira u XV. i XVI. stoljeću* [From pestilence save us: The influence of Ottoman danger and epidemics of plague on the iconography of votive images. The case of Split and Trogir in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2008), 54–60.

the active and advanced humanist circles during the second half of the century, which modified Jerome's image accordingly to the ideas of collective belonging which grew significantly during the intense period of political insecurity, caused mainly by the Ottoman progress in the Balkans.

The timeframe closes at the very beginning of the sixteenth century by which time Jerome's image had already become embedded in popular devotion, and the gradual process of the formation of his image as a Dalmatian had stabilized. Further, his saintly image has been adopted into the elaborate national discourse within the Dalmatian and Croatian *republic of letters*, which overshadowed the devotional practices to the saint through several subsequent centuries. The general popularity of Jerome during the fifteenth century, century later was enhanced with another level of institutionalization of Jerome's cult: namely, Erasmus' edition of Jerome's works in 1516, followed by a new life of the saint, cleaned of the medieval constructions and legends, together with the promotion of Jerome as a Church father and the ecclesiastical authority in the counter-reformation.

The final reason resulted from geopolitical changes after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, symbolically ending the centuries-old connection of Croatian lands with the Hungarian crown of Saint Stephen. In 1527, the Croatian nobles confirmed the election of Ferdinand I of Habsburg (1527–1564) as the Croatian King in the town of Cetin. The geopolitical changes reflected upon the social and ethnic structures in the communes also. The demographic changes in the ethnic structure in the communes had been ongoing through the previous centuries, as the ethnic Slavic peoples gradually outgrew the number of the native Latin population. During the fifteenth century, the prevalence of the Slavic, i.e. Croatian people, had been directly caused by migration waves from the hinterlands, ignited by famine and the Ottoman threat. The main period of migrations was between 1450 and 1550.⁶⁰

The change of the ethnic structure also influenced the growing use of the Croatian vernacular language in the urban centers. Still, one thing must be kept in mind while reading this thesis. The culture of the entire Middle Ages, and even later, was trilingual in the Croatian context: Latin, Croatian and Old Church Slavonic, and the intertwining of Glagolitic, Latin and Cyrillic written systems were quite common on different levels. Added into this mix was also Venetian vernacular Italian.

Educated people of that time usually knew all three languages and all three scripts as they were exposed continuously to their influences, which is seen in the written production as well, and it

⁶⁰ Raukar, "Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u anžuvinom razdoblju" 58–59; Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 20.

reflected upon the production of devotional literature to Saint Jerome.⁶¹ As it is discussed in chapter 2, with the increasing use of the Croatian vernacular language, the Glagolitic cult of Saint Jerome began to gain in importance, aided by the spread of the Glagolitic alphabet and Glagolitic culture. On the other hand, the growing importance of the Croatian vernacular language, discussed in the chapter 8, is best seen in the literary production from the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the publication of the first literary works in the Croatian vernacular language, epic poem *Judita* (Judith) written by Marko Marulić in 1501 or novel *Planine* (Mountains) written by Petar Zoranić in 1536.⁶²

1.6 SAINT OF WHOSE NATION?

For our discussion, another contextualization is necessary. As this dissertation will show, the reasons behind Jerome's popularity during the fifteenth and sixteenth century did not lie only in the appropriation of Stridon, but also in the appropriation of Jerome as a member of an ethnic community, in sources referred to as Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs or Illyrians. The plurality of the identities, or the manners of the identification of the individuals with the imagined community through different criteria: from the narrower communal to the broader linguistic, ethnic, and even proto-national affiliation, became commonplace in Renaissance Europe. The emergence of patriotic and proto-national discourses and the ideas of the common belonging to the imagined communities, expressed in the *respublica litteraria* during the early modern period has been gaining more attention in the scholarship.⁶³ While the evolution of the idea of the nation in the Early Modern Period has been previously discussed in Croatian historiography, the complex question of the early development of humanist nationalism during the fifteenth century has never yet been discussed in detail.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Consult: Aleksandar Stipčević, *Socijalna povijest knjige u Hrvata 1: Srednji vijek* [The social history of the book among Croats 1: The Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 2004).

⁶² For general introduction on Croatian medieval and renaissance literature, see: Vjekoslav Štefanić, ed., *Hrvatska književnost srednjeg vijeka* [The Croatian literature in Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska etc., 1969); Marin Franičević, *Povijest hrvatske renesansne književnosti* [The history of Croatian renaissance literature] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1983); Nikica Kolumbić, *Poticaji i nadahnuća: Studije i eseji iz starije hrvatske književnosti* [Incentives and inspirations: studies and essays in older Croatian literature], (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2005).

⁶³ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New Brunswick; London: Collier Books, 1967); Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberger, and Kathrin Mayer, *Nationenbildung. Die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellektueller* (Berlin: Verlag, 1998); Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky, eds, *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁶⁴ Neven Budak, "Hrvatski identitet između prošlosti i moderniteta" [Croatian identity between past and modernity], in *Hrvatska - kako dalje: zadanosti i mogućnosti* (Centar za demokraciju i pravo Miko Tripalo; Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta

The theoretical discussion on the plurality of identities, which reflect the complexity of the medieval and early modern sense of belonging, and its subsequent evolution through the centuries which resulted with Croatian nation-building, is far beyond the scope of this thesis. For better understanding how Jerome's image was adopted in these proto-national narratives among the higher educated strata, mainly the nobility, who were the bearers of such ideas in medieval Dalmatia and Croatia, contextualization is necessary. For our understanding the important are civic, ethnic and national identity. The narrower, civic affiliation, can be defined vaguely by belonging to the certain commune, complying to its laws, venerating local patron saints, respecting the local customs and more importantly having a legal right to the citizenship.

For better understanding how ethnic belonging was understood, a definition is borrowed from Lovro Kunčević and his work on the civic and ethnic discourses of the identity of Renaissance Dubrovnik (Ragusa), where the ethnic discourse is defined as “references to imagined communities (e.g. Slavs, Illyrians or Dalmatians) which were defined by contemporaries through a combination of factors such as mythic common origin and history, common language, religion, customs, territorial vicinity and so on.”⁶⁵ It is important to bear in mind that belonging to such communities was not defined by political borders, but rather with the broader cultural sphere defined by the mentioned criteria. It is here to recall that during the Late Middle Ages, the Croatian lands were divided between different political entities, without central place of the power which could unite them together, like it was during the period after the *Treaty of Zadar* when after few centuries the territorial integrity was fulfilled.

For that reason, the common ethnic belonging started to be emphasized even more. In a broad sense, “the ethnic discourse can also be considered a variant of a more widespread phenomenon: one of those intriguing but methodologically challenging proto-national discourses of identity present in early modern Europe.”⁶⁶ For that reason, the ethnic and proto-national affiliation given to Jerome in the sources discussed in this thesis, should be understood as the close synonyms.

u Zagrebu, 2004), 153–62; Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*; Domagoj Madunić, “Strategies of the Distinction in the Work by Vinko Pribojević,” in Trencsényi and Zászkaliczky, eds, *Whose Love of Which Country?*; Lovro Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku: diskursi o identitetu renesansnoga grada* [The myth of Dubrovnik: Discourses on identity of the renaissance city] (Dubrovnik; Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015).; Luka Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš and His *De Bellis Gothorum*: Politics and National History in the Fifteenth-Century Adriatic,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2019): 457–91.

⁶⁵ Lovro Kunčević, “Civic and Ethnic Discourses of Identity in a City-State Context: The Case of Renaissance Ragusa,” in Trencsényi and Zászkaliczky, eds, *Whose Love of Which Country?*, 150.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

For our understanding, both must be seen as broad collective identities, which unlike a civic one, that could have been adopted regardless of the ethnic affiliation of individual, the ethnic one could not, as it was defined by language and place of origin. How could ethnic communities of Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs, or Illyrians be defined? So, very broad and inclusive definitions can be given. In a fundamental understanding of the terms Dalmatian, Croat, Slav or Illyrian, they could all be seen as synonyms referring to the peoples not related genealogically, but through the same spoken language, the Croatian vernacular or Slavic vernacular, a shared history of the united Croatian lands under the king of Croatia and Hungary and common customs. Further, they could refer to people united by a shared territorial presence beyond the political borders of the fifteenth century—those living on the territories which could be defined as Croatian historical lands, and acting within the same cultural sphere. However, depending on the author and the context, such imagined borders narrowed or broadened, or different criteria of inclusion were applied, with every authors definition was a unique blend, as is discussed later throughout the text.

Such complex questions deserve longer methodological and the theoretical discussion than cannot be given in this dissertation, but I want to point out the difference in the use of the terms “ethnic” and “national” related to appropriation of the saint by the peoples living in the medieval Croatian lands. I use the term “nation” in the renaissance perspective, referring to the use of the Latin term *natio*, where it was directed towards tracing ancestry of peoples to antiquity of and even further back, forming myths filled with the heroes from the glorious past. A new genre of national history evolved, intending to glorify the past, its prominent individuals, heroes, and saints, to contribute to a reinforcing of the common consciousness, positioning their imagined nation above others.

The contemporary ideas that arose among the educated elites were carried by the intellectuals who regarded themselves as caretakers of the nation, with the “mission of civilizing their unlearned compatriots, defending national honor in the face of foreign attacks, and bolstering the claims of chosen secular rulers by portraying them as the protectors of their nations.”⁶⁷ The writing of national history was a way of achieving these goals. So, when referring to the written narratives of national history and patriotic discourse in which Jerome was adopted in the broader political framework, I will use the term “national”, keeping in mind the renaissance perception of nation.

Although in the broader theoretical framework, the term proto-national would be more suitable, because these discursive constructions of communities eventually derived to our present-day understanding of the nations, and because, in the Croatian context, they represent early attempts

⁶⁷ Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš and His De Bellis Gothorum,” 459.

to conceive a Croatian identity, which gained strong momentum during the nineteenth century. In other sources, where Jerome's regional origin is underlined, I will use the term "ethnic".

Throughout this thesis, it is important to have another mental note. The medieval and late-medieval understanding of term "Croatian" and the present-day definition of the Croatian nation should not be seen in the equivalent terms, even though the roots of it are found exactly in the period discussed in this thesis. Furthermore, the use of term "Croatian" in this thesis does not imply ethnic or national belonging, unless emphasized like that, but to the geographical presence of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia and Croatia, defined few paragraphs above. Furthermore, when referring to the understanding of ethnic or "national" origin and belonging, it is important to keep in mind that this type of affiliation was present among the highest social strata—the nobility and the educated clergy—to whom this type of self-identification was of importance, and not among everyone living on these territories.

In short, it can be said that in the emerging Croatian-Dalmatian *republic of letters*, intellectuals, mainly Dalmatian, usually boasted of their nation in two ways. They either proudly voiced allegiance to the narrower Dalmatian, in a broader sense Croatian nation, which could be imagined present in the cultural sphere corresponding loosely to the borders of the Croatian Kingdom before the establishment of the Venetian government in 1420. Or they presented themselves, and other Dalmatians as representatives of a larger Illyrian, that is South or, indeed, pan-Slavic nation—though at this point they seem to have had little or no contact with elites across the rest of Slavdom. Another aspect, which reflects how complex was the process of formation of these early senses of common belonging is the territorial presence of Jerome cult during the period.

This thesis is not focused on the evolution of the cult in Dalmatia just because of the belief Jerome was born there, but also due to the geographical spread of the cult. The humanist tradition dominated the production in Dalmatia, while the Glagolitic one was dominantly present on the territory of Croatia. In Slavonia, there is no evidence of the widespread presence of Jerome's cult and of any attempts to try to formulate the regional veneration, or by identifying with the already established cult in Croatian and Dalmatia, or by promoting their stream of perception that Stridon was, in fact, Štrigova, a village once on the territory of the Bishopric of Zagreb. There, in 1447, Frederick of Celje, ban of Slavonia and feudal lord of Međimurje, built and equipped the chapel of Saint Jerome. The reason was based on the belief that Štrigova was Jerome's Stridon. In the same

year, Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455) issued a bull granting special indulgences for the chapel in Štrigova.⁶⁸

Why there was no more vigorous promotion of Jerome's cult in Slavonia is even more confusing, knowing that the cult of the saint was promoted in the Cathedral of Zagreb from the fourteenth century. In 1380, the members of the cathedral chapter, on the initiative of Bishop Pavao Horvat, have founded the Confraternity of Saint Jerome, with the initial goal of helping those in need, doing the deeds of mercy on Jerome's feast day, and two days after.⁶⁹ The literature and few sources mention that in the sacristy of Zagreb Cathedral, once a fresco of Saint Jerome existed on the southern wall, painted together with the Hungarian Holy kings Stephen, Ladislav and Emeric, and the fresco of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. Today, only the latter two figures survived, while the description of others is found in the handwritten note added to one seventeenth-century manuscript.⁷⁰

Although some researchers assumed that the fresco of Saint Jerome (and other Church Fathers) was executed at the same period when the surviving depictions were, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, I am more prone to consider their execution being later in date. If not, then this depiction of Saint Jerome would be among the earliest known, with or without other Church Fathers! Although this question should be discussed separately in the future research, there are two possible reasons why Jerome's veneration in the Bishopric of Zagreb and in Slavonia did not follow the same path as that in Croatia and Dalmatia.

The first one lies in the administrative organization of the Kingdom of Croatia within the Kingdom of Hungary, where Slavonia relied much more on Buda and the support of the Hungarian King. On the other hand, the humanist centers in Slavonia never formed in a manner as they were in Dalmatia. Those Slavonians who were known for their humanist occupation, like John Vitéz (Ivan Vitez od Sredne, John Vitéz de Zredna, 1404–1472) or Janus Pannonius (Ivan Česmički, Ioannes Pannonius, 1434–1472), did not nurture their interest in the urban centers of Slavonia, but in the humanist circle around King Matthias Corvin (1443–1490) in Buda.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Matija Berljak, *Bula Pape Nikole V. Za crkvu rodnoga mjesta svetoga Jeronima u Štrigovi* [The papal bull of Nicholas V to the church of Saint Jerome in Štrigova] (Donja Lomnica: Grafika Marulin, 2019). Turk, "Kapela sv. Jeronima u Štrigovi".

⁶⁹ Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić, ed., *Monumenta Historica liberae regiae civitatis Zagrabiae Metropolis regni Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Brzotiskom K. Albrechta, 1889), 291-291.

⁷⁰ Ana Deanović, "Srednjovjekovne zidne slikarije na području Zagreba" [The medieval wall painting in the Zagreb area], in *Iz starog i novog Zagreba*, ed. Franjo Buntak (Zagreb: Muzej grada Zagreba, 1957), 131-138.

⁷¹ See: Marianna D. Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World. Croatian and Hungarian Latinity in the Sixteenth Century* (Columbus: Slavica, 1985).

The Illyrian or pan-Slavic ideologeme is of greater importance. Already in the writings of Georgius Sissoreus (1442–1509), in his *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici* written in 1487, *Illyrians* was the umbrella term used for all the peoples living on the territory of the ancient province of Illyria, including the Dalmatians, who used various names for their own groups, but were united by the same spoken language.⁷² In her masterful book on the development of collective identities, Zrinka Blažević describes early modern Illyrianism as a discursive product of the South Slavic branch of the humanistic *respublica litteraria*, which from the end of the fifteenth century was intensively engaged in the project of the symbolic construction of Illyrian trans-national identity.⁷³ It is in the Illyrian ideologeme that Saint Jerome fully affirms himself as a national saint and national hero, where his figure symbolically contributes to the “sacralization of the national, that is, to the nationalization of the sacred”.⁷⁴ I am emphasizing the Illyrianism since the emergence of such discourse represents another significant step in the evolution of Jerome’s saintly image in Dalmatia and other Croatian lands. This aspect of Jerome’s image deserves its own study and is the natural continuation of the material and discussion presented here, but it is work for another day.

The formation of the concept of national saints developed from the well-established local and regional patronage of the saints,⁷⁵ it emerged together with the idea of national belonging, towards the end of the Middle Ages. In fact, the cult of saints provided one its powerful symbols. Such “national” cults could originate from dynastic cults, such as those of Saint Venceslas in Premyslide Bohemia,⁷⁶ Saints Stephen and Saint Ladislav of the Arpadians in Hungary,⁷⁷ or Saint Louis in Capetian France.⁷⁸ Cults of patron saints of certain kingdoms could also develop around other popular

⁷² Juraj Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije i o gradu Šibeniku* [Concerning the location of Illyria and the town of Šibenik], ed. Veljko Gortan (Šibenik: Muzej grada, 1981), 19. See chapter 3: *Illyria as the common name for all the peoples that speak that language*.

⁷³ Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*.

⁷⁴ Zrinka Blažević, “Indetermi-Nation: Narrative Identity And Symbolic Politics In Early Modern Illyrism,” in *Whose Love of Which Country?*, ed. Balazs Trencsenyi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213; On the importance of the national saints for the Illyrian ideologeme, see: Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 110–11.

⁷⁵ Gábor Klaniczay, “Sainthood, Patronage and Region.” in *Cuius patrocinio tota gaudet regio. Saints’ Cults and the Dynamics of Regional Cohesion*, ed. by Stanislava Kuzmová, Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš (Zagreb: Hagiotheca, 2014) 441-454.

⁷⁶ František Graus, “St. Wenzel, der heilige Patron des Landes Böhmen” in *Lebendige Vergangenheit. Überlieferung im Mittelalter und in den Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter* (Böhlau: Köln, 1975), 159-181.

⁷⁷ Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 367-391.

⁷⁸ Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)

saintly figures as the cult of Saint Denis in France,⁷⁹ or Saint George in late medieval England.⁸⁰ In any case, these cults acquire fully their “national” character only in the early modern times, which is beyond the chronological domain of this thesis.

Unlike the saints specialized in personal advocacy or against individual harm, such as Saint Sebastian as the protector against plague, national patron saints held a special position. As God was universal, he could not be monopolized in favor of a certain country as the local saints could be to reinforce their national causes. National saints on the other hand could be called upon to aid the people of the particular nation he was patron of, to ensure their stability, wealth, prosperity, and to protect them from harm.⁸¹

Compared to the above-mentioned examples, Jerome’s position is a bit different in this field. The nation which later appropriated him as a national saint did not have a center of power or a state during the fifteenth century and later. The Croatian lands were not united under the figure of the same ruler. Consequently, there was no such public sphere where this cult could have obtained an institutionalized framework secured through the promotion by a joint royal and ecclesiastical administration and used in royal propaganda. Instead, the road to the formation of Jerome’s image as a national saint was polycentric, where different means of appropriation channeled devotion into a transformative force within the emerging literary discourses on nationhood. For that reason—being an exemption among the other national saints—veneration of Jerome as a national saint certainly opens many questions on the symbolic representations of the early notions of the nations.

Yet, no matter how they called their nation or how large they imagined it to be, the intellectuals from Dalmatia and Croatia claimed Jerome as the first among their illustrious ancestors. It was not only Jerome’s prominence among other compatriots, and his saintly powers that were a constructive component of it, but the fact that his figure reflected many other constructive *topoi* in the proto-national ideologeme: common ancient origin, territorial distribution, linguistic unity, national characterology, national geography, national institutions, national heroes, national saints.⁸²

As this dissertation shows, even before the articulation of this polyvalent character of Jerome as a national saint in the literary production of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, and its integration

⁷⁹ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship,” *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975): 43–69, eadem, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1999), 138. In the chapter on the role of Saint Denis, the author mostly relies on the discussion by Bernard Guenée, “État et nation en France au Moyen Age,” *Revue Historique* 237, no. 1 (1967): 17–30.

⁸⁰ Jonathan Good, *The Cult of Saint George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015).

⁸¹ Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, 138.

⁸² Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 90.

to a proto-national discourse, these *topoi* were at different moments joined to Jerome in the sources related to the collective devotion to the saint as the patron saint of Dalmatia. Keeping in mind that the Dalmatian communes and Dalmatian humanists were the main actors in the formation of Jerome's image as Dalmatian and its subsequent transformation into a national saint, when discussing the veneration of the saint, I will refer to him as "a patron saint of Dalmatia" where Dalmatia does not only refer to the borders of Venetian Dalmatia, but rather to the broader cultural sphere of Croatian lands with the Dalmatian urban centers as the bearers of the cultural progress.

There is another term used to describe the ethnic affiliation of the peoples living in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, mainly present in the Italian sources, that is Venetian sources, which deserves further clarification – *Schiavone/i*. The term was used to describe the peoples coming from the Eastern Adriatic Coast stretching from the Istrian peninsula to the Bay of Kotor. However, this title was limited to those who were of Slavic origin and who spoke the Slavic language, regardless of the political entity they were coming from, seen for example in the confraternity established in Venice in 1451, *Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni* whose members were individuals from Venetian Dalmatia and Albania, Croatian Kingdom, Bosnian Kingdom and later the Ottoman Empire. Although the term is very often translated exclusively as "Dalmatian/Dalmatians", or more inclusively as "Slav/Slavs", in this work, I will use the original term applying it when discussing the presence of Slavic groups in Italy, speaking Slavic vernacular languages and having their origin in the Eastern Adriatic Coast.

Before placing the research in the previous historiography, and elaborating on the methodology and theoretical framework, next section summarizes the general historiography on Jerome and his cult, together with the position of Dalmatian examples in it. The cult of Saint Jerome was present along the Eastern Adriatic Coast regardless of political borders—The Republic of Venice to which Dalmatia belonged, the Hungarian Kingdom to which medieval Croatia belonged, or the Republic of Ragusa, an independent entity. For that reason, when I am referring to the geographical and overall presence of the cult in this region, with the common characteristics of veneration, I am using the term Eastern Adriatic Coast. A narrower definition is that of Dalmatia, which should be understood more broadly in the borders of the Roman province of Dalmatia or Dalmatian within the Croatian Kingdom, and not narrowly as Venetian Dalmatia after 1420. Additionally, the terms Dalmatian and Croatian should be understood primarily as the geographic and cultural determinant, especially when discussing the presence of the cult in the Dalmatian communes, where it refers to the geographic location and not to the ethnic or proto-national affiliation, unless its emphasized like that.

Furthermore, the difference must be noted with the use of Slavonic and Slavic when discussing the language spoken among the inhabitants of the region. The term “Slavonic” is used when discussing old-Church Slavonic or the Croatian redaction of it, while the term “Slavic” is used as the umbrella term for the vernacular languages of the southern Slavs. However, to differentiate the spoken Chakavian Croatian, I am using the term “Croatian vernacular”, together with the Venetian dialect spoken as the “Italian vernacular” in Dalmatia. Even though the use of the term “Italian” before the unification of Italy could be subject to the discussion, in this work I am using it in a similar manner as “Dalmatian” or “Croatian”, as a geographic and cultural determinant of the specific characteristics present in the Apennine Peninsula related to the artistic, cultural or devotional production, and not necessarily as an ethnic or national determinant.

1.7 THE HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central hypothesis discussed here relates to the growing personal devotion among the educated elites in Dalmatia, in a manner corresponding to the veneration shown by their Italian counterparts but adapted to the region’s specific circumstances. Due to the unstable historical and political period caused by the Ottoman threat, Jerome’s image in Dalmatia transformed from that of a universal Church father and penitential model into the patron saint of all Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs or Illyrians depending on the sources, gaining the position reserved for national saints.

This research starts with the assertion that before the fifteenth century, the cult of Saint Jerome cannot be regarded as generally present in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. While the notion of his Dalmatian origin existed, it did not cause the formation of the distinctive cult present in the broader ecclesiastical and civic framework, except for within the “local” medieval Glagolitic tradition, where Jerome’s origin was a main component of the cult, linked together with his alleged invention of Glagolitic script.

By presenting the gradual process of the growing devotion to the saint, I argue that although the Glagolitic veneration, mostly concentrated on a “triangle” between Zadar, Istria, and Lika, nurtured the idea of Jerome’s origin, it did not have a direct influence on the formation of the distinctive features of veneration in the urban centers of Dalmatia, south of Zadar. Instead, I bring forward the neglected elements of the Renaissance cult of Saint Jerome, which spread through the humanist and ecclesiastical networks, finding there fruitful ground, by offering the diverse manifestations of the cult, literary and artistic, together with devotional practices.

The interplay of the different traditions of veneration—Glagolitic, Franciscan, Humanist—and the involvement of different actors—ecclesiastical institutions and educated individuals which adopted the “imported” Italian expressions of the cult—resulted in regional particularities and expressions and enriched the meaning behind the visual representation. This research emphasizes that it was the personal affiliation towards the saint by educated humanists, as seen through the possession of his works and the commission of the artworks, that eventually led to the full formation of Jerome’s image as a Dalmatian, in the written and the artistic production of the period. The development of humanism was the main force behind this construction, on two levels.

The first one, relates to Jerome’s general appropriation as a model for the pious intellectuals, where Italian humanist development of the cult, and its personal appropriation was a key element for the rise of Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia. The second point, relates to the adoption of Jerome as a national saint in the literary discourse of proto-national identity,⁸³ where the elements nurtured through the devotion, such as the alleged invention of Glagolitic script, had been adopted in a constructive matrix of the identities of the “imagined communities”⁸⁴—Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs, Illyrians—in the literary production, taking the saint out of the dominant religious context and into the national discourse.

Additionally, some of the humanists and historiographers, like Flavio Biondo in his *Italia Illustrata*, have considered the saint being Italian. It must be noted, that in the Apennine peninsula, despite the immense popularity of Jerome, this type of identification with the saint has never reached the same level as it did in Dalmatia and Croatia, as other individuals surpassed Jerome as the most significant representatives of the nation. Subsequently, with the development of humanism in Dalmatia, supported by the general popularity of Jerome and the different appropriations of the saint, Jerome’s figure gradually grew out of the religious sphere. Jerome’s status became a crucial factor in the construction of the national discourses. For these reasons, without the humanist intervention, the Glagolitic cult alone would never have formed the image of Jerome as a national saint.

Furthermore, I emphasize that two crucial historical points have contributed significantly to the formation of Jerome’s image as Dalmatian and that at those points, the actual “birth” of the idea of Jerome as a national saint occurred. The first one, transpired at the beginnings of the second half of the fifteenth century when Jerome’s feast day started to be celebrated annually and officially in

⁸³ On the debates of the humanists on national identity see Tibor Klaniczay, “Die Benennungen ‘Hungaria’ und ‘Pannonia’ als Mittel der Identitätssuche der Ungarn,” in Tibor Klaniczay, S. Katalin Németh and Paul Gerhard Schmidt, eds., *Antike Rezeption und Nationale Identität in der Renaissance insbesondere in Deutschland und Ungarn* (Budapest: Balassi, 1993), 83-110.

⁸⁴ I borrow here the term coined by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

Dubrovnik, Trogir, and Šibenik. Further, in the latter two communes, due to the progressive humanist culture and the developing Renaissance, Jerome's role as a patron saint of Dalmatia received its first public visual manifestations. Jerome's image now set in full public view is here contextualized for its artistic value and in its the historical context.

I argue that it is not the image itself that reflects Jerome's universality as the patron saint of Dalmatians, but the unstable period in which it was executed—the plague pandemics and the fear of the Ottoman threat.⁸⁵ The reasons why such a votive image was executed should be read embedded between the lines of the historical context of ongoing geopolitical changes. The manifestation of Jerome's public image during this period, invoked his protection for all the peoples living in the Eastern Adriatic Coast who had come to consider him a compatriot.

What was the dynamic of the adoption? How did veneration in Dalmatia differ from that in Italy? How did Jerome fit in the cultural exchange between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea? Who were the individuals who venerated the saint as their patron saint? When did the cult get its institutionalized framework? How was the idea of Jerome being a national saint reflected in the artistic production and the writings of humanists, primarily those of national history? Did every representation of Jerome in Dalmatia necessarily reflect his role as a national saint? These are the questions to be answered.

1.8 SOURCES, METHODOLOGY AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sources

The cult of Saint Jerome in the Apennine Peninsula was abundant in written accounts and the visual representations, which serve here as primary sources. However, the situation in Dalmatia was very different. Despite the importance of the cult during the Renaissance, the number of preserved sources is scarce compared to the situation in Italy. The primary type of sources available are visual representations due to their abundance, preserved in monastic museums and private collections, among which, the commune of Trogir leads, having several sculptural representations of Jerome. The focus here is put on the number of private devotion commissions, together with the two examples of the collective devotion: the *Šibenik Tondo* (1465–1468) (Fig. 56), a relief representing penitent Saint

⁸⁵ The Croatian humanists' concern with the Ottoman threat is analyzed in detail by Marianna D. Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World*. The documentation of a protective role by Saint Jerome against the Ottomans, however, still has to be explored by future research.

Jerome on the cathedral of Saint James in Šibenik and the *Trogir Relief* (1467) (Fig. 78) in the baptistery of the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir.

The second type of source is constituted by the preserved manuscripts and the printed edition of Jerome's *vita*, his works, and other devotional literature. Although copies have certainly circulated during the Renaissance, the small number of the preserved copies does not allow us to interpret their full direct impact. Among the surviving manuscripts are the excerpts of Jerome's letters in the codex of Petar Cippico today in the Marciana Library in Venice (*Ms. Marc.lat.cl. XIV, n.24 [4044]*), the *vita* of Saint Jerome written by Marko Marulić, today kept in the British Library (*Ms. Add. 18.029*) which was not widely known during the author's lifetime, and a life of a saint in a form of a sermon written in the Croatian language known as the *Florentine life of Saint Jerome* from the *Florentine Codex* (Firentinski zbornik) in the Laurenziana Library in Florence (*Ashb. 1582*). This research further managed to trace the only known Latin copy of Dalmatian provenance of Pseudo-Eusebius's letter *De Morte Hieronymi*, part of the codex (*Bridwell MS5*) transcribed by Chrysogonus de Nassis in Zadar in 1467, today in the Bridwell Library of Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Due to the general lack of preservation of this primary source material, this research also relies on a third type of written sources—archival documents and local historiography. The first, contains information on the paintings and the manuscripts once commissioned or possessed by certain individuals. Apart from using unpublished documents, the thesis highly relies on the documents published in the secondary literature, such as Jorjo Tadić's *Građa o slikarskoj školi u Dubrovniku XIII-XV veka* for Dubrovnik, Emil Hilje's *Gotičko slikarstvo u Zadru* and Federico Bianchi's *Zara Cristiana* for Zadar, and Paolo Andreis' *Storia della città di Traù* for Trogir.⁸⁶

The last group of sources is the literary production of Dalmatian humanists of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century in which Jerome is praised as a national saint and a national hero, for example in Georgius Sisgoreus' *De situ Illiriae et civitate Sibenici* (1487), or Vinko Pribojević's *De origine successibusque Slavorum* (1532).⁸⁷ Another valuable written source are those works that defend Jerome's Dalmatian origin against Italian appropriation, namely Marko Marulić's *In eos qui*

⁸⁶ Jorjo Tadić, *Građa o slikarskoj školi u Dubrovniku XIII-XV* [Documents on the school of painting in Dubrovnik from 13th to 15th century], Naučna knjiga (Belgrade, 1952); Emil Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo u Zadru* [Gothic painting in Zadar] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1999); Carlo Federico Bianchi, *Zara cristiana: dell'arcidiacono capitolare*, vol. 2 (Zara: Tipografia Woditzka, 1877); Paolo Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù* (Split: Hrvatska Stamparija Trumbić i drug, 1908).

⁸⁷ Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije.*; Vinko Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i slavi Slavena* [On the origins and the glory of the Slavs], ed. Veljko Gortan (Zagreb: Golden marketing: Narodne novine, 1997).

beatum Hieronymum italum fuisse contendunt (1507) and so-called *Schiavoni booklet* (1498) for the *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice.⁸⁸

Methodology and the Theoretical Framework

Due to the limitations and diversity of the sources, the methodological approach in this thesis is interdisciplinary, from the application of art-historical methods, to textual analysis, to interpretive methods of historical evidence. Another reason for such an approach lies in the very character of Jerome, who during the Renaissance, as shown by Eugene Rice, was present in almost all segments of society, from private piety where he imposes himself as a patron, to universities where his works were studied, to humanistic circles where he served as an example of a learned and pious individual. In a sense, Jerome could be seen as the mirror of renaissance society, culture, and religious practices, in general and in Dalmatia. Due to the strong correlation of text and image, within which personal engagement in the veneration of the saint was embedded, wrapped within the broader context of the changes of the fifteenth century, the research of Eugene Rice serves as a guide for the methodological approach of this thesis.

However, an important difference in the approach of this work and Rice's book relates to the portrayal of the collective modes of thought present in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, which led to the eventual veneration of Jerome as a national saint. This determinant is also an illustrative difference in the understanding of the saint's cult between Italy and Dalmatia. In Italy, the saint was primarily present in the domain of private, ecclesiastical, and monastic piety, not the civic one. This is reflected in Dalmatia as well, but with a significant difference—he became an expression of the collective piety of the people that saw him as a compatriot. Therefore, the general methodological approach is based on the comparative analysis and consideration of Dalmatian examples in the overall veneration of the saint in Italy. This approach is conditioned by the equivalence of devotional practices and by the affiliation of Dalmatia to the Venetian Republic, where Venice imposed itself as a political and as a cultural center, especially after 1420.

The narrower approach is the iconographic analysis of the chosen examples, considered within the evolution of the saint's iconography, focusing on the written models which have been embedded in the visual representation. Even though this thesis deals mainly with images, it does not aim to apply formal analysis since the group of visual sources analyzed, visibly different in its stylistic and formal characteristics, cannot be analyzed in this manner. However, where possible, this research offers an

⁸⁸ See: Novaković, "Novi Marulić"; Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni."

insight into the pictorial models used in Dalmatia, representing them as commodities between the two shores of the Adriatic Sea, contributing to the discussion of the evolution of renaissance art.

The last methodological approach is the interpretative one, which considers the discussed representations of Jerome and the meaning embedded in them through the prism of the historical events of the period, which influenced the development of the collective consciousness. This research pursues the historical understanding of Jerome by the people living on the territory of medieval Croatia and who venerated him as a national saint and as a personal patron.

The polysemic aspects of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, encompassing different contexts of veneration, and the meanings consisted in the figure of the saint, complicates the positioning of this research in a linear theoretical framework. Another reason contributes to the difficulties: the lack of research on the smaller segments of the cult, which had to be analyzed and contextualized in order to understand the complex dynamic of implementation of the cult between the different actors and institutions. In order to clearly point out the difference between the civic cult of Jerome, where his saintly figure was rooted in the sphere of private devotion that contributed to the public role of the saint in the civic cult, and the veneration of Jerome as a patron saint of Dalmatia, the literary and artistic expressions of devotion to Jerome, private and public, official and unofficial, are observed through the broader framework of cultural history. However, by applying only one theoretical stream, it is not possible to adequately portray the span of the cult.

Jerome's cult and its expressions in the Dalmatian communes during the fifteenth century should be primarily observed as commodities of exchange between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. However, it is important to point out that although Jerome's cult and his expressions in Dalmatia are viewed through the prism of cultural exchange, which was often one-sided, from the Apennine Peninsula to the Eastern Adriatic Coast, it would be completely wrong to view this relationship in terms of an anachronistic *center-periphery* approach. This thesis shows just the opposite – regardless of the dependence on Italian cultural production, the progressive Dalmatian communes managed to transform the idea of the saint and to reform his image as Dalmatian. This transformation can be seen also in the visual sense, as artists in Dalmatia adapted the Venetian iconographic type “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” into the specific iconographic variant of type “Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto” presented on the relief in the baptistery of Trogir, and the twelve small-scale dimensions reliefs modeled upon it.

In a discussion on the cultural production, the theoretical and methodological approach in this thesis has been primarily inspired by the works of Peter Burke and Michael Baxandall, whose

approach to the Renaissance production have drastically changed perceptions of the period and the culture by proposing a social approach to art history and cultural history. Besides the fundamental works by Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society* (1972), and its subsequent updated editions, *The Renaissance* (1987) and *The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries* (1998),⁸⁹ I have relied primarily on his more recent studies, including the book *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (2001) in which the question of the use of the images as historical evidence was problematized.⁹⁰ The article “Interrogating the Eyewitness” (2010) follows the book, reconciling the potential of art history and general history in the interpretation of historical evidence.⁹¹ The article serves as the methodological guide due to its useful “ten commandments” approach to images, intended primarily for historians.

Michael Baxandall’s research has also contributed significantly to the perception and the research of the visual production of the Italian Renaissance by applying the methods of social history, anthropology, art history, visual theory and psychology in order to offer cultural interpretations of the historical experience. In his book *Painting and Experience in the Fifteenth-Century Italy* published in 1972, and in the later publications, Baxandall has elaborated the concept of “the period eye”, a concept which he used to describe the process of reading the visual information embedded in the paintings by those who observed it, employing their experience and knowledge to interpret the culturally defined symbols.⁹² His approach is an anthropological analysis of visual culture, in which artists and artworks had their social, religious and commercial roles. Baxandall explores how the public, in this case, mainly the patrician class, and the painters, approached the visual experience, which was distinct for fifteenth-century Italy, and how their mutual interaction formed the paintings and their visual communication.

Of importance for our account is Baxandall’s earliest work on the correlation of text and image during the Renaissance, *Giotto, and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350–1450* (1971).⁹³ In it, he discusses how the literary works—

⁸⁹ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1987); Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); Peter Burke, *The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford; Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

⁹⁰ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

⁹¹ Peter Burke, “Interrogating the Eyewitness,” *Cultural and Social History* 7 (2010): 435–43.

⁹² Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in the Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008); Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandall, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁹³ Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350–1450* (Clarendon Press, 1986).

books, literary correspondence between humanists, contracts, artistic treatises—shaped the visual understanding and how the artists were concerned with it, in as much as they were shaping the images to meet the demands of the commissioner and the art market. Following his approach, “to offer an insight into what it was like, intellectually and sensibly, to be a Quattrocento person,”⁹⁴ this dissertation will offer an insight into the various segments of the society of Dalmatia primary, during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, elaborating different social, religious and historical factors that Jerome’s image represents.

When discussing the devotional aspects, I have approached the cultural production through the prism of the devotional changes of the period, which occur as the culmination of the meditative practices, actively adopted by the popular reform movements such as *devotio moderna* and the similar movements.⁹⁵ I want to point out that this question is the one which will have to be reassessed separately in the future, within a study on the general presence of such practices in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, to which the questions and the conclusions brought in this work, will present valuable contribution.

The adoption of Jerome into the national history narratives contributes to the discussion on the history of ideas, mainly those on the development of the first national sentiments. For that reason, the formation of Jerome’s image as a national patron saint during the fifteenth century, in written and visual media, should be understood as the most original expression of Dalmatian humanism and the Renaissance. This dissertation does not deal directly with the questions of the development of the idea of nation and proto-national identities and discourses, and the approach when it tackles the questions of common “national” belonging is far from the the modern concept of nation, related to eighteenth and nineteenth-century processes of state-building. My approach to the questions of humanist proto-nationalism is primarily based on the study of Caspar Hirschi *The Origins of Nationalism* in which he steps out of the modern approach to the idea of nations, and rather elaborates the source of the idea as an innovation of humanist currents, where the idea of the nation and nationalism emerges as an inter-European competition, where the goal is to present one’s *natio* as superior to another.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., 152.

⁹⁵ Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion”; Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*; Christoph Burger et al., eds., *Between Lay Piety and Academic Theology: Studies Presented to Christoph Burger on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010); James D. Mixson, “The ‘Devotio Moderna’ and the New Piety between the Later Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era,” in *Religious Life between Jerusalem, the Desert, and the World*, ed. Kaspar Elm (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 317–331.

⁹⁶ Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*.

I am relying on publications that have dealt with the emergence of such ideas in the Croatian Early Modern Period, mainly the work by Zrinka Blažević *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, together with other individuals studies that focus on regional variants in Central and Eastern Europe, such as *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* edited by Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky and the case studies by Lovro Kunčević, Domagoj Madunić and Luka Špoljarić, quoted throughout the text.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Although the core of this thesis is the humanist cult of Saint Jerome, it begins with the elaboration of the pre-existing traditions of the veneration before humanism and the Renaissance. The second chapter, *Monastic Communities and Jerome's Invention of Glagolitic Script* reviews the veneration of Jerome among the monastic communities, who praised the saint as the inventor of the Glagolitic script, elaborating the historical circumstances which led to the formation of this myth. The chapter focuses on the aspects of the cult adopted later in the writings of national history by Dalmatian humanists, and explores further the idea, hinted at already in previous scholarship, of Jerome's supposed invention being regarded as a miraculous intervention, and with that, the possibility of Glagolitic written liturgical production being perceived as a secondary relic of the saint.

The third chapter, *The Patron of the Franciscan Province of Dalmatia*, explores the adoption of Jerome in this role from the end of the fourteenth century. Due to the many under researched segments of Franciscan activities, especially those concerning the implementation of the Observant reform whose rise is parallel to the rise of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, this chapter focuses on the question of the existence of a particular iconographic type which reflects the saint's status within their *milieu*. In order to demonstrate that the most frequent representation in the Dalmatian Franciscan *milieu* "Saint Jerome as a Cardinal" is a reflection of the popularity of this representation in Venice, the detailed evolution of the type is presented. Furthermore, it positions Jerome in the broader context of Franciscan veneration, drawing the typology between Saint Francis and Saint Jerome, underlining the importance of Franciscan adoption for the general development of the cult. Special attention is put on the evolution of the "Penitent Saint Jerome" iconographic type in the reform atmosphere of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The fourth chapter *Jerome Between Humanism and Private Devotion* observes the manifestations of private devotion to the saint in Italy, mainly Florence and Venice, in their social,

religious, and cultural context. This is done in order to establish the pattern of the practices, where such elaboration is necessary to understand the contemporary practices of Dalmatian humanists as a reflection of the growing popularity of the saint among their counterparts in the Apennine peninsula, adopted through the spread of humanism and the Renaissance. Although it summarizes most of the already discussed segments of Jerome's cult, it brings new perspective on the personal devotion to the saint and his image in the popular piety, pointing out to the under researched aspects of Jerome's veneration in Italy. Elaboration of the chosen examples, focusing on the practices present in Venice, as the main center of cultural, artistic and political influence on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, is necessary for understanding the motives behind the artistic production of Dalmatian provenance analyzed in the fifth chapter *The Adoption of the Renaissance Cult in Dalmatia*.

In it, the manifestations of the cult in Dalmatia are presented as commodities of exchange between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, within the development and expansion of humanism and the Renaissance. This is demonstrated by presenting the early adoption of the cult, already at the end of the fourteenth century among the Zadar merchant elite, and focusing on the several renaissance artworks in Trogir, "the cradle" of the renaissance devotion to the saint in Dalmatia, mainly executed by Niccolò Fiorentino and his workshop. Through an analysis of the iconography, their original location, commissioners and the reasons beyond the commission, and its positioning in the overall artistic production of Jerome's cult at the period, I discuss that not every artistic representation of Jerome in Dalmatia should be considered only as the expression of his privileged status among his compatriots. Even though such ideas could be contained in them, the initial framework through which they should be analyzed is the one of the civic cult and the private devotion of the individuals. This chapter positions the Dalmatian production within the context of Italian renaissance, bringing valuable conclusions on the circulation of the artistic motifs and the styles, and sets the foundation for understanding the particularities of veneration in Dalmatia.

Chapter six, *The Institutionalization of Jerome's Cult*, presents the first step in the formation of Jerome's image as a Dalmatian, through the inclusion of his feast day in the official communal calendars in Trogir, Dubrovnik and possibly Šibenik, whereby the civic cult received its public expression. Furthermore, it outlines the existence of the ecclesiastical network of the Dalmatian bishopric seats as the polycentric impulses promoting the cult. Promotion that was correlated with the appointment of several bishops by Pope Nicholas V who granted permission to the *Schiavoni* members in Rome to found a national church of Saint Jerome in the Eternal city in 1453. Additionally, the chapter looks at the example of the confraternity in Venice, where Jerome's cult started to develop among members from 1463, pointing out the connections between it and the Zadar cathedral chapter,

and exploring the manners of communication within the mentioned network of institutions and their contribution to the establishment and the promotion of Jerome's image as a Dalmatian.

The seventh chapter *The Visual Formation of Jerome as a Dalmatian* focuses on the transformation of Jerome's public image in the examples of the reliefs in Trogir and Šibenik, marking their execution as the turning point in the perception of the saint in Dalmatia. The chapter offers a detailed iconographic analysis placing these two compositions within the Renaissance production of Jerome's image. Special attention is put on the relief of Trogir, due to its unique composition and iconography, proposing it as the invention of the Trogir humanist circle based on an adaptation of examples of private piety in Venice. The most significant contribution is its iconographic reading, based on the apotropaic Psalm 90 where the protective features of the psalm were translated into Jerome's image as a primary heavenly protector. Moreover, the reasons for their execution are found in the unstable period of the Ottoman conquest and the several plague outbursts which occurred during the period.

The last chapter, *From Sainthood to National Symbol* observes the humanist written production of Dalmatian provenance in three main genres: devotional literature, national history, and polemical essays on his origin. The chapter argues that the adoption of Jerome as a national saint occurred with the adoption of his figure in the production of national history, as his status was adopted over from his thriving cult among humanist individuals first, and then subsequently pushed into the public sphere as well. It presents the original Dalmatian devotional literature composed in the Croatian vernacular language and observes how the saint was presented as the most glorious representative of Dalmatians, Croatians, Slavs and Illyrians.

2 MONASTIC COMMUNITIES AND JEROME'S INVENTION OF GLAGOLITIC SCRIPT

*(...)i da bi me tumačen 'je blaženoga Hijeronima ne uvižbalo,
s prirokom bih pisal, boju se.⁹⁷*

(“...and if I had not been thought by the teachings of Blessed Jerome,
I am afraid I would be writing with difficulty”.)

The multifunctionality of Jerome's saintly image, which through the centuries was adopted in different contexts of devotion and piety, is reflected in the presence of different traditions of veneration present in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. During the fifteenth century, the ubiquity of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, with communes as the focal point of veneration and the formation of his image as Dalmatian, relied primarily on the general popularity of the saint during the period, emerging from Italy. However, the fertile ground for venerating the saint was not due only to the belief in his local origin, but also by already existing institutionalized forms of veneration among the monastic communities—Glagolitic and Franciscan—which had for centuries nurtured devotion to Jerome. This chapter focuses on the Glagolitic veneration, while some aspects of the Franciscan veneration of Jerome are the topic of the proceeding chapter.

The rapid popularity of the saint was the result of two dominant traditions of veneration: the local Glagolitic tradition which nurtured the idea of Jerome's regional origin and the general reputation of Jerome's cult emerging from Italy at the end of the thirteenth century. The Glagolitic tradition, first documented in the thirteenth century, extolled Jerome for his local origin, his supposed invention of the Glagolitic script, and the translation of the Bible into Old Church Slavonic. These historically unsupported ideas originated from the belief that Jerome's birthplace was originally somewhere in

⁹⁷ Marko Grčić transferred Zoranić's text from the original to the modern Croatian language. The translations of Zoranić's work in this work were based on the Grčić's version. Petar Zoranić and Marko Grčić, *Planine* [Mountains], ed. Josip Bratulić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2000), 9. Petar Zoranić et al., *Planine* [Mountains], (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2002), 50. Here I would like to thank Dolores Grmača for the fruitful discussion on a matter, and her suggestions and help with the interpretation of the text.

Dalmatia.⁹⁸ Another Dalmatian tradition associated the saint with the Franciscan Order and in 1393, Jerome was accepted as the patron of the newly created Franciscan province of Dalmatia.

These traditions were the roots from which the Renaissance cult of Jerome in Dalmatia gained strength as they witnessed the claim of his local origin in medieval Dalmatia and Croatia. Importantly, this veneration developed separately from the general re-invention of Jerome's cult at the end of the thirteenth century when his relics were translated to the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The paucity of sources makes it difficult to fully interpret Jerome's veneration before the end of the fourteenth century when he started to gain further prominence in Dalmatia and Croatia. The Glagolitic aspects of Jerome's cult have, thus far, been the only perspective researched in detail, with scholars concentrating on the presence of the saint's *officium* in Glagolitic liturgical books, the formation of the myth of the invention of Glagolitic script,⁹⁹ and the Glagolitic edition of the popular devotional work *Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi* known also as *Senj Transitus* (Senjski Transit) in 1508.¹⁰⁰

The only publication that presents these issues in a language available to the broader scholarly audience is the book *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome* by Julia Verkholtantsev. In it, she illustrates the political and ecclesiastical climate that assisted the construction of Jerome's Slavic identity associated with the previously mentioned innovations within the dissemination of Christianity among Slavic ethnic groups.¹⁰¹ Her research serves as an excellent starting point in the exploration of Jerome's Dalmatian identity and the particularities of the cult, due to the lengthy list of sources in the bibliography in various Slavic languages. Nor does the author does not focus purely on the evolution of the idea in Croatia, but also on its transmission among other Slavs, analyzing the expressions of the cult in Bohemia, Poland, and Silesia.

⁹⁸ Saint Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, trans. Thomas P. Halton (Washington: CUA Press, 2010), 167. Jerome lived long before the settlement of the Slavs in the area of present-day Croatia in the seventh century.

⁹⁹ John V. A. Fine, "The Slavic Saint Jerome: An Entertainment," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 22 (1998): 101–12; Miroslav Glavičić, "Pismo pape Inocenta IV. senjskom biskupu Filipu u tiskanim izdanjima i historiografiji" [The letter of Pope Innocent IV to Philip, Bishop of Senj, in printed publications and historiography], *Senjski zbornik* 41 (2014): 159–83; Vanda Kraft Soić, "Otpis Inocenta IV. senjskom biskupu (1248.) pod patronatom sv. Jeronima. I. senjski privilegij iz godine 1248." [Rescript of Pope Innocent IV to the Bishop of Senj (1248) under the patronage of St Jerome I. privilege of Senj from 1248], *Croatica Christiana periodica* 40, no. 77 (2016): 1–23; Vanda Kraft Soić, "Otpis Inocenta IV. senjskom biskupu (1248.) pod patronatom sv. Jeronima. II. Povijesni usud glagoljice i začetci jeronimske tradicije, [Rescript of Pope Innocent IV to the Bishop of Senj (1248) under the patronage of St Jerome II. historical fate of glagolitic script and beginnings of St Jerome tradition], *Croatica Christiana periodica* 40, no. 78 (2017): 17–37.

¹⁰⁰ Vjekoslav Štefanić, "Glagoljski tranzit svetog Jeronima u starijem prijevodu" [Glagolitic Transitus of St. Jerome in the older translation], *Radovi Staroslavenskog instituta* 5 (1964): 99–161; Anica Nazor, "Senjski transit svetoga Jerolima i hrvatski rječnik do Marulića i njegovih suvremenika" [The Senj Transition of St. Jerome and the Croatian dictionary till Marulić and his contemporaries], *Rasprave: Časopis Instituta za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje* 25 (1999): 249–55.

¹⁰¹ Julia Verkholtantsev, *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome* (DeKalb, IL: NIU Press, 2014).

This chapter presents an overview of the veneration of Jerome among the Glagolitic monastic communities together with the position of his figure in Glagolitic written production, focusing on the ecclesiastical and political issues that contributed to the consolidation of the myth of him being of Slavic (Dalmatian) origin and the inventor of Glagolitic script. This aspect, is of great importance because of its adoption in later humanist Latin production within the national history genre, starting from the second half of the fifteenth century. As Iva Kurelac explains, during the Renaissance, the question of the linguistic identity became one of the important elements of the Croatian humanist historiography. Due to the political dis-unity of the Croatian lands, language became one of the key elements of self-identification among the Slavic population and the interpretation of its origin and the ethnic autochthony was a key element in the writings of the Dalmatian humanists of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.¹⁰²

Although the discussion was influenced by both Sarmatian and Italian Renaissance historiography, the dispute on the origin of the Slavic language, liturgy, and the Glagolitic script is largely the result of the medieval Glagolitic tradition, in which understandably Jerome's saintly figure has found its place. In order to understand the adoption of the Glagolitic narrative of Jerome into some of the works of national history, discussed later in this dissertation, it is necessary to present the evolution of the idea of Jerome as the inventor of the Glagolitic script.

This chapter explores further the idea, hinted at already in previous scholarship, of Jerome's supposed invention being regarded as a miraculous intervention, and with that, the possibility of Glagolitic written liturgical production being perceived as the saint's secondary relic. The historical sources mention the presence of Jerome's relics in several places along the coast, but it is not known whether they held a performative function, in terms of votive practices and miraculous interventions.¹⁰³ However, there is no evidence that the saint relics were present during the fifteenth century in the Dalmatian communes. This only contributes to the argument that cult of Saint Jerome

¹⁰² See: Iva Kurelac, "Modaliteti recepcije glagoljaške tradicije".

¹⁰³ It is not known whether certain communes in the Eastern Adriatic possessed Jerome's relics, and, if so, if they played a crucial role in the celebration of the saint or were a destination for local pilgrimages. Current research managed to identify these relics of Jerome: Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić, ed., *Monumenta Historica* vol. 1, 58. The earliest mention is in Zagreb, where Jerome's relics were used in 1275 during the consecration of the altar of Saint Peter and Paul in the sacristy. Ivan Crnčić, *Najstarija poviest Krčkoj, Osorskoj, Rabskoj, Senjskoj, i Krbavskoj biskupiji* [The oldest history of the dioceses of Krk, Osor, Rab, Senj and Krbava] (Rim: Slova vjeroplođničina u ruku P.Marietta, 1867), 157–58. The author brings a transcription of a letter from 1381 written in Dobrinj, on the island of Krk, about the relics in the church among which was one of Saint Jerome. Marija Pantelić, "Glagoljski kodeksi Bartola Krbavca" [The Glagolitic codices of Bartol Krbavac], *Radovi Staroslavenskog instituta* 5 (1964): 5–98. Jerome's relics were used during the consecration of the main altar in the church of Saint Andrew in Bakar in 1493. Further, it is known that the small church of Saint Jerome on Marjan Hill, near Split, was a focal point of local pilgrimages from the second half of the fifteenth century, when the present-day church was built on the place of the earlier hermitage.

in the Eastern Adriatic Coast was primarily constructed around the idea of Jerome's local origin and that the saintly intercession granted to those who saw him as one of their kind was granted on the close connection through the shared origin, rather than the miraculous power of his relics.

Furthermore, it observes the diffusion of the cult in the expanding Glagolitic culture during the fifteenth century, already influenced by the rising humanist culture in the Dalmatian communes, placing the written Glagolitic production about Jerome in a broader cultural context. Finally, it examines the sources, primarily of foreign travelers and pilgrims who voyaged across the Eastern Adriatic Coast, in order to establish the extent to which the idea of Jerome being a Dalmatian and inventor of Glagolitic script was commonly recognized in Dalmatia during the Late Middle Ages. However, it is not the objective of this chapter to provide a comprehensive review of the preceding scholarship but to point out the still under-studied aspects of this strain of research about the cult and bring about new conclusions on the circulation of the devotional material on Jerome between Italy and the Eastern Adriatic Coast.

2.1 THE INVENTOR OF GLAGOLITIC LETTERS

The ascent of the distinctive veneration of Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic Coast began in the High Middle Ages when he was given the mythical role of the inventor of Glagolitic script. The old Slavonic script was used since the Early Middle Ages, when Saint Cyril, its original inventor, designed it to write in the Slavonic language and preach to the Slavs. While in the other eastern Slavic lands, such as Bulgaria and Serbia, a Cyrillic alphabet became widely used by the Late Middle Ages, in Croatia, the Glagolitic alphabet remained in prevalent use.

Glagolitic script was invented around the middle of the ninth century by the monk Saint Cyril to be used in his missionary work among the Slavs in Great Moravia in 863, which he conducted with his brother Methodius. The existing scripts of the languages of the Church, like Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, could not be used to write the Slavic language. For that reason, the invention and application of a new script were indispensable. It was based on the language of the Macedonian Slavs on the theme of Thessaloniki, where the brothers were born. Given the small linguistic variations of the Old Slavic language at that time, Glagolitic script was easily applicable to all Slavs, who used it until the

twelfth century. As a consequence of the Great Schism, among the Eastern Slavs the Cyrillic script began to take over the Glagolitic script, which continued to be used by the Western Slavs.¹⁰⁴

This aspect, along with the saint's regional origin, facilitated the continuation of the myth through the centuries. Developing within the framework of the first ideas of collective identities, the myth was adopted at the end of the fifteenth century and adapted and elaborated through the subsequent centuries, all the way until the birth of the modern ideas of nations in the nineteenth century. Even though the script was used until the nineteenth century, the decline of its use is notable from the sixteenth century onwards, when use of Latin script increased inside ecclesiastical circles as a repercussion of the Counter-Reformation.¹⁰⁵

The first use of the script was in ecclesiastical circles, for liturgical books created in Old Church Slavonic, and later in the Croatian redaction of Old Church Slavonic. Among the representative examples are *Borgiano Illyrico IV*, the oldest preserved complete missal written in the Croatian redaction of Old Church Slavonic in 1371, today preserved in the Vatican library, and the illuminated *Missal of Duke Novak*, written in 1368 by Novak Disislavić, duke of Krbava.¹⁰⁶ The former, is essential for the perception of the cult of Saint Jerome among the Glagolites, as it contains the only surviving example of a full mass on Jerome's feast day. Additionally, one of the folios of the *Borgiano Illyrico IV* contains the inscription *Missale nel carattere di S. Gierolamo del 1371*, which confirms the dating of the missal and reflects the notion that the Glagolites perceived the script as the product of Jerome's intellect. Even though the note was added later, probably when the missal came into the possession of the Vatican library, it testifies to the long dispute on the authorship of Glagolitic letters.¹⁰⁷

Regardless of its predominantly ecclesiastical use, Glagolitic script infiltrated administrative and juridical documents of the region, as can be seen for example in the *Baška tablet* (Bašćanska ploča), a stone altar screen slab containing the description of a donation of King Zvonimir,

¹⁰⁴ Since the beginning of the scientific study of the Glagolitic script, several theories have circulated about its origin. Some saw it as a variation of an existing script, such as the Greek, Coptic, or Armenian alphabet. Another theory saw the formation of the script as based on the Christian symbols of the cross and the circle. The historically long-held theory that is of interest in this thesis is Jeroninian theory, thoroughly refuted by Franjo Rački in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, most researchers and linguists agree on Cyril's authorship. Consult: Franjo Rački, *Pismo slovjensko* [The Slavic Script] (Zagreb: Brzotiskom D. Albrechta, 1861).

¹⁰⁵ Eduard Hercigonja, *Tisućljeće hrvatskoga glagoljaštva* [The millennium of Croatian Glagolism] (Zagreb: Hrvatska Sveučilišna Naklada, 2009); Marija Pantelić, *Hrvatsko glagoljsko srednjovjekovlje* [Croatian Glagolitic Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Petar Bašić, "Kada je napisan hrvatskoglagoljski misal Illirico 4?" [When the Croatian Glagolitic manuscript Illirico 4 was written?], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskog instituta* 56–57 (2008): 93–99.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Bašić explains that the year 1371 in the marginal note was probably calculated on the table of the Easter dates given at the beginning of the missal.

dating around the year 1100, the *Vinodol statute* (Vinodolski zakonik) from 1288, and even notarial documents.¹⁰⁸ With the development of literacy and the expanding use of Croatian vernacular language, the use of Glagolitic script had become more frequent, even in everyday life, resulting in a golden age of Glagolitic literacy during the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁹ The present state of scholarship acknowledges that the idea of Jerome's invention of the script has no historical foundation since he lived long before Slavs came to the territory of Dalmatia; therefore, it is unlikely that he spoke Slavic or invented the Glagolitic letters. Why then, did such an idea arise, and where from? The script, and with it the Old-Church Slavonic language, was predominantly of ecclesiastical use, so it is not surprising that it was in those circles that the legend first appeared.

Letter by Pope Innocent IV to Philip, Bishop of Senj

Official acceptance of the use of the Glagolitic script and Glagolitic written production by the Church, contains prominent mention of Jerome's authorship. This permission can be found in a letter sent by Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254) in 1248 to Philip, Bishop of Senj, grants to the bishop the right to use the Glagolitic script and the Slavonic language in his bishopric. The core of the decision was in the clarification of Jerome's invention of the script:

Your petition directed to us maintains that there are special letters in Slavonia, which the clergy of that land say they have from Blessed Jerome, and which they use in celebrating the Divine offices. [...] Therefore, considering that the word is subject to the matter and not the matter to the word, we, by the authority of this letter, grant you the permission requested, only in those places where this custom is lawfully in use, and provided the meaning does not suffer from this difference in letters.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Petar Runje, *O knjigama hrvatskih glagoljaša* [About the books of Croatian Glagolites] (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1998), 54. In 1405, Chrysogonus (Krševan), a Glagolitic priest, wrote his testament “in littera sclava et suo notorio sigillo sigilatam”. Leo Košuta, “Glagoljski tekstovi u arhivu osorske općine”, [Glagolitic texts in the archives of the Osor municipality], *Vjesnik historijskih arhiva u Rijeci i Pazinu* 1 (1953): 163–218. Hercigonja, *Tisućljeće hrvatskog glagoljaštva*, 79-81.

¹⁰⁹ An example of everyday use of the Glagolitic script can be found on the polyptych made by Biagio di Giorgio da Traù (Blaž Jurjev Trogiranin) for the altar of Saint Jerome in the Benedictine church of Saint John the Baptist in Trogir. The note is not easy to read, and it was most likely some sort of private inscription related to the execution of the work. Since Biagio di Giorgio was originally from Lika region, which was known for the use of Glagolitic script, he was probably using it in everyday life, like in this case where he made a note about the amount that needed to be paid to the butchers. See: Branko Fučić, “Glagoljica i dalmatinski spomenici” [The ‘Glagolitsa’ and the Dalmatian monuments], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 21 (1980): 274–84. Here I would point out the valuable research by Petar Runje, who traced the production and the ownership of Glagolitic books in numerous archival sources. His works emphasize the importance of Glagolitic books in the Croatian Middle Ages, and the widespread use of Glagolitic script in the cultural centers, such as in Zadar. Petar Runje, “O vrijednosti i ugledu glagoljskih knjiga u 15. stoljeću” [The value and prestige of the fifteenth century Glagolitic books], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskog instituta* 37 (1987): 171–83; Runje, *O knjigama hrvatskih glagoljaša*.

¹¹⁰ The English translation was borrowed from: Verkholtantsev, *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome*, 44; The Latin

Nevertheless, the tone and wording of the papal letter indicate caution and restraint, suggesting that the falsehood of such a claim may have been known to him and the Roman clerical circles, but that they were hesitant about it. Still, he does not reject it.¹¹¹ The question of the genesis of the Jerominian myth of the origin of Glagolitic script and his subsequent prominent role among the Slavs, who used this script during the Middle Ages, was discussed in detail by Julia Verkholtantsev and Vanda Kraft Soić.

The matter discussed in the papal letter was a centuries-long problem in medieval Croatia. From the ninth century, when the first Slavonic missionaries came to Dalmatia, the use of the Slavonic language and liturgy presented a problem for the church hierarchy. In 925, a church council was held in Split, where the use of the Slavonic liturgy and Glagolitic letters was among the discussed topics. The reason for this lies in the concerns of Pope John X (914–928), who was afraid that the Slavonic language would gain preference over Latin.¹¹² Julia Verkholtantsev sees this as a political question rather than a linguistic one, since the pope was afraid that the Dalmatian clergy could compromise the unity of the church. He addressed the church authorities to be sure “that in the land of the Slavs, the Divine office is performed according to the customs of the Holy Roman Church, that is, in Latin, and not in a foreign [language].”¹¹³

The primary concern was not about the use of the language, but of the proper use of the Roman rite. In the end, the decision of the council allowed the use of the Slavonic language and liturgy only to the monks since they realized that complete prohibition would affect the evangelization of the people living in rural areas. The 1060 Split church council, once more stated that the use of Slavonic liturgy was only allowed to those members of the clergy who knew Latin letters and language as well.¹¹⁴ How did Saint Jerome become the recognized inventor of Slavonic letters? Croatian historiography traditionally accepts that the legend of Jerome inventing Glagolitic letters derived from the fear of accusations of heresy arising from disputes on the use of the Slavonic language and liturgy. This argument is supported by the fact that Saint Cyril, the true inventor of Glagolitic letters,

transcription: Kraft Soić, “Otpis Inocenta IV. I.,” 22. (*Venerabili fratri*) *Episcopo Sceniensi (etc.) Porrecta nobis tua petitio continebat quod in Sclavonia est littera specialis, quam illius terre clerici se habere a beato Jeronimo asserentes, eam observant in divinis officiis celebrandis. Unde ut illis efficiaris conformis, et in terre consuetudinem in qua consistis episcopus immiteris, celebrandi divina secundum dictam litteram a nobis suppliciter licentiam postulasti. Nos igitur, attendentes quod sermo rei et non est res sermoni subiecta, licentiam tibi in illis dumtaxat partibus ubi de consuetudine observantur premissa, dummodo sententia ex ipsius verietate littere non ledatur, auctoritate presentium concedimus postulatum. Nulli ergo etc. Nostrae concessionis etc. Datum Lungduni IV Kalendas Aprilis [Pontificatus nostri] anno quinto.*

¹¹¹ Kraft Soić, “Otpis Inocenta IV. II.,” 19.

¹¹² Verkholtantsev, *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome*, 38.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

was not venerated by the Glagolitic communities. Rather, together with his brother Methodius, Cyril was considered a heretic.¹¹⁵

The reaction to the proclamation of Saint Cyril as a heretic should have been the rejection of the Slavic mass and the Glagolitic script by those who used them, but the opposite occurred. By replacing Cyril with Jerome, the Glagolitic communities could easily receive Rome's blessing upon their activities. Moreover, we must bear in mind that while Saint Cyril is nevertheless a Byzantine, Eastern saint, and the attribution of such an invention to Jerome, the translator of the Bible into Latin, would have been more readily accepted among the Roman Curia. John Fine argues that Jerome was used by the Glagolites as an "ancient heritage" to justify their tradition each time they were attacked by Latinists.¹¹⁶ In this context, the figure of Saint Jerome was a tool to prove loyalty to the Roman Church and its official politics, while, protecting the Slavonic language which from the perspective of its supporters, should not be perceived as inferior to Latin and Greek, but equivalent as a sacred language. On the other hand, Verkholtantsev argues that it is possible that the legend came from the Latin clergy, and not the Glagolites, in order to better incorporate the Glagolitic communities into the Roman church.¹¹⁷ Regardless of the initiator, the intention is evident.

Who could disregard the script and the mass invented by one of the greatest saints, Church Father, translator of the Bible, and author of so many theological works? The sacred legitimation did not make only the letters sacred, but it gave sacred legitimation to everything written in the script as well. By attributing the invention to Jerome, and with that granting it a divine origin, the Slavonic language became the language of the Church, equal to Latin and Greek. As noted previously, while the originator(s) and architect(s) of this process are irrelevant here, its impact is more than evident, primarily in cultural production, such as Glagolitic liturgical books that contain Jerome's *officium* or mass in his honor.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 49–53. These pages give a detailed analysis of the absence of the cult of saints in Dalmatia. Pantelić, "Odras sredine," 239. No missals contain a mass for Cyril and Methodius. Their officium can be found in nine breviaries in three different versions, but none of these comes from Dalmatia.

¹¹⁶ Fine, "The Slavic Saint Jerome," 104.

¹¹⁷ Verkholtantsev, "St. Jerome, Apostle to the Slavs, and the Roman Slavonic Rite," 46; Julia Verkholtantsev, "Littera Specialis... a Beato Jeronimo": How Did Sts. Cyril and Methodius Lose Recognition as Inventors of Glagolitic letters to St. Jerome?," *Ricerche Slavistiche* 54 (2010): 225–63.

2.2 GLAGOLITIC CULTURAL PRODUCTION

The reasons for the previously mentioned justification of the use of Glagolitic letters was its widespread use in the Croatian lands. It was most prevalent in the region that comprised the territory of Kvarner, Lika, Krbava, Istria, and Zadar, which more than any other, acted as the cultural center of the Eastern Adriatic Coast, and a focal point of Glagolitic activity.¹¹⁸ According to Pantelić, the triangle between Krbava, Nin, and Zadar was the golden triangle of Glagolitic culture and literacy. Due to unstable political conditions at the turn of the fifteenth century, this cultural center moved north to the island of Krk, which also nurtured the Glagolitic tradition and south to the area around Dubrovnik.¹¹⁹ It is important to emphasize that while the Dubrovnik area was known for early Glagolitic activities and the use of the script, the town itself never became a solid Glagolitic center, like Zadar. Not all urban centers of the Croatian Middle Ages nurtured the tradition of Glagolitic literacy due to the predominant classical tradition and the observance of the Roman rite in their cathedrals, as was the case in Trogir and Split.

With the infiltration of the Croatian vernacular language, especially in literary production from the sixteenth century onwards, and the presence of a strong Glagolitic tradition in the hinterlands, the Glagolitic heritage became a part of the cultural identity of Medieval and Early Modern Croatia. Its interaction with humanist production also resulted in the formation of so-called “Glagolitic humanism” which developed in Lika and Krbava under the influence of the humanist currents from Zadar. The term refers to the achievements of the humanists between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries who used both the Croatian and Latin languages in their written production. The most distinguished representatives of this group were, Nicholas of Modruš (Nikola Modruški, 1427–1480) and Simon de Begna (Simon Modrusiensis, Šimun Kožićić Benja, 1460–1536), and the above-mentioned Novak Disislavić (1349–1373).

¹¹⁸ Petar Runje, “Knjige glagoljaša Zadarske nadbiskupije u srednjem vijeku” [Glagolitic books in the Archbishopric of Zadar in the Middle Ages], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 49 (2007): 154. There is much evidence of Glagolitic activities in the region of Zadar. The inventory of a merchant from Zadar written in 1380 mentions a Bible written in the Slavonic language. For Runje, one of the most beautiful medieval Croatian manuscripts, *The Hrvoje’s Missal* (1403–1404), was prepared in the scriptorium of Saint Chrysogonus in Zadar. The scribe Butko had written it, while some other illuminator illustrated it.

¹¹⁹ For more about the Glagolitic inscriptions in the Dubrovnik area see: Niko Kapetanić and Mateo Žagar, “Najjužniji hrvatski glagoljski natpis” [The newly discovered Glagolitic inscription in southern Croatia], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku*, no. 39 (2001): 9–48; Marica Čunčić and Marta Perkić, “Hrvatski glagoljski natpis Župe dubrovačke iz 11. stoljeća” [The Croatian Glagolitic inscription of Župa Dubrovačka from the 11th century], *Slovo : časopis Staroslavenskoga instituta u Zagrebu*, no. 59 (2009): 77–122.

The Officium and Mass in Glagolitic Liturgical Books

Another reason for the popularity of Jerome's cult among monastic communities was because the Benedictine, Pauline, and Franciscan Third Orders used the Slavic mass and the Glagolitic script, acknowledging its invention by Jerome. The liturgical books used by them supported the saint's privileged position, reflected in the presence of copies of the *officium* or a mass dedicated to the saint. Vesna Badurina Stipčević has made a detailed analysis of the Glagolitic liturgical books that contain references to the saint. She has published a list of breviaries, dating from between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, containing the *officium* of Saint Jerome on his feast day, September 30.¹²⁰ The *officium*, which are found in the Glagolitic liturgical books, was composed of three parts: a hymn to Jerome, his *vita*, and an excerpt from his *Letter XXII*, to Eustochium.¹²¹ Jerome's life is described from his birth in Stridon until his death in Bethlehem. The inclusion of excerpts from *Letter XXII* is not surprising, keeping in mind the monastic provenance of the breviaries. In it, Jerome wrote to his Roman disciple, Eustochium, when she chose the life of ascetic virginity. Together with her mother, Paula, she was a fervent follower. In the letter, Jerome describes his penitent life in the desert, fasting, fighting bodily temptations, and being surrounded by wild animals. These elements were appealing to the monks because through them, they could self-identify with the saint, whose penitent and ascetic lifestyle in the desert served as an exemplary model of the monastic lifestyle.

The breviary *Borgiano Illirico VI*, written in 1387, asserts Jerome as a member of the Benedictine Order.¹²² The adoption of Jerome as their predecessor was a legitimization of their activities. With it, they could prove loyalty to the pope and the postulates of their order, even while they continued to use the "controversial" Slavic liturgy. Similarly to the approval granted to the Bishop of Senj, the Benedictines of the island of Krk, received papal approval in 1252 to continue using the Slavic liturgy and the Glagolitic script, in the face of the fact that the island had been conquered by the Venetians in 1244 who had banned the use of the Slavic language.¹²³

¹²⁰ Badurina Stipčević, "Legenda o Jeronimu", 22. The fourteenth-century breviaries are: *IV Vrbnik Breviary* (Parish office, Vrbnik), *Borgiano Illirico IV* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), *Pašman Breviary* (Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences), *First Beram Breviary Ms 161* (National Library, Ljubljana). The fifteenth-century breviaries are: *Second Beram Breviary Ms 163* (National Library, Ljubljana), *Hum Breviary* (National and University Library, Zagreb), *Mavro's Breviary* (National and University Library, Zagreb), *Borgiano Illirico X* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), *First Novi Breviary* (Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences), and *Second Novi Breviary* (Parish Office, Novi Vinodolski). The office is also contained in printed breviaries: *Baromić's Breviary* from 1493 and the *Brozić Breviary* printed in 1561.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²² Pantelić, "Odras sredine," 235.

¹²³ Fine, "The Slavic Saint Jerome," 103.

Other Glagolitic liturgical books mentioning Saint Jerome are missals. A mass in honor of the saint is preserved only in missals from the northern parts of the Adriatic basin, Kvarner and Istria. The full pattern of the mass is preserved in the oldest surviving Croatian Glagolitic missal written in 1371 in Omišalj and the above-mentioned *Borgiano Illirico IV*.¹²⁴ Another missal holding a portion of the mass, is the *First Beram Missal* now held in the National Library of Slovenia in Ljubljana.¹²⁵ The first printed book in Croatia, the *Missale Romanum Glagolitice*, published in 1483 in the Croatian recension of Old Church Slavonic, was based on the manuscript *Missal of Duke Novak* written in 1368. In the calendar of the *editio princeps*, May 9 was marked as the feast of the *Prenesenie svetago Eronima* (Translation of Saint Jerome), which is not contained in any other Glagolitic calendar. Marija Pantelić confirmed that the *Missal of Duke Novak* was edited for printing by Glagolitic monks in Istria.¹²⁶

According to her, the celebration of the translation of Jerome's relics to the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore was connected to the rising popularity of the idea of the saint's Istrian origin promoted by Flavio Biondo (1392–1463). In 1464, Pope Pius II (1458–1464) officially proclaimed this date as the feast of the *Translatio*. Interestingly, Pius II had previously been the Bishop of Trieste (1447–1449) and was undoubtedly familiar with the widely held belief in his bishopric that the Istrian village of Zrenj was considered as one of the possible locations of Stridon—Jerome's birthplace (Fig.102).¹²⁷ The inclusion of the feast day is an expression of the Istrian tradition and the respect paid by the redactors of the text to their former bishop. The Istrian influence is reflected in other feasts specific to the region that cannot be found in other calendars: Saint Lazarus and Saint Servulus, martyrs from Trieste.¹²⁸

Marija Pantelić also suggests that the celebration of the translation of the saint's relics should be seen in another tradition. The Glagolitic *First Beram Breviary*, written in 1396 and today held in the National Library in Ljubljana, has a special *officium* on the date of the translation. The distinctive feature is an alternative hagiographical view of the translation of Jerome's relics, attributing it to Saint Helen, who had sent a piece of Jerome's clothing to her son Constantine with a request to build a

¹²⁴ Pantelić, "Odras sredine," 235; Pantelić, "Kulturno-povijesni značaj," 239.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 236; Ibid., 239.

¹²⁶ Marija Pantelić, "Prvotisak glagoljskog misala iz 1483. prema Misalu kneza Novaka iz 1368." [Editio Princeps of the Glagolitic missal from 1483 based on the Missal of Duke Novak from 1368], *Radovi Staroslavenskog instituta* 6 (1967): 46.

¹²⁷ Pantelić, "Kulturno-povijesni značaj," 240. The bishop of Ravenna, Superantio, wrote in the fourteenth century that Zrenj contained a very simple church in honor of Jerome, standing above the grave of the saint's parents.

¹²⁸ Pantelić, "Prvotisak glagoljskog misala," 46.

church consecrated to him in Constantinople.¹²⁹ The present scholarship has not yet discussed the possible Eastern tradition of veneration, so the source of this legend is unknown.

The Glagolitic Cult in Dalmatia

The surviving breviaries give a clue to the geographical origins of the cult, with most originating in the northern parts of Croatia, Kvarner, and Istria. Meanwhile, the only Dalmatian Glagolitic breviary that contains the *officium* of Saint Jerome is the fourteenth-century *Pašman Breviary*, made in the Benedictine monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Tkon, on the island of Pašman. The presence of the saint's *officium* can be seen as the reflection of a strong Glagolitic tradition in the Zadar region, but it does not indicate the celebration of the saint in the Dalmatian cities which would later become the centers of Jerome's humanist cult: Trogir, Šibenik, Split, and Dubrovnik. The breviaries all attest to the continuation of Jerome's cult in medieval Croatia and in Venetian and Habsburg Istria, medieval political entities that were not a part of the medieval Croatian kingdom. However, there is insufficient historical evidence to say the same for medieval Dalmatia.

Regardless of the political non-unity of the Croatian lands, it is evident that the saint was venerated in areas where the population was predominantly Slavic. It is reasonable to assume that other breviaries from Dalmatia, now lost, contained the same office. All the more so, because the monastery in Tkon had a scriptorium in which Glagolitic books were produced for the whole region of Dalmatia. Future research into the origin of Jerome's cult among the Glagolites, especially in Istria, should consider the comparative analysis of the *Missal of Duke Novak* and *the Editio princeps* made by Marija Pantelić, which confirmed the exchange of Glagolitic texts from Zadar, through Lika and Krbava, to Istria.¹³⁰ This would reveal Dalmatia's place in the wider cultural context and permit the conclusion that the existence of the cult in Istria also implies its existence in Dalmatia. The enduring Glagolitic tradition in the region also lends support to this claim.

The non-liturgical Glagolitic codex *Petris Miscellany* from 1468 contains 162 different texts, mostly apocryphal and hagiographic legends, including the legend of Jerome, which refers to him as *Jerome a Croat* (Jeronim Hrvatini) and emphasizes his Slavic origin.¹³¹ For Petar Runje, one of the pioneers of Glagolitic research in Croatia, this is proof that, "in the fifteenth century, among the

¹²⁹ Pantelić, "Kulturno-povijesni značaj," 241.

¹³⁰ Pantelić, "Prvotisak glagoljskog misala," 46.

¹³¹ Badurina Stipčević, "Legenda o svetom Jeronimu u hrvatskoglagoljskom Petrisovu zborniku (1468.)," 341.

Croats, there existed a notion of Jerome being Croatian.”¹³² Another reason for the lack of relevant Glagolitic books from Dalmatia is the period of Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth century, during which church properties were confiscated, including liturgical books. The last pages of the *Illyrico V* breviary tell a story of how the people of the village Tribihovići in Lika had collected money and bought back the book from the Ottomans in 1487.¹³³ Such a fate could have befallen liturgical books containing Jerome’s *officium* or any other book that could tell us more about the development of his cult among the Glagolitic monastic communities.

Based on the sources, a conclusion can be formulated here that Jerome’s Glagolitic cult was present in places where Glagolitic activities were present: the triangle between Zadar and its surroundings, Istria and the Kvarner Islands, and the region of Lika and Krbava. In these places we can trace the cult through the centuries among the predominantly Slavic inhabitants and the speakers of the Croatian vernacular language. In Dalmatia, where the script was primarily, although not exclusively, used in the hinterlands, we do not find the presence of a public Glagolitic cult in the communes.

The reasons for this should be sought in the strong influence of the local ecclesiastical centers which were tightly connected with the Roman Curia and the Latin Roman Rite. In the main cathedrals, the Slavic mass was not served. However, Georgius de Sclavonia (Juraj Slovinač, 1355/1360–1416), a theologian at the Sorbonne and a promoter of the Glagolitic script,¹³⁴ compiled a list of the bishoprics in which the use of the Slavic mass was allowed, among them the bishoprics of Split, Zadar, Šibenik, and Trogir.¹³⁵ The learned theologian also accepted the Jeronimian theory on the genesis of the Glagolitic letters, as can be seen in the note he added to his personal copy of Jerome’s *Commentaries on the Psalms*, where he added a marginal note next to the passage where Jerome

¹³² Runje, “Sv. Jeronim i glagoljica u Hrvata,” 111. In my opinion, this is a hasty conclusion based on an unwarranted generalization, since other sources refer to Jerome also as Dalmatian, Illyrian, or Slav. Taking into consideration the complexity of the perception of common belonging in the period on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, such general conclusions are not possible, and they only create a diversion in the mission of untangling the complex structure of present identities in late medieval Dalmatia and Croatia. Although his conclusions are not on the wrong track, they lack theoretical contextualization which would support it.

¹³³ Runje, “O vrijednosti i ugledu glagoljskih knjiga” 174; Mladen Ibler, “Breviary Borgiano Illirico 5-6,” in *Senjski zbornik*, 36, 2009, 226.

¹³⁴ Franjo Šanjek and Josip Tandarić, “Juraj Iz Slavonije (Okolo 1355/60–1416.) Profesor Sorbonne i pisac, kanonik i penitencijar stolne crkve u Toursu” [George of Slavonia (Cca 1355/60–1416) Professor of Sorbonne and writer, canon and confessor of the Cathedral Church in Tours], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 8 (1984): 1–23; Zrinka Novak, “Juraj Slovinač - Teolog i profesor pariške Sorbonne” [George of Slavonia-Theologian and professor of Parisian Sorbonne], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 34 (2010): 19–28.

¹³⁵ Novak, “Juraj Slovinač,” 25. The list that Georgius de Sclavonia brings is: *episcopus de Kerbavia* (bishop of Krbava), *biscop Cnynski* (bishop of Knin), *episcopus krcki* (bishop of Krk), *episcopus /quasi archiepiscopus! /de Split* (archbishop of Split), *episcopus Troguier* (bishop of Trogir), *episcopus Schibenik* (bishop of Šibenik), *archiepiscopus Zadarski* (bishop of Zadar), *episcopus Nenski /ninski/* (bishop of Nin), *episcopus Rabski* (bishop of Rab), *episcopus Osorski* (bishop of Osor), *episcopus Senski* (bishop of Senj).

explains how he translated the Psalms into the vernacular, Juraj Slovinač wrote *in linguam sclavonicam* suggesting that Jerome used the Slavonic language as his vernacular instead of Latin.¹³⁶ His devotion to Jerome was so deep that he asked that a mass for his soul be served on Jerome's feast day.¹³⁷ During the fifteenth century, the written production of the Croatian Middle Ages reached its peak with literary production in three languages—the Croatian vernacular, the Croatian redaction of Old Church Slavonic, and Latin—and three scripts—Glagolitic, Latin, and Cyrillic.

For Glagolitic production, it was a “Golden Age” when most of the preserved codices were made,¹³⁸ together with the printing of Glagolitic books such as the before-mentioned *Missale Romanum Glagoliticum*, published in 1483 in the Croatian recension of Church Slavonic, and *Breviary* printed in 1491. With the use of the Croatian vernacular language, even in literature, the Glagolitic heritage influenced even humanist production. Understandably, this influence happened in areas where the Glagolitic heritage was predominant—Lika, Krbava, and Zadar. Among the few names to mention here is Nicholas of Modruš (1427–1480), a prominent humanist, papal legate, and a promoter of the Glagolitic script.¹³⁹

He was born in Kotor but educated in Venice, where he earned the title of Doctor of Philosophy and Theology. In 1457, he was named the first bishop of the newly established Bishopric of Modruš, on the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia,¹⁴⁰ in a region known for Glagolitic literacy. In one of his letters, written around 1470, he wrote in defense of the use of the Glagolitic script in his bishopric, using the Croatian language and Glagolitic script. The letter was written while Nicholas was in Spoleto, addressed to the clergy and the chapter of his bishopric, after he heard, that someone of the local people was spreading rumors that the Slavic liturgy was not approved by the pope.

The name of the perpetrator is not known, but Nicholas addresses him as “bitter and vile enemy who does not cease to trouble and confound your souls and bodies,” saying that the violence experienced from the Ottoman hands is a blessing compared with what “an evil neighbor, who eats

¹³⁶ Ibid., 26.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 21. Instead of September 30 he lists his feast day on October 1.

¹³⁸ See: Hercigonja, *Tisućljeće hrvatskoga glagoljaštva*, 88-98.

¹³⁹ On Nicholas of Modruš see: Luka Špoljarić, “Ex libris Nicolai episcopi Modrussiensis: knjižnica Nikole Modruškoga” [Ex Libris Nicolai episcopi Modrussiensis: the library of Nicholas of Modruš], *Colloquia Maruliana* 21 (2012): 25–63; Luka Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš, ‘The Glory of Illyria’: Humanist Patriotism and Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Rome” (Doctoral dissertation, Budapest, Central European University, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ Luka Špoljarić, “Nikola Modruški avant la lettre: Društveno podrijetlo, akademski put i počeci crkvene karijere (uz prilog o slučaju živog mrtvaca u Senju)” [Nicholas of Modruš avant la lettre: His social background, academic path, and early ecclesiastical career (With an appendix on the case of a revenant in Senj)], *Povijesni prilozi* 33, no. 46 (2014): 69–92.

with us” did.¹⁴¹ Answering such claims, following the already established tradition, he invoked Saint Jerome as the initiator of Slavic liturgy:

And in the same manner in many churches across Croatia and Dalmatia the holy mother Roman church honorably confirmed the rites and traditions instituted by St. Jerome, and she never accepted any protests from anyone concerning that what he, more important than any other holy father, inspired by the Holy Spirit did for the comfort of the common people in imitation of St. Paul, whose works he had read.¹⁴²

As the historical evidence suggests, in the early decades of the fifteenth century, and as will be further discussed in this dissertation, the ongoing Glagolitic tradition did not directly influence the formation of Jerome’s cult in the urban centers of Dalmatia for the primary reason that the local ecclesiastical centers did practice the Slavic liturgy, and were thus exempt from the possible discussions on the matter that roiled the northern Adriatic basin. But in those places, where it was still strong tradition, the question perpetuated. Still, it would be wrong to see the Dalmatian communes as isolated strongholds, completely resistant to the idea of Jerome’s local origin or the perception that he invented Glagolitic letters, since Glagolitic monks were present in these urban centers as well. Admittedly, in this region the Glagolitic monks had considerably less influence than the mendicant orders for example, but they were still present.

While, the use of the Slavic liturgy in the Dalmatian communes, apart from Zadar, remains a historiographical problem which has not been observed in detail, there is no evidence that the growing presence of Jerome’s cult in the communes from the middle of the fifteenth century was a result of the institutional support of the bishops and the clergy who wanted to promote Jerome as the inventor of Glagolitic script. Instead, as elaborated further in the later chapters of this dissertation, the evolution of Jerome’s cult in the communes should be observed in light of the growing importance the saint started to gain in Italy since the beginning of the fifteenth century and later across Europe. And it had a strong support by the local bishops and the clergy but for different reasons.

That said, the Glagolitic veneration cannot be neglected completely. The idea of Jerome’s Dalmatian origin was nurtured for centuries among the Glagolitic monks, who with their sermons delivered in the vernacular language, could have spread the notion of Jerome’s Dalmatian origin among the local population, even before his cult started to take on distinctive characteristics in Italy during the fourteenth century. With the development of the renaissance cult in Dalmatia and the growing notion of Jerome’s Dalmatian origin, the Glagolitic tradition gained more importance from

¹⁴¹ The transcription and the English translation of the letter is found in: Luka Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš, ‘The Glory of Illyria’, 155–56.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 156–57.

the end of the fifteenth century when it was adopted into the humanist discourse regarding the national history and the distinctiveness of the peoples living in the Eastern Adriatic Coast.

Finally, valuable information on the perception of Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic Coast can be obtained from accounts left by foreign travelers who made stops in the region on their way to the Holy Land. Besides the descriptions of churches and mentions of the relics held in them, these pilgrims also reflected upon local customs. Some even name Jerome directly as the patron saint of Dalmatia. The earliest such note is in the itinerary of Pedro Tafur (Pero Tafur, 1410–1484), a Spanish pilgrim. During his short stay in Split in the 1430s, he talked with some of the locals probably canons of the cathedral or local nobility, who informed him that two saints, Saint Christopher and Saint Jerome, were born in the city and that the memory of where their houses stood was still alive at the time.¹⁴³ Even though the story is not certifiable, it demonstrates how the idea of Jerome's local, or, more accurately, regional origin was present, and that the people of Dalmatia were aware of the fact that he was born somewhere in the territory. Importantly however, for our argument, the invention of the Glagolitic script is not mentioned.

A few years later, another traveler, Felix Fabri (1438/1439–1502) stopped at several places on the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the 1480s.¹⁴⁴ When he visited a small island in the vicinity of Šibenik he encountered a friar who spoke in the Slavic language, a member of the Third Order of the Franciscans, who were Glagolites, and who informed him that Jerome had invented letters different from Greek and Latin for his compatriots and that he used those letters to translate the Bible into Slavic:

And came to me, one of the brothers of the Third Order and the Rule of Saint Francis and greeted me with the Slavonic words and let me inside the house. When he saw that I cannot understand him, he called for the priest who spoke to me in Italian; he spoke neither Latin nor German. (...) They also say that Saint Jerome found, composed and gave to Dalmatians, his compatriots, letters different from the Latin and Greek, which were later named Slavonic.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures: 1435-1439*, ed. Malcom Letts (New York: London: Harper & Bros., 1926), 53. "(...) we came to a town called Spalato, which is also in Dalmatia. Saint Jerome and Saint Christopher were born in this town, and there is an arm of the sea which passes by a hamlet, where they say Saint Christopher carried the poor people across who could not pay for a boat, and even to-day there is some remembrance of the houses of both those saints."

¹⁴⁴ Stjepan Krsić, "Opis hrvatske jadranske obale u putopisima švicarskog dominikanca Feliksa Fabrija (Schmida) iz 1480. i 1483/84. Godine" [Description of Croatian Adriatic Coast in travelling accounts by Felix Fabri, Dominican from Switzerland], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 39 (2001): 133–216.

¹⁴⁵ Félix Fabri and Konrad Dieterich Hassler, *Fratri Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, vol. 3 (Stuttgartiae: Sumptibus Societatis litterariae Stuttgardiensis, 1848), 366. *Exivit autem ad me*

Informed by the Glagolitic friar that Jerome translated the Bible into the Slavonic language and composed the mass, Fabri reached for the evidence in the saint's written production, where he misinterpreted Jerome's words on the translation of the Bible into the Latin, as the confirmation of what was said to him by friar:

It is clear from the epistle on the places and names of Hebrew questions that Jerome translated divine office and the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular: "Our task is to refute the errors from the Hebrew books, and to explain the etymology of names and regions in the vernacular language". And again, in a letter to Sophronium: "I have delivered the translation, diligently corrected, to the people of my language."¹⁴⁶

Another foreign traveler, Georges Lengherand, the mayor of the city of Mons, attended a Slavic mass in Poreč, which was said to have been composed by Saint Jerome.¹⁴⁷ Although the idea was nurtured among the Glagolitic communities, the existence of belief of his Dalmatian, or Slavic origin and the alleged attribution of Glagolitic letters was known even beyond the Slavic speaking territory. Flavio Biondo, in his work *Italia Illustrata* written in, when discussing Jerome's origin, what I will elaborate in detail later in the thesis, mentions how Dalmatians considered Jerome as their own and falsely presumed that Jerome invented letters different from Greek and Latin for them.¹⁴⁸ The promotion of the belief in Jerome's authorship of Glagolitic script was present in areas where Glagolitic production was common.

The existence of such a common tradition in the Dalmatian communes south of Zadar before the sixteenth century is not evident from the written sources outside of the Glagolitic context. Regardless of the paucity of the sources which could contribute to the notion of how widespread this enduring belief was, such an understanding circulated during the fifteenth century and with the growing interest for the saint and the growing importance of the vernacular language, the idea of Jerome's alleged invention gained more relevance. This is primarily seen in the adoption of the

unus frater tertii ordinis et regulae tertiae sancti Francisci, et verbis Sclavonicis me recepit 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.[...] 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.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 367. *Quod autem beatus Hieronymus in vernaculam linguam divinum officium et sacram scripturam transtulerit, palet in epistola de locis et nominibus hebraicarum quaestionum, ubi dicit: studii nostri est, de libris Ebraeorum errores refellere, etymologias quoque nominum atque regionum vernacula lingua explanare. Et iterum in epistola ad Sophronium: antiquorum, inquit, translationem diligentissime emendatam olim meae linguae hominibus tradidi.*

¹⁴⁷ Georges Lengherand, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand, moyeur de Monsen Haynaut, a Venise, Rome, Jérusalem, Mont Sinaï et le Kayres, 1485-1486* (Mons: Masguillier & Deguesne, 1861), 88. *Et ce propre jour entre autres messes oymes ung prêtre qui dit messe en langue esclavon; et nous fut dit que saint Géromme composa les messes qui pour le présent se dient en ce langage.*

¹⁴⁸ Biondo, *Roma ristavrata et Italia illustrata*, 196.

narrative in some of the works of the national historiography as it was in Vinko Pribojević's *De Origine Successibusque Slavorum* (On the origin and glory of the Slavs) published in 1532.

The people living in the fifteenth-century Eastern Adriatic Coast certainly believed that this praiseworthy saint was born among them, and they felt it necessary to emphasize this to the foreigners coming to their land. However, the idea of the attribution of Glagolitic letters to Jerome was certainly known in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, but as will be discussed in the chapter on adoption of the Renaissance cult in the Dalmatian communes, was not unanimously accepted and promoted as an integral element of Jerome's Dalmatian identity. This is understandable, as while the idea was an important element for the Glagolites themselves, for the Franciscans (with exception of the Third Order), humanists, and ecclesiastical centers which promoted Jerome's cult, but did not use the Glagolitic letters or the Slavic liturgy, it was not the constructive element of devotion.

2.3 GLAGOLITIC SCRIPT AS A SAINTLY ATTRIBUTE

It is not known whether, during the Late Middle Ages, any commune in the Eastern Adriatic possessed Jerome's relics or if they played any significant role in the celebration of the saint, or were a destination for local pilgrimages.¹⁴⁹ The lack of a central place of worship and the relics through which the saint could perform his intercession is the vital feature of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia whose formation, as discussed in this thesis, is polycentric and emerges in different traditions: Glagolitic, Franciscan and Humanist. Within the Glagolitic veneration, the importance of Jerome's alleged invention of the script is seen in the substitution of the veneration of his bodily remains with secondary relics—books written in the Glagolitic script. Jerome's translation and edition of the Bible were perceived as divine works, especially in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, where this element of his sanctity was enriched with the belief that he translated the Bible into Church Slavonic. The example from Krk, and the added note in *Illyrico IV*, written in Omišalj, demonstrates how the Glagolitic script was perceived in correlation with Saint Jerome.

¹⁴⁹ Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti: ceremonijal i državni blagdani dubrovačke republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću* [The Theatre of Power: State ceremony and feasts of the Dubrovnik Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth century] (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2009), 259. In the eighteenth century the Dominican convent in Dubrovnik received one as a gift from the archbishop Lupis, who had brought the reliquary with a fragment of the bone of Saint Jerome from Rome. At this time, another reliquary was purchased from Venice and built into the altar of Saint Jerome in the church of Saint Simeon in Zadar. The mentioned church of Saint Jerome near Split has been mentioned in the sources as the pilgrimage destination only from the end of the fifteenth century.

Glagolita Clozianus

At the end of the fifteenth century, *Glagolita Clozianus* (Kločev glagoljaš), a Glagolitic codex dating back to the eleventh century, passed to the ownership of Marquardo Breisacher, the emperor's envoy.¹⁵⁰ He had received the codex from Luka Rinaldis, a canon from the island of Krk, who had close relations with the Frankapan family that ruled over the island. He saved the codex after the death of Ivan Frankapan when his belongings were stolen and scattered.¹⁵¹ Breisacher added the Latin note that demonstrates the importance the book had. It was believed that the codex was an autograph copy by Saint Jerome himself and was covered in silver and gold binding and venerated as a relic:

These sheets, here bound together from the inside, were written by the own hand of Saint Jerome, the most astute doctor of the church of God. And they are part of the Bible, written in the Croatian language. And to me, it was given as a gift by Lucas de Reynaldis, a priest from the diocese of Krk, who got it from the glorious lord Ivan Frankapan, ruler of the before mentioned island Krk, who ornamented the book in gold and silver to be worshipped just as relics.¹⁵²

Breisacher emphasizes that the codex was written in *lingua Croatina*, referring obviously to the Glagolitic script.

Despite the note's historical incongruity, it provides an important insight into the perception of Jerome as the inventor of Glagolitic letters. The codex was written with the older, rounded variant of Glagolitic letters, which were indeed different from the angular type of the fifteenth century. Taking these factors together with the tradition of Jerome's invention of the letters, the relic was born. Breisacher did not need it for liturgical or devotional use since he could not understand it; in the note, he wrote that the codex of homilies is a Bible. Štefanić argues that it is quite unusual that Luka Rinaldis decided to give the codex to an Austrian military governor who could not have had any practical use for it.¹⁵³ Thus, he gave it as a precious gift, a relic. The perception of it as a relic is a possible reason why it was later dismantled, and today, only a few pieces remain.

¹⁵⁰ Vjekoslav Štefanić, "Nova istraživanja o Kločevu glagoljašu" [New research about the Glagolita Clozianus], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskog instituta* 2 (1953): 67–74; Vjekoslav Štefanić, "Kločev glagoljaš i Luka Rinaldis" [Glagolita Clozianus and Luka Rinaldis], *Radovi Staroslavenskog instituta* 4–5 (1955): 129–53; Patrick J Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22. Unfortunately, not many pages from this massive book are extant. The first fourteen pages, including the note added by Breisacher, are kept in the Biblioteca comunale di Trento (ms. 2476). The additional two pages are kept in the Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck.

¹⁵¹ Štefanić, "Kločev glagoljaš," 131.

¹⁵² The translation was based on the transcription brought by Štefanić. Ibid., 130. *Isti quinterni, hic intus ligati, scripti fuerunt de manu propria S. Hieronimi ecclesie Dei doctoris acutissimi. Et sunt biblie pars in lingua Croatina scripta. Et mihi dono dedit D. Lucas de Reynaldis, presbyter Veglensis dioeceseos, qui habuit a Magnifico Domino Johanne de Frangepanibus, domino insule prefate Vegle, qui librum auro et argento ornatum pro reliquiis venerabatur.*

¹⁵³ Ibid., 143.

Other examples support the idea that Glagolitic books were perceived as secondary relics of Saint Jerome, even though not explicitly stated in the historical documents. Joško Belamarić, for example, presents the case of “the most expensive Croatian book ever” from Šibenik.¹⁵⁴ In 1440, a priest, Marko Marijašević, made a contract with the officials of the parish of Saint Michael in Rogovo, which obliged the parish to pay him around 520 liters of barley, 1280 liters of wine, and 1000 liters of oil, in exchange for a book to be received after his death. Additionally, he also was given a house in Zadar. Belamarić agrees with Petar Runje, who argued that its immense value conditioned the high price of the book as a relic rather than its material worth.¹⁵⁵ Both authors convincingly suggest that it is possible that the book, similarly to the *Glagolita Clozianus*, was bound in a richly decorated cover and kept in the treasury. If it was venerated as a relic, whose was it if not Jerome’s since it was written in Old Church Slavonic and presumably with Glagolitic script?

Other examples in Dalmatia may also underpin the idea of the book as a secondary relic of the saint. One of these is the case of the *Evangeliarum Spalatense*, which has been anecdotally linked to the person of Saint Domnius (Dujam), a local martyr and patron saint of the city of Split, but was probably written in the eighth century.¹⁵⁶ Connecting saints and texts in this way is not unique to this geographic area. It can be seen in other examples of producing books with divine help, for example, of Saint David, a patron saint of Wales, and his *Imperfect Gospel*,¹⁵⁷ and the *Reims Gospel*, a manuscript of Slavic origin composed out of two texts written in Cyrillic and Glagolitic letters, most probably in the fourteenth century in the monastery of Saint Jerome (Emmaus) in Prague. Because of its rich binding decorated with precious stones, the latter was venerated as a relic and spurred the unfounded legend that it was the one on which French kings took an oath during the coronation ceremony.¹⁵⁸ Another legend however, attributed the authorship of the text to the Czech Saint Procopius of Sázava (d. 1053).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Joško Belamarić, “Prilozi opusu Nikole Vladanova u Šibeniku” [Contribution to the oeuvre of the painter Nikola Vladanov (1443) in Šibenik],” *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 41 (2008): 171.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁵⁶ Aleksandar Stipčević, *Socijalna povijest knjige u Hrvata 1,21*; Mirjana Matijević Sokol and Tomislav Galović, eds., *Splitski evangelijar = Evangeliarium Spalatense* (Split: Književni Krug, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ Frederick George Cowley, “The Relics of St David: The Historical Evidence,” in *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 276.

¹⁵⁸ Gábor Klaniczay and Ildikó Kristóf, “Écritures saintes et pactes diaboliques. Les usages religieux de l’écrit (Moyen Âge et Temps modernes),” trans. Marie-Pierre Gaviano, *Annales* 56, no. 4 (2001): 947–80. The copy of the Gospel of Saint John, which was deposited in the grave of Saint Cuthbert (687), was considered to be his relic, same as the gospels of Saint Boniface. The saintly autographs were also highly venerated as relics. Part of the oldest manuscript of the Rule of Saint Benedict was considered to have been written by Benedict himself. A similar practice occurred with Saint Francis and a parchment with his *Laudes Dei Altissimi*, written and signed by him. For more details, consult pages 957–960.

¹⁵⁹ Auguste Vallet De Viriville, “Évangélaire slave, dit Texte du sacre, de la bibliothèque de Reims, par Louis Paris et Jean-Baptiste Silvestre,” *Bibliothèque de l’école des chartes* 15, no. 1 (1854): 192–94.

For the Glagolitic communities, the invention of Glagolitic letters by Saint Jerome was perceived as a miraculous invention of the saint who decided to bring the word of God to his compatriots. Not only were they chosen and not forgotten by this erudite and pious man, but their language was equal to other languages of the Church, Greek and Latin. Furthermore, this narrative also conveys the idea of the distinctiveness of the people who used the language. In addition to its sacred nature, the script was created with intention; that of a great Christian, a Church Father, who, despite all his other significant accomplishments, did not forget his people. Additionally, it provided an absolute continuity of the language since ancient times, proving the centuries-long existence of the people who were using it.

2.4 VITA AND TRANSITUS SANCTI HIERONYMI IN THE GLAGOLITIC EDITION – *SENJ TRANSITUS*

The establishment of the Croatian vernacular in the spheres of public life and literacy during the fifteenth century, and the invention of the printing press, made Glagolitic books more accessible to a broader audience. Already in 1491, the first printing press was established in Kolinj, in the region of Lika, followed by one in Senj (1494) and later another in Rijeka (1530–1531). The first printed books were understandably liturgical. The above-mentioned *Missale Romanum Glagolitice* (1483) was followed by the *Brevijar po zakonu rimskoga Dvora* (Kolinj breviary, 1491), *Baromićev brevijar* (Baromić breviary, 1493), *Senjski missal* (Senj missal, 1494), and *Spovid općena* (1496). Among the books printed in Senj were translations of popular theological and liturgical manuals, such as the *Spovid općena*, which was the translation of *Confessionale generale* by Michele Carcano (1427–1484).¹⁶⁰ In 1508, the first non-liturgical book in the Croatian vernacular and Glagolitic script was printed, *Transit svetoga Ieronima* (Transitus Sancti Hieronymi). To fully understand the importance and the impact of the mentioned devotional work to the saint, it is necessary to present the evolution of devotional literature to the saint, from his earliest *vitae* to the later medieval hagiographic constructions.

¹⁶⁰ Anica Nazor, “O glagoljskoj tiskari u Senju i njezinim izdanjima (1494.-1508.)” [About the Glagolitic printing house in Senj and its editions (1494-1508)], *Senjski zbornik* 41 (2014): 211–43.

The First *Vitae* of Jerome

Despite the considerable number of written works Jerome produced during his life, accounts referring to his life and sanctity were few. The primary source of information on Jerome's life are the letters he exchanged with his companions and disciples and the autobiography he incorporated into his work *De viris illustribus*. However, these texts lack the particularly significant element upon which sanctity relies—miraculous deeds. Jerome's intellectual production and translation of the Bible could be understood as a miraculous work that brought the Bible to the masses, but it was not something that could be used as supernatural material that would appeal to believers.

Yet, the very lack of a *vita* from Jerome's days is what left space for later inventions and constructions. These later works based on his own words accentuated only those elements that fit the hagiographical pattern as a means to endorse his sanctity. The two *vitae* of Jerome known in the Middle Ages and attributed to ancient authors were *Hieronymus noster* and *Plerosque nimirum*, and they formed the basis of all later medieval hagiographies of Saint Jerome. The earliest of the two was the *Hieronymus noster*, titled after the initial words in the text. The author used a remark from the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus, written in the sixth century, as the model for the legend, upon which he built up a narrative.¹⁶¹ Based on this, the hagiography *Hieronymus noster* could not have been created before the time of Marcellinus.¹⁶² By analyzing the text of the *vita*, Alberto Vaccari proposes that the legend was written in the Carolingian era, most likely in the ninth century.¹⁶³

Yet, in the formation of Jerome's image, the later *vita*, *Plerosque nimirum*, played a more significant role, as apart from the description of Jerome's life, it narrated his first miracle, which would in time grow into one of the primary attributes of the saint—*The Story of the Lion*. Two variants of the text are known. The first one was attributed to Pseudo-Sebastian, while the second version was

¹⁶¹ Marcellinus was a count during the reign of Emperor Justinian in Constantinople, where he wrote historical records. His only surviving work is the *Chronicle*, which is a continuation of the chronicle started by Jerome and relates many important events of the period. See: Brian Croke and Ammien Marcellin, *Count Marcellinus and His Chronicle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). As Rice explains, Marcellinus established a chronology that all the later writers held on to, writing that Jerome was ordained in Rome, while he himself informs us that that happened in Antioch: "Our Jerome mastered Greek and Latin literature in Rome, and also was ordained a priest there. Later the young man went to Bethlehem, where he decided to remain, like a prudent animal, beside our Lord's crib". Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 25.

¹⁶² Alberto Vaccari, "Le antiche vite di S. Girolamo," in Vaccari, *Scritti di erudizione e di filologia* 2, 1958, 3; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 25.

¹⁶³ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 7.

an attempt to combine both known *vitae*, *Hieronymus noster* and *Plerosque nimirum*.¹⁶⁴ Compared to *Hieronymus Noster*, the *Plerosque nimirum* brings new elements to Jerome's cult.

The first such element is the discussion on virginity, in which the author quotes the *Acts of Saint Nereus and Achilleus*.¹⁶⁵ The second noteworthy contribution is the story of Jerome befriending a lion during his time staying in a monastery in Bethlehem, by picking a thorn out of the lion's paw. With that act, Jerome tamed the lion, who then resided in the monastery with the monks. The third novelty is the element that Jerome was elected as a cardinal priest and fled Rome due to the Arian heresy. In *Hieronymus noster*, Jerome left Rome because of its hostile clergy, who sought to trap and defame him. Jacobus da Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* gives further details to the defamation plot, pointing out that a women's garment was secretly placed in his cell.¹⁶⁶

The story of the lion in Plerosque nimirum was not the invention of the hagiographer but instead emerges from Aesop's fables—*The lion and the shepherd* and *Androcles and the lion*. However, in Late Antiquity, the story was disseminated within the hagiographical genre, attributed initially, not to Jerome, but to Saint Sabbas (439–532) and Saint Gerasimus of Jordan (d. 475).¹⁶⁷ The adaptation of Aesop's narrative to the hagiographical genre offered a different meaning and theological connotations to the lion story. The act of taming the lion became a metaphor for suppressing the bestial in man, and it is not surprising that this element is present in the *vita* of the hermit monks, including Jerome, whose life in the desert was intended to promote the suppression of physical desires and bodily temptations that could lead to sin against God.¹⁶⁸

It is still unclear when the story passed from Sabbas or Gerasimus to Jerome. Vaccari suggested that the adoption of *The Story of the Lion* took place in Rome in the seventh century in the

¹⁶⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 209. See a footnote 2. E. Gordon Whatley, Anne Booth Thompson, and Robert Upchurch, "Saint Jerome: Introduction," in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), 109–26. Both versions are published in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, the first under the number BHL 3871, and the second under BHL 3870.

¹⁶⁵ Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*, 140; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 209.

¹⁶⁶ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 28; Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, "Chastity Models in the Legenda Aurea and in the Sermones de Sanctis of Jacobus de Voragine," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 52 (2008): 19–30.

¹⁶⁷ Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints*, vol. 3 (Dublin: Duffy, 1845), 76; Vaccari, "Le antiche vite di S. Girolamo," 12; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 40, 43. This was likewise asserted in the *Plerosque Nimirum*, in which the author instructs us that Jerome's legend was transferred to the West through the pilgrims to the Holy Land and that it was comparable to the lives of the ancient fathers. In both lives, that of Gerasimus and Sabbas, the monks then living as hermits in Palestine encountered injured lions and helped them, and as a sign of gratitude, the lion remained to live as a faithful servant and loving disciple in the case of Saint Gerasimus.

¹⁶⁸ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 40. Rice explains that the removal of the thorn is a metaphor for baptism and the washing away of original sin. This interpretation is supported by the *Gesta Romanorum*, compiled at the end of the thirteenth century, which presents the story of the lion as a moralizing tale, in which the character of the saint is replaced with the character of a knight. As the moral of the story, the author compares the lion with the whole of humanity that limps because of the sins of Adam and Eve.

monastery of Saint Sabbas, to which Giovanni Mosco (550–619) left behind a copy of his work *Prato Spirituale*, which contains, among others, a legend of Saint Gerasimus. Presumably, because of the resemblance in the names, and because of the common component of the hermit lifestyle, Gerasimus' attribute was given to Jerome. If we agree with Vaccari's explanation, this adoption of Gerasimus' account to Jerome's life would have taken place at the beginning of the seventh century.¹⁶⁹ A formal analysis of the text, together with the mentioning of a "cardinal-priest" and quotes from the *Acts of Saint Nereus and Achilleus*, points to a Roman author. With all this, Vaccari reinforces his argument that this transformation occurred in Rome. Following this, the author most likely came from the environs of Rome. Based on the style and the composition, Vaccari proposed the dating of *Plerosque nimirum* to the Carolingian age, same as the *Hieronimus noster*, but placing *Plerosque nimirum* earlier in the chronology.¹⁷⁰

The argument for the emergence of both *vitae* in the Carolingian age is further reinforced by the pictorial cycles of Jerome's life that can be found in two manuscripts from the ninth century: the *First Bible of Charles the Bald* (also known as *Vivian Bible*), copied at the monastery of San Martin of Tours around 845, and the *Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura*, presumably composed in Reims around 868.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, Ferdinand Cavallera does not agree with this explanation, since he points out that while there are analogies between Jerome's and Gerasimus' *vitae*, the evident discrepancies demonstrate that both legends simply adhered to the same earlier source. He suggests that such a transfer could have happened because pilgrims may simply have misunderstood the matter, mistaking Gerasimus for Hieronymus, and adhered the story to Jerome, who had greater importance in the Western Church.¹⁷²

Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi

In Western Christianity, compilations of the works connected to Jerome were known as *Vita et transitus Sancti Hieronymi* (further in text *Transitus*). The core of the compilation were the apocryphal letters attributed to Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Eusebius of Cremona, which had been re-discovered at the beginning of the fourteenth century. They were reproduced together with a short *vita*, a list of his miracles, and the hymns and prayers in the saint's honor, with variations in the editions. Scholars acknowledge that the letters were forged to fulfill the inconsistencies and gaps in

¹⁶⁹ Vaccari, "Le antiche vite di S. Girolamo," 12.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁷¹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 26.

¹⁷² Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*, 142. The story of Gerasimus misses the elements of the donkey and the merchants. For Cavallera this is evidence that the story of Gerasimus was not directly attributed to Jerome.

Jerome's life, primarily his last days, and to enrich his *vita* with miracles so he could be more appealing to devotees. Not all scholars agree on when this forgery happened.

As they were usually reproduced together, as a unit, Eugene Rice suggests that they were forged at the same time by the same author. The similarity between the style and the purpose of these letters with the text of the translation of Jerome's relics to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in the 1280s (further in text *Translatio*) indicates that they were forged in a unique ideological project. Still, he proposes that the letters were forged a bit later than the *Translatio*, most probably at the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁷³ Due to the fact that the cult was "invented" in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the church appears as the first possible place of such forgery.¹⁷⁴ Rice also suggests that the author could have come from the Dominican circle due to the emphasis on the element of preaching and the familiarity of the author with the Dominican theological texts of the time, especially on the question of *gloria* and *beatitudo*.¹⁷⁵

Ferdinand Cavallera suggests that the author of Pseudo-Eusebius' letter differed from the author of the other two, suggesting that Pseudo-Eusebius' letter was composed earlier, in the twelfth century.¹⁷⁶ Francesco Lanzoni, in his analysis of the three letters, asserts that all three were produced in the same period, associating the author of these letters with the author of the text of the *Translatio* composed after the 1280s.¹⁷⁷ Given the similarities and the influence of the Italian vernacular of the thirteenth century that can be detected in the language, he identifies the author as Italian, forming the hypothesis that it could have been produced in the Dominican circle connected to Santa Maria Maggiore.¹⁷⁸ Eugene Rice agrees with Lanzoni on the dating, and provides an additional argument for why the production of the letters cannot be placed earlier. The letter by Pseudo-Eusebius indirectly quotes a passage from the decision of Pope Boniface VII, ordering the celebration of four church doctors *sub duplici solemnitate*.¹⁷⁹ For this reason, the *terminus post quem* for the production of the letter is the year 1295.

¹⁷³ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 218-219. The similarities between the two texts consist of some common motifs, such as the appearance of Jerome in a dream followed by a bright light, singing, and evaporating scents.

¹⁷⁴ See more: Ivić, "'Recubo Praesepis Ad Antrum'."

¹⁷⁵ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 219.

¹⁷⁶ Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme*, 56–63.

¹⁷⁷ Francesco Lanzoni, "La leggenda di S.Girolamo," in *Miscellanea geronimiana. Scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920), 38. The text of *Translatio* describes the event of translation of Jerome's bodily remains from Bethlehem to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. According to the legend connected with the church, in 1283 a monk had a vision of Jerome, in which the saint expressed his wish to be moved to the Roman church. The text of the event was written down in the 1290s.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 218; *PL* 22, 240–41.

The content of the letters enriched Jerome's life at large, and in its content, we see the foundations of the late medieval and Renaissance cult of Saint Jerome. Eusebius of Cremona (d. 423), one of Jerome's disciples and his successor in the apostolic mission to Bethlehem, in a letter known as *Epistola beati Eusebii de morte gloriosissimi Hieronymi doctoris eximii* and addressed to Damasus, Bishop of Porto, and Theodosius, Roman senator, describes Jerome's last moments and death.¹⁸⁰ Eusebius met Jerome while working as a secretary for Pope Damasus, and due to their close friendship, he followed Jerome to Bethlehem, together with Paula and her daughter Eustochium, where they all established a monastery and a hostel for pilgrims. The forger chose one of the closest associates of Jerome and a successor of his apostolic life, Eusebius, as the author of the letter. His alleged authorship gave credulity to the piece. The most significant contribution of this letter, written to inform the addressees of Jerome's death, is in the description of Jerome's last moments, not found in other hagiographic material. Eusebius reports that Jerome's death happened on the 30th of September of the year 420.¹⁸¹

The description narrates that Jerome, when he felt that the moment of his reunion with Christ was coming closer, invited his fellow monks to join him while professing Christ and taking the Communion. Even on his death bed, he used the opportunity to instruct the monks on the proper way of monastic living, condemning unworthy priests and those Christians who were participating in the eucharist despite living a sinful life of infamy and lust. Eusebius describes the moment as full of God's presence, illuminated by a bright light, followed by visions of the host of angels and a voice from heaven, which invited Jerome to ascend. Furthermore, he mentions how at the same moment, in Jerusalem, Cyril had a vision of angels welcoming Jerome in heaven.¹⁸²

The second letter by Saint Augustine of Hippo to Cyril of Jerusalem, *Epistola sancii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi ad Cyrillum Jerosolymitanum episcopum de magnificentiis beati Hieronymi*, informs Cyril about his vision of Jerome's soul.¹⁸³ When Augustine had sat at his desk in Hippo, to write and answer Jerome on the question of the state of souls after death, and how the souls of saints

¹⁸⁰ *BHL* 3867; *PL* 22:239. The letter is also known under these titles: *Epistola de morte Hieronymi*, *Epistola ad Damasium episcopum de morte gloriosissimi Hieronymi*, *Epistola del transito di S. Hieronymo*, *De morte Hieronymi* or *Transitus diui Hieronymi per Eusebium Cremonensem eiusdem Hieronymi discipulum sanctissimum editus incipit*. Daniel Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 157; For a detailed analysis see: Rita Lizzi Testa, "The Ascetic Portrayed: Jerome and Eusebius of Cremona in the Italian Art and Culture of the Renaissance," in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (Leuven; Paris; Dudley: Peeters, 2007), 303–40.

¹⁸¹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 30. The author of *Hieronymus noster* includes a brief account on Jerome's last days saying that he was so sick that he used a rope above his bed to lift himself up.

¹⁸² Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 6; Lizzi Testa, "The Ascetic Portrayed," 306.

¹⁸³ *BHL* 3867; Migne, *PL* 22:282–89. The letter can be found also under the title: *Epistola de magnificentiis Hieronymi ad Cyrillum*. A more detailed description can be found in: Lizzi Testa, "The Ascetic Portrayed," 317.

enjoy God’s glory, a mysterious ray of light, followed by an intense fragrance, appeared in front of him. It was Jerome’s soul that informed Augustine of his death and proclaimed “its way to the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁸⁴

The second vision of Augustine, four days later, had a considerable influence on the formation of Jerome’s iconography. In a dream, he saw two men accompanied by the host of angels—Saint John the Baptist and Saint Jerome. The Forerunner was crowned with a triple diadem for his martyrdom in blood, while Jerome only had a double, for his spiritual martyrdom. Regardless of that, John the Baptist emphasized their equality in the pious life they led, and in the glory they are both enjoying after death: “What I can do, he can do; what I will, he will; and in the same way that I see God, he too sees, knows and understands God, and in this consists all our glory and happiness and that of all the saints.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, he encouraged Augustine to write the praises of Jerome.¹⁸⁶ For this reason, the pairing of the two saints became common in artworks.

The last letter, *Epistola de miraculis Hieronymi*, contains the answer of Cyril to Augustine, and it brings a novelty—Jerome’s miracles that he did during his lifetime, as well as on his death bed and after his death.¹⁸⁷ Cyril also reports what he saw at the moment of Jerome’s death—the ascent of his soul to heaven in the multitude of angels, with Christ on his right side. He reflects on Jerome’s wish to be buried in the bare ground at the entrance of the cave where Jesus was born, emphasizing his humility and modesty. Jerome’s sanctity is described similarly as in Augustine’s letter—a vision in which Saint Peter and angels accompany Jerome and John the Baptist.

The contribution of this letter is the large number of miracles that Jerome had performed, which were previously lacking in his *vitae*, besides the miracle of taming the lion. Similar to the general theme that runs through the letters, the question of *visio beatifica* is supported by Jerome’s authority even in the miracles. Cyril reports how after Jerome’s death, a heresy that the souls of the blessed do not meet Christ until Judgement Day had spread in the East. The legend also describes Cyril’s vision of Jerome, in which Jerome appeared to Cyril to inform him that the heresy ceased. Pseudo-Cyril’s letter informs us that Eusebius of Cremona had brought three men back to life by

¹⁸⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 51-52. The same day, Sulpicius Severus and three companions had a similar vision of light and a voice glorifying Jerome and announcing that the King of kings is escorting him into the kingdom of heaven and that the angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, disciples, martyrs, confessors, holy virgins, and the Blessed Virgin Mary were festively preparing to celebrate the arrival of their “fellow citizen”.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 52; *PL* 22, 287–88.

¹⁸⁶ Lizzi Testa, “The Ascetic Portrayed,” 324.

¹⁸⁷ *BHL* 3868; *PL* 22, 289–326. The letter can be found under these titles as well: *Liber cyrilli de miraculis diui Hieronymi ad beatum Augustinum*, *Epistola ad beatum Augustinum de miraculis Hieronymi*, *Responsio Cyrilli ad Augustinum de miraculis B. Hieronymi*.

placing Jerome's cloak over them. They had witnessed the pain of souls suffering in purgatory, joy in heaven, and torments of the souls in hell.¹⁸⁸

The importance of these letters is not only in bringing more details on Jerome's life and completing his *vita* but also in the fact that these letters constituted a constructive element of the cult in the later centuries, specifically in the fifteenth, when the manuscript copies were circulating Europe. Its broader influence on the formation of Jerome's image will be further discussed in this thesis through the chosen examples of devotional literature and artworks, which directly or indirectly quote the *Transitus*. Jerome's *vita* was known since Carolingian times. However, his cult was reserved for the close circles of educated ecclesiastics and monks who primarily appreciated his contributions to the translation of the Bible and the development of Christian theology.

The lack of miracles through which devotees could identify with the saint left his saintly figure out of popular devotion, until the dissemination of the pseudo-letters. The text of the *Transitus* offered a full narrative on Jerome's life, describing his miracles, and serving as a sort of prayer book honoring the saint and offering the model how to live a pious life of imitation of the Christ by following the example of Jerome. Importantly, *Transitus* offered a written narrative whose most relevant parts were translated into the visual language of diverse artistic representations of the saint.¹⁸⁹

The letters spread with their inclusion in the major works of the fourteenth-century hagiography concerning Jerome, starting with *Hieronymianus liber* (c.1336–1342), Giovanni d'Andrea's continuing with Pietro Calò who incorporated them into Jerome's legend in his *Legenda de Sanctis* (before 1340), and finally with Petrus de Natalibus who included them in his *Catalogus Sanctorum* (1372). Through these transcriptions, the content of *Transitus* circulated in Europe, promoting Jerome's cult through new material, primarily miracles. The wide circulation of these texts can be seen by the fact that scholars have identified over 400 manuscript copies containing the letters, in complete form or in parts.¹⁹⁰

With the invention of the printing business the devotional literature became easily accessible to the wider literate audience. In Venice alone, the center of the publishing during the period, *Transitus* had 14 editions between 1475 and 1498, out of which 12 were in the vernacular.

¹⁸⁸ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 59, 224. Pseudo-Cyril's letter informs us that the Eusebius of Cremona brought three men back to life by placing Jerome's cloak over them. They witnessed the pain of souls suffering in purgatory, joy in heaven, and torment of the souls in hell. This account is important for the separation of the Greek heretics, who believed that souls do not experience the *visio beatifica* until the Last Judgement.

¹⁸⁹ See pp. 70-75, 153-154.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 219.

The vernacular versions truly witness the popularity of the saint, showing that even those who could not read Latin, wanted to possess a copy of this work in their libraries, regardless of being laics or clerics.¹⁹¹ However, the early printed books were of religious nature, so we should also consider the vernacular editions as sort of manuals for preachers who drew material about Jerome from it for their sermons on the saint.

Senj Transitus

The Croatian edition of *Transitus* published in 1508 should be observed in the context of the growing popularity of the saint and the subsequent popularity of the devotional literature, reflected in the numerous transcriptions of and translations into the vernaculars of Europe. Silvestar Bedričić translated the popular Italian incunable *Transito de Sancto Girolamo* (Venice, 1487) into the Croatian vernacular and prepared it for printing in Glagolitic script in the printing workshop of the master Grgur of Senj (Grgur Senjanin).¹⁹² In the historiography, it is known as *Senjski transit* (Senj Transitus) after the place of publishing, Senj, territorially in the Kingdom of Croatia. What makes this edition unique is that unlike other Glagolitic books printed in the Croatian redaction of the Church Slavonic language, this one was written in the Chakavian dialect, a vernacular language, which the editors of the *Senj Transitus* describe as the Croatian language.¹⁹³ Since this edition was based on the translation of Italian incunabula, it follows the already established form respected in the printed editions, comprising a short *vita*, a list of Jerome's miracles, three pseudo-letters, and the hymns in the saint's honor, with variations in the editions.¹⁹⁴

The transcriptions of the *Transitus* had been circulating the territory of the Eastern Adriatic Coast long before the printed edition. The Glagolitic *Ivančevićev zbornik* (Ivančević Miscellany), written at the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, contains a transcription of Pseudo-Augustine's letter to Cyril and the letter of Pseudo-Cyril to Augustine, while Pseudo-Eusebius's letter is found among the Glagolitic fragments in the Croatian Academy of Arts and

¹⁹¹ David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, eds., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting* (Washington; Vienna: National Gallery of Art; Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), 132. In Florence, in 1490 Francesco Bonnacorsi published the Tuscan edition under the title *Divoto transito di sancto Hieronymo (ridocto in lingua fiorentina)*.

¹⁹² Nazor, "Senjski transit," 251. The translation of *Senj Transitus* was based on the edition *Transito de s. Girolamo* (Venezia: Annibale de Foxio da Parma, 1. VI. 1487). Today, ten incomplete copies of the *Senj Transitus* are preserved. Four are kept in Zagreb at the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Of the remaining copies, two are preserved at the National Library in Saint Petersburg, and one copy each at the National Library in Prague, Košljun, Vrbnik, and one in a private collection.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁹⁴ Badurina Stipčević, "Legenda o svetom Jeronimu u hrvatskoglagojskom Petrisovu zborniku (1468.)," 340.

Sciences.¹⁹⁵ Still, the texts in the printed edition, and those in the manuscript edition, do not belong to the same redaction. The translation of the Glagolitic fragments was based on the Latin copy of the letters, while *Senj Transitus* is a direct translation of Italian incunabula.¹⁹⁶

In addition to being written in vernacular, the *Senj Transitus* has another unique feature. At the end of the book, there is an additional double-rhymed hexameter poem in Glagolitic letters, *Anjelske kriposti* (Angelic virtues), written in honor of Saint Jerome. The poem narrates events from the life of Saint Jerome with an emphasis on the episode with the lion, while it does not mention his death and miracles, which are the main subject in the *Transitus*. Based on this and other linguistic differences, Anica Nazor concludes that the author of the hymn and the translator of the text were two different persons.¹⁹⁷

Since these verses could not be found in any other edition, Latin or Italian, they represent an original Croatian contribution to the devotional literature of Saint Jerome. This poem exists in Latin transcription in a few versions. The earliest is in the *Codex Dalmatico-Laurenziano* known also as the *Florentine Codex* (Firentinski zbornik) from the Laurenziana Library in Florence, written at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹⁹⁸ Another version is a part of the *Miscellany Codex* held at the Franciscan library in Dubrovnik, where the poem is published in a shorter version and under a different title *Versi od svetoga Hierolima* (Verses of Saint Jerome).¹⁹⁹ I am discussing this hymn in more detail in the chapter 8.

The edition from Senj bears witness not only to the popularity of the saint in Croatian lands but also to the adoption of the popular expressions of the cult, which first emerged in Italy with its translation into the language comprehensible not only to ecclesiastical circles but also other educated individuals. The reasons for the *Transitus* having been chosen as the first non-liturgical book in the vernacular to be printed also lie in the context of the time and the above-mentioned establishment of the vernacular language in the sphere of public life and literacy of the period. The culmination of the vernacular, though written in Latin script, occurred in the sixteenth century, when Marko Marulić

¹⁹⁵ Štefanić, “Glagoljski transit,” 106.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁹⁷ Nazor, “Senjski transit,” 218.

¹⁹⁸ Franjo Švelec, “Autor dvanaesteračke legende o svetom Jeronimu” [The Author of the hexameter legend of Saint Jerome], in *Ivšičev zbornik* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filološko društvo, 1963), 353–62; Nazor, “Senjski transit”; Anica Nazor, “Dvanaesteračka legenda o svetom Jeronimu” [Dodecasyllable legend of Saint Jerome], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskog instituta* 15–16 (1965): 214–24. Anica Nazor, “Još jedan latinički tekst legende o Svetom Jeronimu [Another Latin written text of a legend of Saint Jerome],” *Radovi. Razdio historije, arheologije i historije umjetnosti* 14, no. 6 (1975)

¹⁹⁹ Švelec, “Autor dvanaesteračke legende,” 222.

wrote the epic poem *Judita*, inspired by the Old Testament story of Judith, in Croatian vernacular and Latin script.

The infiltration and new appreciation of the vernacular among humanists and writers can also be seen in the first vernacular novel *Planine* (Mountains) written by Petar Zoranić in 1536. In the prologue, the author expresses his gratitude to the saint for teaching him how to write in his own language:

Indeed, I have written with considerable shame, because, as you know, I am in many unlucky worries that are distracting me from such a venture, and because the language we speak has been contaminated with Italian words; and if I had not been thought by the teachings of Blessed Jerome, I am afraid I would be writing with difficulty.²⁰⁰

From this passage it is evident that Zoranić accepted the ongoing attribution of the Glagolitic script to Jerome, referring to the abundant Glagolitic production that he was educated through, since the region of Zadar, where he was from, had been a strong Glagolitic center for centuries. The translation of the popular incunable shows that regardless of the centuries long veneration of Jerome, the Glagolitic tradition did not produce a diverse and original devotional literature to the saint, but it has been influenced with the imported and popular literature.

²⁰⁰ Zoranić and Grčić, *Planine*, 9. “Zaista sam pisao s nemalim stidom, jer, kako znate, u mnogim sam nevoljnim brigama koje sasvim odvrćaju od takva posla, i jer je jezik kojim općimo natrunjen talijanskim; i da me nije uvježbalo tumačenje blaženoga Jeronima, bojim se da bih pisao s mukom.”

3 THE PATRON OF THE FRANCISCAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA

*Mihi oppidum carcer est, et solitudo paradus,
quid desideramus urbium frequentiam,
qui de singularitate censemur?
(Jerome, Ep.125,8,1)²⁰¹*

(But to me, a town is a prison, and a solitude is a paradise.
Why do we [monks] long for the crowded cities,
We whose name speaks of loneliness?)

The Glagolitic veneration discussed in the previous chapter should be seen as the beginning of the institutionalization of Jerome's image in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The ongoing tradition of Jerome's regional origin nurtured within the Glagolitic tradition likewise contributed to the formation of other practices of veneration of Saint Jerome. In 1393, the new Franciscan province of Dalmatia, *Provincia Dalmatiae Sancti Hieronymi*, was formed, with Saint Jerome as its patron, at the general chapter of the Franciscan Order in Cologne. The records from this chapter have not survived, but the administrative reasons for such a reorganization are evident.

The newly-founded province was the legal successor of the former *Provincia Sclavoniae*. In 1228, Pope Gregory IX sent a bull to a convent in Zadar, informing the friars of Francis' sanctity, which leads us to conclude that the province, in the documents mentioned as *Provincia Sclavoniae* under the patronage of Saint Seraphinus, was established in the first decades of the thirteenth century.²⁰² Since there is no documented evidence concerning the beginnings of the province, the numbers of convents, or its internal administrative structure, we can only assume that the province already existed as an administrative unit inside the order.

The *Provincia Sclavoniae Sancti Seraphini* stretched across the Croatian historical lands, up to the Sava River and the border with the Hungarian Franciscan province, *Provincia Hungariae*

²⁰¹ Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), 91.

²⁰² Stanko Josip Škunca, *Povijesni pregled franjevačke provincije Sv. Jeronima u Dalmaciji i Istri* [A historical overview of the Franciscan province of St. Jerome in Dalmatia and Istria] (Pula: Zadar: Provincijalat Franjevačke provincije sv. Jeronima u Dalmaciji i Istri, 2006), 23,40.

Sanctae Mariae. The size of province represented an organizational problem due to the growing number of convents and the vast territory it controlled. For this reason, in 1393, a fraction of the province was formed into the new province of Dalmatia, which had jurisdiction over the convents in the southern part of the territory. However, the rest of the territory was divided between the Hungarian province and the Bosnian Vicary, *Vicaria Bosnae S. Crucis*. The new Dalmatian province inherited all the rights and privileges of the former *Province Sclavonia*, but its territory was reduced to a narrow belt along the coast stretching from Trieste to Durazzo.

From that moment on, it is possible to discern the veneration of Jerome by the Dalmatian Franciscans in both visual and written production, which reflects his distinguished position in Dalmatia. Despite the importance of Jerome's saintly figure as the symbolic representation of the Dalmatian province, no research examines the expressions of devotion to Jerome inside the province. Those scholars who have discussed the evolution of Jerome's cult among the Franciscans, have only done so at the margins of other research.²⁰³ Besides the generally low interest in Jeronimian topics in Croatian historiography over the past few decades, the difficulty in such research lies largely in the many under-researched segments of Franciscan history and heritage in Dalmatia.

The reason for the paucity of studies lies primarily relates in the difficulties inherent to researching the development and dissemination of the Franciscan Observant reform movement during the fifteenth century, which had a strong political undertone through which the interests of the Papacy, Kingdom of Hungary, Venetian Republic, and the Republic of Ragusa were promoted as well. Such an undefined and complex context, yet to be researched, presents a challenge for further exploration of important research questions regarding the evolution of Jerome's cult in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The question which will have to be discussed in more detail in future research is the position promotion of Jerome's cult in that process and the possible political symbolism his image contained.²⁰⁴ The more in-depth research of the internal organization of the province, especially

²⁰³ Donato Fabianich, *Storia dei frati minori dai primordi della loro istituzione in Dalmazia e Bossina fino al giorni nostri* (Tip. Fratelli Battara, 1863); Stanko Josip Škunca, *Franjevačka renesansa u Dalmaciji i Istri: opservantska obnova i samostani Provincije Sv. Jeronima u 15. st.* [Franciscan Renaissance in Dalmatia and Istria: Observant reform and the monasteries of the Province of Saint Jerome] (Split: Franjevačka Provincija Sv. Jeronima u Dalmaciji i Istri, 1999); Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*; Dominik Mandić, *Franjevačka Bosna: Razvoj i uprava Bosanske vikarije i provincije, 1340-1735* [Franciscan Bosnia: development and administration of the Bosnian Vicariate and Province, 1340-1735] (Rim: Hrvatski povijesni institut, 1968); Zrinka Pešorda, "Prilog povijesti franjevaca u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku" [Contribution to the history of the Franciscans in Medieval Dubrovnik], *Croatica Christiana periodica* 24, no. 45 (2000): 29–57.

²⁰⁴ During the last few decades of the fourteenth century, the question of the observance of the rule started to be debated among members of the religious order. Those who propagated the changes asked for the return to the teachings of the

regarding the question of the division between the observant and conventual friars, will allow researchers to more firmly establish the position of Dalmatian Franciscan in the overall evolution of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia.

Regardless of the voids in the present state of scholarship which do not allow us to portray the position of Jerome among Dalmatian Franciscans adequately, this chapter presents the analysis and arguments necessary for understanding the development of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, when his cult became omnipresent along the coast. Unlike the Glagolitic tradition, the Franciscan appropriation of Jerome brought his cult to the urban centers. The mendicant orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans were the critical force in the formation of urban spirituality, especially during the fifteenth century, when the observant reform movement was quickly spreading across Europe. The urban aspect of the mendicant orders often relied on endowments given by local families, who e built their private chapels in mendicant churches and helped financially to commission artworks and other necessary liturgical equipment.

Among the artworks of the Dalmatian provenance that represent Jerome, the most numerous are those that were commissioned for the Franciscan monasteries and churches. In the last decades, the Franciscan heritage of Croatia has gained more attention with two exhibitions of Observant and Conventual heritage, which revalorized their artistic production in the region and were followed by catalog publications.²⁰⁵ In them, Jerome's role as patron of the province is emphasized several times, but without the elaboration of the choice of him as a patron and the place he had among the community of friars together with possible particular liturgical celebrations.

The iconography of the saint, mostly representing Jerome as a cardinal with a model of a church in his hand, has been very often misunderstood as a regional Dalmatian particularity, due to

founder of the order. Inside the Franciscan Order, the movement took strong root around 1400, and it spread rapidly across Europe. Famous preachers like John of Capistrano and Bernardino of Siena promoted the new ideals. During the fifteenth century, the movement strongly influenced a change in the political and religious atmosphere and artistic and cultural production due to its connection with humanism. See more: Duncan B. Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order: From Saint Francis to the Foundation of the Capuchins* (Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1987). James D. Mixson, "Religious Life and Observant Reform in the Fifteenth Century," *History Compass* 11, no. 3 (2013): 201–14; James Mixson and Bert Roest, eds., *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015).

²⁰⁵ The re-valorization of the Franciscan heritage in Croatia occurred with two relevant publications that observed the artistic heritage of Franciscans, Observants, and Conventuals, with accompanying texts that contextualized production through the centuries: Igor Fisković, ed., *Milost Susreta: Umjetnička baština franjevačke provincije Sv. Jeronima* [The grace of the encounter: Artistic heritage of the Franciscan province of the Saint Jerome] (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 2010); Ljudevit Maračić and Milan Pelc, eds., *Veličina malenih: Povijest i kulturna baština hrvatske provincije Sv. Jeronima franjevac konventualaca* [The Greatness of the small: The history and the cultural heritage of the Croatian conventual Province of Saint Jerome] (Zagreb: Hrvatska provincija sv. Jeronima franjevac konventualaca; Institut zapovijest umjetnosti, 2010).

its frequent depiction in artworks of Franciscan provenance. This chapter does not have the aim of examining these questions in-depth, first, because of the limits of this thesis, and, second, because of the complexity of the questions, which deserve to be examined in a separate study. The prevalence of visual representations, the importance of the saint, and the written sources in Franciscan libraries and archives present firm ground for a future comprehensive study on the position of Jerome among the Dalmatian Franciscans.

Starting with select examples of visual production of Franciscan provenance preserved today in the museum collections of Dalmatian convents, this chapter studies the occurrence of the image of Saint Jerome from cultural, artistic, theological, and political viewpoints, in order to describe the role of the saint in the different contexts of Franciscan history. For the main discussion of the thesis—the adoption of the manifestations of Jerome’s cult in Italy and its subsequent adaptations in Dalmatia during the period to reflect his Dalmatian origin—the Franciscan affiliation with Jerome is presented here in the first place to understand how widespread his saintly figure was, and in which way the idea of his regional origin was nurtured in the institutionalized form as the patron of the Dalmatian province.

However, to understand the complex process of building the image of Jerome as a Dalmatian, in the written and moreover in the visual production supported by the rising humanist veneration, it is necessary to determine how Jerome is presented in these artworks and whether it is possible to establish the presence of specific iconographic types which reflected his position as the patron saint of the province.

Regardless of the importance of Jerome as the patron saint of the Franciscan province of Dalmatia, his veneration among the friars should not be observed as an isolated phenomenon and restricted only to the monastic cloisters. The immersion of the Franciscan friars in the urban life and their close connections with the patrician families who endowed their churches and whose members very often held the office of proctor for the monasteries, underlines the direct communication between the bearers of the dominant streams of the veneration of Jerome in Dalmatia—the Franciscans and the local humanist circles consisting primarily of the rich, educated and influential members of patrician families.²⁰⁶ As I discuss in the chapter on the development of private devotion, the earliest

²⁰⁶ For some examples of the close connections between the local aristocrats and the Franciscan order, consult: Zoran Ladić, “Oporučni legati pro anima i ad pias causas u europskoj historiografiji. Usporedba s oporukama dalmatinskih komuna” [Legacies pro anima and ad pias causas in European historiography. Comparison with the wills from Dalmatian communes], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije*

examples of personal endowments to Jerome are found in the Franciscan *milieu*. This is not surprising, not only because of the mentioned connection between the friars and private endowments but also due to the importance Jerome had within the Franciscan order in general, through whose monastic networks the new devotional trends were adopted in Dalmatia.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will discuss three main research questions, focusing on the elements of the adoption of the expressions of the cult emerging in Italy. Why was Saint Jerome chosen as the patron saint of the province? Was this denomination only conditioned by the local friars who wanted to honor their compatriot or were external factors also contributing to it? How and why Jerome was adopted among the saints specially venerated by Franciscans?

I will look at the general position and popularity of Jerome inside the Franciscan Order as the external impetus behind the new denomination of the province, proposing that it could have happened on the initiative of local friars, as much as it could have been proposed at the general chapter of the Franciscan Order in Cologne. Starting from an analysis of the selected artistic commissions and production of Franciscan provenance, focusing on the presence of Saint Jerome, this chapter will observe two main questions regarding artistic production. First, can we read a symbolic meaning behind Jerome's image during the implementation of the Observant reform in the Province of Dalmatia? Second, taking into consideration the prevalence of the iconographic type "Saint Jerome as a Cardinal" with the model of the church in Franciscan commissions, can this unique iconographic type be understood as an expression of Jerome's special status in the Dalmatian province and his local particularity? By employing a comparative methodological approach between Dalmatian and Italian artistic production of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, and not solely of Franciscan origin, this chapter presents the adoption of this iconographic type as the initial step in the dynamic process of the formation of Jerome's image as Dalmatian.

znanosti i umjetnosti 17 (1999): 17–29; Zoran Ladić, "Legati kasnosrednjovjekovnih dalmatinskih oporučitelja kao izvor za proučavanje nekih vidova svakodnevnog života i materijalne culture" [Bequests of late medieval Dalmatian testators as a source for study of some aspects of everyday life and material culture] *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 21 (2003): 1–28; Branka Grbavac, "Oporučni legati Zadrana i Trogirana bosanskim franjevcima u doba Tvrtka I." [Legacies of citizens of Zadar and Trogir to the Bosnian Franciscans during the rule of Tvrtko I.] in *Bosanski Ban Tvrtko "Pod Prozorom u Rami,"* ed. Tomislav Brković (Prozor – Sarajevo – Zagreb: Synopsis, 2016), 137–61; Sanja Miljan, "Ekonomska aktivnost franjevacu u Zadru u 14. stoljeću" [The economic activity of the Franciscans in Zadar in the fourteenth century] *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 35 (2017): 27–46,

3.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRANCISCAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA

The new administrative organization established at the chapter in Cologne in 1393 was not put into effect for the next five years. Since the documentation from the chapter has not survived, we can only assume the reasons for the decision and the long delay of its confirmation. These reasons could be found in the disturbances within the papacy caused by the Western Schism, but it is more likely that the delay in the confirmation happened because of dissatisfaction with the new division of jurisdiction, present both in the Bosnian Vicary and the new Province of Dalmatia.

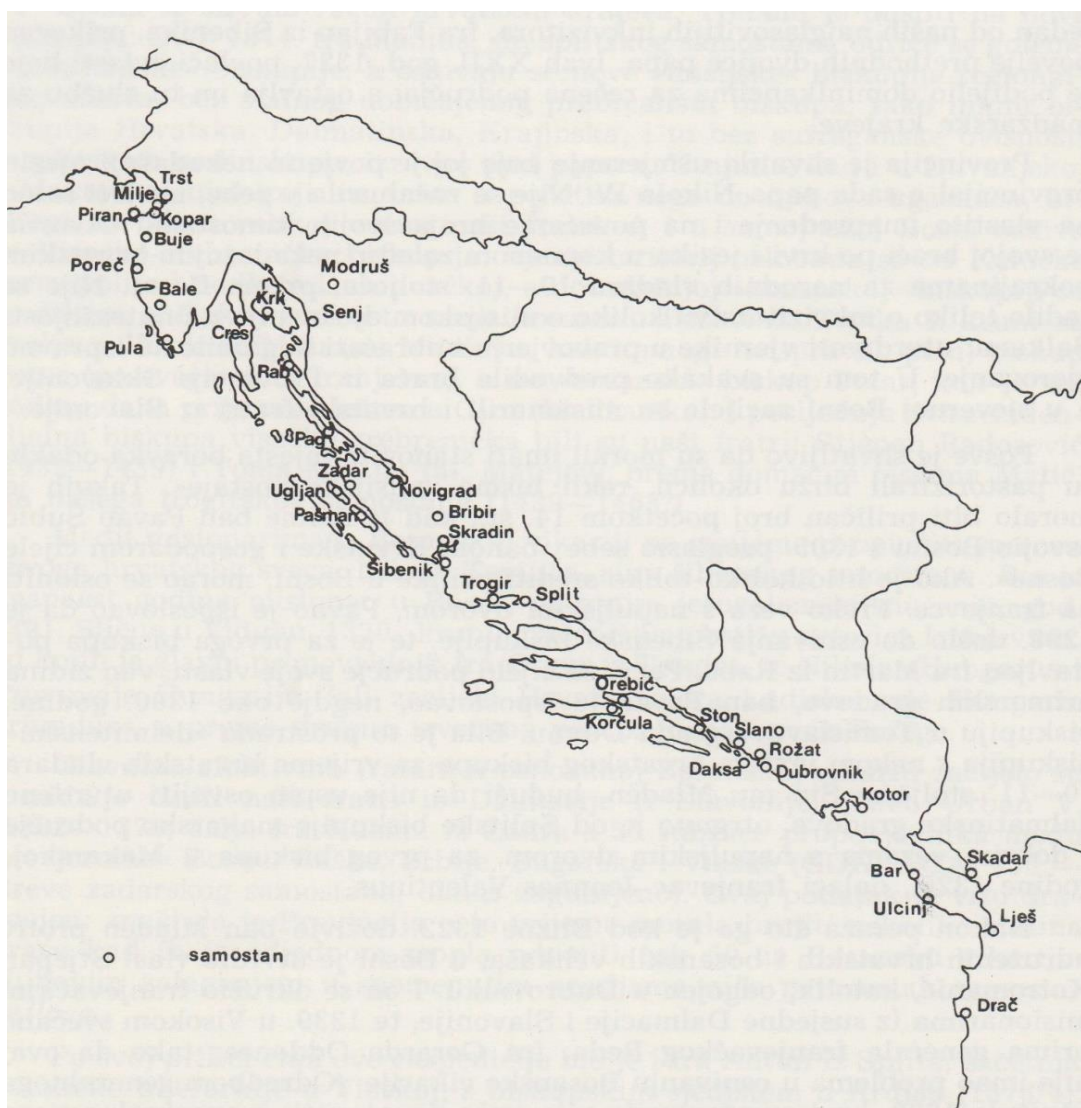


Figure 4 Map of Provincia Sclavonia. Source: Ljudevit Maračić (ed.), *Hrvatska provincija*, 17.

The Jurisdiction Problems

The Bosnian Vicary, an autonomous territorial unit formed in 1340 under direct papal supervision, enjoyed a special status compared to other Franciscan provinces. Due to the rising heretical and dualistic beliefs in the territory of Bosnia, within the Bosnian Church, and the wish of the Hungarian king to restrict these influences, a vicary in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Province of Sclavonia was founded.²⁰⁷

Initially, it was served by friars from other provinces, whose goal was to preach against the disbeliefs within the Bosnian Church.²⁰⁸ Problems with the new jurisdiction arose very soon after its establishment. The Bosnian Vicary, due to its level of autonomy, received the right to establish convents even outside of the territory under its jurisdiction, including the regions of Dalmatia and Slavonia, where the economic situation was better and the political situation was more stable. This was the case, for example with the convent in Ston, on the Pelješac peninsula, in 1344.²⁰⁹ This, while at the same time, of the establishment of the Vicary, the territory of the Kingdom of Bosnia was under the formal jurisdiction of the Province of Sclavonia.²¹⁰

The existence of two Franciscan administrative units in the same territory caused problems in the juridical sense. Thus, it is understandable that the prolonged quarrels and the problems between the friars culminated in a debate at the general chapter. The questions of pastoral care and the apostolic mission had to be solved at the general chapter in Cologne, where Nicholas of Zadar advocated the rights of the Province of Sclavonia, while Bartholomew of Alverna eagerly defended the interests of the Vicary.

It seems that the decision of the chapter, which agreed to solve these problems with the dissolution of the territorial unit of the Province of Sclavonia, and its division into the Bosnian Vicary,

²⁰⁷ Although the establishment of the Bosnian Vicary and its existence were largely marked by Observant activities, Žugaj showed that the Franciscan presence on the Bosnian territory was earlier, which once more stresses a need for further research into the relations between the Dalmatian and Bosnian friars, and the question on the early emergence of the observant fluctuations within the province. Furthermore, since this early apostolic mission on the territory of Bosnia was conducted by Conventual Franciscans from the province of Sclavonia. See: Marijan Žugaj, “Bosanska vikarija i franjevci konventualci [Bosnian vicary and Franciscan conventuals],” *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 13, no. 24 (1989): 1–26.

²⁰⁸ Mandić, *Franjevačka Bosna*; Paweł Cholewicki, “The Role of the Franciscans in the Kingdom of Bosnia during the Reign of King Stjepan Tomaš (1443-1461),” *CEU Annual of Medieval Studies* 25 (2019): 107–20. The Bosnian Vicary (lat. *Vicaria Bosnae S. Crucis*), was established in 1340, marking the long Franciscan presence in the territory of Bosnia and their apostolic activity against the heresy of the Bosnian Church. The Vicary was under the direct supervision of the Minister General of the Order and was served by the Franciscans from the other provinces, mainly Italians, Hungarians, and Dalmatians. Understandably, the latter were among the most common for their knowledge of the language in which they could preach to the new converts.

²⁰⁹ Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 39.

²¹⁰ Maračić and Pelc, *Veličina Malenih*, 14.

Hungarian Province, and the newly established Dalmatian Province of Saint Jerome, was not a solution with which everyone was satisfied. This was especially true for the Dalmatian friars, as now their province was limited only to a narrow belt by the sea. The problem was solved, even though only partially, with the apostolic bull *Apostolicae sedis circumspecta*, issued by Pope Boniface IX in 1398.²¹¹ With it, the pope granted the Province of Dalmatia all the rights and privileges of the former Province of Sclavonia as its legal successor.

In the bull, the reasons for the renaming of the province and changes made to its borders are cited as understandable (*ob nonullas causas rationabiles*), without providing an elaborated explanation or describing the problem explicitly.²¹² In the letter, the appearance of the new provincial seal is also set out, demanding that the former seal depicting Saint Seraph be replaced by the depiction of Saint Jerome.²¹³

Today, the silver matrix of the pointed oval seal prepared for the provincial minister is kept in the British Museum in London (Fig.5).²¹⁴ The scene inside the architectural Gothic canopy represents Jerome dressed in a cardinal's robe, seated at a table with books to the right of him, and a lion in front of him. Below, a kneeling Franciscan is portrayed. The entire scene on the seal is framed with the ongoing inscription: S. MINISTRI: PVINCIE DALMATIE. ORDIS. FRM. MINOR.²¹⁵ The iconography follows the iconographic type "Saint Jerome in his Study" popular in the second half of the fourteenth century, representing the saint as a cardinal in his study, with the addition of the lion.



Figure 5 Seal-matrix of Minister of the Franciscan Province of Dalmatia, late 14th century (6cm x 3.85 cm) The British Museum, London. Source: The British Museum (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1568781001>) ©The Trustees of the British Museum (Accessed 20 June 2020)

²¹¹ Fabianich, *Storia dei frati minori*, 150,432; Željko Tolić, "Franjevci u našim krajevima u 13. stoljeću" [Franciscans in our regions in the 13th century], *Služba Božja* 56, no. 3–4 (2015): 260. [...] *quod Provincia Sclavoniae iuxta morem dicti ordinis de coetero Provincia Dalmatiae nuncuparetur, ac priores et alii fratres dicti ordinis, qui sigillo seu sculptura aut imagine Seraphin in illa Provincia utebantur, ex tunc sigillo seu sculptura aut imagine sancti Hieronymi uterentur, ut omnibus privilegiis et indulgentiis quibus sub huiusmodi Provincia Sclavoniae utuntur sub Provincia Dalmatiae praedicta uti gaudere valeant, concedere de benignitate apostolica digneremur*", BF, VII, p. 82.

²¹² Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 40.

²¹³ Fabianich, *Storia dei frati minori*, 150; Tolić, "Franjevci u našim krajevima," 260. [...] *qui sigillo seu sculptura aut imagine Seraphin in illa Provincia utebantur, ex tunc sigillo seu sculptura aut imagine sancti Hieronymi uterentur.*

²¹⁴ Donal Cooper, "Gothic Art and the Friars in Late Medieval Croatia 1213-1460," in *Croatia: Aspects of Art, Architecture and Cultural Heritage*, ed. John Julian Norwich (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009), 77.

²¹⁵ *Seal-Impression / Seal of Franciscan Province of Dalmatia*, Late 14th century, The British Museum, https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=46103&partId=1&searchText=medieval+books&page=1.

The lion became one of the most recognizable attributes of the saint, based on his *vita*, from the already-mentioned *Plerosque nimirum* written in the Carolingian period, which narrates how Jerome befriended a lion in the monastery he stayed at in Bethlehem and took care of him by picking a thorn out of his paw.

Despite the continuation of the province in the legal sense, an important change did occur; even though the new *Provincia Sancti Hieronymi* was the legal successor of the *Provincia Sancti Seraphini*, its territory was narrowed significantly. While it could seem that the problems of jurisdiction were solved with the papal decision, the quarrels that started during the fourteenth century only intensified during the fifteenth century with the dissemination of the Observant movement and foundation of convents of the Bosnian Vicary in the territory belonging to the Province of Dalmatia.

Question of the name

Even though the Province of Dalmatia succeeded the former Province of Sclavonia in legal terms, although with significantly less territory, it is unclear why it changed its patron saint and its name from *Sanctus Seraphinus* to *Sanctus Hieronymus*. Furthermore, it is not clear who exactly *Sanctus Seraphinus* was in the *communio sanctorum*. In the Croatian historiography, the question of the denomination is not completely clear since no one has yet paid enough attention to this problem. Atanazije J. Matanić informs us that some scholars have argued that it refers to the seraph itself, while others emphasized the symbolic connection with Saint Francis, who by receiving the wounds of Christ embedded in the wings of a seraph on Mount La Verna becomes a wounded seraph himself.²¹⁶

However, to those familiar with Franciscan iconography and theology, the image of the saintly seraph represents Saint Francis, who, in the act of stigmatization, received the wounds from Christ himself embedded in the figure of a seraph. Through this act he becomes Christ-like, just like the seraph from which he received the wounds of the living Christ; he becomes *alter Christus*. Saint Bonaventure, the most important theologian of the early days of the order who discussed the concept of Francis as the angelic saint, identified Francis with the sixth angel of the Apocalypse, who is to bear the “the sign of the living God,” that is, the wounds of Christ.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Atanazije J. Matanić, “Od ‘provincije Sklavonije’ sv. Serafina do ‘provincije Dalmacije’ sv. Jeronima god. 1393.” [From the ‘Province of Sclavonia’ of Saint Seraphinus to the ‘Province of Dalmatia’], in *Pod zaštitom svetog Jeronima*, ed. Igor Fisković and Josip Sopta (Dubrovnik: Provincijalat Franjevačke provincije sv. Jeronima u Dalmaciji i Istri, 1999), 25.

²¹⁷ Brian Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility, 1150-1350: A Study on the Concepts of Infallibility, Sovereignty and Tradition in the Middle Ages, Studies in the History of Christian Thought* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1988), 78–80; David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 144.

Furthermore, he describes Francis' burning love for Christ with the image of the seraph, which, in its essence, is an angel that burns out of love for Christ.²¹⁸ In the identification of Sanctus Seraphinus with Saint Francis lies the possible reason for the change of the name of the province, since it was rather unusual to have two provinces named after the same saint. Furthermore, it was unusual because the province of Tuscany and Umbria, to which Assisi belonged, was the only one that had the right to be named after the founder of the order.²¹⁹

The Local Legend

The initial denomination of the province to *Sanctus Seraphinus* could have come from the special connection of the Dalmatian convents with the founder of the order. Most of the convents founded early in Dalmatia nurture the legend of being founded by none other than Francis himself, during his journey to Holy Land, when due to the bad weather, he was forced to spend some time in Sclavonia.²²⁰ One such legend is reported by Donato Fabianich in his *Storia dei frati minori dai primordi della loro istituzione in Dalmazia e Bossina fino al giorni nostri* written in the nineteenth century. The local legend that he records narrates how Francis, while he was in Zadar, waiting for better weather to continue his journey to the Holy Land, visited the nuns in the Monastery of Saint Nicholas. There he performed a miracle by healing the sick abbess. As a sign of gratitude, the nuns donated a part of their lands for the establishment of a convent, near the church of Saint Jerome.²²¹

Another version of this legend mentions that prior to the before-mentioned miracle, he decided to pray in the church dedicated to Saint Jerome, in the vicinity of the Monastery of Saint Nicholas.²²² In the earlier sources, this legend is not to be found, but its significance here is obsolete. The significant element in the legend is the pairing of Saint Francis and Saint Jerome, which indicates the later invention of the legend, with the *terminus ante quem non* being the end of the fourteenth century and the change of the patron of the province. Likewise, the foundational link between the founder of

²¹⁸ Saint Bonaventure, *The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* (London: Aeterna Press, 2015). Chapter XiV *Of his sufferings and death*: "1. Francis, now crucified with Christ alike in flesh and in spirit, while glowing with seraphic love toward God, did also thirst, even as did Christ Crucified, for the multitudes of them that should be saved."

²¹⁹ See more about Francis' stigmatization: Chiara Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate. Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1995); Jacques Dalarun, *The Misadventure of Francis of Assisi: Toward a Historical Use of the Franciscan Legends* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, Franciscan Institute, 2002); Jacques Dalarun, *François d'Assise en questions* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2016).

²²⁰ Fisković, *Milost susreta*, 15. The Franciscan presence on the Eastern Adriatic Coast is traditionally associated with the early activities of Saint Francis himself. Francis visited the Dalmatian coast due to the unfortunate winds on his way to Holy Land. Mentioning only the province without specifying the town left much space for the legends of the foundation of Dalmatian Franciscan convents. According to the tradition, the convents in Zadar, Trogir, Pašman, Trsat, Zagreb, and Dubrovnik were founded by Francis.

²²¹ Fabianich, *Storia dei frati minori*, 16–17.

²²² Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 9.

the order and the patron saint of the province was emphasized. The chapel or church of Saint Jerome mentioned in the legend is of uncertain origin, and based on the archival sources, it is debatable if it existed before the fifteenth century. It is assumed that the chapel of Saint Jerome could have preceded the Renaissance chapel of the Detrico family, built around 1480, in the northwestern aisle of the nave.²²³

Based on the archival sources and the preserved expressions of the cult, it is not possible to discuss the systematic veneration of Jerome among the Franciscans before the second half of the fourteenth century. Regardless of the paucity of earlier surviving manifestations of the cult, a few examples witness that even before the change of the name of the province, Jerome was venerated among the Franciscans in Zadar, that is, the new denomination was just a confirmation of already established practice.

The First Expressions of the Cult

In 1375, Paolo, a son of Marco Giglardo, expressed a wish in his testament that in the event that all his heirs were to die, the proctors should make an altar in the chapterhouse of the convent of Saint Francis in Zadar and provide all the liturgical equipment for the altar which was to be consecrated to Saint Jerome.²²⁴ At the end of the fourteenth century, Ivan Germanov, in his testament composed in 1390, decided that above his tomb in the church, the images of Saint John the Baptist, Saint Francis, and Saint Jerome along with the Virgin Mary should be painted. Even though the document is partially damaged so that the name of the church is not clearly visible, judging by the iconography and the place of the burial of the donor, the frescoes should have been in the church of Saint Francis in Zadar.²²⁵

These two examples from Zadar show the presence of Jerome's cult within the Franciscan *milieu*, even before 1393 and the choice of Jerome as the patron of the province. There is an important difference between these two examples and the later commissions of altarpieces that decorated Franciscan churches. Though Jerome's image on the altarpieces of Franciscan churches clearly

²²³ Pavuša Vežić, "Sveti Frane u Zadru - arhitektura crkve i samostana u doba gotike i renesanse" [St Francis in Zadar: Architecture of the church and the monastery during the Gothic and Renaissance periods], *Ars Adriatica*, no. 8 (2018): 17, 28. Vežić informs that in the archives of the convent of Saint Francis in Zadar exists the information that in 1406 the chapel of Saint Jerome was connected with the church by three arches (*unita alla chiesa in figura di tre capelle*), although the other sources did not confirm the same assertion.

²²⁴ Emil Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo u Zadru*, 163.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 165. DAZd, ZV, Vannes Bernardi di Firmo, B II, F II, nr.1, fol 1. *Item voluit quod post mortem eius fiant supra eius seppulcrum et pingantur figure beate Marie Virginis, Sancti Iohannis Baptiste, Sancti Ieronimi et Sancti Francisci [...].*

conveys his role as the patron of the province, in these two examples, the choice of Jerome was conditioned by private devotion to the saint. Before the fifteenth century, it is not possible to discuss the systematic visual promotion of Jerome as the patron of the province.

The practice of founding private chapels and altars greatly increased during the *trecento*, where some of them were decorated by lavish fresco cycles by the most famous artists of the period, such as the Bardi Chapel, painted by Giotto around 1325, in the Florentine Franciscan church Santa Croce.²²⁶ In Florence, between 1402 and 1404, the chapel consecrated to Saint Jerome by the Del Pugliese family was adorned with frescoes by Gherardo Starnina, illustrating the *Life of Saint Jerome*.²²⁷ For this reason—and due to the archival sources, at least those currently published, as well as the preserved cultural heritage—we cannot claim that before the establishment of the Province of Dalmatia a vivid cult of Saint Jerome existed in the Province of Sclavonia that was systematically promoted by the Franciscans. It is only from the end of the fourteenth century that we can follow the adoption of Jerome’s cult within the province. The programmatic commission of artworks, including the representation of Saint Jerome as the patron of the province, is noticed only from the fifteenth century onwards.

In the scholarship, the choice of Saint Jerome as the patron of the province is often generally attributed only to his local origin. The internal factor in such a choice was an ongoing tradition that saw Jerome as Dalmatian. The external factor was the growing popularity of Jerome inside the Franciscan Order. Stanko Škunca hints at the possibility that the choice of Jerome was a wish of local friars who wanted to emphasize the connections between the two saints who were traditionally credited with the foundation of the province.²²⁸ While the origin of the legend is not known, here I would propose that the invention of the legend happened after the renaming of the province, to justify the choice of Jerome by connecting him to the foundation of the first convent on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, the one in Zadar, and through this, his connection to Saint Francis. The choice of Jerome as the patron saint of the province could have come about at the urging of both parties at the chapter in Cologne.

²²⁶ On the emergence of such practice see: Ena Giurescu Heller, *Trecento Family Chapels in Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce: Architecture, Patronage, and Competition* (New York: New York University, 1997); Joachim Poeschke, *Italian Frescoes, the Age of Giotto, 1280-1400* (New York; London: Abbeville Press, 2005).

²²⁷ Anneke De Vries, “Two Copies after Starnina’s Lost Frescoes in Santa Maria Del Carmine,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz* 43, no. 1 (1999): 189–99.

²²⁸ Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 40.

3.2 JEROME AND THE FRANCISCAN ORDER

The adoption of Jerome by the Franciscan Order occurred during the fourteenth century just as Jerome's popularity in the Latin Church overall was on the rise. Why was he adopted among the Franciscan saints? There are several for this. In the first place, there is the typological connection between Saint Jerome and Francis. In a sense, Jerome's renunciation of material goods and clerical privileges, followed by his voluntary exile to the Syrian desert and choice of solitude over Papal Rome, could be seen as the prefiguration of the acts and image of Saint Francis.²²⁹ This act of renouncing all privileges is present in Jerome's iconography, symbolized by his cardinal *galero* – red hat of office, usually thrown on the ground or hung on a tree.²³⁰ In the narrative depictions, we do not find the scene of Jerome leaving for the desert very often. One of the earliest cycles of Jerome's *vita* is found in the famous Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*, painted by the Limbourg brothers in 1408 to 1409 (Fig.6).²³¹ Among twelve illuminated pages is the scene of Jerome departing the city in a boat, dressed in the monastic habit, holding an open book in his hand, with the towering city and church prelates in the background. In the sequence of the scenes, this one (f.185r) is painted between the scene in which Jerome is ordained as cardinal (f.184) and the scene of Jerome taking the thorn out of the lion's paw (f.186).²³²

However, this scene is not placed in Rome, but in Constantinople and represents Jerome's departure for the Syrian desert, dressed in a monastic habit. In 1452, Benozzo Gozzoli (1420–1497) painted the frescoes in the chapel of Saint Jerome in the church of San Francesco in Montefalco together with the life of Saint Francis in the main chapel (Fig.7).²³³ In the chapel, only two scenes

²²⁹ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 238–44.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

²³¹ Meiss, "Scholarship and Penitence," 138; Timothy Husband, *The Art of Illumination: The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry* (New York: New Heaven: Metropolitan Museum of Art : New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). The miniatures narrate the life of Saint Jerome. Among the depicted scenes are: *Saint Jerome Studying Classical Philosophers* (f.183r), *Saint Jerome is Ordained as a Cardinal* (f.184r), *Saint Jerome in a Woman's Dress* (184v), *Saint Jerome Contemplates the Holy Sepulchre* (185v), *Saint Jerome is Tempted by Dancing Girls* (186r), *The Lion finds the Missing Ass* (187r), *Saint Jerome Translating the Bible* (f.187v), *The Sick Attending the Funeral of Saint Jerome* (189v). Based on the selected scenes and their sequence, the cycle was modeled upon the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine.

²³² Even though the *Legenda Aurea* only mentions his departure to Constantinople, Jerome left Rome twice. The first time, around 373, he went to Asia Minor, where he spent most of his time in Antioch and Northern Syria. During this journey, he mastered Greek and Hebrew and studied the scriptures in Constantinople with Gregory of Nazianzus. In 382, Jerome returned to Rome, where he worked on his translation and edition of the Bible. Soon after the death of Pope Damasus, Jerome's patron, he left Rome for good in 385. The speculated reason for this is his close relation to Roman aristocratic women—Marcella, Paula, and her daughter Eustochium. The latter two joined him in Palestine, where they founded a hospital for pilgrims and the double monastery.

²³³ Diane Cole Ahl, "Benozzo Gozzoli's Cycle of the Life of Saint Francis in Montefalco: Hagiography and Homily," in *Saints. Studies in Hagiography*, ed. Sandro Sticca (. Binghamton, N.Y. : Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996), 191–213; Vittoria Garibaldi, ed., *Benozzo Gozzoli: la cappella di San Girolamo a Montefalco: il restauro, I restauri* (Perugia: Quattroemme, 2003).

represent the saint. One of them shows Jerome in cardinal robes, with his *galero* on the ground as a symbol of the renunciation of wealth and privileges. Another one depicts the famous scene of Jerome taming the lion.



Figure 6 The Limbourg brothers, *The Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry, Saint Jerome Leaves Constantinople* (f.185r) 1405–1408/1409, The Metropolitan Museum (The Cloisters Collection,) New York. Source: <https://blog.metmuseum.org/artofillumination/manuscript-pages/folio-185r/> (Accessed 20 June 2020)



Figure 7 Benozzo Gozzoli, *The Departure of St Jerome from Antioch*, Chapel of Saint Jerome, Franciscan church in Montefalco, 1452. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benozzo_Gozzoli_The_Departure_of_St_Jerome_from_Antioch_-_WGA10223.jpg (Accessed 20 June 2020)

Although this departure scene is usually identified as *Jerome Leaves from Antioch*, I am more prone to interpret it as depicting Jerome's departure from Rome, due to him being still dressed in cardinal's attire and with his *galero* tossed on the ground. Furthermore, in the narrative of Jerome's life, the renunciation of the privileges transpired in Rome. The reason why this rare scene was chosen to be depicted as one of two from the saint's life, lies in the typological connection between Saint Jerome and Saint Francis in the aspect of the renunciation of earthly goods and the active imitation of the life of Christ.

Another reason why Jerome was included among the Franciscan saints lies in the fact that Jerome was also regarded as the founder of the first monastic order because of the monastery he

established in Bethlehem together with Paula, the Roman *matrona*, who accompanied him to the Holy Land.²³⁴

Still, there is a vital difference between the monastic life of Francis and that of Jerome. While Jerome's was limited to the monastic communities in the desert and personal contemplation in the wilderness, the actions of Francis and subsequently the Franciscan Order, were focused on urban centers and communities. Despite this, both of them searched for a sanctuary in the wilderness where they could seek God and his mercy. The most famous episode of Francis's life, *Stigmatization*, happened in the wilderness on Mount La Verna where he was spending forty days fasting and meditating. Notably, both Jerome and Francis have the same *topos* in their hagiography: taming and befriending animals—Jerome had tamed a lion and Francis had tamed a wolf in Gubbio.²³⁵

It is not without reason that the Franciscans were interested in the above detailed aspects of Jerome's saintly life since they resonated with the postulates of the Franciscan Order. Among them, poverty was a pillar of the order, which caused a long dispute among the Franciscans, ending in the division of the Observant and Conventual branches in 1517. The second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century was a period of extensive debates inside the Franciscan Order, and the Latin Church in general, in particular on the question of apostolic poverty, the trigger for the development of the reform movement inside the order. The proponents and defenders of the idea of absolute poverty built their arguments on theological texts and debates, in which Jerome appears as the perfect model for his ascetic lifestyle and pious life. In a sense, Jerome's renunciation of material goods, preferring the desert to papal Rome, could be seen as the prefiguration of the acts and image of Saint Francis.²³⁶

The use of Saint Jerome as the authority in the debate on poverty is noticeable in Saint Bonaventure's *Apologia pauperum*, the theological treatise composed in 1269 to defend and promote the existence and the actions of the Franciscan Order.²³⁷ His work can be seen as the direct answer to

²³⁴ Andrew Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy: A Commentary on Letter 52 to Nepotian, with Introduction, Text, and Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Megan Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). In the book, the author examines the connections between monasticism and scholarship, observing Saint Jerome as the embodiment of one mode of asceticism—biblical studies. By exploring the different research questions regarding Jerome, she unravels how Jerome's intellectual persona contributed to the intellectual development in the West.

²³⁵ David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 23; Lisa Kemmerer, *Animals and World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 229–30.

²³⁶ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 238–44.

²³⁷ Piotr Skubiszewski and Maria Skubiszewski, "The Poor in the Frescoes of the Campo Santo at Pisa and Santa Croce in Florence," in *Symbolae historiae atrium* (Warszawa : Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 270.

Gerard of Abbeville's attack against the existence of mendicant orders.²³⁸ While Bonaventure reflects upon the words of other Church Fathers, like Augustine and John Chrysostom, he extensively quotes Jerome's words on poverty, along with his letters to Paula and her daughter Eustochium.²³⁹

The discussions on obedience to the monastic rule were not only reserved only for the Franciscans. The importance of this issue during the fourteenth century is evidenced by the number of new monastic congregations that were founded, some of which managed to obtain official papal recognition as an order.²⁴⁰ The change in dynamics within the church, triggered by the end of the Western schism, as well as the interference of humanist ideas in church teaching, led to what is called today the Observant movement.²⁴¹ Although it was primarily limited to religious communities, the movement also had a broader social impact on society, which is evidenced by the establishment of lay communities driven by the same goals: a return to the eremitic ideals of the early desert fathers, strict adherence to the rules, following the teachings of *vita apostolica*, chastity, and absolute poverty.

However, not everyone inside the Franciscan Order was in favor of the reform. Longstanding differences between the two streams resulted in a global movement in which convents were reformed in waves, with the peak of these activities occurring during the fifteenth century. The dominant stream at the beginning, the Conventuals, supported less strict obedience to the rule of Saint Francis. The Observants on the other hand, advocated strict adherence of the rule. In such a time of change, where on the one hand, attention was given to the learned word, the re-valorization of ancient works, and thus to patristic writers, and on the other, to meditative spiritual development in solitude, Jerome began to gain importance, within the Franciscan Order and beyond.

The Institutionalization of the Cult: the Gesuati, the Order of the Hieronymites and the Girolamini

Within the growing reform atmosphere, Jerome's cult received its institutional framework, whereby several congregations whose actions were dedicated to the imitation of Jerome's virtues and manner of life were named after the saint - the *Gesuati*, the order of the *Hieronymites* and the

²³⁸ Virpi Mäkinen, *Property Rights in the Late Medieval Discussion on Franciscan Poverty* (Leuven; Paris; Dudley: Peeters, 2001), 34–56.

²³⁹ Saint Bonaventure and Robert J. Karris, *Defense of the Mendicants* (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publication, 2010), 201; Skubiszewski and Skubiszewski, "The Poor in the Frescoes," 279.

²⁴⁰ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 68–75. The congregations are: the *Frați Gesuati di San Girolamo*, the *Spanish Hieronymites*, the *Frați eremiti di San Girolamo a Fiesole*, the *Poveri eremiti per amore di Gesù Cristo di Frate Pietro da Pisa*, and the *Monaci eremiti di San Girolamo dell'osservanza di Lombardia*.

²⁴¹ Gabriella Zarri, "Ecclesiastical Institutions and Religious Life in the Observant Century", in ed. Mixson and Roest, *A Companion to Observant Reform* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 45.

Girolamini.²⁴² The common points between them was the monastic life inspired by Jerome's letter to Eustochium in which they discovered the ideal of the observance of the rule and the apostolic life. The expansion of their operations and the congregation houses throughout Italy often with the help of local aristocratic families, have largely contributed to the establishment of the image of penitent Saint Jerome.²⁴³

One of them was the *Fрати Gesuati di San Girolamo*, founded in Siena by Giovanni Colombini, a cloth merchant, around 1360. The postulates were poverty, apostolic mission, preaching, penance, and assistance to the poor and sick together with firm discipline.²⁴⁴ Initially, they were formed as the lay confraternity *Clerici apostolici Sancti Hieronymi*, following the rule of Saint Benedict. At the beginning of the fifteenth century however, some communities, especially one in Venice, were accused of following the teachings of the heretical *Fratricelli* group. For that reason, they were subject to the interrogation of the "committee," made up of Cardinal Niccolò Albergati (1373–1443), Giovanni Tavelli (1386–1446), and Ludovico Barbo (1381–1443), a distinguished member of the canonical group around *San Giorgio in Alga* in the Venetian lagoon and the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of San Giustina in Padova.²⁴⁵ The choice of leading ecclesiastical figures of the time show how the influential the teachings of the congregation had become. A result was the confirmation of the congregation of *Gesuati* as a monastic order in 1439.²⁴⁶ Accordingly, Jerome's images started to adorn the *Gesuati* churches. Among the earliest was the so-called *Gesuati polyptych* painted by Sano di Pietro in 1444, for the *Gesuati* church of Saint Jerome in Siena, consecrated in 1446 (Fig.8).²⁴⁷

The *predella*, today preserved in scattered pieces, depicted scenes from the life of Saint Jerome based on *Transitus*.²⁴⁸ The direct influence is seen in the scene *Vision of Saint Augustine*, where saints Jerome and John the Baptist are shown in the golden halo-type cloud and *Death of Saint Jerome*, where his soul has appeared to Cyril in Jerusalem. Among the scenes is the representation of penitent Saint Jerome, kneeling in front of the cave, surrounded by snakes and scorpions, with his

²⁴² Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 131–39.

²⁴³ Ibid, 131–32.

²⁴⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 76; For the influence of Gesuati on the development of penitential iconography of Saint Jerome, see Chapter 2 in: Kurt Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d'Este Hours: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Ferrara* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 2000).

²⁴⁵ Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, and Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), 54.

²⁴⁶ Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d'Este Hours*, 54; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 69.

²⁴⁷ Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500*, 54; Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d'Este Hours*, 142.

²⁴⁸ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 76.

cardinal's *galero* on the ground, dressed in the hermit-style habit. A similar representation was made a bit earlier, at the turn of the century, by Lorenzo Monaco. The painting, today in the private collection, depicts Jerome kneeling inside the cave with a stone in his hand.



Figure 8 Sano di Pietro, *Gesuali polyptych*, Pinacoteca Nazionale Siena, Predella: The Penitent Saint Jerome, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1444 (23cm x 37cm). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sano_di_Pietro_-_Scenes_from_the_Life_of_St_Jerome_-_WGA20776.jpg (Accessed 20 June 2020)

The order of the Hieronymites (*Fratres S. Hieronymi de Fesulis, Congregazione degli eremiti di S. Girolamo a Fiesole*) was established by Carlo Montegraneli, a Florentine nobleman and a Franciscan tertiary in 1377.²⁴⁹ In 1360, he withdrew to a small building in the nearby village of Fiesole to engage in a life of prayer, meditation, and the mortification of the flesh.²⁵⁰

The latter was one of the common ways of seeking redemption of sins by experiencing physical suffering through fasting, chastity, pious kneeling, or flagellation. Who else could grow into an ideal model than Jerome, not only because of his experiences in the desert described in his letter *De custodia virginitatis* (Letter XXII) written to Eustochium,²⁵¹ but also because by it he became a

²⁴⁹ Meiss, "Scholarship and Penitence," 135.

²⁵⁰ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 70.

²⁵¹ *PL* 22, 395. The most famous letter by Jerome was written to his young disciple, Eustochium, daughter of Paula. The letter contains an explanation of his views on asceticism and virginity, together with advice on how to live a life of purity, this letter could be understood as Jerome's manifest on monastic life. It is not without reason that copies of these letters are often found in monastic libraries, and that part of it inspired Lupe de Olmedo in the fifteenth century to compose the *Regula Monachorum* for the congregation of the Hermits of Saint Jerome of the Observance, founded in Spain in the fourteenth century. In the letter, Jerome juxtaposes the city and the desert. He contrasts the monastic life to the luxuries and hypocrisy of Rome and its aristocracy. In it, Jerome also recounts his dream in which Christ judged him for his love of pagan literature. See more: Patricia Cox Miller, "The Blazing Body: Ascetic Desire in Jerome's Letter to Eustochium," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 21–45; Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 38–29. The letter is known also under the title *Libellus de virginitate servanda*.

confessor of the faith, a white martyr, and eventually a saint? Furthermore, Jerome, in his commentaries on the books of the Bible, emphasizes several times how the only way to salvation is—an ascetic lifestyle—following in the footsteps of Christ.²⁵²

The Hieronymites order had support from Florentine aristocratic families, which endowed their churches and houses. Thus, on the works commissioned from 1460 for the convent of Fiesole, the Florentine devotees, all of whom belonged to influential families of the city, choose to appear either by the presence of their coat of arms or further in the century, in portraiture as donors on the paintings.²⁵³ The most significant among these, was the support of the Medici family. Around the middle of the fifteenth century, Cosimo de Medici built a new monastery in Fiesole, not far from his villa and adorned it with an altarpiece by Zanobi Strozzi dated around 1460.²⁵⁴

It is not unexpected that it was in Tuscany where this iconographic type of penitent Jerome appeared, not merely because of the above-mentioned activities of Giovanni Colombini in Siena, and Carlo Montegranni in Fiesole, but also because of Pietro Gambacorta, whose congregation the *Poor Hermits of Saint Jerome* or *Girolamini* gained official recognition in 1421.²⁵⁵ Similarly to Carlo Montegranni, Pietro Gambacorta built a solitary hut on a mountainside near Urbino and lived a life of heroic penance and mortification there, “in imitation of Saint Jerome, to whom his devotion and attachment were extreme.”²⁵⁶ With the evolution of the mentioned congregations into orders, and with the foundation of new houses, the image of penitent Jerome spread. After 1400, it could be found even beyond Italy.²⁵⁷

These congregations, which had close connections to the Franciscan Order, as seen in the example of Carlo Montegranni, who was a Franciscan tertiary, did not develop directly from the Franciscan Order but from the early reform atmosphere in the Western Church. Similar congregations of lay people, which later evolved into monastic communities, are present also in the northern parts

²⁵² Saint Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome, Volume 2 (Homilies 60–96)*, ed. Marie Liguori Ewald (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 86. “At the side of the just man, we may infer bodily weaknesses; on the right side, however, integrity of soul. By the sufferings of the body, by fasts and chastity, a thousand fall; but on the right where, through the freedom of the soul, doctrine is pure and holy, the greatest number of the enemy fall.”

²⁵³ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 176.

²⁵⁴ Amanda Lillie, “Fiesole: Locus Amoenus or Penitential Landscape?” *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 11 (2007): 11–55; Laurence B. Kanter and Pia Palladino, *Fra Angelico* (New York: New Heaven: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Yale University Press, 2005), 264.

²⁵⁵ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 71.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 71; See also: Zarri, “Ecclesiastical Institutions and Religious Life”, 40.

²⁵⁷ Hélène Verougstraete and Roger Van Schoute, eds., *Jerome Bosch et son entourage et autres études* (Leuven; Paris; Dudley: Peeters, 2003), 294. During the fifteenth century, the penitent Jerome was rarely present in northern paintings. However, after 1500 it became a part of the visual repertoire, mostly due to Erasmus’ work on the life and works of Saint Jerome.

of Europe, where Geert Groote started a lay reform movement known as *devotio moderna*.²⁵⁸ The members gathered in the congregation *Brethren of the Common Life* and *Sisters of the Common Life*; they also favored Jerome as their model, which will be discussed later in this thesis. The similarities between the Italian and northern European practices have been noted, but as of yet, no study explores their emergence and close connection points.²⁵⁹

Regardless of the strong influence of these congregations on the establishment of Jerome's image, especially in the domain of private devotion, and the contribution to the spreading of his cult around Italy, there are no houses or direct influence documented beyond the Apennine peninsula. Judging from the existing scholarship, there was no direct influence of these movements in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. However, indirect influence is seen through the adoption of the iconographic type of penitent Jerome in the standard iconography of the saint during the period, and the general spiritual atmosphere to be found primarily in Venice, where the *Gesuati* made an impact.

Firmer conclusions regarding this question cannot also be made for another reason, as present scholarship still has not tackled in detail the development of the spiritual atmosphere during the fifteenth century in Dalmatia. Much more work needs to be done on identifying the presence of the practices of the "new piety" and the channels through which the new spiritual ideas were adopted, especially in the domain of personal piety.²⁶⁰

The Penitent Jerome

The "Penitent Saint Jerome" iconographic type shows the saint as a hermit in a desert landscape, standing in front of a cave with a rock in his hand. This image of Jerome became one of the most prevalent representations of the saint. Subsequently, it evolved, so Jerome came to be depicted kneeling in front of the cave beating his chest with the stone in front of a cross.²⁶¹ Usually, this image is noted as the "Tuscan type" because of its evolution among the reformist congregations

²⁵⁸ James D. Mixson, "The 'Devotio Moderna'", 317–331.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 325; Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d'Este Hours*, 115;

²⁶⁰ For the particular studies see: Zrinka Novak, "Utjecaj kulta blažene Djevice Marije na neke aspekte pobožnosti na istočnoj jadranskoj obali u razvijenoj i kasnoj srednjem vijeku" [The influence of the Virgin Mary cult on some aspects of devotion at the Eastern Adriatic Coast in the High and Late Middle Ages], *Croatica Christiana periodica* 35, no. 67 (2011): 1–28; Zoran Ladić, "Religioznost kao pokretač društvenih i intimnih promjena u srednjem vijeku - primjer dominacije 'socijalnog i laičkog kršćanstva' u urbanim društvima istočnojadranske obale [Religiosity as impetus of social and intimate changes - The example of domination of 'social and laic Christianity' in urban societies on the East Adriatic Coast]," in *Religio, fides, superstitiones ...: O vjerovanju i pobožnosti na jadranskom prostoru*, ed. Marija Mogorović-Crljenko and Elena Uljančić-Vekić (Poreč: Zavičajni muzej Poreštine: Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, 2017), 78–109; Zoran Ladić and Meri Kunčić, "Few Examples of Marian Devotion in the East Adriatic Urban Settlements in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period," in *Le Vie della Misericordia - The Ways of Mercy*, ed. Mariani Calò and Maria Stella (Lecce: Congedo Publishing, 2017), 379–404.

²⁶¹ For development of the type in detail see: Meiss, "Scholarship and Penitence."

in Tuscany. Millard Meiss, who was among the earliest scholars to address the emergence of this type in the religious climate which stemmed from the Observant movement, places this innovation among the members of the *Hieronymite Order*. However, a better formulation is that this type emerged from the religious climate of the lay congregations close to the movement, which all had the same postulates, comprising the mortification of the flesh and penance, and to which Jerome served as the model of a penitent and pious life.

As Daniel Russo noticed, the fundamental transformation of Jerome's saintly figure occurred during this period, and this reform *milieu*; from an authority figure expressed in the representations of Jerome as a cardinal, to a kneeling penitent, embracing the more flexible contours of Observant spirituality adapting to new forms of devotion.²⁶² The portrayal of Jerome as a humble penitent, who questioned himself how to live according to Christ, instead of depicting him as a church doctor with his halo of holiness, made his figure more approachable for the devotees.²⁶³ Russo draws another parallel. While the image of "Jerome as a Cardinal", or "Jerome in his Study", became a model for the self-identification of the educated ecclesiastical individuals and scholars, the image of penitent saint transforms in the same way, only for a different audience, for which the penitential aspect of Jerome's life becomes a fundamental point of identification.²⁶⁴

The image of penitent Jerome started its transformation in the individual iconographic type already at the end of the fourteenth century. The change of the spiritual atmosphere in Tuscany is seen in the frescoes by Buonamico Buffalmacco in the Camposanto in Pisa (c.1330–1340), where several episodes from the *Lives of the Holy Fathers in the Desert* (Thebaid) were painted, including Saint Jerome as a monk reading the Bible.²⁶⁵ Lorenzo Monaco's *Saint Jerome* dated to 1398–1400, can be seen as the starting point in the evolution of the type (Fig.9). Here the saint is depicted as the penitent in the cave, in a rocky landscape with the trees, deprived of the other elements in the landscape. The only other attributes are the animals, snakes, and scorpions around the saint in the cave, a direct citation of Jerome's letter to Eustochium, where he asserts that the only company he had in the desert were wild animals.

²⁶² Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 131.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 139–40; Christine Ungruh, "Charismatic Desert Saints: Charisms as Signifiers of the 'Other' in Thebaid Cycles of the Italian Tre- and Quattrocento," in *Transcultural Imaginations of the Sacred* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 141–61.

It was followed by another panel, still of debatable authorship between Giovanni Toscani and the young Fra Angelico, dated to 1419–1420.²⁶⁶ The saint is depicted in a similar landscape as in Lorenzo Monaco's painting, without the cave, wearing the hermit's garment, holding a rock near his chest, and a scroll in his hand. The painter borrows the depictions of the animals from Lorenzo Monaco's painting, adding another attribute of the saint—the cardinal's *galero* on the ground. From the choice of the scene, and Jerome's garments, the panel was probably made for the *Hieronymite congregation* in Fiesole. Further evolution of the type is found on the *predella* of the *Gesuati altarpiece* (1444) by Sano di Pietro, among the scenes of the life of Saint Jerome. One panel depicts the saint in a similar composition as Lorenzo Monaco's representation—as a penitent hermit in front of the cave, now in a more elaborated landscape with the representations of the animals.²⁶⁷

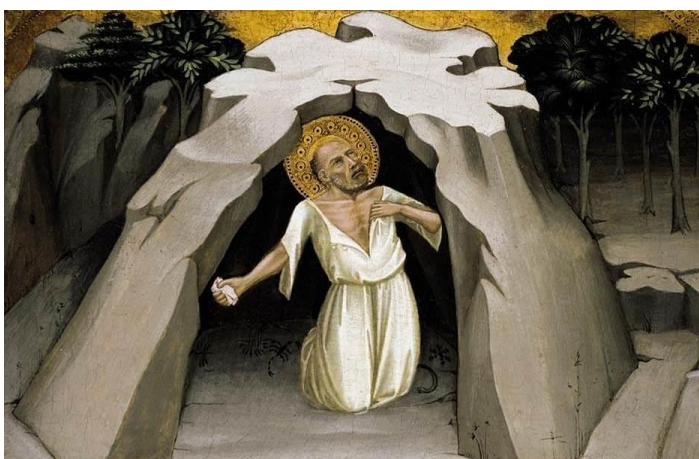


Figure 9 Lorenzo Monaco, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, Predella of the polyptych in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, c. 1398-1400 (23cm x 26cm) Private collection. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lorenzo_Monaco_-_St_Jerome_in_the_Wilderness_-_WGA13606.jpg (Accessed 20 June 2020)

Around the 1450s, the Tuscan artistic environment developed further the type of penitent Jerome, adding the crucifix in front of Jerome, a central theme of his meditations in the desert, conformed with his wish of imitating the life of Christ and suffering in the desert the same way Christ has suffered on the Cross. This idea is constant in the text of *Transitus*, and its inclusion in the visual representation of Jerome also connects with the growth of personal devotion, consisting of the

penitential practices at the period like flagellation, together with the greater focus on the imitation of the Christ and contemplation of the image of the crucified Christ.

Jerome, Francis, and John the Baptist

From the fifteenth century onwards, the penitent Jerome infiltrated Franciscan iconography, in which he started to be depicted jointly with Saint Francis, kneeling in front of the cross, as can be seen in Pesellino's *Christ on the Cross* (Fig. 10), adored by Saint Jerome and Saint Francis, from the middle of the fifteenth century, today kept in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Both saints

²⁶⁶ Marvin Eisenberg, "The Penitent St Jerome' by Giovanni Toscani," *The Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 878 (1976): 275–83.

²⁶⁷ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 76; Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 202–3.

are kneeling in front of Christ, while Jerome holds a rock in one hand and his prayer beads in the other, an attribute in his penitent iconography, Saint Francis is shown with rays emanating from his hands, reminding the viewer of the wounds he had received. The juxtaposition of the two saints is again visible on the altarpiece made by Ercole de Roberti around the 1490s; the left wing illustrates the *Nativity of Christ*, and the right one combines the dead *Christ in the tomb* with the *Penitent Saint Jerome* holding a stone in his hand, with *Saint Francis receiving Stigmata* and *Christ's Deposition from the Cross*, on the hill across from the Saint Francis figure, on the back.²⁶⁸

Both compositions reveal the influence of contemporary devotion, in which the body of Christ was

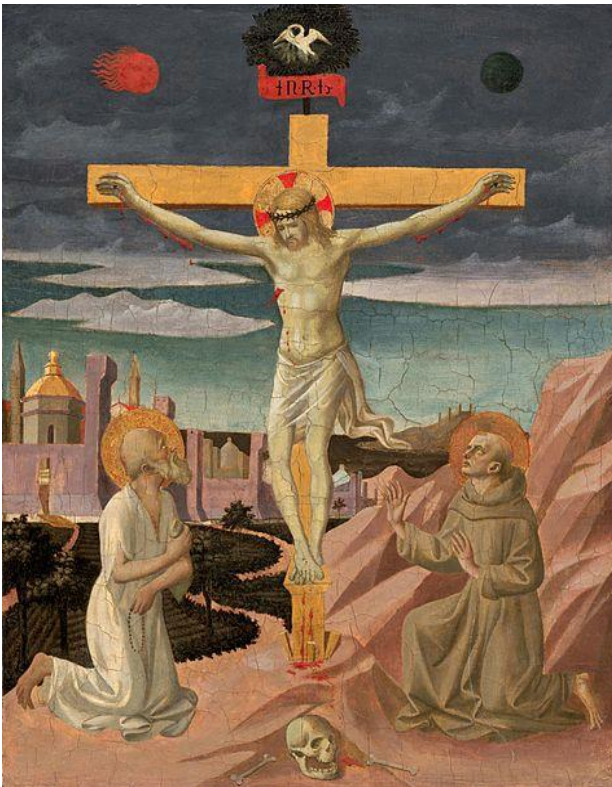


Figure 10 Francesco Pesellino, *Christ on the Cross, Adored by Saint Jerome and Saint Francis*, c. 1449-1450, (61.5 cm x 49.1 cm) National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.250.html> (Accessed 20 June 2020)

in the focus of veneration. Both Jerome and Francis embedded this devotion within the acts described in their *vitae*.²⁶⁹ Penitential devotion represents the shifting moment in the metamorphosis of the sanctity of both saints. Jerome beat his chest in a penitential fervor to recreate the suffering of Christ, while Francis, with the stigmatization, became *alter Christus*. Besides the mentioned ideological connections, the iconographic correlations are distinguishable in the depictions of the “Penitent Saint Jerome” in the scenes where he is kissing and embracing the cross. This derives from the Franciscan visual tradition, as can be seen in the example by Cimabue in the choir of Saint Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century.²⁷⁰

These examples illustrate the place the saint had among the Franciscans as the personification of genuine monastic practices, for which they

readily adopted him in the Observant movement. It was not solely Jerome’s lifestyle that established him as a model for those friars who promoted reform but likewise his intellectual contribution to the interpretation of the scripture, which served as a preparation for sermons.

²⁶⁸ Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d’Este Hours*, 185.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

His writings motivated many celebrated preachers of the fifteenth century, such as Giovanni Dominici (c. 1355–1419), Girolamo of Siena (1335/40–1420), and one of the most influential protagonists of the Observant movement, Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), who spoke of Jerome as his inspiration to join the Franciscan Order.²⁷¹ The iconography of the frescoes that were supposed to be painted above the tomb of Ivan Germanov reflects other aspects of Franciscan theology in which Jerome was adopted. The choice of Saints Francis, Jerome, and John the Baptist is not accidental, and it testifies to the contemporary devotional practices and the context of the time when the frescoes were commissioned. The popularity of the joint depiction of these three saints culminated in the fifteenth century when they are often depicted in polyptychs with the Virgin Mary in the central panel.

Even though Saint John the Baptist and Saint Jerome are paired together more often, they all come from the same tradition of the promotion of an ascetic lifestyle, renouncement of earthly goods, and imitating the life of Christ. Saint John the Baptist and Saint Jerome were paired based on the before-mentioned popular apocryphal work on Jerome's death and miracles—*Transitus Sancti Hieronymi*. The letters emphasize several times the parallel between John the Baptist and Jerome. Pseudo-Eusebius' letter depicts Jerome as the new John the Baptist, who, by his ascetic way of life, agreed to be a martyr, witnessing the true doctrines of Christ. Jerome's ascetic way of life also opposes the envy and hatred of immoral members of the Roman Curia.

In the other two letters, the equaling of these two saints in their holiness is even more pronounced. In the description of his vision, Augustine explains to Cyril that John the Baptist appeared in the presence of Saint Jerome and emphasized that he and Jerome were the same in their



Figure 11 Benozzo Gozzoli, *Virgin Mary with Saint Anthony, Saint Jerome as a cardinal, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Louis of Toulouse*, Chapel of Saint Jerome, Church of Saint Francis in Montefalco, 1452. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benozzo_Gozzoli_-_Madonna_and_Child_Surrounded_by_Saints_-_WGA10221.jpg (Accessed 21 June 2020)

²⁷¹ Bert Roest, *Order and Disorder: The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 310; On Jerome's importance for Bernardino's sermons see: Franco Mormando, "'Nudus Nudum Christum Sequi': The Franciscans and Differing Interpretations of Male Nakedness in Fifteenth-Century Italy," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, ed. Edelgard E. DuBruck and Barbara I. Gusick (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 179.

holiness. Additionally, he prompted Augustine to record all of Jerome's glory. Cyril conveys his vision of Jerome and Saint John the Baptist in the company of Saint Peter and the angels. These two saints are also equaled by choosing a martyr's path to the Kingdom of God. Their pairing became a common practice in the visual medium, where the two saints are usually depicted one next to the other on polyptychs, as can be seen on the famous polyptych of Masaccio and Masolino, so-called *Colonna altarpiece*, executed in 1428–1429 for the chapel of Saint John the Baptist in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

The image of Saint John the Baptist had importance in the Franciscan domain even without the presence of Jerome and their pairing. Saint John was known for his penitential and prophetic preaching.²⁷² As André Vauchez explains, in Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* he had an essential role in the formation of the image of Saint Francis. Accordingly, by Bonaventure's identification of Francis with the sixth angel of the Apocalypse, he becomes a new Elijah, a new John the Baptist.²⁷³ If the lives of all three saints would form common *topoi*, all three saints could be seen in one line of succession together with Christ: Saint John the Baptist→Jesus Christ→Saint Jerome→Saint Francis. Their pairing should also be seen in the streams of development of the Franciscan Order and the before-mentioned reform movement. In such a movement, John the Baptist and Saint Jerome served as models, and their images were adopted and merged into the Franciscan iconography, which reflected the universal ideals of devoted life: poverty, humility, prayer, and penitence.

This grouping of saints on the common ground started to gain more importance with the spread of the Observance, and it can be seen in the example of Benozzo Gozzoli's mural painting in the above-mentioned chapel of Saint Jerome in the Franciscan church of Montefalco (Fig. 11). The polyptych form fresco executed in 1452 depicts the Virgin Mary



Figure 12 Sano di Pietro, *Madonna and Child with Saints Jerome, Bernardino, John the Baptist, and Anthony of Padua and Two Angels*, c. 1460 (61.9 x 39.7 cm) The Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/458982> (Accessed 21 June 2020)

²⁷² John H. Hughes, "John the Baptist: The Forerunner of God Himself," *Novum Testamentum* 14, no. 3 (1972): 191–218.

²⁷³ André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 42-43, 148, 326. The connection also lies in the given name of Saint Francis, which was John.

on the throne surrounded by Saint Anthony, Saint Jerome as a cardinal, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Louis of Toulouse, evidently Franciscan saints.

Three saints dominate the production of the above-named Sano di Pietro (1405–1481). His work, mostly representing themes of Franciscan spirituality and theology, made him also known as *Maestro di Osservanza*.²⁷⁴ He produced a series of devotional images of the Virgin Mary, surrounded with the most important Franciscan saints—among them very often Jerome and John the Baptist. One of such work is the *Madonna and Child with Saints Jerome, Bernardino, John the Baptist, and Anthony of Padua and Two Angels* altarpiece executed in the 1460s (Fig.12), and kept today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Bernardino of Siena and Six Angels*, from the same period, today kept in the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

Jerome as New Christ?

Following this argument, I came to the question already raised by Daniel Russo—the portrayal of Jerome as the new Christ.²⁷⁵ As it was already noted, Jerome’s life in *Transitus* has a lot of common hagiographic *topoi* with the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. In the same way, after 1450, the representations of the penitent Saint Jerome adopt the main characteristics featured in the iconography of other penitent saints, namely Saint John Baptist and Saint Francis. The analogies between three saints are all embedded in the text of the *Transitus*.

Here, it is salient to underline in more detail the analogy between Saint Francis and Jerome, starting from the conclusions drawn by Daniel Russo, and reflecting on the adoption of Francis’ iconography to the representations of Saint Jerome in penitence. Although the earliest examples by Lorenzo Monaco or Giovanni Toscani do not have many visual points in common, the later iconography of Jerome in penance heavily relies on the representations of stigmatization of Saint Francis (compare Fig.13 and Fig.14). The recurring depiction of these scenes underlines the ideological correlation between two saints. The solitary retreat that both saints have chosen, Francis on Mount La Verna and Jerome in the desert of Chalcis, can be read as a voluntary exile, and the deliberate choice of confronting sin by imitating the life of Christ. The deserted wilderness landscape

²⁷⁴ Maria Falcone, “La giovinezza dorata di Sano di Pietro. Un nuovo documento per la ‘Natività della Vergine’ di Asciano,” *Prospettiva*, no. 138 (2010): 28–34. For a long period, a series of paintings that promote Observant spirituality and ideology was considered to have been made by an unknown painter called *Maestro dell’Osservanza*, after the polyptych in the Basilica dell’ Osservanza in Siena. However, recent research showed that it was no one other than Sano di Pietro.

²⁷⁵ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 238–45.

in which saints are placed is read as an analogy to the temptations of the Christ in the desert, in line with Jerome's descriptions of his own life in the desert.



Figure 13 Gentile da Fabriano, *Saint Francis receives stigmata*, 1415 (89cm x 65cm), Fondazione Magnani Rocca, Parma. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gentile_da_fabriano._st._francis.jpg (Accessed 21 June 2020)



Figure 14 Jacopo Bellini, *Penitent Saint Jerome*, c. 1430 (95cm x 65 cm), Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacopo_Bellini._San_Girolamo_penitente.jpg (Accessed 21 June 2020)

For living in the wake of Christ's teaching, these saintly figures were formed during their time in the solitude, and through their actions, come to be identified with Christ himself. Francis' identification is manifested by the gift of stigma, and Jerome's by the penance for which he achieved white martyrdom. Saint John the Baptist, therefore, assumes a pivotal role which places Jerome on the same level as the Poor of Assisi; he introduces the spiritual and thematic analogy between the two saints.²⁷⁶ Therefore, the depictions of these saints are found in a landscape filled with symbolic meaning—the wilderness as a place of spiritual journey in which overcoming temptation is rewarded.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 238. The pairing of these three saints is seen on the altarpiece by Marco Zoppo painted in 1471 for the Church of Saint John the Baptist in Pesaro, where the central image of the Virgin and Child is surrounded by Saint John the Baptist, Saint Jerome, Saint Francis and Saint Paul. On predella the images of Saint John the Baptist in the desert, Saint Jerome penitent and Saint Francis receives the stigmata are painted.

Saint Jerome, after his victory over the temptation of sin, was awarded understanding of the Scriptures, which allowed him to translate the Bible. Saint Francis similarly received the stigmata at the end of his journey into holiness, that is, becoming the image of Christ.

Therefore, the iconography of penitent Jerome should also be read as a prefiguration of the scene in which Francis receives the stigmata, through their typological connections. The first and foremost correlation is the rocky landscape in which both saints are located, sometimes with a few trees or some animals. The ecstasy of Saint Francis corresponds to the penitential rapture of Saint Jerome. The crucified Christ embodied in the seraph giving stigmata to Francis is translated in the crucifix before which Jerome kneels. The direct appropriation of the iconography of stigmatization is also evident in the presence of the lion, which is often the only witness during the act of penance. Although the lion in the depictions of Jerome has its source in his earliest *vitae*, in this scene, we can read it as a prefiguration of Brother Leo, a confessor of Saint Francis and a faithful companion who left written testimony of Francis's stigmatization. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the depictions of Jerome the penitent, the lion appears in the same place as Brother Leo in the depictions of stigmatization, most often in the lower left or right corner.²⁷⁷

Although the matter of forming Jerome's repentant iconography following the content of *Transitus* and adopting the depiction of Francis iconography will require more study in the future, I want to draw attention to another example of the typological link between the depiction of the saints. The *Rinieri Altarpiece* by Francesco d'Antonio di Bartolommeo made for the Gesuati church in *Santa Trinita Vecchia* in Florence around 1431, represents Virgin with the Child on the throne and Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist.²⁷⁸

The *predella*, similarly to the *Gesuati polyptych*, contains narrative scenes of Jerome's death. Of interest is the representation of Jerome on his deathbed, in both examples, as the similarity is visible in the iconography of the deaths of Saint Francis and Saint Jerome. The scene of Francis' death, painted by Giotto in the *Bardi Chapel* in Santa Croce in Florence around 1325, shows the saint lying on a bed while the Franciscan brothers surround him with expressive features of pain and sorrow. In the *vita* of Saint Francis, his death has the symbolical meaning of transmitting the message of his apostolic mission. The obedience to the rule, that is, poverty, is emphasized several times in

²⁷⁷ I would like to express my gratitude to Ana Marinković for pointing out the typology between brother Leo and lion, and for the fruitful discussion on the matter.

²⁷⁸ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 156.

the paragraph describing his last moments, together with Francis' mission to live a life imitating Christ.²⁷⁹

The representations of Jerome's death follow the composition established by Giotto on the example of Francis,²⁸⁰ but also send a symbolic message of Jerome giving a mission to his monastic brothers to follow a life of penance, which is reflected in the image of the flagellant on the predella of the mentioned *Rinieri altarpiece*. Daniel Russo, in his book on the development of the iconography of Saint Jerome, already noticed that the text of the *Transitus* has a lot of common points with the *vitae* of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, where the text of the *Transitus* portrays Jerome as similar to the *poverello* of Assisi. Both had applied themselves to live in conformity with the example of Christ.²⁸¹

From the given examples, it is evident that within the Franciscan Order, Saint Jerome, and with him Saint John the Baptist, gradually received new roles as the models of the devoted life of penance and asceticism, serving as the authoritarian predecessors to the life and actions of Saint Francis. Their frequent representation with the Virgin Mary reflects another Franciscan doctrine—*immaculate conception*—highly promoted by their theologians and visible in their special devotion reflected primarily in their visual production. Jerome is of great importance in the discussion on the virginity of the Virgin Mary, questioned in his time by Helvidius, a biblical commentator, to whom Jerome answered in *De perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae* (The Perpetual Virginity of Mary), in which he not only defends Mary's virginity but proposes that Joseph also retained his.²⁸² While it has not yet been established when the earliest pairing of the saints occurred, such representations in which

²⁷⁹ “The Life Of St. Francis Of Assisi by St. Bonaventure,” accessed October 30, 2019, https://www.ecatholic2000.com/bonaventure/assisi/francis.shtml#_RefHeading_Toc351061218: “While the companions of the Saint were weeping, stricken with keen pangs of pity, one of them, whom the man of God had said should be his Warden, knowing by divine inspiration his wish, rose in haste, and taking an habit, with the cord and breeches, brought it unto the little poor one of Christ, saying; “These I lend unto thee, as unto a beggar, and do thou receive them at the bidding of holy obedience.” (...) He charged the Brethren that stood around him, on their loving obedience, that when they saw that he was dead, they should leave him lying naked on the ground for so long time as a man would take leisurely to compass the distance of a thousand paces. O truly Christ-like man, who strove alike in life to imitate the life of Christ; in dying, His dying; in death, His death, by a perfect likeness, and was found worthy to be adorned with an outward likeness unto Him.” Compare the description with the description of Jerome's death on pp.72-73.

²⁸⁰ A similar composition is found in the later, fifteenth-century paintings. Lorenzo Bastiani painted the scene two times. In 1485 he painted the *Pala di San Girolamo* for the cathedral of Asolo. The predella panels, today in Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, depict scenes from the life of Saint Jerome, including his death. For the *Scuola di San Girolamo* in Venice, which he became a member of in 1470, he painted a cycle of the *Life of Saint Jerome*, repeating the same scene of Jerome's funeral like it is on the predella. Vittore Carpaccio painted Jerome's funeral in his famous cycle in the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

²⁸¹ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 158.

²⁸² Susan L. Green, *Tree of Jesse Iconography in Northern Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 37.

Francis, Jerome, and John the Baptist are depicted together with the Virgin Mary became more frequent during the fifteenth century.

3.3 “SAINT JEROME AS A CARDINAL”

The most common iconographic type present on the Eastern Adriatic Coast was “Jerome as a Cardinal”, with or without a model of a church in his hand. Examining the production of the period however, it is evident that this type was preferred among Dalmatian Franciscans. Due to its frequency in the artistic production of the fifteenth century along the coast and the different contexts of veneration, this iconographic type is sometimes identified as a local particularity. Such understanding comes from one of the main obstacles in the research of the cult of Saint Jerome, where the researchers had the tendency to approach it as the regional particularity, rather than observe the production in the comparative perspective of the growing cult of the saint in the period. This chapter shows that the presence of this type of representation in Dalmatia was mainly conditioned by the artistic influence coming from the Apennine peninsula, where it was dominant manner of presenting the saint during the first half of the fifteenth century.



Figure 15 Leonard and Petar Petrović, *Pietà with Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist*, 1498, Southern portal of the Franciscan church in Dubrovnik. Source: Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 3.0), author: Peter Clarke, https://hr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:Pieta_Dubrovnik.JPG (Accessed 21 June 2020)

Yet, we find it also in other examples from the same period, not necessarily of Franciscan provenance. In 1433, Pietro de Riboldis from Milan received a commission for a carved altarpiece for the main altar of the Franciscan church in Zadar (Fig. 20). The Vivarini brothers and their workshop delivered a new altarpiece for the Franciscan church of Saint Euphemia in Kapor on the island of Rab in 1458 (Fig. 24). Another wood carved altarpiece was commissioned for the Franciscan church in Pula, in the second half of the fifteenth century (Fig.

23).²⁸³ In Dubrovnik, at the end of the fifteenth century, the Petrović brothers carved a monumental

²⁸³ Ivan Matejčić, “Pulski Poliptih” [The Polyptych from Pula], in *Istra u novom vijeku - Lav i orao*, ed. Tatjana Bradara (Pula: Arheološki muzej Istre, 2017), 81–102.

portal of the Franciscan church, with the figures of Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist (Fig. 15).²⁸⁴ This example is unique since it represents the adoption of this iconographic type, in which Jerome is not dressed as a cardinal but is instead wearing a Franciscan habit, holding a church model in his hand. Here, his figure is the symbolic representation of Dalmatia, as a patron, emphasizing Jerome's importance for the Franciscans, especially in the province of Dalmatia.

When did the iconographic type of Jerome as a cardinal emerge, and in what context? Do representations of "Jerome as a Cardinal" with or without the model of the church in his hand, carry a message beyond the visual representation? Or is it just an emblematic representation of his sanctity and his role as a Church Father? Is it strictly connected with the Franciscan circle, or is it present in other ecclesiastical, theological, and social contexts? Most of the artworks commissioned during the fifteenth century, in which the image of Jerome appears, follow the form of Late Gothic polyptychs with several saintly figures displayed. Besides the standard portrayals of Franciscan saints such as Saint Francis, Saint Anthony of Padua, or Saint Clare, Saint Jerome is also present as the patron of the province.

Before discussing the frequency of this depiction as a possible local particularity, it is necessary to summarize the emergence of the type and its dispersion through the artistic and commissioner's networks beyond Italy. As Hans Belting has already noted, the various iconographic types representing Jerome served a different audience in different contexts, and the differences in the representations had meaning for those who observed them.²⁸⁵ Thus, it is necessary to present the context in which some of the already mentioned artworks were commissioned and their position in the broader Franciscan artistic production. The analysis of the chosen examples shows that the visual production of the Franciscan provenance in Dalmatia followed devotional and artistic trends in Italy. The commission of some of the works is connected with the implementation of the Observant reform in the convents and the province. As it was already mentioned, without the systematic analysis of the observant and the conventual artistic heritage, more definite conclusions cannot be brought on the prevalence of Jerome's image within one stream or another.

²⁸⁴ Milan Prelog, ed., *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika XV. i XVI. stoljeće: urbanizam, arhitektura, skulptura, slikarstvo, iluminirani rukopisi, zlatarstvo* [The Golden Age of Dubrovnik in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century: Urbanism, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Illuminated Manuscripts, Goldsmith] (Zagreb: Muzej MTM, 1987), 341.

²⁸⁵ Hans Belting, "St. Jerome in Venice", 5–33.

Giovanni d'Andrea and the Iconography of Jerome

The representation of Jerome as a cardinal is one of the early iconographic types that appeared already in the fourteenth century, symbolizing his role as a Church Father. Its dissemination is directly connected with the popularity of the first comprehensive written work on Jerome's life and deeds compiled in the middle of the fourteenth century by Giovanni d'Andrea, a fervent devotee to Saint Jerome. This canon lawyer from Bologna and professor of law at the University of Bologna wrote a book titled *Hieronymianus Liber* or *De laudibus de Sancti Hieronymi* between 1334 and 1346/47.²⁸⁶

It includes texts written by Jerome as well as earlier works about him: lives, testimonies of his miracles and his glory. Giovanni d'Andrea decided to complete this work because of the lack of proper veneration of the saint and the misleading information on his life. He believed that Jerome, who teaches every Christian, should be venerated appropriately by everyone. Giovanni's wish to promote the saint was caused by Jerome's lack of veneration in Italy and the lack of churches consecrated to him, since he believed that among the Church Fathers, Jerome deserved the most respect.²⁸⁷

His attachment to Jerome comprised many actions that could be portrayed as public manifestations of the cult—building churches and consecrating them to Jerome,²⁸⁸ commissioning a fresco cycle of Jerome's life on the façade of his house, and ultimately writing down the life and miracles of Saint Jerome. The frescoes have not been preserved, but the explanatory verses are still visible and testify to the earliest narrative representations of Jerome's life. About his actions Giovanni writes:

Thus I began to venerate this glorious doctor of the Church by keeping his vigil and by celebrating his feast-day in all kinds of ways. By calling upon his assistance in my actions, when I started something, when I had to give advice, had to make a statement or write something. I have seen to it that certain children were given his name at their baptism and that monks adopted exclusively from his writings, and I have made prayers to him to instruct my friends; I give the text of these below, in the third part.²⁸⁹

He even gave himself credit for establishing the most popular iconographic type of the saint—the cardinal type:

²⁸⁶ About other means of veneration by Giovanni d'Andrea see: Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 17–23.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸⁸ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 64–69. Giovanni d'Andrea dedicated a chapel to Saint Jerome in the Bologna cathedral. On the road to Florence, he helped the construction of the parish church consecrated to Jerome and has contributed to the construction of the Carthusian monastery, dedicated to his patron saint, as he pointed out in his work.

²⁸⁹ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 17.

I have established the way he should be painted, namely, sitting in a chair, beside him the hat that cardinals wear nowadays and at his feet the tame lion; and I have caused many pictures of this sort to be set up in diverse places.²⁹⁰

Another element of Jerome's iconography is mentioned in *Hieronymianus*. The hymn *In laudem Hieronymi carmen* describes the encounter of Jerome and the lion in the desert, where Jerome had retreated with the wish to imitate the sufferings of Christ and Saint John the Baptist.²⁹¹ While Giovanni d'Andrea promoted veneration of Saint Jerome and his depiction as a cardinal, the origins of this portrayal should be sought inside the Dominican *milieu*, to which Giovanni also belonged due to his connections with many influential Dominicans of the time.

The formation of Jerome's image as a cardinal goes back to one of his earliest hagiographies, *Plerosque nimirum*, where he was named cardinal-priest. A similar formulation can be found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* written around 1260, which informs us that at the age of 29, Jerome was "ordained a cardinal priest in the church of Rome".²⁹² Jacobus de Voragine's work, disseminated throughout Europe, served as one of the main literary models for many other saintly representations. Even though Giovanni d'Andrea names himself as the most meritorious for the formation of the image of Jerome as a cardinal, it is more likely that the honor should be given to Jacobus de Voragine's work, and not only for the development of the cardinal type but also for the development of penitent Jerome:

Jerome (Hieronymus in Latin) comes from *gerar*, holy, and *nemus*, a grove—hence a holy grove—or *noma*, a law. Therefore, in his legend, the saint's name is interpreted as sacred law. He was holy, i.e., firm, or clean, or wet with blood, or set apart for sacred use, as the temple vessels were said to be holy because they were kept apart for sacred uses. Jerome was holy, which is to say firm in doing good, by his long-suffering perseverance. He was clean in his mind through his purity, and wet with blood through his meditation on the Lord's passion. He was set apart for sacred usage in his exposition and interpretation of Holy Scripture.²⁹³

Already in the introduction, Jacobus de Voragine emphasizes the two poles of his sanctity—his penitential life and his theological work put into the translation and explanation of the Bible. He interprets Jerome's name as the sacred law, which corresponds to his role of the Doctor of the Church.

²⁹⁰ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 65; Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 59. Hieronymianus (Basel ed. [1514]), fol. 16.

²⁹¹ Oskar Bätschmann, Giovanni Bellini (London: Reaktion, 2008), 16. *Hieronymianus divi Hieronymi vit(a)e mortis prodigioru(m) dicto(rum) ac scripto(rum) exflorationes p(er)stringens (ut)seque(n)s indicat prolog(us) p(ri)ncipal(iter) qu(a)ttuor in p(ar)tes divisus: p(er) decreto(rum) famosissimu(m) doctore(m) B. Joa(n)ne(m) Andre(a)e studiosissime co(m)Pilatus.*

²⁹² Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 598.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 597.

The description of penitential life during Jerome's four years in the desert of Chalcis is described by quoting the most famous of Jerome's letters, the one to Eustochium:

Later he wrote to Eustochium to tell her about his trials there: How many times, living in the wilderness, in the vast solitude that provides a horrid, sun-scorched abode to monks, have I thought that I was basking amid the delights of Rome! My misshapen limbs shuddered in their sackcloth, my squalid skin had taken on the blackness of an Ethiopian's flesh. Tears all day, groans all day—and if, resist it as I might, sleep overwhelmed me, my fleshless bones, hardly holding together, scraped against the bare ground. I say nothing about food or drink: even the sick have cold water to drink, and to have some cooked food was like a sinful indulgence. All the company I had was scorpions and wild beasts, yet at times I felt myself surrounded by clusters of pretty girls, and the fires of lust were lighted in my frozen body and moribund flesh. So it was that I wept continually and starved the rebellious flesh for weeks at a time. Often, I joined day to night and did not stop beating my breast until the Lord restored my peace of mind. I even dreaded my cell, haunted as it was with my thoughts. Angry and stern with myself I plunged alone, deeper and deeper, into the wasteland; and, as the Lord is my witness, from time to time and after many tears I seemed to be in the midst of throngs of angels.²⁹⁴

The *Legenda Aurea* introduces another important element of Jerome's sanctity that is embedded in his iconography. This element is the renunciation of his privileges in Rome, together with the description of the hostile environment among the clergy due to which Jerome decided to depart for the Syrian desert, as can be seen on the previously mentioned frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli:

At the age of twenty-nine Jerome was ordained a cardinal priest in the church of Rome, and when Pope Liberius died, Jerome was acclaimed by all to be worthy of the pontifical chair. But he had denounced some monks and clerics for their lascivious lives, and they were so resentful that they began to lay snares for him. John Beleth tells us, for instance, that they used a woman's clothing to create a false impression of him. He got up one morning to go to matins, as was his custom, and found at his bedside a woman's gown, which, thinking it was his own, he put on and so proceeded into the church. His adversaries, of course, had done this in order to make it look as if he had a woman in his room. Jerome now saw how far these people would go in their insane folly, so he gave way to them and went to join Gregory of Nazianz, bishop of the city of Constantinople. After studying the Scriptures with Gregory, he retired to live in the desert.²⁹⁵

In the church of *San Niccolò* in Treviso, among other important and famous men of the church, primarily ones of the Dominican Order, is the first representation of Saint Jerome where he is not depicted only among the Church Fathers (Fig. 16).²⁹⁶ The frescoes were executed in the nave by Tommaso da Modena in 1352. The representation of Jerome partially follows the representation

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 598–99.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Strümpell, "Hieronymus Im Gehäuse," 188.

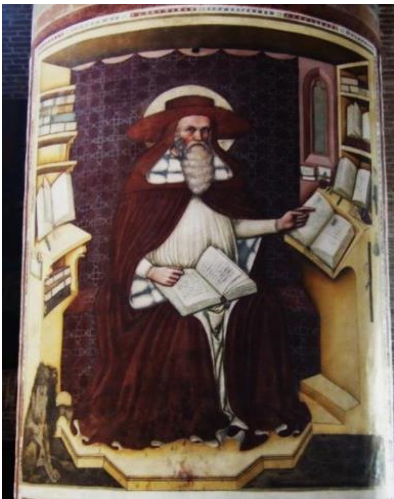


Figure 16 Tommaso di Modena, Saint Jerome, San Niccolò church, Treviso, 1352. Source: Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 3.0), author: YukioSanjo, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:8833 - Treviso - San Nicol%C3%B2 - Tommaso da Modena -](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:8833_-_Treviso_-_San_Nicol%C3%B2_-_Tommaso_da_Modena_-_)

described by Giovanni d'Andrea; Jerome wears his cardinal hat on his head. The type of representation that Giovanni d'Andrea had in mind is "Jerome in his Study", which follows Giovanni's praise of Jerome for his knowledge of languages that enabled him to translate the Bible.²⁹⁷ The emergence of this type is directly connected with the emergence of humanism in which Jerome became the perfect model of a pious and educated lifestyle.

Columna Aurea et Totius Ecclesiae Fundamentum

During the second half of the fourteenth century, the representation of Jerome as a cardinal in a study was transformed, and the saint started to be depicted as standing in his cardinal clothes, holding a model of a church in his hand, sometimes combined with an open book. Bernhard Ridderbos, in his study on the development of the iconography of Saint Jerome in early Italian art, names this type as a particularity of the Venetian painterly school due to a large number of surviving artworks representing the saint in this manner.²⁹⁸ The author starts his analysis from two paintings of Venetian origin. The first one is Saint Jerome from the polyptych *Traditio clavium* painted in 1370, and once kept in Berlin's Kaiser

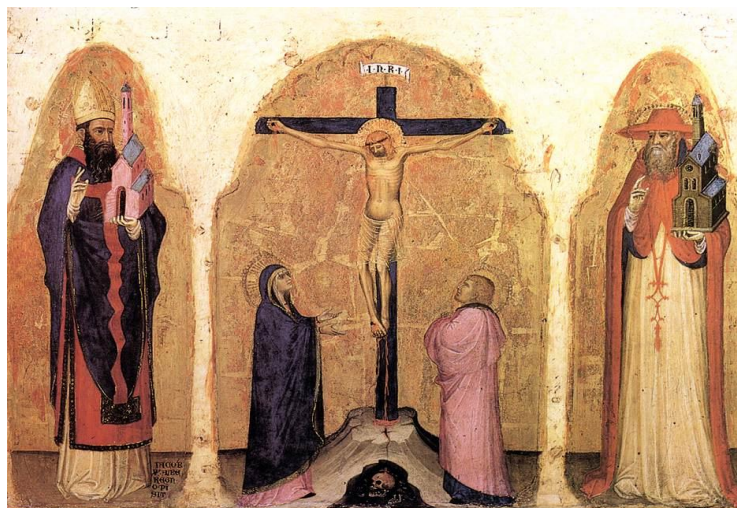


Figure 17 Jacobello Alberengo, *Triptych*, 1360-90 (45cm x 56cm) Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. Source: Gallerie dell'Accademia (CC BY 4.0) <http://www.gallerieaccademia.it/cristo-crocifisso-tra-la-vergine-san-giovanni-san-gregorio-e-san-girolamo#&gid=1&pid=1> (Accessed 21 June 2020)

²⁹⁷ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 23.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

Friedrich Museum.²⁹⁹ The second representation is found on the *Arqua Petrarca polyptych of Saint Augustine* executed in the 1360s and kept in the *Oratorio della Santissima Trinita*. Both paintings were made by Lorenzo Veneziano.³⁰⁰

In the same period, the image of Jerome as a cardinal emerged in Florence. For the Santa Croce church in Florence, Giovanni Biondo and Niccolò Guarini painted *Madonna and Four Church Doctors* around 1463. Unlike Venetian examples, where the saint is depicted standing and holding a church and a book, the Florentine examples portray the saint seated on a throne. The diversity of iconographic variations in the period—the standing or sitting saint, holding a book or a model of a church, or both—represent a separate and complex research problem that will be discussed in a future and separate work.

In the period of the second half of the fourteenth century, the iconographic type of Jerome as a cardinal became a standard way of representing Jerome in Venice and its region. We can find Jerome as a cardinal, holding a model of the Church in his hand, on paintings by Paolo Veneziano, Jacobello di Bonomo, Zanino di Pietro, and Jacobello Alberengo. The model of the Church is usually represented with an elaborated three-aisled basilica, as it is on the *Crucified Christ between Virgin Mary and Saint John with Saint Jerome and Gregory*, painted before 1397 and today preserved in Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice (Fig. 17).

In some paintings, as in Masaccio's and Masolino's polyptych from Santa Maria Maggiore, Jerome holds a simple one-aisled church, while in the Venetian paintings of the fifteenth century, elaborated architectural types emerged, as on Vittore Crivelli's panel from 1481, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, where the saint holds an octagonal church with a cupola (Fig.19). The variety of church models shows that the model of the church does not represent any specific church but serves as a typological attribute. Where did this attribute emerge from?

On both paintings discussed by Ridderbos, in addition to the church, Jerome holds an open book, with the inscription DOCTOR ET ECCLESIE PRIMA COLONA FUIT FACILE CONTE. The meaning of the word CONTE is not clear at first. Ridderbos suggests that it could be the abbreviated form of the word *contenere* (to smash), which refers to Jerome being the “smasher of the bows of the

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 8; Cristina Guarnieri and Andrea de Marchi, *Lorenzo di Niccolò called Lorenzo Veneziano: Saint John the Baptist* (Milan: Altomani & Sons, 2016), 6, 10–11. In 1945, the polyptych was partially destroyed; the panels representing Saint Bernard, Saint Mark, John the Baptist, and Jerome are known only through reproductions. The central panel, *Traditio Clavium*, is kept in Museo Correr in Venice, while the predella panels depicting scenes from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul are in the collection of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin.

³⁰⁰ Guarnieri and Marchi, *Lorenzo di Niccolò*, 17. The altarpiece from Arqua Petrarca was attributed to Jacobello di Bonomo initially.

heretics” as described in Pseudo-Eusebius’ letter contained in the *Transitus*: “(...) beginning from the East as far as the West, making an end to the wars of the heretics, smashing their bows, he has burnt their weapons and shields in the fire.”³⁰¹ Additionally, in the letter, Jerome is praised as the “golden pillar and the foundation of the whole church.”³⁰²



Figure 18 Carlo Crivelli, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, Altarpiece in the Cathedral of Camerino, c. 1490, detail.
Source:
[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carlo_Crivelli_-_St_Jerome_and_St_Augustine_\(detail\)_-_WGA5794.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carlo_Crivelli_-_St_Jerome_and_St_Augustine_(detail)_-_WGA5794.jpg) (Accessed 21 June 2020)



Figure 19 Vittore Crivelli, Saint Jerome, the Vinci polyptych, c. 1481, (60.8cm x 38.4cm), detail, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Source: Art UK
<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/saint-jerome-32663#> © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Accessed 21 June 2020)

The emergence of this type in Venice can be put in the context of great ecclesiastical debates, in particular those on the question of the *visio beatifica*. This debate, was at the center of discussion among western theologians in the fourteenth century during the papacy of John XXII (1316–1334), who, in one of his sermons, propagated a heretical view on the state of souls after death.³⁰³ John XIII claimed that souls do not reach heaven until Judgement day, but they wait in a state of “sleep”. At that moment, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Jerome were used as theological authorities to dispute this claim. The anonymous treatise *De visione beata* (*Paris BN, lat. 3170*), written in 1333–1334, relies

³⁰¹ Translation brought in the: Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 8; *PL* 22, 240. Eusebius, *De morte Hieronymi, ad Damasum*, Cap. 1. [...]incipiensque ab Oriente usque ad Occidentem, auferens bella haereticorum, eorumque arcum conterens, arma et scuta eorum combussit igni.

³⁰² Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 8; *PL* 22, 244. *O vir ineffabilis, o virtutum vas admirabile, o splendor patientiae, o lampas praeifulgida, o diadema honoris et gloriae, angularis lapis firmissimus, exemplar innocentiae, columna aurea, et totius Ecclesiae fundamentum.*

³⁰³ See more: Bernard McGinn, “Visio Dei: Seeing God in Medieval Theology and Mysticism,” in *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

on Cyril's letter to Augustine and Augustine's letter to Cyril, using Augustine's vision of Jerome as the proof of saints enjoying *beatitudo* with God.³⁰⁴

Jerome was imposed as an authority for two reasons. First, because he is one of the Church Fathers, and much of medieval theology is based on his discussions. Second, due to his anti-heretical role, read in three pseudo-letters. In Pseudo-Cyril's letter, an event after Jerome's death is described. According to the legend, after his death, a heresy spread that souls had to wait until Judgement Day to be saved, denying the existence of Purgatory. While Eusebius was praying in Bethlehem with his fellow bishop, Jerome appeared in the form of a vision and announced that the heresy had ended. His authority was also supported by the miracle he performed—Eusebius used Jerome's cloak to resuscitate three dead men who had witnessed the apparition of Jerome, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter, and a large host of angels. Subsequently, Jerome led them through Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, to witness the punishment of those who sin and do not repent³⁰⁵

How are these texts related to Venice, where Jerome became omnipresent in the fifteenth century? The texts of the pseudo-letters were known in Venice already in the fourteenth century, when they were used by Pietro Calò of Chioggia (d. 1348), a Venetian Dominican friar in the convent of San Giovanni and Paolo, in his *Legendae de sanctis* emphasizing Jerome's anti-heretical role:

For we were as sheep wandering through error and superstitions fabrications, not listening to the sound doctrine, but gathering false prophets who, rising among the people as mendacious teachers, introduced doctrines of varied perdition until this day dawned [viz. Jerome] who, shining like the sun for fifty years and six months, exerting himself with much labors and strain by study and vigils, in order to break the bread for us, has radiated in the Sanctuary of God, chasing away the darkness of the errors, and liberating all from perdition. And beginning from the East as far as the West, making an end to the wars of the heretics, smashing their bows, he has burnt their weapons and shields in the fire. For through him God has caused miraculous signs to occur on the earth so that He would make known His Name. Then, marching on until the ends of the earth, by curing those who were overwhelmed by the darts of the heretics, by enlightening the minds of the people, by disclosing the mysteries of the Scriptures, by solving problems, by clarifying dark passages, by explaining obscurities, by confuting and correcting falsehoods, and by uniting truths from many languages, he has strengthened the Sanctuary of the Lord, and like a candle that was not put under a bushel, but on a candlestick in the Court of the Lord, has, more excellently than others, with exceptional refinement opened to all the entry to the Kingdom of God.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 6–8.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 4–6.

³⁰⁶ Ridderbos, 11. His work is also known under the name *Legendarium o Legendae de tempore*. In it, the Dominican friar collected 863 legends of saints using different available sources, and they are preserved in several manuscript copies. Calò's work served as a model for Petrus de Natalibus and his *Catalogus Sanctorum* written between 1369–1372.

Here, I would agree with Ridderbos' identification of Calò's manuscript as the main source for the representation of the *Venetian type* of "Jerome as a Cardinal" with the church (and a book) in his hand, which emerged in the period when Jerome's authority was being invoked in the main theological discussion of the time, reflecting his status as the "foundation of the whole Church".

There is another reason for the development of this iconographic type, which was caused more by necessity than the desire to transmit an anti-heretical message. While the elaborated polyptych type of altarpiece had been present in art history since the eleventh century, in Italian peninsula, multi-paneled paintings started to become popular from the thirteenth century, especially in the Sieneese school. With the development of Jerome's cult in Italy and the wish to include him in such painterly representations, a problem could have occurred because the type of "Saint Jerome in his Study", the one promoted by Giovanni d'Andrea, could not be easily incorporated along with the other saints usually represented only with their attributes, in front of a golden background. Jerome's image had to be adapted to the challenges of the new pictorial forms; thereby, the book came to reflect his intellectual and theological work while the church stood for the importance of his teachings and biblical exegesis for the institutionalization of the church. This type of representation, above all, reflected Jerome's role as a Church Father.

The Council of Basel–Florence–Ferrara (1431–1449)

The presence of Jerome's image in Florence points to the hypothesis that the image of Jerome as a cardinal did indeed emerge during the debates on the *visio beatifica* during the fourteenth century, in Florence in Dominican circles. Just to point out that the main fresco decoration in the chapel Strozzi di Mantova executed by Nardo di Cione (1350–1357) represents Last Judgement, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.³⁰⁷ This long debate culminated in the fifteenth century when it was discussed at length at the Council of Florence–Ferrara. Among the distinguished theologians that participated in the council was Basilios Bessarion (1403–1472), the metropolitan of Nicaea who accompanied Emperor John VIII Palaeologus to Italy, and who was known for his diplomatic, theological, and humanist activities.³⁰⁸

His support of the reunification of the churches was in the hope that the united church would save the Byzantine Empire from the invading Ottomans. In this, he was left alone since most of the

³⁰⁷ Ana Munk, "Visions of Beatitude in Santa Maria Novella's Paradise. The Ultimate Goal of Human Endeavor in Monastic Tradition and Dominican Thought," *IKON* 6 (2013): 183–98.

³⁰⁸ For Bessarion's written production see: Luc Deitz and John Monfasani, "Cardinal Bessarion," in *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133–46.

Eastern churches did not want to settle on the central questions of separation. Bessarion's preference for the Western doctrine, which at the end prevailed with his agreement on the *filioque*, was only accepted by the minor Eastern churches but earned him a cardinal title in Rome from Pope Eugene IV in 1439.

The cardinal had a close connection with Venice, where he acted as the legate of Pope Pius II in 1463. Today, as a reminder of the close connection between Bessarion and the Republic of Venice, stands the library of Marciana, whose founding nucleus of Greek manuscripts were donated by the cardinal himself. His memory in Venice is preserved beyond this act. During his stay in Venice, his primary mission was to convince the representatives of the Republic to join the papal crusade against the Ottomans. Pope Eugene IV had promoted the fifteenth-century crusade already at the Council of Florence-Ferrara; in 1438, he gave indulgences for the defense of Constantinople during the emperor's visit to the West.³⁰⁹

Bessarion's actions in Venice regarding the negotiation of Venetian inclusion in such activities were followed by gifts. Besides books, Bessarion gifted a reliquary of the True Cross to *Scuola Grande della Carità* in 1463. The memory of it is also preserved in the painting by Gentile Bellini painted after the cardinal's death in 1472–1473, depicting him with the reliquary.³¹⁰ Bessarion's anti-Ottoman activities in Venice were also connected with the *Scuola di San Giorgio e Triphone degli Schiavoni*, a confraternity founded in 1451 by immigrants from the Eastern Adriatic Coast, mostly from Dalmatia and Kotor Bay, which is discussed in more detail in later chapters. However, the main reason for the dissemination of "Saint Jerome as a cardinal" iconographic type lies in the role of Venice as the political, cultural, and artistic center for the Eastern Adriatic Coast, especially Dalmatia. It is through these connections that this type was accepted as the most popular, and thus it prevailed in Dalmatia.

³⁰⁹ Norman Housley, ed., "Crusade and Reform, 1414-1449: Allies or Rivals?," in *Reconfiguring the Fifteenth-Century Crusade* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 67.

³¹⁰ Patricia Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine in His Study: A Portrait within a Portrait," in *Augustine in Iconography: History and Legend*, ed. Joseph C Schnaubelt and Frederick Van Fleteren (New York: P. Lang, 1999), 523–24.

3.4 DISSEMINATION OF THE CULT IN THE PROVINCE

After the establishment of the *Province of Dalmatia*, new visual iconography was gradually introduced into the Franciscan churches along the coast. Among the lavishly decorated churches was undoubtedly the church of Saint Francis in Zadar, which by the decision of the general chapter in Cologne, became the seat of the province of Dalmatia. The church was consecrated in 1280, but the construction and the furnishing of the interior continued during the *trecento*. The turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century was also marked by construction and artistic activities in the church and convent building, associated with its new role of serving as the representative of the whole province.

Accordingly, the interior furnishing of the church reflected its privileged position. In the last decade of the fourteenth century, new choir stalls, carved by Giovanni di Giacomo (Ivan Jakovljević) in 1394, were installed inside the choir. Besides the new ciborium above the main altar in 1417, the organs were made in 1443 by Marco degli Organi, and the new choir screen was finished in 1449 by Giorgio Dalmata.³¹¹ A new monumental wooden polyptych commissioned in 1433 for the main altar was carved by Pietro de Riboldis from Milan (fig. 20).³¹² Unfortunately, today only parts of the altarpiece have survived, so its initial composition is not known. The extant images include: *The coronation of the Virgin*, *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, *Saint Simeon* (as one of the city's patron saints), *Saint Jerome* (as the patron of the province), *Saint John the Baptist*, *Saint Clare*, and one holy Franciscan monk.³¹³ The carved figures of the altarpiece were painted by Dujam Vučković some twenty years later.



Figure 20 Pietro de Riboldis, Dujam Vučković, Saint Jerome, Franciscan convent in Zadar, 1432. Source: Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo u Zadru*, p.128.

³¹¹ Vežić, "Sveti Frane u Zadru," 42.

³¹² Fisković, *Milost Susreta*, 198–200; For the bibliography see: Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 129; Nikola Jakšić et al., *Umjetnička baština zadarske nadbiskupije. Kiparstvo I: od IV. do XVI. Stoljeća* [The artistic heritage of the Zadar Archbishopric. Sculpture I: from 4th until 16th century] (Zadar: Zadarska nadbiskupija, 2008), 240–44;

³¹³ The original dimensions were 3,9x5,2 meters.

The Ugljan Polyptych

In the treasury of the church of Saint Francis in Zadar, today turned into a museum, other artworks of Franciscan provenance are kept. Among them is one of the most valuable paintings of Croatian Late Gothic painting, *The Ugljan polyptych* (Ugljanski poliptih), painted by Dujam Vušković and Giovanni Pietro from Milan (Ivan Petrov iz Milana) at the end of the first half of the fifteenth century for the Franciscan church of Saint Jerome, on the island of Ugljan, in the vicinity of Zadar (Fig. 21 and 22).³¹⁴ The example of the foundation of the convent in the island of Ugljan and its consecration to Saint Jerome by Simon Cosse de Begna (Šimun Kožin Benja) in 1430 is witness to the close connection between the patrician families and the Franciscans, in this case Observant, for whom the church and the convent were constructed.³¹⁵ The foundation points, once again, to the aspect of personal inclination to the saint, as well as the devotion of the Franciscans to Jerome—the essential contributions to the development of Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia.



Figure 21 Giovanni di Pietro da Milano, Dujam Vučković, *The Ugljan polyptych*, c. 1450 (245 x 130 cm), Treasury of the Franciscan monastery in Zadar. Source: <https://www.christianiconography.info/Edited%20in%202013/Croatia%202012/ugljanPolyptych.html> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

³¹⁴ Emil Hilje, “Ikonomografski program predele ugljanskog poliptiha” [Iconographic program of the predella of the Ugljan polyptych], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 36 (1996): 43–57; Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 97–100.

³¹⁵ Tomislav Raukar, *Zadar u XV stoljeću: ekonomski razvoj i društveni odnosi* [Zadar in the 15th century: Economic development and social relations] (Zagreb: Liber, 1977), 291; Emil Hilje, “Utemeljenje franjevačkih samostana na zadarskim otocima” [The foundation of Franciscan monasteries on the Zadar islands], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 45 (2003): 15; Nikola Jakšić, “Prilozi povijesnoj topografiji otoka Ugljana” [A contribution to the knowledge of topography of the island of Ugljan], *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru* 28 (1989): 93–94. Simon’s father, Cossa, owned a number of houses, land, and salt-works. During his lifetime, he gave generous sums to Zadar monasteries. A record reports that by the end of the fourteenth century, Cossa’s estate amounted to about 15,000 ducats. After his death, the estate was succeeded by his son Simon, who, in one document from 1440, states that his estate is greater than 10,000 ducats. In the testament, written in 1442, Simon expresses a wish to be buried in the church in front of the main altar.



Figure 22 Giovanni di Pietro da Milano, Dujam Vučković, The Ugljan polyptych, c. 1450 (245 x 130 cm), Treasury of the Franciscan monastery in Zadar (detail)

The former relates to the private devotion of prominent and educated individuals, in this case, Simon de Begna, who through his private connections with Italy, could have gotten familiar with the growing personal devotion to the saint in Italy, especially in the region of Venice, which will be discussed in detail later. Such actions became more frequent in the later decades of the fifteenth century. Additionally, dedication to Jerome should be seen in the context of the growing Observant movement inside the Franciscan Order.

The monumental Ugljan Polyptych depicts the enthroned Madonna in the central field, surrounded by two rows of saints, divided into eight columns, with *imago pietatis* in the upper central row.³¹⁶ Jerome, together with Saint Francis, flanks the central representation of the Virgin Mary; the image of Saint Francis clearly alludes to the Franciscan provenance, and that of Jerome refers to his patronage of the convent as well as the province. The church was consecrated in 1447, and its late consecration could relate to the execution of the painting for the main altar.³¹⁷ The foundation of the convent was not only a personal endowment for Simeon's soul. It was connected with the turmoil inside the province between those who advocated a more substantial observance of the rule, led by Nicholas of Trogir (fra Nikola Trogiranin), and those who were for less strict obedience, led by Nicholas of Durazzo (fra Nikola Dračanin).³¹⁸ Since the latter ones, Conventuals, held all the main convents in the province, the Observants had no other choice than found the new ones.

In 1430, Pope Martin V issued a papal bull, which allowed the foundation of the convent of Saint Jerome on the island of Ugljan, under the jurisdiction of the Bosnian Vicary, already served by

³¹⁶ Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 97-100. In the upper row are depicted Saints Chrysogonus, Stephen or Lawrence, John the Baptist, Demetrius, Donatus, and an unidentified saint on the right. In the lower row are Saint Peter Martyr, Nicholas, Francis of Assisi, Jerome, Simeon, and James the Great. The predella depicts the twelve apostles.

³¹⁷ Hilje, "Utemeljenje franjevačkih samostana", 15.

³¹⁸ Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 48. Škunca assumes that he was the provincial of the Dalmatian province in the years 1425–1430 and that Nicholas of Zadar was a participant at the general chapter in Assisi in 1430, where he became familiar with Observant efforts. However, he does not support this with documents. Furthermore, the list of the Franciscan provincial puts Ludovico Traversari at that place in those years.

the Observant friars.³¹⁹ Similar permission was granted by the pope to Nicholas of Trogir in 1432 for the foundation of the convent in Trogir, and in 1434 for the foundation of two houses in the territory of the Split archbishopric.³²⁰ It seems that the main effort of Observant friars in Dalmatia was directed towards the reformation of the whole Franciscan province of Dalmatia, seeking the exemption of the convents in Dalmatia out of the jurisdiction of the Bosnian Vicary.

This is also visible from the formation of the separate custody of Saint Jerome in the 1430s (the earliest mention in documents is 1436) inside the Bosnian Vicary, which united all the newly founded Observant convents in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Dalmatian province. The new custody, with its seat in the before-mentioned convent on the island of Ugljan, was formed with the goal to complete the reform of the Dalmatian province. The choice of the seat was not only conditioned by the name of the monastery but also by the proximity of the convent to the seat of the province—the convent of Saint Francis in Zadar. Nevertheless, naming the custody after Saint Jerome, and not after its geographical seat—*Ucleanensis*—was unusual.

The foundation of the convent in Ugljan was directly connected with the effort to introduce Observant reform into the convents in Dalmatia and to release themselves from the authority of the Bosnian Vicary. While the naming after Saint Jerome could be seen as honoring the provincial patron saint, it could be read differently—as a political symbol of unification. The grouping of convents in custody inside the Bosnian Vicary was a way to distinguish the convents from the Bosnian ones, emphasizing their otherness and belonging, even though not formally, to the Dalmatian province.³²¹ By putting themselves under the protection of Saint Jerome, the Observants used Jerome's name as the authority for their pretensions on the other convents of the province.

In a way, they wanted to emphasize the continuation of the Franciscan province of Saint Jerome through their actions, but also to underline their wishes and aspirations to reform the whole Dalmatian province. In 1447, the pope Nicholas V legally confirmed the independence of the custody of Saint Jerome in a bull with which the foundations for the Dalmatian Observant province of Saint Jerome were set up.³²² In this light, the consecration of the church to Saint Jerome on Ugljan, in May 1447, should also be observed.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Škunca, *Franjevačka renesansa*, 49–50.

³²¹ Convents established after 1430, which formed the core of the custody, were Saint Jerome in Ugljan, Holy Cross on the island of Krapanj, Saint Anthony (Drid) on the island of Čiovo, and Saint Domnius on the island of Pašman. Eventually, as the older convents were reformed, they were included in the custody.

³²² Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 57.

Polyptychs of Slano and Rožat

From archival documents, it is known that the cult of Saint Jerome was nurtured in the Franciscan convent in Dubrovnik as well, where a chapel consecrated to the saint existed.³²³ In 1450, Matko Junčić signed a contract with the procurators of the convent to make an altarpiece for the mentioned chapel. Unfortunately, the elaborated altarpiece did not survive until the present day. However, a document from 1495, in which Božidar Vlatković and his son Nikola committed to making an altarpiece for the Franciscan church in Cavtat, includes a description of the Junčić' altarpiece, which was supposed to serve as the model. Among the Franciscan saints—Saint Francis, Saint Claire, San Anthony of Padua, and Saint Bernardino of Siena—Saint Jerome was depicted dressed as a cardinal.³²⁴

In the area of Dubrovnik, the Observant reform picked up momentum very early. The convents in the territory of the Republic of Ragusa, in terms of jurisdiction, were divided between the Bosnian Vicariate and the Dalmatian Province of Saint Jerome. The convent of the Little Brethren in Dubrovnik and the Daksa convent were governed by the Dalmatian province, while the Franciscan houses in Ston (1340), Korčula (1392), Rožat (1393), Slano (1392), and Konavle (1429) were governed by the Vicary. Among the earliest churches consecrated to Saint Jerome on the Eastern Adriatic Coast was the church of the Franciscan convent in Slano, near Dubrovnik, founded for the needs of the Observant Bosnian friars.

The Gradi family founded the convent in 1392, and the church was built some years later, confirmed with the dedicatory inscription on the façade. Cvito Fisković concludes that the construction of the church happened in 1461.³²⁵ That year, Andrea Resti (Andrija Restić) commissioned the altarpiece for the main altar from Lovro Dobričević. Unfortunately, the altarpiece, like many other paintings of the same fate, did not survive until the present day. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić assumes that the altarpiece once reflected Franciscan iconography, as can be seen in other paintings of the period. Furthermore, we can assume that it had a panel representing Saint Jerome, not

³²³ On the altarpiece by Junčić see: Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, *U potrazi za izgubljenim slikarstvom: o majstoru Lovru iz Kotora i slikarstvu na prostoru od Dubrovnika do Kotora tijekom druge polovice XV. stoljeća* [In search of lost art. On master Lovro of Kotor and painting from Dubrovnik to Kotor during the second half of the fifteenth century], (Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, 2013), 146–50.

³²⁴ Jorjo Tadić, *Građa o slikarskoj školi*, chap. 680. [...] *unam palam pro altari magno chori ecclesie dictorum fratrum de Zaptat...cum figuris decem..illius forme sicut est illa quam fecit olim Matchus Gioncich in ecclesia Santi Francisci in Ragusio ad altare Sancti Hieronymi. [...] a parte dextra, sint sanctus Hieronymus in forma cardinalis, bene factus.* DAD, Div. Not. 74. f. 171v.

³²⁵ Cvito Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari XV. i XVI. stoljeća u Dubrovniku* [Croatian builders and sculptors of 15th and 16th century in Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1947), 93–94; Prijatelj Pavičić, *U potrazi za izgubljenim slikarstvom*, 184.

necessarily as the patron of the province, as in other paintings discussed here, but as the patron of the church in which the altarpiece was placed.

The reform of the convents in the territory of the Republic of Ragusa was supported by the local government, which wanted to diminish the influence of the Bosnian Vicary on its territory, together with the influence of the Republic of Venice through the Italian friars serving in Dubrovnik and its surroundings. The Republic of Ragusa was also not very keen on having its convents under the influence of Venice through the Province of Dalmatia. Already in 1437, the Republic of Ragusa demanded the separation of the before-mentioned convents from the Bosnian Vicary and inclusion in the Province of Dalmatia. This did not result in the hoped-for ending since Pope Eugene IV forbade any possible separation. Knowing the pope's support of the Bosnian Vicary, it is not surprising that in 1446 he tried to unite the convents of the Province of Dalmatia and the Bosnian Vicary. This attempt was annulled by his successor, Nicholas V, in 1447.³²⁶

With the decision of Nicholas V, a union between the Dalmatian and Ragusan convents was formed, but it served largely as a mere formality, as the Ragusans managed to negotiate the foundation of a separate Custody of Dubrovnik, under the jurisdiction of the Bosnian Vicary. Dissatisfaction was even more emphasized in the period between 1464 and 1469 when a forceful union between the Vicary and the Dalmatian province was imposed by the Holy See, under the threat of expulsion of everyone who would oppose it.³²⁷ The newly enlarged province expanded over the territory of four different political entities—the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Ragusa, the Hungarian Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire—reflecting the complexity of the different political interests in this question.

The friars from Dubrovnik managed to obtain a papal bull, which granted that jurisdiction over all the convents in the territory of the Republic of Ragusa was held under the direct jurisdiction of the General Minister of the order. It is highly likely, as was assumed even at the time, that the permission was a forgery, and it caused a diplomatic crisis. The uproar resulted in the expulsion of the Dubrovnik friars and convents from the order at the general chapter in Mantua in 1467, but this order was soon annulled due to the diplomatic efforts of the Republic of Ragusa and the commitment of Cardinal Bessarion.³²⁸ The inability of the Bosnian, Dalmatian, and Dubrovnik Franciscans to come together resulted in the expulsion of the Bosnian Franciscans from the Dalmatian province at the end of 1468, by the decision of Doge Cristoforo Moro.³²⁹ With this act, the union ceased to exist.

³²⁶ Pešorda, "Prilog povijesti franjevacu," 41.

³²⁷ Škunca, *Franjevačka renesansa*, 87.

³²⁸ Škunca, 92; Pešorda, "Prilog povijesti franjevacu," 44.

³²⁹ Škunca, *Franjevačka renesansa*, 92.

While it might seem that the complex process of the implementation of the reform was settled in the 1460s, negotiations and the efforts continued in the subsequent decades, especially in Dubrovnik, where the reform was heavily embedded in the political context.

The overall jurisdiction was established at the general chapter in June of 1469 when it was decided that all the convents of Dubrovnik should be joined with the Dalmatian province and that the existing union with the Bosnian Vicary should be annulled.³³⁰ It was a culmination of the quarrels between the Bosnian, Dalmatian, and Ragusan friars. The latter had already gained a sort of autonomy in 1468, after the problems at the council of Mantua when the convents in Dubrovnik were put under the jurisdiction of the General Minister of the order, at the urging of the pope.³³¹ The Observant convents in the territory of Venetian Dalmatia and the Republic of Ragusa were further joined in the Ragusan-Dalmatian Vicary until 1478 when they were divided into two separate units: the Ragusan Vicary and Dalmatian Vicary.

These complex political vacillations, impacted local art commissions as for example with the commission of the altarpiece in Rožat, which can be connected with the events of 1468 and 1469 when the convent in Rožat was excluded from the Bosnian Vicary and put under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ragusa. This change, was reflected in the commission of a new altarpiece for the main altar of the church, executed by Lovro Dobričević, which we know of from the preserved contract.³³² The painting is not conserved in its original location and form. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić argued that the central piece of the polyptych was the *Ludlow annunciation* kept in the Wernher Collection in the Ranger's House in London, while the panels with the saints were composed in pseudo-polyptych, today kept in the National Gallery in Prague.

The depicted saints indicate the Franciscan provenance of the painting—Saint Francis, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Claire, Saint Louis of Toulouse, and Saint Bernardino of Siena, canonized in 1450. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić already noted that this commission should be observed within the spread of the Observant reform in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, not only due to the depiction of Saint

³³⁰ Škunca, *Povijesni pregled*, 94.

³³¹ Giovanni Evangelista Cusmich, *Cenni storici sui minori osservanti di Ragusa* (Trieste: Tipografia del Lloyd Austriaco, 1864, 1864), 23; Frano Jurić, *Povjesno-opisni prikaz franjevačkog samostana u dubrovačkoj Rijeci* [The Franciscan monastery in Rijeka dubrovačka] (Zagreb: C. Albrechta, 1916), 49; Pešorda, "Prilog povijesti franjevaca," 42.

³³² Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, "Prilog poznavanju Navještenja Ludlow" [A contribution to the Ludlow Annunciation], in *SIC ARS DEPRENDITUR ARTE Zbornik u čast Vladimira Markovića*, ed. Sanja Cvetnić, Milan Pelc, and Daniel Premerl (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2010), 439–54. The article by Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić presents a new analysis of the altarpiece, making the hypothesis that the Ludlow Annunciation and the polyptych from the National Gallery in Prague were part of the same polyptych and that it was painted by Lovro Dobričević, who received the last payment for the painting in 1469. Also, see the chapter 8 *Tragom jednog Dobričevićevog rastavljenog poliptiha* in: Prijatelj Pavičić, *U potrazi za izgubljenim slikarstvom*, 261–86.

Bernardino but also for the choice of the depiction on the central panel—the Annunciation and Marian iconography were largely promoted by the Observants.³³³

She builds her argument around the iconography and the choice of the depicted saints, especially of Saint Elisabeth, mother of Saint John the Baptist, who is one of the protagonists of the Visitation, to which the church in Rožat was consecrated. The rare occurrence of Elisabeth’s image in the paintings of fifteenth-century Dubrovnik leads to the conclusion that her appearance on the polyptych relates to the specific iconography that reflected its original placement. Even though she leaves her conclusions on the level of hypothesis, there are strong indications that the *Ludlow annunciation* and the *Polyptych from Prague* could be the work that Lovro Dobričević executed in 1469 for the church in Rožat.

Taking into consideration the depicted saints, and the year of the execution, we can support the given hypothesis that the commission is directly connected with the exclusion of the monastery in Rožat from the Bosnian Vicary, and its inclusion into the newly founded Ragusan-Dalmatian Vicary. The presence of Jerome’s image also supports this hypothesis. It can be read as an expression of Franciscan iconography, and his portrayal as the standard depiction among the Franciscan saints. The political context in which it is commissioned leaves us with the assumption of Jerome’s political symbolism. Still, due to the lack of research into the connection between political interests during the introduction of the reform, especially in the Dubrovnik area, the debate on the presence of Jerome’s image as a symbolic political expression in this context will have to wait.

The Carved Polyptych from Pula

The caution that one needs to keep in mind when analyzing the presence of Jerome’s image in the artworks of the Franciscan provenance and the perspective of the growing Observant reform can be seen in the example of the polyptych commissioned for the Church of Saint Francis in Pula in the second half of the fifteenth century (Fig. 23).³³⁴ Although his cult was promoted through the reform, Jerome’s cult was not exclusively reserved for the Observant friars. With the partial establishment of the Dalmatian Observant province, which started in 1447, the Conventuals did not

³³³ Prijatelj Pavičić, “Prilog poznavanju Navještenja Ludlow,” 449.

³³⁴ Jasenka Gudelj, “Pula, samostan sv. Franje - Arhitektura i umjetnička baština” [Pula, Saint Francis monastery - architecture and artworks] in *Veličina malenih: Povijest i kulturna baština Hrvatske provincije sv. Jeronima franjevac konventualaca* (Zagreb: Hrvatska provincija sv. Jeronima franjevac konventualaca, 2010), 180–85.



Figure 23 Andrea da Murano, *Polyptych from Pula*, Franciscan church in Pula, c. 1480. Source: Povijesni i pomorski muzej Istre (Historical and Maritime Museum of Istria), author: Ivo Puniš, <http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/item/577/> (Accessed 21 June 2020)

cease to exist.³³⁵ Moreover, they both still existed with the convents in the same geographical territory and both under the protection of Saint Jerome. The convent in Pula was never reformed. The presence of Jerome dressed as a cardinal holding a church in his hand, in this example, is conditioned by the general popularity of Jerome, and especially among the Franciscans. In the composition and the iconography, this carved altarpiece relies on the Venetian artistic models,

particularly on the Vivarini brothers' workshop. Due to the similarities with several other Istrian carved reliefs of Virgin with Child, Ivan Matejčić suggested an attribution to Andrea da Murano.³³⁶

The Vivarini Altarpiece in Kampor

The influence of the Venetian artistic models on the Franciscan commissions is further seen in the altarpiece for the new church of the convent of Saint Euphemia in Kampor on the island of Rab, consecrated in 1455. Three years later, in 1458, a new altarpiece, commissioned in Venice from Bartolomeo Vivarini, was installed on the main altar. Among the depicted Franciscan saints, including Saint Francis, Saint Bernardino of Sienna, and Saint Louis of Toulouse, Saint Jerome is depicted in a half-length figure dressed in the same manner as on the *Ugljan Polyptych*, with the addition of a book in his left hand. Unlike other representations in Dalmatia where Jerome holds a book in his hand, this one is adorned with the inscription: *Sive bibo, sive comedo, sive aliquid facio, semper videtur illa horibilis tuba sonare in auribus meis. Surgite, mortui, venite (ad iudicium)*. The neighboring panel depicts Saint John the Baptist is the example of already explained established iconography.

³³⁵ In the 1450s, the Observant friars occupied the provincial seat in Zadar. The problems arose as both Conventual and Observant friars were living under the same roof. Eventually, the Conventual friars moved the seat of their province to Šibenik, where it exists still today.

³³⁶ Matejčić, "Pulski Poliptih."

The manner of depiction is typical for Venetian painting and can be found on other artworks by the Vivarini brothers and their workshop.³³⁷ Whilst the Vivarini brothers promoted this type frequently, they were not the only ones. Carlo Crivelli's representations of Jerome are distinguished from the others of the period for the architecturally elaborated churches in the saint's hand, as can be seen on the panel of Saint Jerome, today in the National Gallery in London, once part of the altarpiece in Ascoli Piceno (Fig. 19). The presence of the book in such representations vary; in those where Jerome holds the book, the inscriptions often quote different sources: the Bible, Jerome's works, or works about Jerome.



Figure 24 Antonio and Bartolomeo Vivarini, Saint Bernardine Polyptych, Monastery church of St Bernardine in Kampor, 1458

Among the quotes from the Bible found on the representations of Jerome, the most common are the opening lines of the book of Genesis in Jerome's translation of the Vulgate: *In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram. Terra autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi: et spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas* (Genesis 1:1–2), which is a clear allusion to his translation of the Bible. Such an inscription can be seen on the polyptych *Madonna and Four Church Doctors* in the Florentine church of Santa Croce, where Giovanni del Biondo painted the Church Fathers in the second half of the fourteenth century, as well as on Masaccio and Masolino's

depiction of the saint on the above-mentioned *Colonna polyptych* from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

Among the inscriptions are excerpts from the apocryphal sermon delivered to his faithful followers Paula and her daughter Eustochium: *Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*.³³⁸ During the Middle Ages, this sermon was so appreciated that in some monastic communities, like Cluny, it was read in place of the Gospel on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This letter attributed to Jerome is of apocryphal origin, and it very likely was a

³³⁷ See: Susan Ruth Steer, "'Ell Maistro dell Anchona': The Venetian Altarpieces of Bartolomeo Vivarini and Their Commissioners" (Ph.D., University of Bristol, 2003); Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli, "Antonio Vivarini und Seine Werkstatt: Tradition und Innovation in Zwei Vergessenen Altarwerken," *Jahrbuch Der Berliner Museen* 50 (2008): 53–77.

³³⁸ Bernard Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana manuscripta: La tradition manuscrite des œuvres de Saint Jérôme* (in abbatia S. Petri, 1972), Epistola 309.

product of the Carolingian period.³³⁹ It was the primary source of Jacobus de Voragine for his description of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in his *Legenda Aurea*.

At the very end of the fourteenth century, Mariotto di Nardo di Cione decorated a chapel of the del Palagio family in the Florentine church San Michele Visdomini with scenes from the life of Saint Jerome. Even though today they are preserved only in the *sinopia*, they can be considered among the earliest narrative scenes representing the *vita* of the saint.³⁴⁰ Anneke De Vries connects the commission and the choice of the patron of the chapel with Guido di Tommaso del Palagio, who was known for his support of the Observant Franciscans. His family founded a convent in Fiesole, and he was known as a proponent of the hermitical lifestyle.

Furthermore, she proposes that the chapel had initially been decorated with a triptych by the same artist, today in the *Oratorio di Fontelucente* near Fiesole, representing the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary* giving her griddle to Saint Thomas in the central panel, flanked by the figures of Saint Jerome and Saint John Evangelist.³⁴¹ The incorporation of Jerome into the Marian iconography is supported by the inscription on the book that he holds in his hand. It contains lines from the previously mentioned sermon on the Virgin Mary: *Cogitis me o Paula et Eustochium immo caritas Christi me compellit qui vobis dudum tractatibus loqui consueacram [consueveram] ut novo loquendi genere sanctis quae vobiscum desunt.*³⁴²

Giovanni di Bondo's panel representing Saint Jerome, kept today in the Museum Altenburg in Lindenau, was painted between 1370 and 1375. In it, Jerome is dressed in what resembles a monastic habit with the cardinal's galero on his head, with the lion and donors kneeling in front of him. The dimensions of this panel suggest its use as the central piece of the tabernacle, or more likely as a single painting. In the painting Jerome holds an open book with the inscription: *Ornate o filiae*

³³⁹ T. A. Agius, "On Pseudo-Jerome, Epistle LX," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 24, no. 94 (1923): 176; Hannah W. Matis, "The Seclusion of Eustochium: Paschasius Radbertus and the Nuns of Soissons," *Church History* 85, no. 4 (2016): 665. However, the research has shown that although during the Middle Ages, Jerome was considered the author of this letter, it was written by Paschasius Radbertus (785–865), a prominent theologian and abbot of Corbie monastery. ; Mirabile, Digital Archives for Medieval Culture lists 51 manuscripts containing a copy of the letter. See: Paschasius Radbertus, "Epistola Beati Hieronymi Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione Mariae Virginis," MIRABILE-Archivio digitale della cultura medievale Digital Archives for Medieval Culture, accessed December 6, 2019, [https://www.mirabileweb.it/title/epistola-beati-hieronymi-ad-paulam-et-eustochium-de-assumptione-mariae-virginis-\(cogitis-me-o-paula-et-eustochium-immo-caritas-christi-me-compellit-\)-title/2428](https://www.mirabileweb.it/title/epistola-beati-hieronymi-ad-paulam-et-eustochium-de-assumptione-mariae-virginis-(cogitis-me-o-paula-et-eustochium-immo-caritas-christi-me-compellit-)-title/2428).

³⁴⁰ De Vries, "Two Copies after Starnina"; Anneke De Vries, "Mariotto di Nardo and Guido di Tommaso Del Palagio: The Chapel of St Jerome at San Michele Visdomini in Florence and the Triptych in Pesaro," *Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 50, no. 1/2 (2006): 7. The author dates the frescoes to a few years before the frescoes in the Chapel of Saint Jerome in the church Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, painted by Gherardo Starnina in 1404. These frescoes are now lost but are preserved in copies.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 19. See footnote 24. The first letters of each line on the left page have been lost, and the text seems to have been partly restored in the later restorations of the painting.

lampadas vestras occurite sponso quia iam ad hostium pulsat. While the inscription originates in Jerome's *Sermon on Assumption* it refers to the *Parable of Wise and Fool Virgins* from the Gospel of Mathew (25:1–13), which Jerome paraphrased several times in his writings, including in the letter to Eustochium and his *Adversus Jovinianum*, a polemical treatise on celibacy and virginity in opposition to the monk Jovinianus, who had asserted the equality of virginity and marriage.³⁴³

The inclusion of Jerome in Marian iconography is also related to the use of his writings in the discussion of the concept of the *Immaculate Conception* and the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary. The emergence of devotion to the Virgin Mary dates back to the desert fathers, sworn to celibacy, during which time the perpetual virginity of Mary was imposed as a model for life-long celibacy.³⁴⁴ This question was at the center of many theological debates during the centuries until its proclamation as dogma in 1845. Not much space can be given here to this significant and extensively discussed topic. Still, it is necessary to underline Jerome's contribution to it and investigate its use in visual representations during the fifteenth century.

The Council of Florence-Ferrara tried to bring a solution to the debate on the Immaculate Conception, mainly between leading Dominican and Franciscan theologians. The former supported the theological opinion of Thomas Aquinas, who opposed the Immaculate Conception, while the Franciscans were avid promoters of the idea, continuing along with the teachings of Saint Bonaventure.³⁴⁵ Among the Franciscans who participated in the council in Florence was Bernardino of Siena, himself a promoter of the concept of the Immaculate Conception.³⁴⁶ Even though definite conclusions cannot be brought here, further research on the question should pay more attention to the presence of quotations from Jerome's works in Marian iconography and its inclusion in the visual arts as the direct influence of the decisions of the Council of Florence-Ferrara.

The altarpiece in Kampoer does not have a representation of the Virgin Mary. Instead, the central panel depicts Bernardino of Siena holding a book and a gold plate in his hands. The representation of Jerome here cannot be interpreted through the mentioned Marian iconography but

³⁴³ See: David S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist: A Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1964).

³⁴⁴ David G. Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth-Century Rome," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 47–71.

³⁴⁵ Thomas M. Izbicki, "The Immaculate Conception and Ecclesiastical Politics from the Council of Basel to the Council of Trent: The Dominicans and Their Foes," *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte - Archive for Reformation History* 96, no. 1 (2014): 145–170. Christiaan Kappes, *The Immaculate Conception: Why Thomas Aquinas Denied, While John Duns Scotus, Gregory Palamas, & Mark Eugenius Professed the Absolute Immaculate Existence of Mary* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2014); Christiaan Kappes, *The Epiclesis Debate at the Council of Florence* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019).

³⁴⁶ Kappes, *The Immaculate Conception*, 227.

in the ideological connection between Jerome and Saint Bernardino to whom the altarpiece is consecrated. The inscription on Vivarini's altarpiece in Kampor has its origin also in Jerome's pseudo-writings and bears connotations of the Last Judgement. Even though the inscription was widely present during the Middle Ages and attributed to Saint Jerome, Eugene Rice explains how its origin is not entirely certain. What he is sure about is that the inscription is a composition made from parts of Jerome's original letter, Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and the parts of the *Regula Monachorum* written by Lope de Olmedo based on excerpts of Jerome's works, for a long time even considered an original work of Jerome.³⁴⁷

A similar inscription is found in other paintings of Jerome. On the polyptych *Saint Donatus* by Antonio Alberti da Ferrara, executed in 1439 for the Franciscan church of Saint Donatus (later Saint Bernardino) in Urbino, Jerome holds an open book with the same inscription: *Sive bibo, sive comedo, sive aliquid facio, semper videtur illa horibilis tuba sonare in auribus meis. Surgite, mortui, venite (ad iudicium)*. The central panel of the polyptych represents the Virgin Mary and child, surrounded by the most important Franciscan saints, where Saint Francis and Saint Jerome have the most prominent position on the sides of the Virgin Mary.

It is not sure from where this textual composition originates. The last part of it, *Surgite, mortui, venite (ad iudicium)*, are the words of an archangel according to Jerome or at least attributed to Jerome by Bede the Venerable.³⁴⁸ Eugene Rice did not manage to trace the composition earlier than Pietro Calò's *Legendae de Sanctis* written before 1340.³⁴⁹ However, some earlier sources mention and attribute the phrases to Jerome. In *The Golden Legend* Jerome is quoted extensively. In the chapter on the *Circumcision of Christ*, these words attributed to Jerome are quoted.³⁵⁰ In *Sermones Dominicales* by Aldobrandinus de Cavalcantibus written in the thirteenth century, the same passage is found.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 255. See footnotes 61 and 62.

³⁴⁸ Madeleine Gray, Peter Thomas, and Joseph Sterrett, "Images of Words: Iconographies of Text and the Construction of Sacred Space in Medieval Church Wall Painting," in *Sacred Text - Sacred Space* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 22.

³⁴⁹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 254. Footnote 61: (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Barb. lat. 714, fol. 323, col. 2), where it appears as follows: *Nam sive coendam sive bibam sive adfaciam, semper videtur illa tuba terribilis sonare in auribus meis: Surgite mortui, venite ad iudicium.*

³⁵⁰ Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 76. "The fourth, fear of the judgment to come: "For I have always feared God as waves swelling over me"; and Jerome: "Whether I eat or drink or whatever else I do, it seems to me that that voice is always sounding in my ears, 'Rise, O dead, and come to judgment'." .

³⁵¹ "Aldobrandinus de Cavalcantibus, Sermones Dominicales," CORPUS THOMISTICUM - Subsidia studii ab Enrique Alarcón collecta et edita Pompaelone ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes ab A.D. MM, [88506] Aldobrandinus de Cavalcantibus, Sermones, pars 1 n. 1, accessed December 6, 2019, <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/xaw1.html>. *Hieronymus: sive comedam sive bibam, illa vox in auribus meis semper videtur sonare: surgite mortui, venite ad iudicium. Dicitur e contra de malis: viri mali non cogitant iudicium.*

The warning tone of the almost prophetic phrase, which recalls the importance of a pious life for salvation on Judgement Day, made the phrase a part of popular culture in the Middle Ages, and convenient to use in sermons. It is paraphrased in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's exposition on Dante's *Divine Comedy*.³⁵² The presence of this inscription on the book held by Saint Jerome on the altarpiece in Kámpor, whose central field depicts Saint Bernardino of Siena, does not seem to be accidental. It has been already mentioned that Jerome inspired Saint Bernardino to join the Franciscan Order, and his influence is evident in the sermons he gave together with his comments on the books of the Bible.³⁵³

Thus, in his sermon about the Apocalypse, he quotes Jerome's words: "Oh, how Jerome estimated that the time of judgment is approaching. When he said, whether I drink or eat, or I do anything else: I always hear the voice sound in my ears: Oh, you dead, rise to the judgment and come to the judgment of the Saviour."³⁵⁴ In one of the sermons preached during Lent between 1429 and 1436, Bernardine extolled:

Upon a signal, upon a calling of the Archangel, and the sound of God's trumpet, the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven. And that trumpet will be the voice of Christ, which will be very agreeable for the just, but will sound terrible for those who will be rejected, and it will say: "Arise, ye dead, come to the judgment" (...). For that voice of Christ will be so fearsome that Jerome dares to say: "Whether I eat, or drink, or do something else, it always seems to me that that voice is sounding in my ears: Arise, ye dead, come to the judgment".³⁵⁵

I believe that the correlation between the central depiction of Saint Bernardino, and Saint Jerome holding this inscription on one of the lateral panels, is not accidental. Moreover, if we keep in mind the main *topoi* of Bernardino's preaching—the apocalyptic imagery and the emphasis on the importance of repentance for salvation on Judgement Day, same as in the teaching of Saint Jerome, the correlation between the two saints is evident.

³⁵² Daniel Christopher Devry Smith, "Imagining Doomsday: Aspects of the Last Judgement in Late- Medieval English Vernacular Devotional and Manuscript Culture, c. 1300-1500" (PhD, Kent, University of Kent, 2018), 181–82.

³⁵³ For the use of Jerome's works in the sermons see: Robert J. Karris, "St. Bernardine of Siena and the Gospel of Divine Mercy (Luke 15:11-32)," *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004): 31–66.

³⁵⁴ Bernardin de Sienne, *Opera omnia: synopsis ornata postillis illustrata*, ed. La Haye, vol. 5 (Huguetan et Ravaud, 1650), 3. *O quam prope aestimabat tempus iudicii Hieronym. Cum dicebat. Sive bibam aut comedam, aut aliquid faciam: semper mihi in auribus sonare videtur ista vox. O vos mortui surgite ad iudicium, et occurrere ad iudicium salvatoris.*

³⁵⁵ See the footnote 231 in Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 101. (*Post haec sequetur quod Apostolus, I Thess.4 cap., 15, ait: Ipse Dominus in tussu, et in voce archangeli, et in tuba Dei descendet de caelo. Quae tuba erit vox Chnsti, dulcissima iuslis, sed tembiliter contra reprobos intonantis ac dicentis: Surgite mortui, venite ad wdicium (...). Tanti namque terroris erit ilia vox Christi, ut Hieronymus dicere audeat: "Sive comedam sive bebam sive aliquid aliud agam, semper mihi videtur in meis aunbus insonare vox ilia: Surgite mortui, venite ad indicium"*).

Franciscan Written Production

Over the centuries, Franciscan convents in the Dalmatian communes had been the bearers of urban literacy, culture, and education. Unfortunately, the once abundant resources of monastery libraries are only partially preserved today. Among the most important are those in the convents of Zadar and Dubrovnik. Although the library of the convent of the Little Brethren in Dubrovnik was destroyed by fire after the devastating earthquake of 1667, today, it houses books and manuscripts brought from other, smaller or extinguished convents.³⁵⁶ Besides the dispersion of the libraries' resources, research is hampered because of the lack of detailed catalogs that would give an insight into the convents' valuable manuscript heritage and allow scholars to make conclusions about the circulation of Jerome's works within the networks of the Franciscan Order. Considering the importance of Jerome's works, primarily in theological teaching and education, we can safely assume that the Dalmatian Franciscans possessed manuscript copies of Jerome's works.

Due to the limitations of this research, this segment of the thesis is based largely on secondary literature, and some future, in-depth study of illuminated manuscripts may lead to different conclusions on the particular liturgical works in honor of Jerome among the Franciscan liturgical books. Those manuscripts that have been covered so far in the literature are mostly of Italian origin and were not originally intended for the convents of the province, they therefore do not contain references to Jerome as the patron saint of the province.³⁵⁷ However, certainly, the Dalmatian Franciscans solemnly celebrated his feast. Considering the importance of Jerome's works, primarily in theological teaching and education, we can assume that the Dalmatian Franciscans possessed manuscript copies of Jerome's works

The catalogs of the incunabula in the Dalmatian convents reveal the possession of Jerome's writings and devotional works dedicated to Jerome in almost all of the convents. Still, we have to keep in mind that present-day libraries were composed over time with some of the books once in smaller houses, which no longer exist today. For a better understanding of the presence of Jerome's works, here I should mention the list based on the catalog of the incunabula in the *Province of Saint*

³⁵⁶ For the catalogue of the manuscripts see: Mijo Brlek, *Rukopisi knjižnice Male braće u Dubrovniku* [Manuscripts of the Little Brethren library in Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1952).

³⁵⁷ Nikola Jakšić, "Due salteri quattrocenteschi veneziani a Ragusa," in *Letteratura, arte, cultura tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico III* (Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2013), 391–426; Nikola Jakšić, "Minijature 15. stoljeća u psaltiru iz Franjevačkog samostana u Kamporu na Rabu" [Fifteenth-century illuminations in the psalter from the Franciscan Convent at Kampor on Rab Island], *Ars Adriatica* 3 (2013): 123–34.

Jerome, composed by Šime Jurić and Vatroslav Frkin in 1990 and 1991.³⁵⁸ From this work we learn that, in the Franciscan convent of Zadar, we find Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistolae I-II*, Parmae (1480). At the end of the book, five papers were added, written by hand, probably at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century—*Vita s. Hieronymi collecta ex tractatibus Augustini, Gregorii, Gelasii, Eusebii*. This text is a copy of one of Jerome's *vitae* extracted from the writings of other Church Fathers and Jerome's contemporaries by Niccolò Maniacoria, written in the twelfth century.³⁵⁹

Other incunabula, brought from the Franciscan convent in Nerezine, the island of Lošinj, also contain Jerome's letters - Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistolae I-II*, Venetiis: Bernardinus Benalius (1490). Besides the letters, Sanctus Hieronymus, *Vite de sancti padri*, Venetiis: Nicolaus Girardengus de Novis (1479) is also kept in the library.³⁶⁰ In Dubrovnik, besides the letter, a copy of *La vita el transito* printed in Venice in 1475 by Gabriele Petri can be found.³⁶¹ In Hvar, *Vite de sancti padri* printed in 1476 by Antonius de Bartholomeo is kept.³⁶² In Kapor, *Epistolae* by Jerome, printed in Venice in 1476 by Antonio de Bartholomeo.³⁶³ In Košljun, besides *Epistolae* printed in Basel by Nicholas Kesler in 1489, a copy of *Vitae sanctorum patrum sive Vitae patrum* printed in Venice by Octavianus Scotus in 1483 is kept.

While all of the mentioned books contain marginal notes added through the centuries, the *Vitae sanctorum patrum sive Vitae patrum* contains a noteworthy reference to Jerome's regional origin: *Sanctus Hieronymus Dalmata*. Another hand added below: *Dalmata non secundum omnes*.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁸ Vatroslav Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula crkvenih ustanova u Hrvatskoj. IV. zbirka inkunabula u knjižnicama franjevačke Provincije sv. Jeronima. Prvi dio" [Catalogues of the incunabula books in the church institutions in Croatia. IV. The collection of the incunabula in the libraries of the Franciscan province of Saint Jerome. 1st part], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 14, no. 26 (1990): 121–204; Vatroslav Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula crkvenih ustanova u Hrvatskoj. IV. Zbirka inkunabula u knjižnicama Franjevačke provincije sv. Jeronima. Drugi dio" [Catalogues of the incunabula books in the church institutions in Croatia. IV. The collection of the incunabula in the libraries of the Franciscan province of Saint Jerome. 2nd part], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 15, no. 27 (1991): 182–261.

³⁵⁹ Matthias M. Tischler, "Quelques Remarques Sur Nicolas Maniacoria. À Propos de l'édition Critique de Son « Suffraganeus Bibliotheca », " *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 112, no. 1–2 (2017): 239–44. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 63. Peter Godman, *The Silent Masters: Latin Literature and Its Censors in the High Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 141. Maniacoria (in sources referred to also as Maniacutia or Maniacorda) adopted Jerome as a personal patron saint due to the personal intercession of the saint. When his mother was pregnant with him, she became ill. It was only after praying to Jerome that she safely delivered the baby. Maniacoria preoccupied himself with the study of the Bible, especially with Psalms, so his affection towards Jerome could have also arisen for this reason.

³⁶⁰ Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula IV - 1.dio," 137.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistolae I*, Parmae 1480. Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistolae I-II*, Venetiis: Johannes Rubeus Vercellensis, 1496.

³⁶² Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula IV - 2. dio," 192.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

We do not know when the notes were written, but they reflect another element of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia that will be discussed later in this thesis, the debate on Jerome's origin.

3.5 JEROME WITH THE MODEL OF A CHURCH AS A DALMATIAN PECULIARITY?

From the fifteenth century on, Jerome's cult was present in the convents along the coast. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Franciscan church in Cres, on the island of Cres, was furnished with new choir stalls during the same period. One of the lateral sides of the stalls was decorated with a full-length figure of Saint Jerome holding a book and a church in his hands. Alongside the saint is a figure of a kneeling Franciscan, similar to the representation of a kneeling Franciscan on the seal of the province mentioned earlier. The relation of the characters on this representation indicates that this depiction of the saint with the Franciscan friar reflects Jerome's protective role over the friars in the province, which included the convent in Cres as well.

We can also assume that such an image was also present on other altarpieces commissioned for Franciscan churches during the fifteenth century. One example is the polyptych by Dujam Vučković made for the main altar of the church of Saint Francis in Split in 1429.³⁶⁵ The once elaborated polyptych, with the arrangement of figures similar to the *Ugljan Polyptych*, is partially preserved today. Among the surviving panels, kept in the Hermitage Museum in Sankt Petersburg, are depictions of Saint Anastasius and Saint Domnius, two saints mainly venerated in Split, indicating its provenance. A panel with the representation of Saint Louis of Toulouse indicates that it was made for a Franciscan church. Considering the iconography of other Franciscan polyptychs of that time made in Dalmatia, we can assume that one of the panels depicted Saint Jerome as the patron saint of the province, but without the documentary evidence, this remains on the level of assumption.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, after the final division of the order into Observants and Conventuals in 1517 (Fig. 25), and when the Dalmatian province had finally established its territorial boundaries and jurisdiction over most of the convents in Dalmatia and Istria, a new visual language was introduced in the Franciscan churches through the commission of altarpieces. A significant number of commissions were ordered from Girolamo di Santa Croce and his workshop, who decorated the main altars of seven Franciscan Observant churches, including the island of Košljun, Poljud (Split), Pazin, and Hvar.

³⁶⁵ See more: Andrea De Marchi, "Splitski poliptih Dujma Vuškovića iz Ermitaža" [Split polyptych by Dujam Vušković from Hermitage Museum], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 36 (1996): 19–27.

As Ivana Čapeta Rakić explains in her PhD dissertation, the iconography of these altarpieces reflected not only Franciscan postulates and saints but also respected local traditions and locally venerated saints.³⁶⁶ The image of Jerome is the most common in all the works of the workshop produced for the Province of Dalmatia—he is represented seven times. The depictions of Jerome in these altarpieces, especially those in Košljun, Pazin, and Hvar, also contribute to the demystification of the understanding of the depiction of Jerome with a church as a local Dalmatian specificity. The church that the saint holds in his hand is the typological representation of a church, as was already discussed earlier on the examples of Carlo and Vittore Crivelli, and it does not represent any specific church (See Fig.18 and 19).

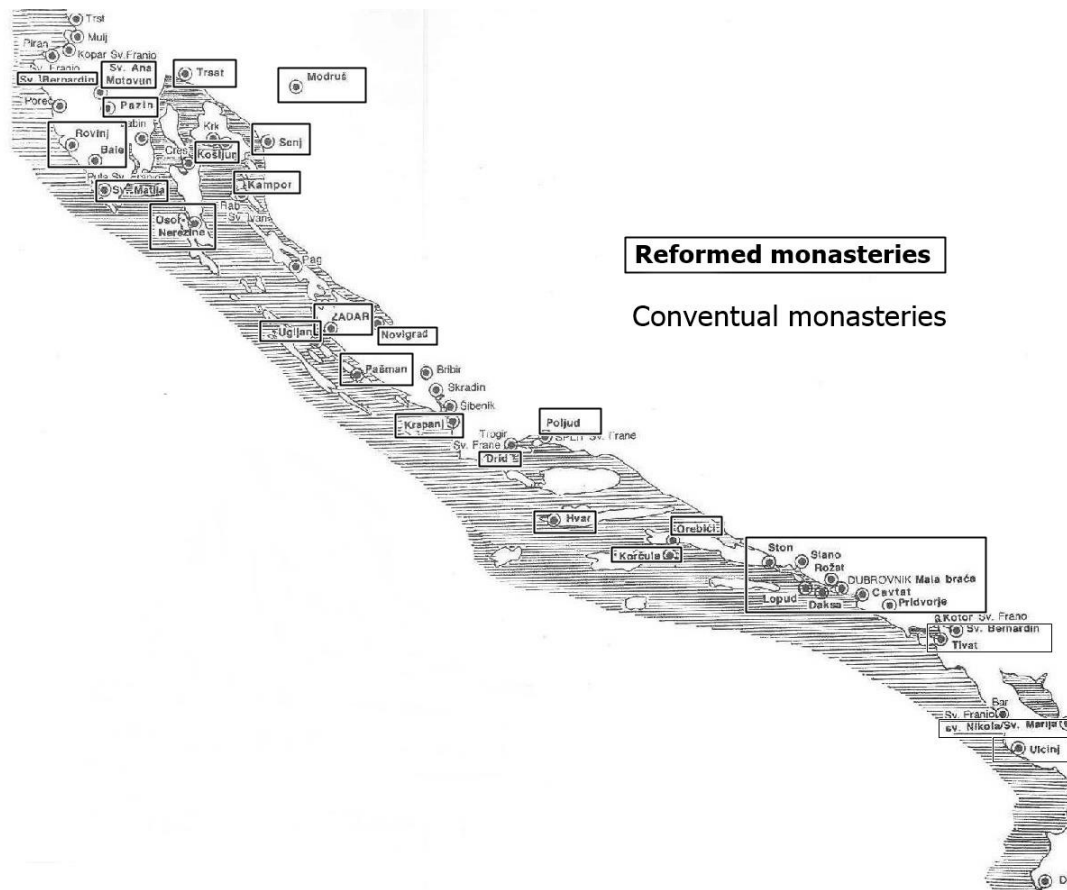


Figure 25 Map of reformed monasteries on the territory of the province of Saint Jerome until 1517. Source: Škunca, *Franjevačka renesansa*.

As discussed in this chapter, Saint Jerome had a prominent place among the Franciscans, but his veneration was not limited only to this mendicant order. Furthermore, the emergence and spread of Jerome's cult during the fourteenth century happened thanks to the recognition of the saint inside

³⁶⁶ Ivana Čapeta Rakić, "Djela radionice Santa Croce na istočnoj obali Jadrana" [Works of the Santa Croce workshop on the Eastern Adriatic Coast] (PhD, Zagreb, University of Zagreb, 2011), 134.

the Dominican Order, mainly for his theological writings, as is argued by Ridderbos in his work *Saint and Symbol*. It is not without reason that one of the earliest portrayals of Jerome as a cardinal in his study appears in the Dominican church of San Niccolò in Treviso. Still, the more comprehensive research on the overall adoption of Jerome within the Dominican order awaits its study. Despite the valuable contribution of his work, Ridderbos leaves aside the aspect of the Franciscan devotion, which contributed to the establishment of Jerome's figure during the fifteenth century. This chapter identified several research questions regarding the connection between Jerome's cult and Franciscan activities, which, due to the limitations of this format, could not be discussed in further detail but will be a subject of future studies.

This type of representation of the saint, as a cardinal with or without a book and a model of the church in his hand, relies mainly on the written works of Jerome or about Jerome. The growing number of paintings representing Jerome in this manner is directly connected with the appreciation of his life and deeds that started to occur with the emergence of humanism. The correlation between the text and image became even more emphasized in the fifteenth century with the blossoming of the Renaissance, and the personal interest of individuals in studying Jerome's letters. As this chapter has shown, it is impossible to mark the representation of Jerome as a cardinal with a church in his hand as a representation specific only to the Franciscan Order, since his role as Church Father was universal for the whole Church, and he is depicted in this way on commissions by other monastic orders and ecclesiastical authorities.

This is also visible in Dalmatia, where the iconographic type of Jerome as cardinal is present outside Franciscan circles. The following are a few such examples. A polyptych titled *Madonna with the Saints*, made by Nikola Vladanov in the fifteenth century, probably for the church of Saint Gregorius (Grgur) in Šibenik, today a part of the permanent exhibition in the interpretation center of the cathedral of Saint James *Civitas Sacra*, has a panel in the upper row with a depiction of Saint Jerome in half-figure, with the Church in his hand (Fig. 26).³⁶⁷

In Trogir, the Benedictine church of Saint John the Baptist had an altar consecrated to St Jerome. In 1435, Biagio di Giorgio da Traù (Blaž Jurjev Trogirinanin, c. 1390–1450) made a polyptych for that altar.³⁶⁸ In the center of the composition is the figure of the Virgin Mary with figures of saints including Saint Jerome in his cardinal robe and a model of the Church in his hand. In Dubrovnik, in

³⁶⁷ Kruno Prijatelj, "Juraj Čulinović i slikarska zbivanja u Šibeniku u doba Jurja Dalmatinca" [Juraj Čulinović and painting in Šibenik in the age of Juraj Dalmatinac], *Radovi Instituta Za Povijest Umjetnosti* 3/6 (1982): 244–45.

³⁶⁸ Cvito Fisković, "Poliptih Blaža Jurjeva u Trogirskoj katedrali" [The polyptych of Blaž Jurjev in cathedral of Trogir], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 14 (1963): 115–36.

1510, the Great Council commissioned a painting of Saint Jerome as a cardinal from Nikola Božidarević for their meeting hall, which was supposed to complement the already existing image of Saint John the Baptist.³⁶⁹ On the significantly damaged *Polyptych from the Rector's Palace* in Dubrovnik, in the upper row, there is a half-figure of Saint Jerome with the model of a church in his hand.³⁷⁰

From all the examples mentioned in this chapter, it is evident that the type “Saint Jerome as a Cardinal” with the model of the Church in his hand was widespread on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, equally in the monastic and the ecclesiastical commissions. The Dalmatian Franciscans preferred this iconographic type because it most adequately represented the role of the patron saint of the province. I would argue that its popularity is mostly conditioned by artistic influence from Venice, where this type was firmly rooted in the visual production of the fifteenth century. Given that Venice was the focal point of various influences on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, local artists quickly embraced Venetian models and iconographic types fashioned through the new artistic language of the Renaissance.



Figure 26 Nikola Vladanov, *Polyptych from the church of Saint Gregory*, Šibenik, 15th century, Civitas Sacra, the Interpretation Centre of the Cathedral of St. James. Source: <http://www.jurajdalmatinac.com/?p=2662>, author: Valentino Dražić Celić (Accessed 21 June 2020)

Lovro Dobričević was formed as an artist in Venice in the workshop of Michele Giovanni Bono, and it is assumed that due to artistic influence, he had contact with Antonio Vivarini and his painterly circle.³⁷¹ The influence of the Venetian typology in the representation of the saints, especially that coming from the workshops of Jacopo Bellini and Bartolomeo Vivarini, has already been noticed in the examples of the Dobričević paintings, especially on the polyptych from Prague.³⁷² For this reason, the presence of this iconographic type among the Franciscans in Dalmatia should not

³⁶⁹ Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj školi*, chap. 841. *Pro sala Maioris Consilii unam figuram Sancti Hieronymi in vestibus cardinalium, secundum designum per eum factum et eis presentatum in tela ad telarium de altitudine, forma et qualitate figure Sancti Johannis Baptiste exitentis in dicta sala*. DAD, Div. Not. 89, f.33.

³⁷⁰ Prijatelj Pavičić, *U potrazi za izgubljenim slikarstvom*, 93. It is assumed that his painting was in the church of Saint Blaise, in the Visconti chapel.

³⁷¹ Ibid. 64,70,72. Due to the visible influences, Grgo Gamulin assumed that Dobričević must have seen the polyptych executed for the cathedral in Poreč, polyptych in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the polyptych today is kept in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, and the Nativity in the National Gallery in Prague.

³⁷² Ibid., 269.

be seen as a local particularity or innovation, but as the influence of contemporary artistic trends. Still, the context in which the artworks were commissioned and the one in which they were placed, give the symbolic meaning to these representations of the saint, where he stands as the representation of the Dalmatian province whose patron he was.

4 JEROME BETWEEN HUMANISM AND PRIVATE DEVOTION

“So let us praise Jerome; better still,
let us imitate his life and deeds!”³⁷³
(Laudivio Zacchia, *Vita Beati Hieronymi*)

The cult of Saint Jerome in the Latin West became more prominent starting from the end of the thirteenth century when his relics were translated to the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The cult, though, reached wide-spread popularity, starting only from the middle of the fourteenth century with the incorporation of his *vita* into the popular hagiographic literature disseminated across Europe. The example of previously mentioned Giovanni d’Andrea (1270–1348), a canon lawyer from Bologna who took a personal vow to promote Jerome’s cult and make sure he was venerated in the manner that a saint of his rank deserved, indicates the first moves in this direction. Soon, other works were also including Jerome, such as the *Legenda de Sanctis* (before 1340) by Pietro Calò and the *Catalogus Sanctorum* (1372) by Petrus de Natalibus.³⁷⁴ Such works promoted devotion to the saint, which eased not only the fast reception of the cult but likewise its great popularity and prevalence during the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Giovanni d’Andrea, in particular, is an outstanding early example of deep personal devotion to Jerome that expressed itself publicly. His special affection towards the saint inspired the actions he undertook and stand as illustrative models of the intimate devotion that would flourish in the centuries that followed.³⁷⁵ Many others who saw Jerome as their patron saint followed Giovanni’s example, expressing their devotion by various means. Usually, he was name-saint, but his identification with devotion and learning was one of the decisive points in the adoption of him as a patron. From the fourteenth century onwards, the commission of family chapels and altarpieces

³⁷³ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 102–4; Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 492.

³⁷⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 49. For our discussion, the work by Pietro Calò (d. 1348, Petrus Calus) is relevant for its incorporation of the pseudo-letters into Jerome’s *vita*, which are not part of *Legenda Aurea*. Together with Petrus de Natalibus, (d. 1400, Pietro Natali) and his work, it had a significant influence on the dissemination of the cult in Northern Italy, especially Venice and its region, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 49. With the popularization of printing, the collections of legends of the saints became more accessible. *Editio princeps* of *Legenda Aurea* was first published in 1470, and the *Catalogum Sanctorum in 1493*.

³⁷⁵ See pp. 109–113.

depicting the saint revealed Jerome's new role as a personal saint, as did the possession of the copies of his works and the devotional work to him. Those more eager in expressing their passion for the saint, and through him for Christ, imitated Jerome's lifestyle by withdrawing into solitude or dedicating themselves to the study of the scripture.

This chapter observes these manifestations among the humanists in Italy, mainly in Venice and Florence, who were the first ones to adopt Jerome as patron for his duality as a devoted and educated individual. Through his image, they could express their faith and defend their love for ancient authors. The burgeoning private devotion to Saint Jerome, beyond humanist enthusiasm, was further present in a broader framework, as the formation of his cult was influenced by the Franciscan Observant movement that was spreading around Europe from 1400 and the lay movement of *devotio moderna* emerging almost at the same time in the Low Countries, that encouraged a more intimate form of devotion.

Here, the commission of these devotional expressions to the saint is studied in the social, religious, and cultural context, to establish the pattern of the practices which were adopted in the Dalmatian communes through the spread of humanism and the Renaissance. The focus will be put on Venice, the city which, due to its proximity, had served as the cultural center for the Eastern Adriatic Coast over the centuries and which became its political center after Dalmatia was included in the Republic after 1420. From that moment on, the political and cultural encounters intensified together with administrative and economic communication, supported by the personal connections of Dalmatian humanists with their Italian counterparts.

Given that the cultural production of the fifteenth century connected with the cult of Saint Jerome is vast, here I will reflect only upon those aspects relevant to the contextualization of the cult in Dalmatia. Such analysis is necessary to understand that the growing veneration in the Dalmatian communes during the fifteenth century was mainly conditioned by the expanding humanism and Renaissance in the Apennine Peninsula to whose broader cultural circle Dalmatia belonged. Unlike the Glagolitic tradition which praised the saint for the invention of the Glagolitic letters and his ascetic lifestyle, in the communes, the cult has rooted solidly in the domain of the private devotion, among the wealthy and educated individuals, which during the second half of the fifteenth century formed the progressive humanist circles where the Renaissance art and ideas have blossomed.

The Glagolitic tradition has nurtured the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin for centuries. However, it did not promote the devotional practices that could be pleasing to the lay audience like the endowment of the altars and chapels and the more intimate aspects of the identification with the

saint in the idea of the penance as the prerequisite for the salvation. Furthermore, it did not offer diverse artistic manifestations of the cult and the devotional material, which could have contributed to the material presence of the civic cult. Like it is presented in the forthcoming chapters, regardless of the equivalence of the devotional practices and the expressions to the saint in Dalmatia with those in the Apennine peninsula among the ecclesiastical and urban elites, from the middle of the fifteenth century some aspects of the Renaissance cult were adapted to reflect the special bond of Dalmatians with the saint they believed was born on the territory of Dalmatia. In order to understand how the local humanist centers transformed the image of Jerome to reflect his Dalmatian origin and the intercessory role for those who saw him as a compatriot, the summary of the practices present in Italy is indispensable.

The inclusion of Dalmatia in the Venetian Republic made the centuries-long cultural connections between the two Coasts of the Adriatic Sea even stronger. Besides the administrative and political networks, the key segment in the adoption of the new artistic, cultural, and devotional ideas were the personal connections of Dalmatian humanists with their Italian counterparts. For that reason, the artistic and literary production, together with the new devotional practices, related to the veneration of Jerome among the educated social layers, the wealthy merchants and the aristocracy, imposes as the primary comparative material for better understanding of the Dalmatian artistic production with the image of Jerome and its possible particularities reflecting his Dalmatian origin.

4.1 THE WRITTEN PRODUCTION

The Letters of Saint Jerome

The recognition of Jerome by Giovanni d'Andrea took place when another movement started to rise – humanism. The intellectual movement that grew widespread during the Renaissance had its roots already in the early fourteenth century in the writings of Petrarch and his followers. Enclosed between the secular intellectual interest and profound piety, it resulted not only in the appreciation of the classical authors, like Cicero, but also sparked renewed interest in patristic literature and Bible studies. This intellectual florescence resulted in the revision of Jerome's translation of the Bible, *Vulgata*, and closer study of not only his commentaries on the Biblical stories but also of other Church

Fathers and patristic literature to which humanists adopted a new critical approach.³⁷⁶ Further, it was not only the Bible that received more considerable attention. The lives of saints, especially those of the early days of the Church, were translated from Greek, enriching the spiritual life and hagiographical literature in the West.³⁷⁷

The debate on the relevance of the Church Fathers, especially between Augustine and Jerome, can be found in the written production of the early humanists. Petrarch (1304–1374), with whom Giovanni d’Andrea was a close friend, repudiated his opinion on Jerome as the first “among the sacred doctors” and his biblical exegesis and other theological treatises as the foundation of Christian Latinity, opting instead for “my Augustine”.³⁷⁸ Petrarch had a related argument with Giacomo Colonna (1300–1341) Bishop of Lombaz, one of the first devotees of Saint Jerome, who profoundly influenced Giovanni d’Andrea. The disagreement involved the use of pagan authors by Jerome and Augustine. For, while Jerome’s love for pagan literature was condemned in his “Ciceronian dream,” Augustine was never ashamed of its contribution to his production.³⁷⁹

In *Letter XXII* to Eustochium, Jerome describes the dream in which he was dragged in front of the throne of God, who accused him of preferring classical literature over Christian, especially Cicero. Struck to the heart, Jerome repented and promised not to read it ever again: “Lord, if ever again I possess worldly books, or if ever again I read such, I have denied Thee.”³⁸⁰ Yet, judging by the number of quotes of pagan authors in his written production after this experience, it is visible that his point of view did not change much, regardless of the commitment given to Christ.³⁸¹ In another moment, Jerome went so far as to defend the reading of classical works when in *Letter LXX*, he answered to Roman orator Magnus’ statements on Jerome’s treatment of references of classical

³⁷⁶ Annet den Haan, “Giannozzo Manetti’s New Testament: New Evidence on Sources, Translation Process and the Use of Valla’s Annotations: Giannozzo Manetti’s New Testament,” *Renaissance Studies* 28, no. 5 (2014): 731–47; Cornelia Linde, *How to Correct the Sacra Scriptura? Textual Criticism of the Bible between the Twelfth and Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2015).

³⁷⁷ Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 22.

³⁷⁸ On the Petrarch use of Jerome’s works see: Riccardo Fubini, *Humanism and Secularization: From Petrarch to Valla* (Duke University Press, 2003), 48; David Marsh, “Petrarch and Jerome,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 49 (2004): 85–98.

³⁷⁹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 137; Carol E. Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 128. The role of Giacomo Colonna in the promotion of Jerome is not accidental as the Colonna family was directly involved with the construction of Jerome’s cult in the West. In the 1290s, Jerome’s cult was implemented in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore with the translation of his relics, orchestrated by Pope Nicholas IV and Colonna family, whose protegee the pope was. Giacomo’s role in the dissemination of the cult during the fourteenth century is still to be researched.

³⁸⁰ Philip Schaff, *The Principal Works of St. Jerome*, vol. 6, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, II (Grand Rapids, MI; New York: Christian Classics Ethereal Library; Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892), 95, https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1819-1893_Schaff_Philip_3_Vol_06_Jerome_EN.pdf. (Further in footnotes: Letter XXII).

³⁸¹ Neil Adkin, “Jerome’s Use of Scripture Before and After His Dream,” *Illinois Classical Studies* 20 (1995): 183–90.

writers in his letters. Jerome wrote that classical literature could be valued not only for educational purposes, studying Latin and Greek, but likewise because it served as a model for Christian literature. With this statement, Jerome placed the Christian production along the line of the ancient authors.³⁸²

This example illustrates one of many dualities of Jerome's character. His position between classical and Christian scholarship made him an ideal model to the humanists for whom the simultaneously intellectual Jerome and pious Jerome became the epitome of the educated and devoted men. He represented a symbol of *studia humanitatis*, a reformulated version of the medieval *trivium*, standing as the precedent of a pious lifestyle combined with intellectual production. Jerome's example was crucial for the recognition of classical literature during the Late Middle Ages. The discussion of Jerome and his views continued during the fifteenth century, but it did not remain the focal point as it had been in the early days of humanism. Giovanni Garzoni of Bologna (1419–1506), who “composed more saints' lives and martyrs' passions than any other Quattrocento humanist,”³⁸³ composed several *laudationes* during the 1470s, in which he praised Saint Paul, Dominic, and Jerome, whom he defended because of the accusations based on Jerome's admiration of the classical authors.³⁸⁴

If a Church Father, the translator of the Bible and one of the foundations of Christian teaching read the classical authors, the humanists could defend their love for ancient literature through his image, without being afraid of the potential accusations. This aspect differentiates Jerome from the other Church Fathers, and it conditioned a different perception of him than Augustine, Gregory, or Ambrose. While the cult of the other three was present in ecclesiastical circles, and their production was studied the same way as Jerome's, the devotion to these saints never reached the level of such popular cult present in different contexts and the diverse manifestations of the cult as it was with Jerome's.

Jerome as a Literary Model

In the growing *republic of letters*, Jerome's overseas letters to his friends presented a model together with those of Cicero, Seneca, or Virgil, and for that reason, we find copies of them in humanist libraries. Andrew Cain points out that by now more than 7000 copies of medieval and

³⁸² On Jerome's attitude on pagan literature, see: Ann Mohr, “Jerome, Virgil, and the Captive Maiden: The Attitude of Jerome to Classical Literature,” in *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity. Inheritance, Authority, and Change*, 2007, 299–322;

³⁸³ Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 170.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

Renaissance manuscripts containing transcription of Jerome's letters have been identified.³⁸⁵ The presence of the references to Jerome's letters in the works by Petrarch shows that even though he was not overly fond of Jerome, the great poet did read his letters and embraced them as a model.³⁸⁶ Other prominent humanists, among them, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1408), Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437) all owned their copies of the letters.³⁸⁷ Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli were even involved in a quest to search for all of the letters and compile them together. During his stay in Venice in 1434, Ambrogio Travesari (1386–1439), who knew many of the letters by heart, copied two of Jerome's letters from the epistolary of Francesco Barbaro and sent it to Niccoli.³⁸⁸

The practice of exchanging letters or excerpts of other classical works was rather common, with Jerome's production as a frequent subject of exchange. Among the humanists of the first generation, interest in Jerome was still largely only literary, without elements of exclusive devotion to him. The reason for this lies mainly in Jerome's reputation conceived in the Ciceronian dream, which Salutati interprets as a warning regarding the excessive reading of classical literature, not as a warning not to read it at all.³⁸⁹

Besides letters, other works by Jerome served as models for humanist writers. Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus* consists of the biographies of famous people of the early church, including himself and Petrarch imitated his style and format in the fourteenth century, likewise Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405-1464), better known as Pope Pius II, in the fifteenth century.³⁹⁰ Exploring the presence of Jerome's texts in the manuscripts composed by Pierpaolo Vergerio (1370–1444), Giovanni Lamola (1405-1450), an Albrecht von Eyb (1420–1475), John M. McMannon illustrated the influence of Jerome's works in the humanist rhetorical training, for Jerome advocated that the message of the Gospel could be transmitted even without formal training, but “by using the rhetorical skills one will evangelize in a way that deepens the impact of the message and causes it to take lasting root in the hearts of believers.”³⁹¹ The example of Giovanni Grasso di Carpi, a notary's son, who transcribed the

³⁸⁵ Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 225.

³⁸⁶ Marsh, “Petrarch and Jerome,” 89–90.

³⁸⁷ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 84.

³⁸⁸ Charles L. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) and the Revival of Patristic Theology in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 123–24.

³⁸⁹ Pierpaolo Vergerio, “Sermones Decem pro Sancto Hieronymo,” in *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome: An Edition and Translation of Sermones pro Sancto Hieronymo*, ed. John M. McMannon (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 14.

³⁹⁰ Eric W. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 45. On use of Jerome as a model for biographies see pp. 393-395.

³⁹¹ John M. McMannon, “Res Aut Res Publica: The Evidence from Italian Renaissance Manuscripts and Their Owners,” *Religions* 3, no. 4 (2012): 218.

codex of the *Letters of Saint Jerome*, with accompanying illuminations in Ferrara in 1467, indicates that the market for Jerome's written production existed and that individuals did not save money to possess a copy.³⁹²

The richly illuminated and ornamented copies of Jerome's letters became objects of prestige as noticeable in the manuscript of large format (29.5 × 18.7cm), today kept in Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, with two coats of arms of the prominent Venetian Mocenigo family on the frontispiece. The commission of a manuscript when books were already printed in large numbers and were considerably less costly than a manuscript, reveals its symbolical value. It has been suggested that it might have been made on the occasion of the election of Giovanni Mocenigo (1409–1485) to the dogeship in 1478.³⁹³ Another example also demonstrates the value of Jerome's written production in the Renaissance period. Marco Barbo (1420–1491), Venetian cardinal who abided in Rome and cousin of Pope Paul II, possessed a copy of Jerome's letters that he donated to the Vatican library, on the day when his secretary Giovanni Lorenzo became a papal librarian.³⁹⁴

The above-mentioned examples reflect the constantly present duality of Jerome. While in the secular fashion, the possession of his works reflects their use as an exemplary model for rhetorical production, in the religious setting, they reflect the importance of Jerome for Christian teaching, together with personal devotion to the saint. The transcription and possession of copies of Jerome's works outside of the monastic libraries, which were traditionally keepers and the transmitters of the knowledge among the educated individuals and humanists who exchanged them as the gifts, have contributed largely to the dissemination of Jerome's cult. Such practice is also discernible in Dalmatia, where humanists like Petar Cippico or Georgius Begna (Juraj Begna) have possessed copies of Jerome's works and exchanged them with other members of Dalmatian humanist circles, elaborated in more detail in the chapter 5.

The development of the humanism and the growing interest in the written production, within the changing spiritual climate of the period supported by various reform movements, has resulted in

³⁹² Ibid, 219-220. The illuminations in the codex suggest its high price. McMannon argues that Giovanni, regardless of his personal affection for the saint, had a business of transcribing and selling manuscripts, for whose improvement he used finished manuscripts as the loan collateral in the bank. Based on the documents, the mentioned manuscript was kept in the bank for two years after its finishing. Eventually, Giovanni Battista Panetti, a Carmelite monk with the interest in the humanist studies and the book collecting, purchased the codex from the bank.

³⁹³ Belting, "St. Jerome in Venice," 19. The central representation of Jerome as a cardinal, who preaches to a group of people, has an elaborated frame with the four cardinal virtues and the representation of a Ciceronian dream of Jerome. Hilmar M Pabel, *Herculean Labours Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 34. The earliest edition of Jerome's letters in Venice was in 1476.

³⁹⁴ Margaret L King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 391.

the number of lives of saints written by the hands of humanists. Alison Knowles Frazier explains that saints and their *vitae* had a social function as role models or mentors which “exhort ourselves to self-improvement.”³⁹⁵ The number of transcriptions of the lives of saints in the second half of the fifteenth century is also explained by their use in the classroom, especially the canonical Latin *vitae*, including those by Jerome—*Vita Pauli and Vita Malachi*.³⁹⁶ Still, the written devotional production, transcription of the existing material, or the composition of the new one could be seen as a kind of *ex-voto* to the saint, like it was with Niccolò Borghesi, who composed a new *vita* of Saint Catherine of Siena.³⁹⁷ In Dalmatia such production is not abundant as in Italy, indeed it was quite poor, but it was present. The best example is the new *vita* of Saint Jerome written by Marko Marulić in 1507, out of deep devotion to the saint and inspired by countless falsehoods and insufficiently detailed records of Jerome’s life.³⁹⁸

A large number of the manuscript copies of Jerome’s letters, out of which some were lavishly decorated like the mentioned manuscript from Ferrara, or the one from Venice, testify that they could have been transcribed with the intention of offering an *ex-voto*. Keeping in mind that the total number of letters attributed to Jerome during the period was above a hundred and fifty, it was quite a venture. Frazier points out to another practice where the composition of new devotional material was considered a rite of passage for young men in the religious order. The famous Cardinal Bessarion composed a *vita* of the hermit Bessarion after he finished the novitiate, marking his passage to the new identity.³⁹⁹ Following the same logic, the transcription or commission to copy works by Jerome could also be observed as a kind of rite of passage, as it was in the case of the manuscript of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo.

With the growing interest in saint lives and the search for original manuscripts that were introducing new elements to the saints’ lives, humanists of the quattrocento composed new accounts on Jerome’s life. Around 1470, Laudivio Zacchia (c.1435–?) wrote *Vita Beati Hieronymi*, following the literary form of the stories in the *Legenda Aurea*. In it, he names Jerome as *divus litterarum princeps* and emphasizes his intellectual and theological achievements. In the introduction to his life,

³⁹⁵ Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 9. The author examines several vitae that were written during the fifteenth century by humanists, even those that in the present historiography are not known as the representatives of the genre, as Lorenzo Valla or Leon Battista Alberti. The reason for that indeed lies in the fact that many of them are not original works, but translations, transcriptions, or compilations of the earlier lives.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38-39. After being healed by touching the relic of Saint Catherine of Siena, Niccolò Borghesi composed a new *vita*. Francesco Diedo (c.1432-1484) composed a new life of Saint Roch as a pledge for the protection of Brescia during a plague outbreak.

³⁹⁸ See footnote 42.

³⁹⁹ Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 36.

he compares Jerome to Aristotle and Plato, but giving Jerome priority, as he teaches of not only things human but also of divine, for which he surpassed all the learned and wise man of Antiquity. The phrase “So let us praise Jerome; better still, let us imitate his life and deeds!” in itself contains a summary of Jerome’s cult during the fifteenth century, where the most significant praise given to the saint was the one done by imitating his life and deeds.⁴⁰⁰

Public Orations

From the examples elaborated above, it is evident that Jerome’s cult was predominantly nurtured among the enclosed circles of the educated individuals, which could have engaged in the theological debates. Jerome, as deeply pious and highly educated individual, became the model after whom they could model their life and actions. Those distinguished humanists who were deeply devoted to Jerome also had a crucial role in shaping popular opinion and raising awareness on the life and deeds of Jerome through the performative actions of public orations delivered on his feast day, September 30th. Such public acts did not only contributed to the establishing of Jerome as a model for rhetorical skills and showing his prominent place among humanist scholars, but they confirm the wider reception and the existence of the vivid civic cult in the Italian cities where his feast day was solemnly celebrated.

Examples include Niccolò Bonavia da Lucca, who in 1410 gave a public speech in Jerome’s honor, while he was still a student, during mass in the church of San Andrea in Padova on Jerome’s feast day. Giovanni Lamola (1405–1450) did the same again in Padova in 1442, Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466), a woman of broad knowledge and humanist perception, delivered an oration in 1453 in Verona, at the invitation of the local bishop, and Agostino Dati (1420–1478), a famous grammarian, did so in Siena in 1446.⁴⁰¹ As seen from these examples, such orations were the part of a celebration of saint’s feast day, incorporated in the liturgical ritual of celebration.

Among other public panegyrics dedicated to Jerome, the most outstanding were those of Pier Paolo Vergerio, the Elder (1370–1444), a canon lawyer born in Justinopolis (Koper, present-day Slovenia). A man with a remarkable career, who served the Carrara family in Padua, afterward two popes - Innocent VII and Gregory XII, and until his death in Buda, served as a secretary to Sigismund

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 102–4, 492.

⁴⁰¹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 95; Linde, *How to Correct the Sacra Scriptura?*, 55.

of Luxemburg, Holy Roman Emperor, and King of Hungary.⁴⁰² Through the years, he delivered a series of sermons on Jerome's feast day. It is likely that Vergerio became familiar with the cult of Saint Jerome in the university circles of Florence, Padua, and Bologna, where he studied. Vergerio himself informs us that his affection towards the saint stemmed from his family, who venerated Jerome as their patron saint. After surviving several ambushes during the 1380s, which his family attributed to Jerome's heavenly intercession, Vergerio took an oath to promote the saint through holding public praise of his sanctity, on his feast day. For Vergerio, Jerome and his lifestyle served as "an example of ethical conduct".⁴⁰³

In ten preserved sermons, Vergerio emphasizes two poles of Jerome's sanctity—the eremitical one which served as a model for the monastic life, and intellectual side—which contribution to interpreting the Holy Scripture. His first sermon was addressed to members of the Benedictine order "who are imitators of the life of that man and comprise just a part of what he began to harvest long ago through sound training."⁴⁰⁴ He used Jerome to affirm the need for church reform in his time, in particular among the monks, where the lack of observance was visible. In this sermon, Vergerio contrasted the small number of monks in his current day with the number in Jerome's time, explaining that with the immorality of his time, referring to Jerome's letter to Eustochium several times to praise this part of his saintly figure.

The messages delivered by Vergerio should also be interpreted in the context of the developing reform movement inside the religious orders, what we can see also from his critique of the preachers. For the latter, he claims that they were just chasing popularity, preaching on moral qualities, urging the audience to act differently according to God's word, but not giving an example with their behavior and life. Vergerio's sermons are preserved in transcription in several volumes, but no single copy contains all ten. The presence of the sermons in several codices originating in Northern Italy shows that students turned to them frequently, not particularly from interest in Jerome,

⁴⁰² John M McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator* (Tempe: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Arizona State University, 1996). This comprehensive biography of Pier Paolo Vergerio, the Elder, discusses the development of humanist education as a reflection of the moral qualities propagated by Vergerio. In this context, McManamon also analyzes how Saint Jerome became the humanist patron saint as an exemplary intellectual man, but also as a devoted Christian whose morality was reflected in his work. Vergerio's portrait of the humanist is based on his written works but also on his public activities, primarily speeches through which he promoted Christian ideals. See a recent study on Vergerio: Anja Božič, "Praising Saint Jerome or Praising Eloquence: Pier Paolo Vergerio's Sermones Pro Sancto Hieronymo And His Letters" (MA thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2020)

⁴⁰³ John M. McManamon, "Pier Paolo Vergerio (The Elder) and the Beginnings of the Humanist Cult of Jerome," *The Catholic Historical Review* 71, no. 3 (1985): 354.; Vergerio, "Sermones Decem," 169. The critical edition and translation of the ten sermons written in praise of Saint Jerome is a continuity of McManamon's previous studies of Vergerio's work and life. The sermons are an excellent example of Vergerio's erudition and eloquence and help us reconstruct the fourteenth and fifteenth-century image of the saint.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 137.

but for Vergerio's authority as an orator to model, after whose work they composed their own.⁴⁰⁵ Vergerio's example shows that the reason for praising Jerome in his case, was not initially driven only by the wish to praise the saint's erudition, but to express gratitude for the protection he had given over his family. This personal invocation was the main force behind Vergerio's wish to promote Jerome's cult, as it was for many other distinguished individuals during the period discussed in this dissertation.

Jerome as the Representation of Docta Pietas

Although Jerome's cult among the humanists developed initially as they adopted a new critical approach to the patristic texts, over time, he received new roles and individual's identification with the saint passed into more intimate and personal levels. For that reason, the iconographic type "Jerome in his Study", which often embedded a portrait of humanists, grew into a model for the portrayals of humanists. This type of image is counted among the Renaissance practice of travesty portraits where individuals portrayed themselves disguised in the figures of ancient heroes or saints whom they admired, and with whom they compared their virtues. There are several such examples in the fifteenth-century renaissance paintings. Through such representations, individuals identified with the saint as a model of moral, pious, and intellectual virtues.

Among the earliest examples of this type of painting is *Saint Jerome in his Study* by the workshop of Jan Van Eyck dated to 1442, which scholars argue is also a representation of the Cardinal Niccolò Albergati (1373–1443).⁴⁰⁶ Such a portrayal did not have its roots only in the general reputation of the saint during the period, but the strong personal relationship of cardinal Albergati had with Jerome. This Carthusian monk became Bishop of Bologna in 1417, where he vigorously supported the ongoing reformation of the religious orders, promoted the decisions of the Lateran Council, and praised contemporary devotional practices that were influenced by the northern lay movement – *devotio moderna*. In all of Albergati's endeavors, Jerome had a distinguished position. At the time when he was appointed as a bishop, he founded two confraternities.

The first was, called *Compagnia dell'Ascensione di Nostro Signore*, known commonly as *Trentatre*, was driven by the concepts of *devotio moderna*, concentrating on the *Imitation of Christ* and the Eucharistic piety by performing theatrical presentations of Christ's passion. The second confraternity was named *Compagnia di S.Girolamo*. It consisted of Bolognese youth and was in fact

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 106–9.

⁴⁰⁶ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 28; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 108; John Hunter, "Who Is Jan van Eyck's 'Cardinal Nicolo Albergati'?", *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (1993): 207.

already in existence when Albergati became a bishop, but they gained strong support from him in their mission to keep youths away from taverns and gambling. Albergati named them after Saint Jerome and composed a catechism textbook for the confraternal members.⁴⁰⁷ Additionally, he promoted personal devotion to the saint among the members by giving them a woodcut of the saint to hang in their homes.⁴⁰⁸

Antonello da Messina's *Saint Jerome in his Study* painted around 1475, is one of the most intriguing renaissance images of the saint for its unusual iconography and composition. Scholars have argued that here too a humanist is wrapped in Jerome's image, and that it represents the embedded portrait of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), German theologian, and promoter of humanism. Similar portrait types are known to have been made for Saint Antonino, archbishop of Florence (d. 1459), the French humanist and philosopher Jacques von Brandenburg (d. 1545), and even Martin Luther.⁴⁰⁹ These depictions mostly portray ecclesiastical dignitaries, proponents of Christian humanism, as in the cases of Nicholas of Cusa, Niccolò Albergati, and Saint Antonino of Florence, advocates of the reforms of the church during the fifteenth century. Not only did these men adhere to Jerome as the personification of the values they were promoting, but through his figure, they could bridge the gap between secular and ecclesiastical humanism, taking the example of Jerome as the connection point between the two.

The unique connection between the saint and the humanists, for whom he stood as the symbolic representation of *docta pietas* is further expressed by the possession of paintings with Jerome's image, not necessarily "Jerome in his Study", used for private contemplation. In his *De politia litteraria* (1462), Angelo Decembrio (1415–after 1465) recounts an account given by Leonello d'Este on the appearance, arrangement, and decoration of the libraries.⁴¹⁰ He mentions that many, "found it pleasant to have an image of Saint Jerome writing in his retreat," and that such an image "teaches us that solitude, silence, and hard work in reading and writing are appropriate for the libraries."⁴¹¹ This sentiment is reflected in the significant number of private commissions depicting "Saint Jerome in his Study", "Penitent Saint Jerome", or "Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness"

⁴⁰⁷ Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20–21.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁰⁹ Penny Howell Jolly, "Antonello da Messina's Saint Jerome in his Study: An Iconographic Analysis," *The Art Bulletin* 65, no. 2 (1983): 238–53; Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 108. Pietro Caiazza, *Alter Hieronymus: il cardinale Bessarione e il San Girolamo nello studio di Antonello da Messina*, Salerno: Scala, 2019.

⁴¹⁰ Pabel, *Herculean Labours*, 25.

⁴¹¹ Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 30.

that were made in Italy, especially in Florence and Venice area, during the second half of the fifteenth century.⁴¹²

The habit of owning a painting of Jerome was also an established practice between the humanists of the Ferrara circle. Guarino of Verona (1374–1460), also present in the discussion in the before-mentioned *De politia litteraria*, owned a painting with the image of Saint Jerome.⁴¹³ Although the painting itself has not been preserved down to the present-day, Guarino’s description of it has. The description survives in one of Guarino’s poems, dedicated to the painter Pisanello, who had gifted him a painting. Guarino delighted in the image, describing his deep esteem for Jerome, sentiments which no doubt could also be applied to other humanists, and reflecting the general effect such paintings had on those who observed them:

Why list all your accomplishments one by one? Here as I write is their pattern: the noble gift you have sent me, a picture of my beloved Jerome, offers a wonderful example of your power and skill. The noble whiteness of his beard, the stern brows of his saintly countenance – simply to behold these is to have one’s mind drawn to higher things. He is present with us and yet seems so absent, he is both here and somewhere else: the grotto may hold his body, but the soul has the freedom of Heaven. However, plainly the picture declares itself to be a painted thing in spite of the living figures it displays, I scarcely dare open my mouth, and whisper close-lipped rather than let my voice break loudly in on one who contemplates God and the Kingdom of Heaven.⁴¹⁴

Guarino’s wish to possess an image of Saint Jerome is found in another letter, written in 1427 to Francesco Giuliano in Venice, where he writes: “All the best, my dearest Giuliano, and remember the image of the blessed Jerome, which, as I recall, you promised me.”⁴¹⁵ Guarino’s love for Jerome could be compared to that of Giovanni d’Andrea. He also named his son after the saint and favored him among other Church Fathers. Jerome’s role of a guide during the reading of the Classical literature and the Scriptures is apparent from the letter sent to a monk Giovanni da Prato:

Imploring and lying prostrate on the ground, I will now pray to Father Jerome to assist us, by the example which he himself has given regarding the reading of pagan authors, as guide, teacher, and patron in a question which we have in common with him; for this concerns his cause as well. [...] If we want to explore the opinion of Father Jerome on reading the poets, the historians and the other authors, this opinion is to be learned in the first place from his writings, which so abound with poems, fables and descriptions of events derived from all poets, that these derivations are lost on the reader if he is not an expert.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹² Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice.”

⁴¹³ Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d’Este Hours*, 165.

⁴¹⁴ Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 92.

⁴¹⁵ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 30.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

The descriptions of the paintings by Leonello d'Este and Guarino of Verona are not referring to the iconographic type “Saint Jerome in his Study”. They both actually describe Jerome in the wilderness, out of his study. Leonello stresses that Jerome is “in his retreat,” while Guarino describes a desert-like landscape, where Jerome is inside a grotto. In both cases, the desert or the cave, should be understood metaphorically. As I elaborate afterwards, the desert or the solitude, is a necessary tool for the intellectual production.

Ridderbos brings other examples on placing Jerome’s image in the library or the study room. In another discussion at the court of Ferrara, reported by Decembrio, one of the speakers expressed his opinion how statues and paintings had nothing to do with reading and studying, to which Guarino opposed that “...both painting and writing tend to one end: the encouragement of learning and the desire for knowledge”. Among them was Giovanni Gualengo, whose remarks — “For my part, I keep at home, with special reverence, a likeness of Saint Jerome plucking out the thorn from the lion’s paw.”— reveal that he, like Leonello d'Este, possessed an image of the saint.⁴¹⁷



Figure 27 Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, c. 1455-1460 (48cm x 36cm), São Paulo Museum of Art. Source: © Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, author: Luis Hossaka, http://mini-site.louvre.fr/mantegna/images/section1/zoom/01_07.jpg (Last accessed 22 June 2020)

From the middle of the fifteenth century, painters depicted Jerome in the desert-like landscape reading a set of books. It has been already discussed how the gradual transformation of “Jerome as the Cardinal” and “Jerome in his Study” into the “Penitent Saint Jerome” happened in the reform circles in Florence due to the different needs of the public of devotees to whom this type of image communicated different aspects of Jerome’s sanctity. The parallel could be drawn with the transformation of “Penitent Saint Jerome” to “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”, highly conditioned by the spiritual atmosphere of Renaissance Venice. Although this type prevails in the production of Giovanni Bellini, the variations of his composition raise a question for the further exploration of the layers of the meaning embedded in this type of representation. I refer to the

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 35.

representation of Saint Jerome by Andrea Mantegna, today in Sao Paulo (Fig. 27),⁴¹⁸ where the saint wears the monastic garment or the painting by Bartolomeo Montagna, where Jerome is dressed in Hieronymite monastic robes (Fig. 31). The significant difference between the way Jerome is painted in Bartolomeo Montagna's painting and the paintings from Giovanni Bellini's circle indicate the different context for which the painting was made and its commissioner, someone with the close relations with the Hieronymite order.⁴¹⁹

Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi

Although I have already presented the importance of the *Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi* for the development of Jerome's image in the literary, visual and devotional sense, it is necessary to underline its significant influence on the expansion of the cult, principally during the Renaissance, where they represent the core of the cult. The translation into the various vernacular languages, like it was with *Senj Transitus*, has facilitated the dispersion of the cult beyond Italy and among different social strata.⁴²⁰ The additional support came with the development of the printing business, where the first books were mainly focused on the liturgical and devotional material. The compilation of pseudo-letters together with Jerome's *vita* and prayers to the saint did not serve only as the comprehensive literature on his life and deeds but could be seen as the meditative manual, as it will be discussed later on the example of the Zadar Polyptych by Vittore Carpaccio.

The number of printed editions of *Transitus* between 1475 and 1550 absolutely confirms Jerome's position as one of the most venerated saints in the popular devotion. Helen I. Roberts listed 28 Italian editions containing letters printed between 1475 and 1500.⁴²¹ Like it was already mentioned in Venice alone, *Transitus* had 14 editions between 1475 and 1498, out of which 12 were in the vernacular. The vernacular versions truly witness the popularity of the saint, showing that even those who could not read Latin, wanted to possess a copy of this work in their libraries.⁴²²

The main reason for the compilation of such later hagiographic material on Saint Jerome is because little was known about the historical Jerome. The paucity of sources from Jerome's time,

⁴¹⁸ See more: Nancy Ridel Kaplan, "O São Jeronimo em meditação no deserto do Masp" (Campinas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1998).

⁴¹⁹ On a detailed explanation of the iconography see: Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 230–33.

⁴²⁰ On the dissemination of the letters in the central Europe and their vernacular translations see: Ágnes Korondi, "A Vita et transitus Sancti Hieronymi kelet-közép-európai és magyarországi elterjedéséről (The Dissemination of the Vita et transitus Sancti Hieronymi in Hungary and East-Central Europe)," in *A könyv és olvasója: a 14-16. századi könyvkultúra interdiszciplináris megvilágításban* (Budapest: MTA-ELTE HECE, 2018), 193–214.

⁴²¹ Helen I. Roberts, "St. Augustine in 'St. Jerome's Study': Carpaccio's Painting and Its Legendary Source," *The Art Bulletin* 41, no. 4 (1959): 285. See the *Appendix I* on page 296.

⁴²² Brown and Ferino-Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 132.

which could help draw his image, left ample space for later medieval interventions and inventions concerning the saint. These later writers were principally concerned with expanding the miracles he performed, which could form his saintly image according to the religious needs and sentiments of the time.

During the fourteenth century, the role and the perception of the devotees started to change with the increasing involvement of the laity in ecclesiastical and monastic structures through the development of the Observant reform, but also due to the development of new piety, largely out of the institutionalized ecclesiastical framework. Secular canons gathered into congregations or joined the Franciscan Tertiaries, embracing the revival of early Christian practices such as the eremitical way of life. The need for devotional material, which could serve as guidance and a model of their spiritual aspirations, vaulted *Transitus* into being among the most popular religious text of the Late Middle Ages. The reason for this lies not only with the portrayal of Jerome as a living example of true faith in Christ but also with the ambiguity of Jerome's character contained in the text, which in itself condenses various aspects of Christian spirituality, each of them susceptible to different interpretations according to the tastes of the new public.⁴²³ Despite its importance for the formation and dissemination of Jerome's cult, and the influence on the formation of the iconographic types of the saint in the Renaissance, the *Transitus* still awaits a comprehensive study.

The reason why such a study is indispensable lies in the influence of *Transitus* on the visual production of the period where the narrative cycle consisting of scenes of his last communion, his death, and the vision of Augustine, uses the content of the letters as its textual model. Unlike other popular saints, such as Saint Francis, fresco cycles of Jerome's life are rare, besides a few Florentine examples mentioned in this thesis, the narrative scenes are primarily found on the *predella* of altarpieces consecrated to Jerome. Other examples of the iconographic manifestation of stories taken from the *Transitus* include, a painted a cycle of the patron saints George, Tryphon, and Jerome in the Scuola degli Schiavoni in Venice, painted by Vittore Carpaccio at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which depicted three scenes from the life of Saint Jerome. Among these scenes was *Saint Augustine in the Study*, which illustrates the moment when Jerome's soul appeared in Augustine's study to announce Jerome's death and transition to heaven—a reference taken directly from the *Transitus*.

⁴²³ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 138.

This scene also has a reference to another vision of Augustine that happened a few days later, which is described in this letter to Cyril and discussed in the previous chapter – that of Saint John the Baptist and Jerome. Here the reference is visible in the painted sculpture of Saint John the Baptist in the niche of Augustine’s study. The pairing of two saints is one of the most common references of the text in the visual medium, where two saints are usually depicted one next to each other on a polyptych.



Figure 28 Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Augustine in his Study*, 1502-1507 (141 cm × 210 cm), Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore_carpaccio._visione_di_sant%27agostino_01.jpg

(Last accessed 22 June 2020)

4.2 THE PRIVATE DEVOTION

The rise of personal devotion to the saint is also evident in the popularity of the name Jerome as a baptismal name, which became one of the main reasons for the choice of him as a personal patron saint.⁴²⁴ Such practice reflects the increasing number of commissions of chapels and altars consecrated to the saint and ornated with his image. This practice was common among saint’s namesakes. It is necessary to clearly distinguish here the difference between use of terms private in public within this thesis. The definition applied here, is borrowed from Michael Baxandall who differentiates between collective commissions, ecclesiastical or communal, and private initiatives, where the painter and his production was controlled by the commissioner.⁴²⁵ Still, it is important to underline that the role of the latter one was often public, depending on the place where the artwork was located, such as a private chapel in a church. This distinction, of “collective” and “private” is applied throughout this thesis.

The elaboration of the adoption of Jerome in the domain of the private devotion where his penitential nature becomes the main point of identification with the saint is necessary to understand how regardless of the existing notion of Jerome’s Dalmatian origin, the re-appreciation of Jerome in

⁴²⁴ Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*, 164. Among the most popular names given at the baptism were Giovanni, Antonio, Francesco, Andrea, Bartolommeo, Bernardo and Girolamo (Jerome).

⁴²⁵ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 10–11.

Dalmatia was largely supported by the new spiritual atmosphere, especially in Venice where the fifteenth century represented a shift in perception of devotion, which becomes more personal and intimate. The process of development of Jerome's civic cult in Dalmatia was directly connected with the establishment of Jerome's popular cult in Italy during the fifteenth century.

The Private Chapels

Among the most common practices of the private devotion to Saint Jerome were the endowment of the altars and the chapels in the already established practice of veneration of the saints, particularly venerated by the certain families, where such commission also stood as the representation of their financial power, political influence. This practice of the personal devotion to the saint has been among the most common in the Dalmatian communes and among the earliest expressions of the personal devotion to the saint as seen on the already mentioned chapel of Paolo Giglaro in the church of Saint Francis in Zadar from the end of the fourteenth century, or the chapel endowed by Nicolotta Sobota in Trogir, finished in 1446.

Among the earliest private chapels to be commissioned with an image of Jerome in Italy, was the previously mentioned chapel of the Del Palagio family in the Florentine church San Michele Visdomini from the end of the fourteenth century, with the scenes from the life of Saint Jerome by Mariotto di Nardo.⁴²⁶ It was followed by a chapel of Saint Jerome in the Florentine church of Santa Maria del Carmine, decorated with the fresco by Gherardo Starnina between 1402–1404.⁴²⁷ The literature considered the Del Pugliese family as the original patrons, but recent research has shown that only in 1465 did the family has taken over the chapel from its original patrons, the Guidoni family, keeping the same patron saint.⁴²⁸ Interestingly, these two commissions are not connected with Jerome's namesakes as the commissioners, which demonstrates that Jerome's cult started to gain general importance.

⁴²⁶ See p. 129.

⁴²⁷ Liana Cheney, *Giorgio Vasari's Teachers: Sacred & Profane Art* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 160. Even though the frescoes have not been preserved down to the present day, the description of it by Vasari survives: "In like manner, when Saint Jerome, being at the point of death, is making his will, he has [represented] some friars in a delightful and realist manner, for some are writing, others listening attentively and looking about, observing all the works of their master with great earnestness. The portrait of Gherardo occurs in the story of Saint Jerome, he is one of the figures who are standing round the dying saint, represented in profile with a hood on his head and a mantle buttoned about him. [...] The whole [painting in which Saint Jerome is receiving his earliest instruction] is executed with much grace and lightness, and Gherardo [Starnina] appears to have delighted in these touches of nature."

⁴²⁸ Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 29.

Similarly to the Zadar example, the patrons of the chapels where those with the close connections to the Franciscan order, like the Del Palagaio family, or Girolamo Piero di Rucellai (d.1497), a wealthy Florentine patrician whose actions reflect several contemporary practices of private veneration to the saint, who has been the supporter of the *Hieronymites* congregation in Fiesole. He possessed a copy of the *vita* of his name-saint, together with a copy of Pseudo-Eusebius' letter on the death of Saint Jerome.⁴²⁹ Besides being his namesake, Girolamo Piero di Rucellai became acquainted with the saint's cult through his close connections with the *Hieronymites* congregation in Fiesole, in whose church he was buried. Before his death, he commissioned an altarpiece from Francesco Botticini around 1490 for the church in Fiesole, known as the *Rucellai altarpiece of Saint Jerome*.⁴³⁰

The altarpiece, *Penitent Saint Jerome with Saints*, today kept in the National Gallery in London, depicts the penitent Jerome with Eusebius of Cremona and Pope Damasus on the right, and Eustochium and Paola on the left, with portraits of the donor and his son.⁴³¹ The choice of saints depicted here alludes to the most popular literature on Jerome at that period—Eusebius's letter to Pope Damasus on Jerome's death and Jerome's letter to Eustochium. The predella narrates the life of the saint following that laid out in the *Transitus*, similar to the previously mentioned *Rinieri altarpiece* in Siena. One branch of the Rucellai family also had a chapel in the church of San Pancrazio in Florence, where the sons of Filippo di Vanni Rucellai built a chapel consecrated to their name-saints in 1465, Jerome and Dominic.⁴³² In Dalmatia, regardless of growing popularity, there are no pictorial narrative cycles of Jerome's life.

In 1495, Girolamo Badoer, a prominent Venetian magistrate, delegated in his last will that his daughter Agnesina Badoer complete his funerary chapel dedicated to Saint Jerome in the church San Francesco della Vigna in Venice, the church served by an Observant branch of Franciscans. The instructions also detailed the iconographic program that was to appear on the altarpiece of the chapel, Saint Anthony of Padua was to be placed in the central panel, with Saint Jerome, Saint Michael, Saint Agnes and Saint Benedict on the sides, completed with the Madonna in the uppermost register. Agnesina respected her father's wish only partially and changed the initial iconographic concept by replacing Saint Anthony in the central panel with Saint Jerome. In this way, she not only pays honors

⁴²⁹ Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori and Rucellai* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015), 262–64.

⁴³⁰ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 76–78.

⁴³¹ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 178.

⁴³² Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence*, 101.

to her father, but also to her new husband, who was Jerome's namesake, Girolamo Giustiniani.⁴³³ The marble altarpiece, executed between 1495 and 1534 by the Lombardo workshop, represents Jerome seated as a cardinal, with the church and the book in his hand, together with the lion next to him.

All three examples showed how it is not possible to observe the implementation of Jerome's cult through only one tradition of veneration, solely humanist, Franciscan or as an expression of private devotion. The intertwining and ambiguity of Jerome's figure, in which different devotional traditions were present, is the strongest reason for his popularity during the fifteenth century. Although the humanists, the ecclesiastic dignitaries, and other highly educated people identified with the saint through his intellectual character, another fundamental reason for individuals to identify with Jerome was in the devotional sense, where his penitential character served as a model for redemptive devotion. This aspect of the cult was the one through which everyone could relate with the saint, regardless of their social status, years of education, or understanding of the current theological debates in which Jerome was imposed as a model. The universal sacrament of penance was the same for everyone, and, for that reason, as is discussed in several places in this thesis, the iconographic type "Penitent Saint Jerome" was the most common among private commissions.

Before elaborating on the reasons behind the gradual adoption of this type in the private domain, I would point out another aspect why the funerary chapels started to be consecrated to Jerome, like it was in Dalmatia. Of all the letters in the *Transitus*, one shaped the painters' production, in particular, resulting in the formation of the separate iconographic type of Jerome's last communion or Jerome's death—Pseudo Eusebius' letter *De morte Hieronymi*.⁴³⁴ In the 1450s, Filippo Lippi painted an altarpiece titled the *Funeral of Saint Jerome*, depicting Saint Jerome on his deathbed, surrounded by the mourning monks, on the commission of Geminiano Inghirami (1371–1460), superintendent of the Cathedral of Prato.

The composition and the positions of the depicted figures point to the already mentioned influence of Giotto's cycle in the Bardi Chapel on the iconography of this scene of the death of Saint Jerome, which confirms the previously posed hypothesis on the formation of Jerome's image after

⁴³³ Douglas Lewis, "The Sculptures in the Chapel of the Villa Giustinian at Roncade, and Their Relation to Those in the Giustinian Chapel at San Francesco Della Vigna," *Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 27, no. 3 (1983): 307–52; Anne Markham Schulz, Manuela Morresi, and Toto Bergamo Rossi, *La Cappella Badoer-Giustinian in San Francesco della Vigna a Venezia* (Firenze: Centro Di, 2003); Catherine King, *Renaissance Women Patrons: Wives and Widows in Italy, c. 1300-1550* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 55–56.

⁴³⁴ Isotta Nogarola, Margaret L. King, and Diana Maury Robin, *Complete Writings: Letterbook, Dialogue on Adam and Eve, Orations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 36. In 1436/1437, Isotta Nogarola expressed gratitude in a letter to Bevilacqua for sending her a book on the death of Saint Jerome. Here, she was referring to the copy of Pseudo-Eusebius' letter.

the image of Saint Francis. The same scene, *Last Communion of Saint Jerome*, was painted between 1498 and 1503 by Sandro Botticelli for Francesco del Pugliese and his chapel in Sommaia. Jill Burke formulated the hypothesis that the execution of this painting is associated with the Renaissance concept of the “good death” which is perfectly illustrated by Jerome’s death, surrounded by his brother monks: “Dying is a prolonged process that is essential for the well-being of the soul.”⁴³⁵ The idea of the “good death” was also one of the topics preached by Girolamo Savonarola, in 1496 in one of his sermons, subsequently published under the title *Dell’Arte del Ben’ Morire*.⁴³⁶

Bartolomeo Scala composed *Collectiones Cosmianae* in 1464, after the death of Cosimo Medici, on his life and deeds. In it, in the form of dialogue, Cosimo in contemplating death, quotes Jerome’s comments lamenting the fragility of worldly life and welcoming the joys of death, together with Jerome’s words of consolation to his friends around him, pronounced in the moments of dying: “from darkness to light, from danger to safety, from poverty to wealth, from battle to victory, from sadness to joy, from servility to lordship, from the temporal to the eternal.”⁴³⁷ Putting Jerome’s words into Cosimo’s mouth, Scala portrayed him as prepared for the “good death”. The description of the death of Cosimo’s grandson, Lorenzo Medici in 1492, by Bartolomeo Dei to Lorenzo’s uncle Benedetto, described how Lorenzo “died so well and with as much patience and knowledge and reverence for God, as excellent religion and divine spirit, with such holy words in his mouth that he seemed to be a new Saint Jerome.”⁴³⁸

These new aspects of the influence of *Transitus*, together with yet another facet of personal self-identification with the saint, clearly show the need for a more comprehensive study of this material whose impact was significant not only as hagiographical material but as a contemplative handbook in both religious and educated circles. The connection of Jerome with this concept could be the reason for the number of funerary chapels being consecrated to the saint, where the individuals who commissioned them could identify with the saint in death, the same way they were doing it during the life.

Jerome and Penance

The popularity of Jerome as the embodiment of penitential practices is related to a change in religious sentiment and the gradually growing role of sacrament of penance that had become

⁴³⁵ Burke, *Changing Patrons*, 185–86.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 185–86.

⁴³⁷ George W. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991), 138.

⁴³⁸ Burke, *Changing Patrons*, 181.

increasingly popular since its institutionalization during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Steven Ozment explains that the penance, “a centerpiece of late medieval church piety,” was closely related to popular beliefs and practices, such as relics, pilgrimage, faith in purgatory, and indulgences.⁴³⁹ One of the reasons for the popularity of the sacrament was its promotion by mendicant friars, especially the Franciscans, who encouraged penitential practice and the preaching of Saint Francis. The postulates of *Poverello* regarding penance are found in one of his last letters to his brethren: “In all your sermons you shall tell the people of the need to do penance, impressing on them that no one can be saved unless he receives the Body and Blood of our Lord.”⁴⁴⁰ This statement could be interpreted as a guiding point during the peak of Franciscan activities in the fifteenth century, when penitential fervor was present in public spaces through the preaching of observant friars, especially in the sermons of Bernardino of Siena and James of the Marches.⁴⁴¹

Although penitential piety was embedded in the monastic and clerical lifestyle, the religious crisis of the Late Middle Ages, affected the development of lay piety and lay penitential practices which were never so varied as in that period. They emerged within the reform movements, which in their nature, sought the restitution of the ideals of the early church by promoting ascetic ideals as the method for solving the spiritual crisis.⁴⁴² Some examples of new devotional practices have already been discussed in this thesis, just to recall the Tuscan congregations or the confraternities supported by Niccolò Albergati.

The rise of devotion to Saint Jerome, Saint John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, and Saint Anthony, all penitential and ascetic saints of the early days of the church, symbolically reflects the religious sentiments of the fifteenth century. Their frequent occurrence in visual media, especially in the domestic setting, testifies to the development of devotional practices even outside of the ecclesiastical framework, where the mentioned ascetic saints served as guides and models in everyday life. The growing wealth, literacy, and self-consciousness among even the middle class expanded a market for all kinds of devotional tools—manuscripts, prints, devotional literature, and images. Devotional texts, many written in the vernacular, started to be accompanied by images, intended to

⁴³⁹ Steven Edgar Ozment, *The Age of Reform (1250-1550): An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 216.

⁴⁴⁰ For the development of the sacrament of penance see the Chapter 7 *The exemplar of perfect penance* in: Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 201.

⁴⁴¹ See: Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁴⁴² Ozment, *The Age of Reform (1250-1550)*, 220.

assist deeper meditative contemplation.⁴⁴³ Images started to circulate in a more portable and affordable form—woodcuts. Several woodcuts representing Saint Jerome have been preserved down to the present day. One of them represents the saint as a cardinal sitting at his desk, with a lion next to him (c.1430). Two handwritten inscriptions support the intercessory role of Jerome, *Sancte Geronime ora pro me*, and *Sancte Ieronime ora pro me*, which indicates its use in personal devotion.⁴⁴⁴ I will return later, in chapter 7, to the question of Jerome and his images in the popular piety.

Two examples by Piero della Francesca support the hypothesis that images of the penitent Jerome were among the preferred media of personal devotion. During his stay in Ancona, Piero della Francesca painted *Saint Jerome in Penitence*, kneeling in front of a cave-like shelf with books, holding praying beads in one hand, and stone in another.⁴⁴⁵ The painting, today kept in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, is signed and dated 1450 by the artist. Due to the established connection of the painter with the family, James R. Banker connects its commission with Girolamo Ferretti, whose namesake and patron Jerome was, and associates it with the chapel of Saint Jerome he endowed.⁴⁴⁶ Still, the lengthy-time discrepancy between the construction of the chapel and the production of the painting makes us question this hypothesis. Due to the dimensions of the painting (51x38cm), and the fact that the chapel was consecrated some twenty years after the execution of the painting, it is more possible that it was made for the commissioner as the *andachtsbilder*, to aid the devotion rather than to be placed in the chapel. Due to the limits of this dissertation, I am leaving this question for some future discussion.

For understanding the visual production in Dalmatia, particularly the depiction of Saint Jerome and the donor Martin Mladošić on the altarpiece which Vittore Carpaccio has made at the end of the fifteenth century for the altar of Saint Marin in the cathedral in Zadar (Fig. 39), of importance

⁴⁴³ Sarah Blick and Laura Deborah Gelfand, “Introduction to Volume 2,” in *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), xlv–xlvi.

⁴⁴⁴ David S. Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2017), 69, 81–83. The author brings other examples of Jerome’s woodcuts used for personal devotion. A manuscript that once belonged to the Carmelite monastery in Frankfurt (*Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Lat. Ms. Oct. 113*), and mostly served as a handbook for the expulsion of demons has a woodcut of Jerome with a lion. Although the presence of Jerome seems strange in the context of exorcism, one of the miracles associated with a saint is of a nun who hangs a picture of Jerome in her cell to keep demons away. Initially, the image was facing the opening text of the book. However, its presence was not merely decorative. The text has an explicit instruction that says, “show an image of blessed Jerome.” As the author correctly notices, this aspect of Jerome’s cult during the fifteenth century was not researched profoundly, especially in connection with the images representing the saint.

⁴⁴⁵ Carlo Ginzburg, *The enigma of Piero: Piero della Francesca* (London: Verso, 2002). James R. Banker, *Piero Della Francesca: Artist & Man* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24. In 1450 he appears as the witness in the will of Simona, the widow of Conte Giovanni di messer Francesco Ferretti.

⁴⁴⁶ Banker, *Piero della Francesca*, 27; Christiansen Keith, *Piero della Francesca: Personal Encounters* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 27.

is another painting by Piero della Francesca. In the early 1450s, he painted *Saint Jerome and a Suppliant*, today in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice.⁴⁴⁷ The saint is dressed as a hermit, seated with a book in his hands, accompanied by the image of a kneeling penitent whose gaze focuses on the crucifix in front of him. For a long time, researchers considered that the figure of the penitent represented Girolamo Amadi, a member of the Lucchese merchant community in Venice, identified with the inscription on the painting. James Banker, however, suggests that the inscription relates to the later owner of the painting, while the initial commissioner whom Piero has portrayed here was Jacopo Anastagi.⁴⁴⁸ Although the initial identification of the donor with Girolamo Amadi is based on the inscription and the fact that saint was his namesake, we have already discussed here that during the fifteenth century, devotion to Jerome was not only driven by having the same name as the saint.

For this discussion, the name of the commissioner is not as crucial as it is the presence of his portrait in the painting. The representation of the donor, kneeling in front of Saint Jerome, reveals an intense devotion to the saint. The hypothesis that it could have been Jacopo Anastagi is also possible, as he identified with the saint through the intercession of his penitential vow, but also for his humanist interests.⁴⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the donor is not physically detached from the depicted scene nor painted on a smaller scale than the figure of the saint. On the contrary, by observing the painting, it is evident that the commissioner is the active participant in the scene where Jerome, dressed in his hermit outfit, is teaching him from the opened book he holds in his hands. Saint and the commissioner are placed in front of the crucifix, a standard element in the iconography of Jerome in penance.

The poetics of the scene does not represent the penitential fervor of the saint, but instead emphasizes Jerome as the one who teaches how to conform the life to the teachings of the Christ. The act of actual teaching presented here should be understood symbolically as well. Through the devotional literature on him and the accounts on his life in the wilderness, where this scene is placed, and the voluntary exile and the suffering of the bodily penance for the sins he committed, teaches with his examples how the salvation and the vision of God could be reached through the imitation of his actions example, and with that the life of Christ.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 223; Keith, *Piero della Francesca*, 33. The painting is also named *Saint Jerome and a Penitent*.

⁴⁴⁸ Banker, *Piero della Francesca*, 33-37. Anastagi was a lawyer and Piero's fellow citizen from Sansepolcro. For Banker, the walled town with the towers behind Jerome and the donor is a representation of their native town. Also, he points out the family connections, through Piero's brother Marco, who married Giacomo's cousin Giovanna. Furthermore, the donor is portrayed in the lavish garment with the scarlet strip, indicating he was a Doctor of Medicine or Law. The same scarlet strip is found in later representations by Piero, on *The flagellation of the Christ*.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 36. It is known that he collected ancient manuscripts together with the manuscripts of his contemporaries.

⁴⁵⁰ About the concept see: Wendy Ruppel, "Salvation through Imitation: The Meaning of Bosch's 'St. Jerome in the Wilderness,'" *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 18, no. 1/2 (1988): 5-12,

4.3 THE NEW DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES AND JEROME

Devotio Moderna

During the fifteenth century, Jerome held a prominent place in other traditions of veneration, apart from that followed by the Italian humanists and the monastic reform movements of the period, mainly Franciscan observant reform, Jerome was linked with a lay reform movement—*devotio moderna*.⁴⁵¹ Initiated by Geert Groote in the Low Countries in the second half of the fourteenth century, the movement spread across Germany and France through economic and commercial networks, remolding devotional practices.⁴⁵² While the postulates of the movement did not present innovations in the religious sense, the imitation of the original apostolic community *Ecclesia primitiva*, the gathering of laypeople, which Groote himself was, involved the following of monastic rule, but without taking vows.⁴⁵³

As Mixson explains, the movement has been seen as the forerunner of humanism and the Reformation, and thus it signals the end of the Middle Ages and the begging of modernity.⁴⁵⁴ The critics of the clergy, the renunciation of religious vows, and the choice of living independently from higher authority can be seen as the anticipation of Reformation. Importantly, he points out that the many of the elements seen as the characteristics of the movement—“modesty of its way of life; its concentration on the essence of Christian living; its devotion to the suffering and crucified savior, his mother under the cross, the penitent Mary Magdalen, the patrons of lepers and the ill, and its preference for the fathers of the early church and early monasticism over theologians who were formed by and who taught in the universities”⁴⁵⁵—were present around Europe even without direct connection with *devotio moderna*, and some of them even before, like the mentioned Tuscan congregations that modeled their life and actions after Jerome.

In terms of devotion, the members close to the movement initially gathered in the community of *Brethren of Common Life* and *Sisters of Common Life*, returned to the direct reading of the Holy Scripture, avoiding the scholastic and neo-scholastic theologians, focusing on inner spiritual development in which the early Church Fathers started to gain importance. The meditative, almost

⁴⁵¹ Mixson, “The ‘Devotio Moderna,’” 321. Mixson points out that regardless of the similarity between the observant movements and *devotio moderna*, they did not influence each other in a narrow sense, and their development stems from the autonomous origins.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 318.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 319.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 323.

mystical form of devotion also consisted of personal devotion to Christ achieved by the contemplation of his suffering and by recreating his humility and empathy.

The ideas of the movement mostly spread through the work of Thomas a Kempis *Imitatio Christi*, written in four books around 1427, which provided the spiritual instructions for a meditative withdrawal from the world, together with devotion to the Eucharist.⁴⁵⁶ Its popularity is testified to not only by the many vernacular translations of the work but also with the vast number of the manuscript and printed editions of the work preserved.⁴⁵⁷ The goals of the movement were aligned with general reform tendencies within the Western church and the spiritual shift which sought to imitate the lives of the ancient fathers. Likewise, Jerome was readily adopted as an emblem of the movement, and his cult flourished among its members.⁴⁵⁸

Scholars have already noticed the authoritative role of Jerome as a model for members of the movement, but still, no study explores it in detail, especially absent has been a focus on its correlation with the emergence of Jerome's cult in Italy. Rice informs us that the *Brethren of Common Life* were so attached to Jerome that during the fifteenth century, it became customary to call them *Hieronymiani*, and the documents sometimes refer to them as the *Order of Saint Jerome*. This honor was expressed in the several congregation houses consecrated to him, together with schools, including one in Liege and one in Deventer, which Erasmus attended from 1478 to 1483.⁴⁵⁹

In such a religious atmosphere, a daily portion of the life of devotees was preoccupied with a contemplation of the divine and acts of penance, in order to achieve spiritual development. The emphasis on the inner spiritual life of lay people represented a major shift from the traditional sense which viewed the monastery as the space in which one's soul could be cultivated for spiritual development. Now it was happening in the secular domain, on an intimate level, inside private spaces, in the privacy of people's homes. The meditative prayer did not only consist of reading texts but also of contemplating devotional images, as mentioned earlier. These visual tools had the purpose of creating an emotional response among devotees, facilitating the formation of mental images of the biblical narratives. This practice, propagated by Groote, continued an earlier established medieval

⁴⁵⁶ William C. Creasy, ed., *The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis: A New Reading of the 1441 Latin Autograph Manuscript* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2007).

⁴⁵⁷ Creasy, xxi. Today more than 700 manuscript copies are known. In the second half of the fourteenth century work was already translated into English.

⁴⁵⁸ For the use of Jerome's in the teachings of the movement consult: R. R Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

⁴⁵⁹ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 116.

practice, dating back to Gregory the Great and Augustine, who had suggested the use of images during the *lectio divina*.

The importance of the use of images for this new form of devotion is underlined several times in the works written by the leading promoters of the cult, like Grootte. Between 1381 and 1383, he composed *De quattuor generibus meditabilium*, a manual in which he discussed four different objects of meditative contemplation that could be used during prayer: the life and passion of Christ in the Scripture, what was revealed to the saints about it, theological material, and images that represented the life of Christ.⁴⁶⁰ For him, the use of an image was necessary for a sensible response in making something concrete present, where sensible and mental powers were in complete harmony in order to reach the divine reality.⁴⁶¹ The intimacy of personal interaction with the image that the observer saw and formed in his mind were of great importance for Grootte:

The sight is more certain than any of the other senses and shows the properties of things in greater plurality than any of the others. Hence the imaginative faculty, desirous of certitude, by its own natural force, turns more quickly to images of visible things, both because more knowable objects and greater certitude are to be had.⁴⁶²

His reasoning continued the teaching of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who also emphasized the importance of images of God's life in human form to remind believers of his accessibility and humility. However, he stressed that those images were not holy, but were only to serve "as a bridge to spiritual contemplation".⁴⁶³ For that reason, we can trace the growing popularity of the images representing the passion of the Christ, together with representations of *Arma Christi*, *Pietà*, or *Man of Sorrows*. Taking into consideration the popularity of Jerome among the followers of Grootte, and his emblematic position as the embodiment of not only the apostolic life, the image of *Penitent Jerome* was also used during the practice of meditative piety. Furthermore, Jerome's voluntary choice of a life in the desert, where he became confessor of a saint, a white martyr, was viewed as an emblematic of the sufferings of Christ.

⁴⁶⁰ Kees Waaijman, "Image and Imagelessness: A Challenge to (Modern) Devotion," in *Spirituality Renewed: Studies on Significant Representatives of the Modern Devotion*, ed. Hein Blommestijn, Charles Caspers, and Rijcklof Hofman (Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2003), 30–31.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁶² Jai Imbrey, "Faith Up-Close and Personal in Mantegna's Presentation: Fictive Frames and the Devotio Moderna in Northern Italy," in *New Studies on Old Masters*, ed. Diane Wolfthal and John Garton (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 241.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 242.

In Italy, the presence of *devotio moderna* is still being discussed.⁴⁶⁴ Nevertheless, some of the ideas that propagated within the movement are noted in Italy, despite the non-existence of formal congregation houses modeled upon Windesheim. Niccolò Albergati, well known for his religious scenes during the period, as it was already mentioned in the description of the *Gesuati* dispute in Venice, was himself a fervor promoter of lay piety. The confraternities which he formed and supported were modeled upon those in the Northern lands. The devotion to Eucharist, advocacy for sacraments of confession, and penance, together with the cult of Saint Jerome, are the connection points between Italian and Northern practices. Regardless of his actions, the stronghold of new religious life in Italy, inspired by the *devotio moderna*, was Venice. There, the ideas spread through popular lay congregations and the reform disseminated from the Benedictine *Santa Giustina congregation* in Padua. Correlated or not, the cult of Saint Jerome in Venice had a prominent place during the fifteenth century, which is visible in a large number of the visual representations of the saint, in both the ecclesiastical and private domain.

The historiographical problem on the emergence and the dispersion of the new devotional practices cannot be discussed here in detail. Nonetheless, it is important to point out the existence of the religious atmosphere around Europe at the period, which have significantly embraced Jerome as the embodiment of new religious ideas and the postulates that were promoted, and which were not exclusive for the *devotio moderna* movement. The obstacle in this research has been a lack of studies on the general religious atmosphere in Dalmatia, which would allow us to interpret better how the more intimate forms of devotion form were accepted in Dalmatia and in which way they were expressed. For that reason, I will summarize the main spiritual streams in Venice, which due to its role of the capital of the Republic and the central place of the power of the Eastern Adriatic Coast, whose cultural, artistic and devotional production is naturally imposed as the main comparative material in discussions like is this one.

⁴⁶⁴ As we do not find the presence of the Congregation of Windesheim or Brethren of Common Life in Italy, many scholars take it as evidence that such ideas were not present on Italian soil. However, scholars have noticed that regardless of the non-existing institutional framework of the movement, the ideas close to *devotio moderna* were present. Massimo Petrocchi, *Una "devotio moderna" nel Quattrocento italiano? ed altri studi* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1961). Daniela Rando, "Le avventure della 'devotio' nell'Italia del Tre-Quattrocento, fra storia e storiografia," in ed. Marek Derwich and Martial Staub, *Die "Neue Frömmigkeit" in Europa im Spätmittelalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 331–51.

4.4 JEROME IN VENICE

One aspect of the devotion to Jerome in Venice, the endowment of private chapels, has already been discussed previously, but here I will focus on the aristocratic and merchant elite who, having accumulated greater wealth, had accepted new trends of the period discussed here: private devotion and Humanism. In both of them, Jerome had a prominent place. The peculiar relation of the aristocrats of the Serenissima and Jerome was already noted in an article by Hans Belting who focused on the adaptation of the “Penitent Saint Jerome” iconographic type into “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” as the expression of a new humanist perception intertwined with the new religious sentiments, strongly supported by the monastic and lay reform movements in Venice at the time.⁴⁶⁵ Taking into consideration that the re-appreciation of Jerome in Dalmatia has been directly connected with the development of Italian Humanism and Renaissance earlier than elsewhere in Europe, supported by the implementation and consolidation of the Venetian government, it is necessary to elaborate the status Jerome had in Venice.

During the rise of the cult, the easy adoption of Jerome in Venice could have been connected with the appropriation of him as Venetian, which could have stemmed from Jerome’s friendship with Heliodore, the first bishop of Altinum, an ancient city in the vicinity of present-day Treviso, considered to be a predecessor of Venice, to whom he wrote letters. Regardless of this, the sources do not suggest that in Venice the veneration of the saint was strongly promoted in the institutionalized form by the civic or ecclesiastical authorities, or that the written or visual production was made to reflect this appropriation. For that reason, the veneration of Jerome in Venice comes as the result of the intertwining traditions of worship, where the humanist circles present the focal point of promotion of the saint. Starting from Belting’s observations that “the variants of St. Jerome’s iconography served many different roles that had always had a specific meaning for each given audience”,⁴⁶⁶ and that the specific iconographic type “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” was destined for the urban educated collectors in Venice, this subchapter explores the religious climate in which such images appeared, with a focus on their function.

The reason why such analysis is necessary lies in the presence of the variation of this type in Dalmatia, in the monumental relief in the baptistery of Trogir, executed by Andrea Alessi in 1467,

⁴⁶⁵ In the iconography of Saint Jerome, the depictions of Jerome the penitent and Jerome reading in the desert are often reduced to the common name of *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, which can be seen in the different titles of the paintings. Therefore, for a clearer understanding of the text, in this thesis the iconographic type of Jerome reading in the desert will be referred to as *Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness*.

⁴⁶⁶ Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice,” 6.

and on the twelve small scale reliefs modeled upon this one, discussed in detail in chapter 7. As this chapter shows, following the conclusions by Belting, such iconographic type was reserved for the narrow circle of the learned man, who knew how to read the embedded symbolism of such representation.

Unlike “Penitent Saint Jerome” which during the second half of the fifteenth century became a standard type in the representations of Jerome in the Apennine peninsula and beyond, this one was limited to the production of the Venetian and the Paduan painterly circles. Its presence in Trogir in the late 1460s, in the period of its early emergence, shows that the contemporary artistic, cultural, and devotional trends and new ideas have been readily accepted. Moreover indicates the close connection of Trogir humanist circle with the Venetian one, and points out the artistic encounters of those artists which worked in Trogir, primary Andrea Alessi and Niccolò Fiorentino with the painterly circles in Florence and Venice. The level of the cultural advancement bolstering in the city at the period is still visible today in the preserved rich Renaissance heritage.

Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness

The type “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” represents the saint sitting in a desert-like landscape, in front of a cave-like formation of rocks, reading a book. Often, he is joined by wild animals with the juxtaposition of a city in the background. In this case, the two most common iconographic types, “Penitent Saint Jerome” and “Jerome in his Study,” are combined, but the depicted atmosphere is deprived of more direct signs of religious enthusiasm such as Jerome hitting himself on the chest with a stone in a penitential fervor. On the contrary, it reflects the meditative Jerome. Unlike the usual portrayal of the penitent saint in the desert, this one depicts the saint in the later years of his life, when he retreated in the monastery of Bethlehem that he founded with Paula and Eustochium, and dedicated his life to the translation of the Bible.⁴⁶⁷



Figure 29 Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome in Desert*, c. 1450, (44 cm × 39 cm), Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham. Source: Wikimedia Commons [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Jerome_in_the_Desert_\(Bellini,Birmingham\)#/media/File:Giovanni_Bellini_San_Girolamo_nel_deserto.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Jerome_in_the_Desert_(Bellini,Birmingham)#/media/File:Giovanni_Bellini_San_Girolamo_nel_deserto.jpg) (Last accessed 22 June 2020)

⁴⁶⁷ Brown and Ferino-Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 132.

Although the scene of Jerome translating the Bible should by rights be set in an interior space, the change of setting alludes to the solitary state of mind necessary for spiritual and intellectual advancement, symbolized by the desert. Even though it was recognized as the Venetian particularity in the scholarship, there is no consensus on the naming of the iconographic type, so the artistic production showing Jerome is often named generally as “Saint Jerome in Desert” or “Saint Jerome in Wilderness”. Taking into consideration the emphasis on the act of reading, I am referring to this iconographic type as “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”.



Figure 30 Alvisio Vivarini, *Saint Jerome Reading*, c. 1476, (31.4cm × 25.1 cm) National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Source: National Gallery of Art, Washington, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.453.html> (Last accessed 22 June 2020)



Figure 31 Bartolomeo da Montagna, *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, long-term loan to the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 15th/16th century (39.7cm x 29cm). Source: © Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, <https://www.museunacional.cat/en/colleccio/saint-jerome-desert/bartolomeo-montagna/212815-000> (Last accessed: 22 June 2020)

The invention of the type is traditionally attributed to Giovanni Bellini due to the number of paintings attributed to him, but the earliest composition is found in the sketchbook of his father, Jacopo Bellini (Fig. 75–77).⁴⁶⁸ The earliest dated *Jerome Reading in the Wilderness* is the one today

⁴⁶⁸ Colin Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini: The Complete Paintings and Drawings* (New York ; London: H.N. Abrams ; Brit. Museum Publ, 1989); Brown and Ferino-Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 132.

kept in the Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, executed around 1450 (Fig. 29).⁴⁶⁹ The saint is dressed in the thin ascetic clothes, sitting on the rock in the desert landscape, with the barren tree and the donkey in the background. The only company of the saint is his faithful companion the lion. Unlike the common way of representing the most famous scene of Jerome's vita—the *Taming of Lion*—where the act of removing the thorn is shown, here the saint is blessing the lion with the raised hand who approached him in the pain.

The similar derived compositions, where Jerome sits inside the cave and reads a book, are found in numerous paintings by other artists of the period in Venice. Andrea Mantegna's painting of Saint Jerome is dated to the 1450s, and today kept in Sao Paolo (Fig. 27). Alvise Vivarini painted the saint reading in the wilderness around 1476 (Fig. 30), and Bartolomeo da Montagna's paintings of Jerome in the desert have a similar composition (Fig. 31).⁴⁷⁰ Among the proponents of this iconographic type, we should also count Pisanello and his lost painting once gifted to Guarino of Verona. The juxtaposition of the wilderness with the city, i.e., nature versus urban, can also be read in the other paintings from this Venetian painterly circle, which represents "Penitent Saint Jerome", especially in the painterly citations of the rocky landscape like Cima da Conegliano or Lazzaro Bastiani, or even Marco Zoppo, mainly active in Bologna, but with close connections with Venetian and Paduan painters (Fig. 68).

Further development of this type is found in the artistic production of Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556). A painting dated to c.1509, today in Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, titled *Saint Jerome in Penitence* (Fig. 33), does not in fact represent the saint in penitence at all. Even though it continues on the theme of an earlier painting of penitent Jerome, dated to c.1506 by the same artist, today in the Louvre (Fig. 32), in its idea, it follows the representations of "Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness". The saint is depicted in the center of the composition in front of a cave, with his chest completely uncovered, leaning on a dead stump, surrounded by books. Still, by placing penitent Jerome, in the background, among the trees, the painter has acknowledged both aspects of Jerome's sanctity, his penitence, and the translation of the Bible.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ Bäschmann, *Giovanni Bellini*, 13–16; Augusto Gentili, "Bellini and Landscape," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165.

⁴⁷⁰ Bartolomeo da Montagna painted several versions of Jerome dressed in the monastic garments, sitting in the wilderness. Pinacoteca Brera has a painting dated 1500-1502, showing Jerome sits in front of a cave-like structure with the monastery in the background. A similar composition is found on his Saint Jerome in Bethlehem, c. 1505-1510, today in Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.

⁴⁷¹ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 223.



Figure 32 Lorenzo Lotto, *Saint Jerome in Penitence*, 1506,(48cm x 40cm), The Louvre Museum, Paris. Source: Wikimedia Commons
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_Penitence_\(Lotto,_Paris\)#/media/File:Lorenzo_Lotto_026.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_Penitence_(Lotto,_Paris)#/media/File:Lorenzo_Lotto_026.jpg) (Last accessed 22 June 2020)



Figure 33 Lorenzo Lotto, *Saint Jerome in Penitence*, Museo nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo, c. 1509. Source: Wikimedia Commons
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_Penitence_\(Lotto,_Rome\)#/media/File:Lorenzo_Lotto_025.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_Penitence_(Lotto,_Rome)#/media/File:Lorenzo_Lotto_025.jpg) (Last accessed 22 June 2020)

The representations of animals in the desert landscape in which Jerome contemplates or beats himself in penitential fervor, have been long discussed among scholars. Among the earliest proponents of its symbolic meaning was Augusto Gentili, focusing on the production of Giovanni Bellini, but his interpretations have not been entirely accepted.⁴⁷² The novelty which Gentili introduces in the reading of Bellini's paintings is understanding the depiction of landscape not as a decorative element but as an allegorical depiction that largely reflects the spiritual state of the time in which the work was created. In his study on the representations of landscape in Western Art, Malcolm Andrews follows the same approach, and has dedicated a whole chapter on the disguised symbolism

⁴⁷² Augusto Gentili, *I giardini di contemplazione: Lorenzo Lotto, 1503/1512* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1985); Gentili, "Bellini and Landscape"; Mauro Lucco, "Sacred Stories," in *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*, ed. David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (Washington; Vienna: National Gallery of Art; Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), 132. Lucco argued that depictions of landscape and animal details in Venetian examples "do not necessarily have a source in the text; they can be read in the context of overall visual meaning, without recourse to boundless erudition."

of the landscape in Renaissance paintings, focusing in particular on the representations of Saint Jerome.⁴⁷³

Among the works that have challenged the traditional view on the Renaissance painterly genres, is the book by Bernard Aikema on Jacopo Bassano in which he interpreted his animal depictions and the elements of rural landscape as reflections of the contemporary spirituality of the age of reform, regardless of their naturalistic representations.⁴⁷⁴ Still, the studies which are dealing with the particular symbolic meaning of the depicted animals are rare, such as mentioned book by Herbert Friedman, and observe the presence of the animals in the traditional medieval symbolism, rather than applying the Renaissance understanding of the Biblical allegory in the arts.

While the study of medieval animal symbolism has been long established in scholarship, the Renaissance treatment of zoomorphic motifs in the art, had been largely neglected until the book by Simona Cohen was published, filling this large gap in the understanding of Renaissance visual culture.⁴⁷⁵ As Cohen discussed throughout the book, Renaissance artists adopted the ongoing medieval tradition of animal imagery, but then added different layers to these older meanings, conditioned by the social, political, or religious context, creating new iconographic meanings, which were very often “disguised under the veil of genre, religious or mythological narrative and, so-called, scientific naturalism.”⁴⁷⁶

The new iconographic meanings have largely depended on the new interest in Scripture studies and direct reading of the patristic literature, together with the stronger reliance of the text and image, also supported by the previously discussed changes in the spiritual atmosphere. The new approaches to the understanding of the landscape in the Renaissance art and the motives that fill it, suggests that such production should be revised, and particularly that representing Saint Jerome, very often accompanied with diverse flora and fauna motifs.

For better understanding of the early Renaissance production and the codification of the visual language of the wilderness and the landscape genre as the mirror of the humanist invocation who saw

⁴⁷³ See the chapter Subject or Setting: Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25–52.

⁴⁷⁴ Bernard Aikema, *Jacopo Bassano and His Public: Moralizing Pictures in an Age of Reform, ca. 1535-1600* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁴⁷⁵ Simona Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

⁴⁷⁶ Simona Cohen, “Animal Imagery in Renaissance Art,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2014): XXXIII; See other works by the author: Simona Cohen, “From the Literal to the Abstract. Metamorphosis of Symbolic Modes in Venetian Renaissance Rural Landscape,” in «*Di là dal fiume e tra gli alberi*». *Il paesaggio del rinascimento a Venezia*, ed. Laura de Fuccia and Christophe Brouard (Ravenna: Giorgio Pozzi, 2012), 53–70; Simona Cohen, “Ars Simia Naturae: The Animal as Mediator and Alter Ego of the Artist in the Renaissance,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 43, no. 2 (2017): 202–31.

solitude as the retreat for their soul, necessary for the literary production, is the works by Leopoldine van Hogendorp Prosperetti.⁴⁷⁷ Although it primarily deals with the production of Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625), the discussion on the visual production representing Jerome emphasizes the role of the visual aids in the spiritual journey of the humanists reflected in the complex iconographic representations of their patron saint. The scope of this thesis does not offer space for further exploration of this question which shows the need for re-evaluation and re-assessment of the earlier Venetian production in the same key, elaborating further the already existing conclusions and studies on a matter, particularly taking into the consideration the growing number of the studies dealing with the correlation between the verbal and visual hermeneutic in the field of the Biblical exegesis.⁴⁷⁸

The understanding of the symbolic representation of the landscape in which Jerome is placed and of the animals that surround him is necessary for understanding the iconographic variations present in the mentioned monumental relief of Saint Jerome in the baptistry of cathedral in Trogir, where the saint is represented surrounded by the unusual group of animals—two dragons, three snakes, a scorpion and a lion—not found in this assemblage in the other representations of the saint. More recently, following Gentili’s approach, Pavel Kalina has brought a new reading of landscape iconography and the symbolic depiction of animals in one of the paintings of Saint Jerome by Giovanni Bellini, today kept at the Washington National Gallery, based on the textual models which previous studies have overlooked.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly to Belting’s conclusions, Kalina sees the iconography of Jerome as a reflection of the vivid spiritual atmosphere in Venice, where the new readings of the Church Fathers and other Christian foundational texts supported by the rising humanism resulted in the evolution of new symbols.

The Washington Saint Jerome by Giovanni Bellini

A painting of Jerome by Giovanni Bellini rests today in the National Gallery of Art in Washington (fig. 34). The panel has dimensions similar to those of mentioned paintings by Piero della Francesca, 47x37.5cm, which supports the supposed private devotion by Belting. The painting is dated to 1505.⁴⁸⁰ In the foreground, an image of Jerome as an old man sits inside a cave, dressed in

⁴⁷⁷ For discussion on Jerome see Chapter 6 *Anatomy of greenery: the vegetal lexicon*, pp. 157-199 in: Leopoldine Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)* (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁴⁷⁸ Walter S Melion, James Clifton, and Michel Weemans, eds., *Imago Exegetica: Visual Images as Exegetical Instruments, 1400-1700* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014).

⁴⁷⁹ Pavel Kalina, “Hericiis et Leporibus: Giovanni Bellini’s St Jerome in Washington and the Idea of the Hermit *is* Life in Italy and Central Europe in the Early 16th Century,” *Umni / Art* 60, no. 5 (2012): 346–62.

⁴⁸⁰ Brown and Ferino-Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 132. Although it is debatable if the dating of the painting is correct, since the style corresponds to Giovanni’s pre-1490s paintings, scientific analysis has demonstrated that the inscribed date is was done at the same time the painting was made.

desert clothing, holding an open book in front of him. He is accompanied by a lizard, a lion, a squirrel, and a pair of rabbits—one white, the other brown (fig. 35). In the background, a city is visible through the opening of the cave.

While the initial response to a question as to the textual source used for the portrayal of Jerome in a desert-like landscape would be Jerome's letter to Eustochium, in which he remembers how in the desert he, "had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts,"⁴⁸¹ the depicted animals do not match this description. Subsequently, scholars have paid much attention to the depiction of two hares of different colors in the *Washington Saint Jerome* since they cannot be found in any of Jerome's letters. Traditionally, they have been interpreted as depictions of rampant sexuality, which would be fitting for the representation of "Penitent Saint Jerome", who while fasting in the desert imagined the splendors of Rome:

How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid be vies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence.⁴⁸²

Kalina proposed other sources for this depiction, which could have originated not from Jerome's letters or devotional works to him. For him, the symbolic meaning of the complex iconography should be sought for rather in a renewed interest in the Biblical books and revisions of the Bible, which also included the extensive reading of patristic literature and their Biblical exegesis. According to this interpretation, the meaning of the hares of different colors could originate from the writings of the Church Fathers Ambrose and Augustine. The former, in his work *Hexameron* (c.389), a theological treatise on Genesis, interpreted the changing color of hares as a symbol of the resurrection. Their position in the desert-like the landscape is based on Saint Augustine's expositions on Psalm 104:18 *Montes altissimi cervis, petra refugium ericiis et leporibus*, he interprets the rock as Christ and the hares as those who seek salvation in him.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ Jerome, "Letter XXII", 78.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Kalina, "Hericiis et Leporibus," 352.

Another argumentation advanced by Kalina supports the already discussed thesis by originally promoted by Belting, regarding the ownership of the painting. In this interpretation, the representation of the hares is a reference to a revision of the translation of the Psalms, where Jerome, known for his misused translations of Hebrew terms, translated the Hebrew term for hare as a hedgehog. Augustine, in his commentaries on the Psalms, correctly uses the term hare.⁴⁸⁴ This notion could have been known only to someone deeply involved with the study of the Bible, and patristic literature, with in-depth knowledge of both Latin and Greek. For that reason, a representation of hares could be understood as the marginal note of a learned humanist referring to Jerome's translation of the Bible, "a humanist correction improving Jerome with Augustine."⁴⁸⁵



Figure 34 Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome Reading in the Countryside*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, c. 1505 (49 cm × 39 cm). Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.358.html> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

As the research by Simona Cohen showed, the animal symbolism of the medieval visual tradition was further adopted to the new notions of the Renaissance, enriched by the extensive Classical and Biblical studies. Her research, in which the animalistic representations are related to the Scriptures, points out that the possible symbolism of the animals based on the Psalms, should not be seen only as the expression of the interest in the Biblical exegesis. I would like to point out another reason why the future research, beyond the examples discussed in this dissertation, should focus more on the correlation of Psalms and the landscape iconography in the representations of Jerome. It is the meditation over the Psalms as the one of the common expressions of the private



Figure 35 Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome Reading in the Countryside*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, c. 1505 (49 cm × 39 cm), detail

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 353.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

devotion during the Late Middle Ages, seen in their inclusion in the prayer books and the Books of Hours intended for the lay devotion.

Already from the days of the early Church the reading and the contemplation over the Psalms was seen as the method for the spiritual growth. Gregory of Nyssa interpreted the meaning of the psalms as the five steps corresponding to the five books of the Psalter, that lead to the Christian growth in virtue, knowledge, and holiness with the goal “of the Christian’s restoration to the image and likeness of God.”⁴⁸⁶ The same use of Psalms was promoted by Erasmus, seeing them as “the food for the soul.”⁴⁸⁷ Another motif on the Washington painting that points out to its possible textual origin in the spring, next to which Jerome sits, borrowed from the sketch book of Jacopo Bellini. The folio 18v from the Louvre sketchbook (Fig. 76)—discussed also later in the dissertation—in the lower left corner shows the deer drinking from the spring, possibly illustrating Ps. 41:2: “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God.”⁴⁸⁸

Bellini’s contribution to the development of Venetian painting had already been noticed during his lifetime. Numerous humanists, the leading clients of his paintings, considered Giovanni “the most celebrated painter in the world” as Felice Feliciano calls him. For Raffaello Zovenzoni, a humanist from Trieste, Giovanni was “the most distinguished painter”.⁴⁸⁹ The embedded symbolism, as was discussed earlier, points to a close correlation of devotional texts with Jerome (his letters, *Transitus*, other written production) and the iconography of the saint during the Renaissance, where the main components of Jerome’s life were transformed into images with a symbolic language. This language would be understandable only to very educated person with an in-depth knowledge of theological works. The problem in resolving the purpose of such paintings lies in the unknown provenance of all of them, as none of the original commissioners are known. Kalina proposes Pietro Bembo, a Venetian cardinal and humanist, son of Bernard Bembo, who was allegedly painted by Bellini in the period when Jerome’s painting is dated as the owner of Washington painting.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁶ See also: Bruce K Waltke and J. M Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Praise: A Historical Commentary*, 2019, 122–24.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., *The Psalms as Christian Praise*, 125.

⁴⁸⁸ Patricia Emison, *Low and High Style in Italian Renaissance Art* (New York: Garland, 1997), 129. The Biblical quotations in this dissertation are based on Douay–Rheims Bible, the 1899 edition of the John Murphy Company, Baltimore, Maryland. <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Douay-Rheims-1899-American-Edition-DRA-Bible/> (Last accessed 20 June 2020).

⁴⁸⁹ Davide Gasparotto, ed., *Lives of Giovanni Bellini* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 2018), 16.

⁴⁹⁰ Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice,” 21. In the description of Bembo’s art collection by Michiel, there is no mention of this painting, nor any painting by Giovanni Bellini. However, this should not be taken as the firm evidence that Bembo did not possess a painting since Michiel does not mention several portraits by Giovanni Bellini that Pietro Bembo commissioned.

The painting possibly belonging to Bembo was also the latest one executed by Bellini depicting this theme of Jerome, deriving from the established artistic and iconographic tradition. Even if Bembo was the original commissioner, such an invention should not be attributed to him but should be sought for in the spiritual climate in Venice and its surroundings around the middle of the fifteenth century. Another possible owner could be the Cardinal Domenico Grimani, in whose will of 1523 the painting of Saint Jerome by Giovanni Bellini is recorded, and cautiously connected with the Washington panel.⁴⁹¹

Unfortunately, the current state of scholarship does not bring us closer to the identification of the possible owner. Regardless of Pietro Bembo, Domenico Grimani or someone else being the original owner of the painting, he was certainly a pious person who devoted himself to humanist studies, read ancient and patristic literature, and produced his own writings. As van Hogendorp Prosperetti explains, “Jerome’s writing on the solitary life form a super-text that knits together all the proofs for a way of life that mirrors the vocation of Christian humanists, learned servants of God, who, like their patron saint, use the life of literary retirement to craft for their souls the therapy of perfect speech.”⁴⁹²

The scholars argued that one of Bellini’s *Saint Jerome* paintings, today in the Contini Bonacossi collection and exhibited in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, was placed in the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice, on the main altar (Fig. 36). This votive church was built between 1481 and 1489 by Pietro Lombardo, to house the miracle-working image of Virgin Mary owned by the Amadi family.⁴⁹³ However, the question of the presence of this iconographic type in the ecclesiastical setting will have to be addressed in the future research.

Jerome as the Embodiment of Solitudo

The limited presence of iconographic type “Saint Jerome Reading in Wilderness” to the Venetian territory marks this type as the local particularity. The portrayal of the saint serenely reading in the loneliness of the nature, points out to different aspects of his saintly life. The meditative painted atmosphere, which emphasized the poetic nature of silence, suggests that the image should have been used as a contemplative apparatus for the spiritual meditations. The constant ambiguity of Jerome’s image is also present here. The poetic solitude could be read in the religious and secular sense,

⁴⁹¹ Davide Gasparotto, ed, *Giovanni Bellini: Landscapes of Faith in Renaissance Venice* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2017), 126.

⁴⁹² Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy*, 174.

⁴⁹³ Deborah Howard, “The Church of the Miracoli in Venice and Pittoni’s St Jerome Altar-Piece,” *The Burlington Magazine* 131, no. 1039 (1989): 684–85; Bättschmann, *Giovanni Bellini*, 169.

appropriate equally for saints and philosophers. Already in the fourteenth century, Petrarch, who was much praised in Venice a century later, emphasized solitude as an essential element of the contemplative life. In his work *De Vita Solitaria* (1346–1356), he celebrates solitude as the appropriate place for philosophers and poets who had loved it even in pagan Antiquity before the saints would choose it in their search for God.⁴⁹⁴ Petrarch’s written production, inspired also by his stay in the countryside outside of Avignon, is a turning point in the humanist ideal of solitude since in his works, as Christian ascetic practices were incorporated with the classical ideas of solitude and the rural retirement.⁴⁹⁵

He praises saints as those who “illuminated solitary spaces with their sacred presence and condemned the cities when they decided to live a spontaneous exile (*urbes spontaneo damnantes exilio*).”⁴⁹⁶ With this in mind, he dedicated an entire chapter to Saint Jerome in which he quoted his letter to Eustochium, describing his days in the wilderness. He expressly pointed out Jerome as a witness to the pagan philosophers in their love of solitude. He further discussed similar ideas elsewhere, such as in his work, *Secretum meum* (1342–1358).⁴⁹⁷ The passionate interest in Petrarch among Venetians is seen in the example of Bernardo Bembo, the father of the before-mentioned Pietro Bembo. He was a proud owner of two autograph copies by Petrarch and had an edition of *De vita solitaria* in his private library that he also considered to be an autograph.⁴⁹⁸



Figure 36 Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, Contini Bonacossi collection, Uffizzi Gallery, Florence, c. 1480 (145 cm × 114 cm). Source: Wikimedia Commons [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Jerome_in_the_Desert_\(Bellini,_Florence\)#/media/File:Giovanni_bellini._san_girolamo_contini_bonacossi_01.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Jerome_in_the_Desert_(Bellini,_Florence)#/media/File:Giovanni_bellini._san_girolamo_contini_bonacossi_01.jpg) (Last accessed 20 July 2020)

⁴⁹⁴ Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice,” 18.

⁴⁹⁵ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 33.

⁴⁹⁶ Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice,” 19.

⁴⁹⁷ Brian Stock, *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 112–113. In book two, Augustine explains to Franciscus that the discomfort he feels regarding the life in town is discomforted inside himself, suggesting the meditative exercise as a way to regain his tranquility. Augustine suggests a close reading of Seneca’s *De Tranquillitate Animae*, Cicero’s *Tusculanae*, and Petrarch’s own *De Vita Solitaria*; On Petrarch referencing Jerome’s works see: Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 84–85.

⁴⁹⁸ Gasparotto, *Giovanni Bellini*, 29.

The possession of Jerome's image could have helped to transform any space into a place of solitude for spiritual or intellectual needs. In the sense of seeking solitude, new devotional practices and humanist interests could rest comfortably side by side. For both, Jerome stood as the emblem. In Venice, the fifteenth-century reform ideas rooted early, among other things promoting the solitary life. The early reforms were promoted by *San Giorgio in Alga*, a group of secular canons in the first half of the fifteenth century, and the so-called *Murano circle* at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The promoted devotional practices resemble those of the congregations of *devotio moderna*.

Gabriele Condulmer, the future Pope Eugene IV, and his cousin Antonio Correr decided to pursue apostolic life by living in solitude and poverty following the rule of Saint Augustine on a remote island in the lagoon, but without taking monastic vows. The congregation, also known as *Canonici secolari di San Giorgio in Alga*, had entirely accepted the rule of Saint Augustine in 1407 when they changed the name to *Canonici regolari di San Giorgio in Alga*.⁴⁹⁹ The initial members were all from noble Venetian families, some clerics, some laypeople, who devoted a lifetime to prayer, solitude, and the imitation of Christ.

The most prominent members were Ludovico Barbo (1381–1443) and Lorenzo Giustiniani (1381–1456), protagonists of Venetian religious life during the period. Ludovico Barbo became the abbot of the Santa Giustina congregation in Padua in 1408, where he introduced many reforms shaped by the teachings of Groote and the *devotio moderna*.⁵⁰⁰ Lorenzo Giustiniani, the only member of the congregation who was proclaimed a saint, became the first patriarch of Venice in 1451, named to the position by his friend Eugene IV.⁵⁰¹ Ludovico Barbo is of interest here, who joined the canons in *San Giorgio in Alga* in their early days, but his most significant role was as the abbot of Santa Giustina, a Benedictine monastery in Padua.⁵⁰² He was appointed to this position in 1408 by Pope Gregory XII,

⁴⁹⁹ On the history of the congregation see: Giorgio Cracco, "La fondazione dei canonici secolari di S. Giorgio in Alga," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 70-88, 13 (1959).

⁵⁰⁰ Mixson, "The 'Devotio Moderna,'" 244; Rando, "Le avventure della 'devotio'," 339.

⁵⁰¹ Lorenzo Giustiniani was promoted as a new type of saint, mainly endorsed by the Venetian aristocracy and government. The laic engagement in this did not please the Church in Rome, by whom he was canonized only in the seventeenth century. Patricia H. Labalme, "Religious Devotion and Civic Division in Renaissance Venice: The Case of Lorenzo Giustiniani," *Publications de l'École Française de Rome* 213, no. 1 (1995): 297–308; Laura Giovanna Urist, "Lorenzo Giustiniani and the Politics of Obedience: Church and State in" by Laura Giovanna Urist" (PhD, Syracuse, University of Syracuse, 2016); Karen E. McCluskey, *New Saints in Late-Mediaeval Venice, 1200-1500: A Typological Study* (London: Routledge, 2020).

⁵⁰² Giovanni B. Francesco Trolese, *Ludovico Barbo e S. Giustina: contributo bibliografico: problemi attinenti alla riforma monastica del Quattrocento* (Roma: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1983); Giovanni Battista Francesco Trolese, *Riforma della chiesa, cultura e spiritualità nel quattrocento Veneto: atti del convegno per il VI centenario della nascita di Ludovico Barbo (1382-1443), Padova, Venezia, Treviso 19-24 settembre 1982* (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1984); Franz Xaver Bischof and Martin Thurner, *Die benediktinische Klosterreform im 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015); Francesco Giovanni Battista Trolese and Giannino Carraro, *S. Giustina di Padova nel quadro del monachesimo italiano: studi di storia e cultura monastica* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2014).

to introduce the monastic reform in the monasteries of Northern Italy. The main novelty, a focus on spiritual development and meditation through solitude, which had been highly influenced by the teaching of *devotio moderna*.

The earliest copies of *Imitatio Christi* were found in the monastery already in 1436.⁵⁰³ The novelties that Barbo introduced to the Benedictine monks were based on the principles of self-examination, meditation, and prayer. Among other things, he propagated solitary prayer among them, for which he suggested the use of images as tools for stimulating meditation and faith. He diminished the participation in liturgical services among the monks to give them more time to reflect alone in their cells. Here, I am interested only in the elements of his teaching within the realm of personal devotion. He addressed this question several times in his writings, especially in his *Forma orationis et meditationis*, written in 1440, where he discussed different types of prayer in for the monks.

Similarly to Groote, he discussed progressive levels of prayer reading, recitation, and gazing on images to inspire meditation. The capability to invoke an intense emotional response of devotees during prayer he names as “facoltà imaginativa,”⁵⁰⁴ which encourages the devotee to “imagine that you are present and pretend to see.”⁵⁰⁵ These practices, together with the possession of *Imitatio Christi* copies, are the fundamental link to the *devotio moderna* movement.⁵⁰⁶ Still, the influence of the reform was felt even outside of the monastic circle to which monasteries reformed by Barbo belonged. He was also embedded in humanist circles in Venice, and he had close contacts with the Paduan University circle. Inside the monastery in Padua, a tight group of humanist scholars had formed.⁵⁰⁷ While Barbo himself had interests in classical literature, which is reflected in his writings, he was more interested in those works which emphasized spiritual contemplation than humanistic scholarship.

With the naming of the members of *San Giorgio* to important ecclesiastical positions, like Ludovico Barbo as abbot of Santa Giustina and later as bishop of Treviso, Lorenzo Giustiniani as the patriarch of Venice, and Gabriele Condulmer as Pope Eugene IV, the ideas which had emerged among the *San Giorgio* congregation have spread. The close connection with the Venetian patriciate, to whom the original members belonged, also certainly helped to spread the ideas of their teaching

⁵⁰³ Imbrey, “Faith Up-Close,” 243.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 244–45.

⁵⁰⁵ Laura D. Gelfand, “Illusionism and Interactivity: Medieval Installation Art, Architecture and Devotional Response,” in *Push Me, Pull You*, 2011, 114. See footnote 75.

⁵⁰⁶ Mixson, “The ‘Devotio Moderna,’” 246.

⁵⁰⁷ Charles L. Stinger, “Italian Renaissance Learning and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Dorota Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 503.

outside the monastic circle introducing the mentioned practices among lay circles, whose level of education would permit them to reach the highest form of prayer, contemplation in a mystical manner.⁵⁰⁸ For that reason also, Lorenzo Giustiniani was promoted by the Venetian Senate, who was pushing his canonization, as the model Venetian patrician, “capable of equal dedication to his homeland and the Church, equally at home in both one and the other structure.”⁵⁰⁹

The spiritual atmosphere that was blossoming in Venice resulted in another group of reform-led laypeople at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *Murano Circle* (Circolo di Murano), who, unlike the canons of *San Giorgio* did not respect any rule and were not as consistent in their actions. What the two groups had in common was that both consisted of young Venetian lay aristocrats, coming from the families noted for their love of classical culture, such as the families Querini and Tiepolo. The initiators of the group were Vincenzo Querini (1479–1514), Trifone Gabriele (1470–1549), Niccolò Tiepolo, and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), to whom later Tommaso Giustiniani (1476–1528), Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), and Giovanbattista Cipelli (1478–1553) joined.⁵¹⁰

The whole group became close during their studies in Padova at the very beginning of the sixteenth century, with Tommaso Giustiniani as their most energetic member and a leader. It was their humanist education that directed them towards studies of the Bible, especially the Psalms, and the Church Fathers, avoiding the scholastic theologians as mediators. Among these men, Giustiniani and Vincenzo Querini were the ones who dedicated their time to study the Hebrew language and were most persistent in the promotion of the group’s postulates. Both took monastic vows in 1510 by joining the Camaldolese order; from that moment on, Tommaso renamed himself Paolo.⁵¹¹

Others who were a part of the group were protagonists of the Venetian religious or diplomatic life during the sixteenth century. Inspired by the new religious sentiments, they were promoting reform of the church, which, for them, should be inspired by the origins of the Church. They believed that the original catechesis of the Church and the desert fathers should replace scholastic dogmatism. They shared their ideas with Pope Leo X in 1513.⁵¹² Regardless of the intense spiritual influence of Giustiniani on his friends, especially as a promoter of life in solitude and the meditative prayer, the

⁵⁰⁸ Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d’Este Hours*, 129.

⁵⁰⁹ Cecilia Cristellon and Seidel Menchi, “Religious Life,” in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 400.

⁵¹⁰ See more: Gianna Gardenal, “Aspetti dell’Umanesimo cristiano preriformistico in area veneta,” in *Italia-Slavia tra Quattro e Cinquecento. Marko Marulic umanista croato* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2004), 33–42.

⁵¹¹ Stefano Tabbachi, “Giustinian, Paolo,” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Treccani, 2001), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-giustinian_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-giustinian_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (Accessed 05 March 2020).

⁵¹² Giuseppe Alberigo, “The Reform of the Episcopate in the Libellus to Leo X by the Camaldolese Hermits Vincenzo Querini and Tommaso Giustiniani,” in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, ed. Christopher M. Bellitto (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 139–52.

group was never been institutionalized, and its impact was more felt through individual action, than as a group. Probably this was the reason why scholarship has not paid much attention to their activities.

Although we do not have explicit evidence of special veneration of Jerome among the group, their actions, especially those of Tommaso could be interpreted as a an imitation of the life of Saint Jerome, in their intellectual approach to the study of the Bible, but also by choosing to retreat into solitude as a form of voluntary exile. In 1507, Tommaso visited the Holy Land, where he wrote how “has been in the solitude of Bethlehem that is so famous for the memory of Saint Jerome.”⁵¹³ The radical eremitical life as that practiced in San Giorgio or Murano Circle, especially by Tommaso Giustiniani, was restricted from those who held public offices or led business or had a family like Pietro Bembo or Gasparo Contarini who pursued a diplomatic career. For that reason, they never formed an official congregation. That did not stop Tommaso however, now called Paolo, to pursue his ideal. In 1521, he founded a hermitage in the mountains of the Marches, consecrated to Saint Jerome. The same year, Pietro Bembo sent him a letter addressed to *eremo di San Girolamo*, in which he praised his choice of “a contemplative life in the manner of God’s servants.”⁵¹⁴

By not choosing the same path as Giustiniani, his friends did not reject the initial ideas of the group. The inability to undertake the complete retreat in the hermitage as Giustiniani did, pushed his companions to seek retreat inside one’s mind and soul, even in the urban setting, substituting the voluntary exile with the contemplative meditation of texts and images. Among the images, there would have been those of Jerome, and here I am not referring only to “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”, but also to the “Penitent Jerome”. The group discussed here cannot be seen as the initiators, but as rather determined practitioners of an already established practices of the fifteenth century which had developed due to several factors, namely reform movements and the growth of the personal devotion. The focus on the act of reading in the former iconographic type indicates that the original owners were “urban collectors” as Belting calls them, who had a passion for ancient and patristic literature, and who self-identified with the saint in his virtues and erudition, but who also imitated his example of solitude although, unlike those of San Giorgio in Alga or Murano circle, in the private space of their homes.

The idea of *solitudo* divided between the religious in the eremitical sense and the poetic according to the concept of *arcadia* in the way Petrarch described it, was encompassed in the image

⁵¹³ Belting, “St. Jerome in Venice,” 17.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

of Saint Jerome, who united the pious and the learned.⁵¹⁵ The duality of his image made this type appealing to the Venetian aristocrats for whom solitude was believed necessary for spiritual and intellectual progress. I believe that further research into the personal networks of the canons of San Giorgio in Alga and the Murano circle, primarily of the families to which members belonged to, would lead to the identification of other owners of Bellini's paintings of Jerome.

Furthermore, it is known that one of the members of the circle, Giambattista Egnazio possessed a painting by Vincenzo Catena depicting Saint Jerome in the desert (*ab eremo*). The painting is has not been preserved, but we can assume that Egnazio used it for his meditative solitude.⁵¹⁶ Although the study which would problematize the broader influence of the Venetian religious setting throughout its *stato da mar* and in particular in Dalmatian communes still waits to be addressed. One of the chapters that follows, analyzing the adoption of Jerome's cult in the domain of private devotion stresses the need for exploring the processes of adoption of the ideas of new piety along with the adoption of the humanism.

⁵¹⁵ See chapter 2 *The Christian world and Arcadia* in: Allan R. Ruff, *Arcadian Visions: Pastoral Influences on Poetry, Painting and the Design of Landscape* (Oxford; Havertow: Windgather Press, 2015), 21–34; Marsha S. Collins, *Imagining Arcadia in Renaissance Romance* (Routledge, 2016). The concept of the unattainable arcadia as an allegorical depiction of the state of mind was actualized during the Renaissance, influenced by the readings of Virgil and Ovid, when arcadia established itself as a genre in painting and literature. The biblical bucolic allegory, where the idea of an arcadia originates from the Garden of Eden, is permeated with a classical notion during the Renaissance, deriving from Petrarch's writings.

⁵¹⁶ Belting, "St. Jerome in Venice," 18.

5 THE ADOPTION OF THE RENAISSANCE CULT IN DALMATIA

*ET : BEATI : HIER(ony)MI : STRIDONIE(n)SIS : PIETATI (...)*⁵¹⁷

(Out of the devotion to Saint Jerome of Stridon...)

Renaissance humanism expanded along the Eastern Adriatic Coast, earlier than anywhere else in Europe as a result of the economic, commercial, political, and personal networks of Dalmatian and Italian individuals. Among the commodities exchanged by humanist individuals on either side of the Adriatic, we must also acknowledge the cult of Saint Jerome. Dalmatian humanists not only acquired and studied the works of Jerome, they also adopted devotional practices from their Italian counterparts, commissioning altarpieces and chapels, and composing new devotional literature.

Still, it is essential to emphasize that the cultural advancement of the Dalmatian communes was due not exclusively to the influence of progressive Italian culture during this period, as is sometimes assumed. Most of the communes had inherited cultural and communal identities of developing from the antiquity, having continued without interruption throughout the Middle Ages. Illustrative examples of this, are the medieval cathedrals and churches of Zadar, Trogir, and Dubrovnik, together with other cultural heritage sites of mostly ecclesiastical provenance. The vast corpus of Medieval and Renaissance heritage not only contributes to the notion of economic and cultural progress but illustrates the diverse influences which the territory of Eastern Adriatic Coast has been exposed to. Influences which reflect its position in the global exchange of artistic forms, ideas, and trends during the Middle Ages and Early Modern periods.

The presence of Jerome's veneration among monastic communities—Glagolites or Franciscans does not represent an unusual practice, given his importance to the Church and its teachings, general inclusion in ecclesiastical settings and extensive visual repertoire. The novelty which the Renaissance brought, was the formation of distinctive features beyond these ecclesiastical and monastic institutions. This new styling of Jerome was rooted in private devotion and found among different social strata. The Italian examples discussed in the previous chapter have shown that the

⁵¹⁷ Belamarić, “Nota za Tripuna Bokanića”, 463

critical component was the personal appropriation and identification with the saint, expressed through artistic commissions and the possession of Jerome's literary and hagiographical works.

This chapter, together with the proceeding one, will show, as Hans Belting has remarked, that regardless of the general popularity of the saint in this period, to be fully understood, the visual manifestations representing Jerome should be looked at in within the overall religious, political, and cultural context in which they developed. Not all the manifestations or contexts of veneration were present everywhere that the cult was present.⁵¹⁸ While, the development of Humanism and the burgeoning of the Renaissance, conditioned the development of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, the key factor in his smooth adoption and transformation into a national saint was his Dalmatian origin. It is evident, that the civic cult of Saint Jerome started to gain more importance from the middle of the fifteenth century when some communes, like Dubrovnik in 1445 and Trogir in 1455 started to celebrate his feast day publicly, where his Dalmatian origin became one of the main reasons for the solemn praise of the saint.

It is from this moment on that Jerome's image started its gradual transformation into the patron saint of Dalmatia, supported, although not directly, with the already existing idea within the Franciscan province and among the Glagolites. The perception of Jerome as the saint affiliated with Dalmatia and the other Croatian lands is seen in the promotion of his cult in the migrant communities outside of homeland, like it was in Rome where the members of *Dalmatiae et Schiavonae nationum* were granted a permission in 1453 to reconstruct the church of Santa Marina and dedicate it to Saint Jerome. Or in Pesaro, Udine and Venice where Jerome's cult had been nurtured among the *Schiavoni* confraternities, discussed further in the chapter 6. Yet, regardless of this, not every manifestation of Jerome's cult can be labeled merely as the expression of his Dalmatian identity, even though this component was certainly embedded in the expressions of private devotion.

One of the most reliable evidence of the growing popularity of a certain saint is the occurrence of his name give at the baptism. Although there is no research which could give us precise quantitative data, some indications are present. Mladen Andreis, in his study on the patriciate of Trogir, brings a

⁵¹⁸ For example, we can see the veneration of Jerome in Bohemia as the reflection of widespread practices that emerged in Italy. Nevertheless, another reason why he was praised there, relates to the emergence of pan-Slavic ideas and the adoption of the Glagolitic cult, which saw Jerome as the inventor of the script and the composer of the Slavic mass. The emperor Charles IV invited Croatian Glagolites to settle in Prague in a monastery he established in the city in 1347. This monastery was consecrated to Saint Jerome, in recognition of the deeds he had accomplished for the Slavic people. Most probably, the monks came from the monastery of Saint Cosmas and Damian in Tkon, which was destroyed by the Venetians in the war with the Hungarian king. Julia Verkholtantsev, "St. Jerome As a Slavic Apostle in Luxemburg Bohemia," *Viator* 44, no. 1 (2013): 251–86; Verkholtantsev, *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome*, 63–115; Martin Slepíčka, "Kult sv. Jeronýma v českých zemích v období středověku [The cult of Saint Jerome in the Czech lands in the Middle Ages]," *Kultúrne dejiny* 10, no. 2 (2019): 176–96.

list of the members of the Great Council in the fourteenth century. Among the listed names, not one Jerome is found. The list of the names common among the nobility, shows that only from the fifteenth century, Jerome's name was adopted, pursuant to the growing devotion to the saint. In the documents consulted for his study, fifteen different Jerome's are found. The overall list of the names of the aristocracy in Trogir from the thirteenth until the eighteenth century, shows that in Trogir, name Jerome (Jeronim) was given to 67 individuals, what makes it among the most popular names after John (Ivan): 195, Peter (Petar): 106, Nicholas (Nikola): 91, James (Jakov): 73.⁵¹⁹

Nella Lonza already noted this phenomenon in the case of the Republic of Ragusa based on the occurrence of name in the testaments of the period.⁵²⁰ Although there is yet no research out of which we could bring the same conclusion on the presence of the chosen name Jerome among the Dalmatian friars, the occurrence of the name in the literature on the Dalmatian Franciscan province, indicates that friars also preferred the saint in this sense.

This chapter analyses the presence of manifestations of Jerome's cult among individuals along the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries positioning them in the broader context of the cult's development. Such analysis is necessary in order to distinguish the local particularities of the saint's veneration in Dalmatia and thereby note Jerome's privileged position among his compatriots. The chosen examples have never before been the subject of a comprehensive study in the broader context of the saint's veneration in Dalmatia, and some of them have only been marginally discussed in the scholarship. The complex historical and political factors that impacted the manifestations of Jerome's cult, and the paucity of previous research, prevents a comprehensive study of the cult in all communes, and thus this research is limited primarily to the commune of Trogir.

The early formation of the cult, the large number of its expressions, and the particularities in its iconographic and visual production established Trogir as a cradle of the Renaissance cult in Dalmatia. The examples from Trogir serve as a referential point for the practices in the other communes that are also discussed here, particularly Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, and Split. This chapter shows that the growing interest in Jerome in the fifteenth century is directly related to the economic and political connections between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, and furthered conditioned by the development of humanism in Dalmatia.

⁵¹⁹ Mladen Andreis, *Trogirsko plemstvo do kraja prve austrijske uprave u Dalmaciji (1805.)* [The nobility of Trogir until the end of the first Austrian administration in Dalmatia (1805)] (Trogir: Muzej grada Trogira, 2006), 295.

⁵²⁰ See note 941 in: Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 257.

Furthermore, it shows that Jerome's image in Dalmatia is more than a mere expression of the civic devotion, but it mirrors the adoption of the Renaissance art, changes in the devotional practices, and the development of the ideas of collective consciousness. This chapter positions the Dalmatian production within the broader context of Jerome's Renaissance cult, discussed in the previous chapter, but it also underlines the achievement of the educated individuals which have, through their personal affiliation with the saint, contributed to the broader presence and the acceptance of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, and its subsequent transformation in the national saint by the end of the fifteenth century.

5.1 JEROME AND THE RISE OF HUMANISM

The Merchants of Zadar

The growing economic potential of the Dalmatian aristocrats and merchants can be seen already from the second half of the fourteenth century, in the various pious legacies that they endowed in their last wills.⁵²¹ Their rise in fortune was due primarily to the stabilization of the political situation in the Eastern Adriatic after the *Treaty of Zadar* signed in 1358. This treaty, signed between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Republic of Venice, placed Venetian pretensions for hegemony in Dalmatia on hold for the next half of the century, as with it, the *Serenissima* was forced to surrender suzerainty over to Dalmatia and its islands to the Hungarian king.

The levels of autonomy given to the communes by the king of Hungary and their inclusion in the broader market facilitated the development of the economy, trade, and artisan production. The local aristocracy, directly involved in communal government, were not the only one who benefited during this period of prosperity. With the development of trade, primarily the salt trade, other social layers started acquired the wealth, a trend which is reflected in their pious legacies and the record of their possessing goods which were considered luxuries—books and paintings.⁵²²

Two examples show how economic prosperity directly influenced the cultural as well. First, the inventory of Chrysogonus de Nassi, the archdeacon of the Cathedral chapter of Zadar, reveals that

⁵²¹ See: Zoran Ladić, *Last Will: Passport to Heaven: Urban Last Wills from Late Medieval Dalmatia with Special Attention to the Legacies Pro Remedio Animae and Ad Pias Causas* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2012).

⁵²² The book by Emil Hilje explores the development of gothic painting in Zadar, based on the number of archival documents. It brings to our attention many artworks that have not been preserved down to the present day. For an analysis of the political and social environment of Zadar during the period, consult the introduction. Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 5-18

he was “one of the most educated people in Zadar in the fourteenth century”.⁵²³ From it, we can see that, among other titles mostly expressing spiritual and ecclesiastical themes, he possessed copies of Jerome’s letters. Another example is Michael, a wealthy silk and textile merchant. His inventory, written in 1385, reveals that he possessed a copy of Dante’s *Comedia Divina*, several paintings for private devotion and that he was fluent in many languages. Besides the Croatian vernacular, Latin, and Italian, he also spoke French (*lingua Francigena*).

The rise of Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia should also be observed in the context of the rising power of secular society, whose members, by acquiring wealth, sought to use that same wealth to secure their place in heaven through pious endowment. Such endowment was also caused by the general change in religious sentiments, in which the idea of personal endowment for souls in purgatory became the main reason behind personal and artistic commissions.⁵²⁴ The earliest commissions of Jerome’s cult, mentioned in the chapter on Franciscan devotion, stemmed from the same religious and social atmosphere. The *nouveau riche*, regardless of the social layer to which they belonged, started accepting Jerome as their personal patron saint. Among these, the wealthy merchants Paolo Giglaro and Simon Begna were not the only ones who venerated Jerome as their patron, and other like Damian de Nassi should also be joined.⁵²⁵

Judging by the occurrence of members in clerical and administrative functions, the Nassi family played an influential role in the history of Zadar during the Late Middle Ages. Still, a thorough study of the family and its members awaits. Besides the already mentioned canon of the church, Chrysogonus de Nassis, Saint Jerome was venerated by another member of the family, Damian Nassi

⁵²³ See footnote 956. Ladić, *Last Will*, 312. *The inventory lists these books: liber decretalium, liber sextus decretalium, liber sententiarum Vgoçini, vnus liber, vnus liber viciorum, vnus liber dialogorum, vnus Donatus, vnus liber de penitentia, liber de diuinitate siue asidibus, vnus quaternus de banbacina de istoriis Sanctorum, vnus liber epistolarum beati Ieronimi, vnus liber de paperio de gramaticha, vnus quaternus facionum et expensarum, vnus quaternus nous de banbacina non scriptum, duo quaterni de decima, vnus liber de peperio super colloquio iudiciale, vnus liber epistolarum beati Ieronimi, vnus liber a canendo de ecclesia, vnus liber de babançina cuius nomen ignoro, certe regule de gramaticha, vnus liber narationum, vnus liber paruus, videlicet carte sex super ius ciuile, vnus liber de paperio super tratactione clericali, vnus breuiarius, vnus missalis qui est pignori precii ser Grisogonum de Nassis, vnus liber racionum fabrice antique.*

⁵²⁴ On general development of the idea of purgatory see: Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); On the merchants of Zadar and the pious endowments consult: Sabine Florence Fabijanec, “Trgovci i njihovi odnosi sa zadarskim crkvenim ustanovama u kasnom srednjem vijeku” [Les marchands et leurs rapports avec les institutions zadaroises ecclésiastiques au Moyen Age tardif], in *Sedamnaest stoljeća zadarske Crkve* (Zadar: Zadarska Nadbiskupija, 2009), 299–318.

⁵²⁵ Tomislav Raukar, “Zadarska trgovina solju u XIV. i XV. Stoljeću” [Zadar’s salt trade in the fourteenth and the fifteenth Centuries], *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta: Odsjek za povijest*, no. 7–8 (1970): 42. From the historical documents, it seems that the Giglaro family accumulated wealth from the salt trade. In 1385, Florentine merchant Cion left to Krešo de Varicassis and Marco de Giglaro proceeds of the salt chambers in Zadar and Pag, until they do not collect the sum of 519 ducats.

(1338-1408), a man well-known in historiography concerning the trade and the political life of Zadar during the fourteenth century.⁵²⁶

However he might guard his investment in business ventures, Damian did not save money when it came to the investment for the salvation of his soul. In 1395, he made a contract with the painter Meneghello di Giovanni de' Canali (Meneghelo Ivanov de Canali, documented 1383–1427) to make an altarpiece with the image of the Virgin Mary, “similar to the one recently made for the church of Saint Francis” for the high price of 36 ducats.⁵²⁷ In his will, written in 1399, Damian made a legacy for a daily celebration of mass at the altar of Saint Jerome in the church of Saint Plato in Zadar.⁵²⁸

The common thing to all three commissioners is their involvement with the growing salt trade. Out of the three, Damian de Nassis had the most crucial role in the establishment of the salt trade network in Zadar and its surroundings. During the second half of the fourteenth century under Angevine rule, one of the main economic forces in the commune of Zadar was the salt trade conducted by a number of local aristocrats controlled by the Royal chamber *Camera regia salis et tricessime*, which from the 1370s was dominated by Florentine merchants in the town.⁵²⁹

In Zadar, an awareness of Jerome's cult developed in the period when mercantile activities were expanding and when foreign merchants were present in town. Similarly, to the Florentine practice of the consecration of the private chapels to Jerome, those in Zadar were dictated by the advancement of the trade and the change in religious sentiments, which resulted in private commissions. The examples mentioned above show that the exchange of goods between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, carried with it also the exchange of contemporary devotional trends,

⁵²⁶ See more on Damian's life and legacy: Serđo Dokoza, “Damjan Bivaldov Nassi (oko 1338.–1408.),” *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru*, no. 57 (2015): 93–144. Based on the existing scholarship, it is still not possible to establish a connection between Chrysogonus and Damian. It is known that Damian had a son named Chrysogonus, but on this alone we cannot claim a connection between them.

⁵²⁷ Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 52.

⁵²⁸ Tadija Smičiklas, ed., *Diplomatički Zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije* [Codex Diplomaticus], vol. 18 (1395-1399) (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1990), 371. *Quod tam ipse prior quam ceteri eius successores teneantur et teneri voluerunt ac se obligaverunt teneri et promiserunt hoc videlicet, quod unus frater presbiter videlicet teneatur omni die super altare sancti Ieronimi sito in ecclesia celebrare in remissione peccatorum dicti ser Damiani*. Lovorka Čoralić, “Dominikanski samostan u Zadru u oporukama zadarskih plemića (XVI-XVIII. st.) [Dominican monastery in Zadar in the wills of Zadar nobility (16th -18th centuries)],” *Croatica Christiana periodica* 18, no. 34 (1994): 202. The Nassi family had a palace opposite of the Dominican church of Saint Plato. Through the centuries, the family has supported the church and the monastery, where the family members have been buried.

⁵²⁹ Raukar, “Zadarska trgovina solju”, 26; Serđo Dokoza, “Zadarsko plemstvo i sol u drugoj polovici 14. i početkom 15. stoljeća” [The Nobility of Zadar and salt during the second half of the 14th and the early 15th century], *Povijesni prilozi* 34, no. 49 (2015): 86–123.

popular cults of saints and other forms of cultural exchange through the presence of Italian merchants in Dalmatia, asking for the further inspection of the networks and the processes of adoption.

Archival documents bring us other important information about pious legacies that show us how the cult of Jerome in Dalmatia found its audience as early as the end of the fourteenth century. In 1391, Ana Matafaris, a widow of Juraj, endowed 30 ducats for the altar of Saint Jerome and the altarpiece on it, in the church of Saint Mary in Zadar.⁵³⁰ Ana was a noblewoman, the daughter of the Dubrovnik aristocrat—judge, councilman, rector, diplomat and merchant—Ivan Gradi, who negotiated a marriage of his daughter with the member of aristocrat family from the other commune, according to the already harmonized practice, in order to strengthen ties with the Zadar aristocracy. On the other hand, her husband Juraj was a member of one of the most respected and politically influential Zadar patrician families, who held a number of public functions in the city, including that of public examiner and rector. He was also in the mercantile business, trading with fabrics and wines.⁵³¹ In the will of Clara de Pomo, widow of Pellegrino, written in 1448, made a pious legacy for making of the figures of St. Jerome, Martin, Catherine and Margarita in the church of Saint Dominic. Given the damage of the document, it is not clear which medium it was, but Emil Hilje assumes that they were made in fresco.⁵³²

However, it would be wrong to view this exchange as unilateral, given the presence of Dalmatian traders, students, or monks throughout Italy, who by returning to Dalmatia brought the new trends as well. Unlike the Florentine examples, where some of the commissioners of Jerome's altars and artworks were closely engaged with the study of his works, in Zadar, at this early period, we do not find such practice among the commissioners mentioned above. The only exception is the presence of Jerome's letters in the library of the canon Chrysogonus de Nassis, but we do not know if he was a fervent devotee of the saint.

Humanist Interest in Jerome's Letters

The exchange between the two coasts intensified after 1420 and the establishment of Venetian Dalmatia, with Zadar as its capital and the seat of *Provveditore Generale di Dalmazia*. The complex process of the inclusion of Dalmatian communes and islands into the Venetian overseas territory, included a revision of the local statutes and laws, limiting the power of the local aristocracy, and

⁵³⁰ Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 165.

⁵³¹ On Ana's and Juraj's marriage see: Tomislav Popić, "Zadarske mirazne parnice iz druge polovice 14. Stoljeća" [Dowry litigations in Zadar in the second half of the fourteenth century], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 30 (2012): 57-85.

⁵³² Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo*, 167, See footnote 78 in p. 195.

undermining communal autonomy. The presence of Venetian officials like Giovanni Battista Bevilacqua and Sante Venier in Zadar, who were active during the 1410s, facilitated the introduction of cultural novelties.⁵³³

Luka Špoljarić has discussed that the relatively sophisticated urban culture, longstanding contacts between two shores of the Adriatic Sea, and the establishment of the Venetian government, resulted in the early adoption of Humanism in Zadar, and later elsewhere in Dalmatia. An interest in the classical works was present in Dalmatia even before the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the significant change that came after the turn of the new century was that the interest was no longer limited to the narrow ecclesiastical circles and the clerics, but it included laymen more widely.⁵³⁴

The same conclusion can be applied to the cult of Saint Jerome. Even though Jerome's cult was present in Dalmatia even before the fifteenth century, only with the dissemination of Humanism and more frequent and accessible contacts with Venetian cultural production through personal connections, did the cult of Saint Jerome start to flourish and be omnipresent in the communes. During the fifteenth century, the line between ecclesiastical and lay interest in classical and patristic literature narrowed, as can be seen in the example of the Benedictine monastery of Saint Chrysogonus, which was the core of artistic and literary production in Zadar for centuries. The circle around the abbot Petar Kršava, a member of the Zadar patrician family, nurtured the interest in the ancient heritage.⁵³⁵

A few names belonging to the fifteenth-century humanist circle must be mentioned for our discussion: Jeronim Vidulić (1430–1499), Juraj Divnić (1440–1530), and bishop Maffeo Valaresso (1450–1494).⁵³⁶ The one that deserves closer examination here, is Georgius Begna (Juraj Begna, c.

⁵³³ Both of them exchanged letters with Francesco Barbaro regularly and asked him to send them manuscripts to Dalmatia. These letters also reveal that the liaison between them and Barbaro was a nobleman from Zadar, Juraj Jurjević. Neven Jovanović, “Ciceron, Plutarh i Francesco Barbaro u Zadru 1417-1419” [Cicero, Plutarch And Francesco Barbaro in Zadar 1417-1419], *Colloquia Maruliana* 22 (2013): 5–27; Luka Špoljarić, “The First Dalmatian Humanists and the Classics: A Manuscript Perspective,” in *A Handbook to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Zara Martirosova Turlone, Dana LaCourse Munteanu, and Dorota Dutsch (Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 48.

⁵³⁴ Špoljarić, “The First Dalmatian Humanists and the Classics,” 47.

⁵³⁵ Branimir Glavičić, “Hrvatski latinisti-humanisti na razmeđu XV/XVI. Stoljeća” [Croatian Latinists and the humanists at the turn of the sixteenth century], *Senjski zbornik* 17 (1990): 62; Ivanka Petrović, “Latinska i glagoljska tradicija sv. Krizogona (Krševana) i sv. Anastazije u hrvatskoj hagiografiji srednjega vijeka” [The Latin and Glagolitic traditions of St. Chrysogonus (Krševan) and St. Anastasia in Croatian hagiography of the Middle Ages], *Slovo: časopis Staroslavenskoga instituta u Zagrebu* 56–57 (2008): 451–75; Jasenka Gudelj, “The King of Naples Emulates Salvia Postuma? The Arch of Castel Nuovo in Naples and Its Antique Model,” in *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean*, Leiden (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 447. In 1434, Petar Kršava renovated the ancient arch erected by Melia Anania to honor her husband and moved it to the precinct of the monastery. During the centuries, the monastery nurtured, developing a multilingual and polygraphic tradition of book production in its scriptorium.

⁵³⁶ Darko Novaković, “Epistolarij nadbiskupa Maffea Vallaressa kao vrelo za povijest hrvatskoga humanizma” [The correspondence of Archbishop Maffeo Valaresso as source for the history of Croatian humanism], *Colloquia Maruliana*

1395–1437), a judge from Zadar who was among the earliest proponents of humanism in Zadar. He maintained a written correspondence with his Italian counterparts, including Cyriacus of Ancona who visited him in Zadar.⁵³⁷

Together with Petar Cippico (1390–1440) from Trogir, Georgius Begna is the most notable representative of early humanism in Dalmatia. Petar Cippico had a great passion for collecting and transcribing the works of ancient authors. Only a few preserved manuscripts, from his once rich library, testify to his erudition and interest in ancient heritage.⁵³⁸ One of them is a codex in which Georgius Begna transcribed the text *De viris illustribus* by Pseudo-Aurelius Victor in 1435, and gifted it to Petar Cippico, who continued to add to it additional excerpts of classical authors and church fathers, between 1435 and 1440.⁵³⁹

The codex, today kept in the *Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana* in Venice, is a witness to their close friendship and the extensive repertoire of classical authors known by both of them.⁵⁴⁰ Among the excerpts that Petar added are those of Cesar, Cicero, Aulus Gellius, and Claudius Ptolemy, particularly the parts which discuss Dalmatia.⁵⁴¹ An interest in the history of the region spurred the curiosity of Petar Cippico, who among the authors in his codex wanted in particular, to have excerpts by authors from his home region, namely Jerome. The codex incorporates the excerpts of his letters to Damasus and Nepotianus, and exegesis on biblical books, such as on *Epistle of Saint Paul to Ephesians* or the *Book of Elisha*.

The codex stands as an example of the established practice among the humanists—the exchange of manuscripts—due to which the ideas and knowledge circulated between the Dalmatian communes and within the individuals of the same scholarly circles. It also stands as an example of

21 (2012): 5–22; Špoljarić, “The First Dalmatian Humanists and the Classics,” 49. The Bishop Maffeo Valaresso was of great importance for the development of Humanism and Renaissance in Zadar, not only for the long period of his apostolic mission in Zadar but for his personal connections with Italian humanists, the circle he formed in Zadar and the artistic commissions and executions in which he was included, directly or indirectly. The collection of his letters *Maffei Vallaresi archiepiscopi Hyadrensis Epistolae et orationes*, among other things, contains correspondence with Ermolao Barbaro the Elder, bishop of Treviso.

⁵³⁷ Bratislav Lučin, “Litterae Olim in Marmore Insculptae: Humanist Epigraphy on the Eastern Coast of the Adriatic until the Age of Marko Marulić,” in *Classical Heritage from the Epigraphic to the Digital: Academia Ragusina 2009 and 2011*, ed. Irena Bratičević and Teo Radić (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2014), 41–42; Luka Špoljarić, “Korespondencija prvih dalmatinskih humanista: Juraj Benja Zadranin” [The correspondence of the first Dalmatian humanists: Juraj Benja of Zadar], *Colloquia Maruliana* 28 (2019): 73–105.

⁵³⁸ On Petar’s interest in the Latin epigraphy and the manuscripts he owned consult: Bratislav Lučin, “Jadranski osvit hrvatskoga humanizma” [The Adriatic dawn of Croatian humanism], *Mogućnosti* 63, no. 1–2 (2018): 14–16; Lučin, “Litterae Olim in Marmore Insculptae,” 44–48.

⁵³⁹ Lučin, “Litterae Olim in Marmore Insculptae,” 87. The presence of the texts by Guarino of Verona in the codices by Petar Cippico also points to the contacts with Italian humanists.

⁵⁴⁰ Biblioteca Marciana, Venice (Ms. Marc. lat. cl. XIV, n.24 [4044]).

⁵⁴¹ Špoljarić, “The First Dalmatian Humanists and the Classics,” 50.

the exchange between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. The note added at the end of the codex demonstrates that in 1457 the manuscript was in Venice, in the hands of the already-discussed Bernardo Bembo.⁵⁴²

Knowing that both Petar Cippico and Georgius Begna have nurtured the friendships with Italian counterparts, especially with Ciriaco of Ancona, whom they even hosted during his journey along the Eastern Adriatic Coast, from Istria to Dalmatia,⁵⁴³ it is not surprising that this codex found its way to Venice. Scholars still argue how the Cippico manuscript ended in the hands of Bembo. While it is unlikely that Petar Cippico could have been friends with a young Paduan student, it is more probable that Bernardo was friends with Petar's son, Coriolano Cippico (1425–1493). Two could have met in Padua while studying together and exchanged manuscripts as a sign of friendship.

Still, the presence of the codex of Dalmatian provenance in Venice that early, represent one of the links between the Dalmatian, namely Trogir humanist circle, with the Venetian one, where from the artistic representations found its way to Trogir, seen in the monumental relief executed in the baptistery, following the direct models from the Venetian and Paduan painterly circles. As in Italy, the development of Jerome's cult related to the possession of transcriptions of Jerome's letters and the devotional literature of the saint. Even though the Glagolitic tradition nurtured devotion to Jerome, we do not find the systematic transcription or translation of the letters among preserved Glagolitic manuscripts. The liturgical codices which contain *officium* for Jerome were used in the monastic setting, and for that reason, they incorporated parts of *Letter XXII* to Eustochium - the description of his life in the desert and his efforts to fight bodily temptations.

Among the preserved Latin manuscripts of Dalmatian and Croatian provenance, we do not find other copies containing Jerome's letters or other works by the saint.⁵⁴⁴ Still, archival documents and quotations of Jerome's works in the literary production of Dalmatian humanists indicates that they were among the preferred literature. In 1461, the Bishop of Hvar, Tommaso Tomassini,

⁵⁴² Bernardo's interest in classical literature started during his studies in Padua in the 1450s, where he earned degrees in philosophy and law. Besides his scholarly interests, Bembo had a noted political career due to which he became acquainted with other influential people of the period, including Lorenzo Medici. In Venice, he held administrative positions, including being a member of Consiglio dei Dieci. In Florence, he was the Venetian ambassador, and in Ravenna, he acted as Podesta. His library, enriched by his son Pietro, contained copies of not only classical authors, but also Petrarch and Dante. See more: Nella Giannetto, *Bernardo Bembo: umanista e politico veneziano* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1985), 91–94, 97–106.; Debra Pincus, "Calligraphy, Epigraphy, and the Paduan-Venetian Culture of Letters in the Early Renaissance," in *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 41–60.

⁵⁴³ Lučin, "Jadranski osvjet hrvatskoga humanizma," 13–14.

⁵⁴⁴ This research consulted archival sources, but the amount of material which was consulted and supposed to be consulted went beyond the research limits of this thesis. However, we believe that further research into archival materials will bring other copies to light.

commissioned a transcription of the letters from the priest Antun.⁵⁴⁵ Recent research into the library of Nicholas of Modruš further discovered that he possessed a copy of Jerome's letters, which is also visible from his written production where he quotes Jerome.⁵⁴⁶ The mentioned Georgius Begna was much fond of the saint; in his testament states that a copy of the letters transcribed by his hand should be given to his fellow citizen Marin Nikolin Kršava.⁵⁴⁷ Probably it was not the whole collection of more than 150 letters, which at the period still was not circulating in such format, but the collection of the selected letters.

Marin Kršava, a Zadar nobleman, about whose activities we do not have full picture, represent an interesting example how the prominent individuals, due to their involvement with the different communal and monastic offices, such as being the public examiner or the proctor of the monasteries, should have been familiar with the different perceptions of Jerome present in Dalmatia at the period.⁵⁴⁸ Petar Runje brings several documents which show how due to his public office Marin was often correlated with the Franciscan Third Order, known to be Glagolites. On one occasion, he went even against the limits of his office and accompanied few hermit monks on their journey to Rome and Assisi, due to the unsolved legal questions over some land given to them.⁵⁴⁹

More important office that he held is being the proctor of several Franciscan observant monasteries, including the convent of Saint Jerome in island of Ugljan, and the convent of Holy Cross in Zadar where the Observant friars have lived before moving to the monastery of Saint Francis, the seat of the province. The documents indicate that Marin, as the proctor of the observant Franciscans had an instrumental role in resolving the dispute between the conventual and observant friars in Zadar.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁵ Stipčević, *Socijalna povijest knjige* 1, 50.

⁵⁴⁶ See footnote 139. Nicholas of Modruš was an intriguing person in Croatian history. He was an active participant of many important events like the council in Mantova, he witnessed the fall of the Bosnian Kingdom in 1463, and subsequently accepted diplomatic service in the Vatican. The article by Luka Špoljarić demystifies many falsely accepted claims about Nicholas in the historiography. Although he was educated in Venice in a scholastic manner, only after moving to Rome in 1464, did he become acquainted with Humanist thought and movement. Today, the Vatican library keeps the 45 books that were once part of his personal library. On the presence of quotations of Jerome's work in his works see; Knezović, "Sv. Jeronim u hrvatskom latinitetu," 3.

⁵⁴⁷ Stipčević, *Socijalna povijest knjige* 1, 50; Špoljarić, "Korespondencija prvih dalmatinskih humanista: Juraj Benja Zadranin," 80.

⁵⁴⁸ On the Kršava family see: Branka Grbavac, "Kršava," in *Hrvatski Biografski Leksikon*, accessed June 24, 2020, <http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=6992>.

⁵⁴⁹ Petar Runje, *Prema izvorima II: rasprave i članci o hrvatskim franjevcima trećoredcima glagoljašima* [According to the sources II: Contributions and the articles on Croatian Third Order Franciscans], (Zagreb : Krk: Provincijalat franjevac trećoredaca ; Povijesno društvo otoka Krka, 2012), 148.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 179–80.

But Marin should not be considered an isolated case. The examples of the Gradi family that constructed the church consecrated to Saint Jerome in Slano or the foundation of the monastery of Saint Jerome by Simon Begna, show that between the local aristocracy in the communes and the Franciscan order, also when discussing the veneration of Saint Jerome, a mutual codependence existed. It is precisely in these individuals where the common point of all the traditions meet, and which, in one way or another, contributed to the formation of the characteristic aspects of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia.

The Nassi Manuscript

One of the obstacles to researching the development and prevalence of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, is the lack of preserved manuscripts containing copies of Jerome's works, his *vitae*, or other devotional literature. This especially relates to the manuscript copies of *Vita et Transitus Sancti Hieronymi* or individual copies of the pseudo-letters, which apart from Glagolitic transcriptions and the Glagolitic edition from Senj, are not known at present. To date, no known Latin manuscript copy has survived in Dalmatia.⁵⁵¹

While humanism had connecting points with the Glagolitic tradition, their mutual exchange did not occur until the end of the fifteenth century, when the vernacular language started to infiltrate literature during what was the golden age of Glagolitic literacy, and the Jerominian theory of the invention of Glagolitic letters started to gain more attention even outside the Glagolitic circles. Even though the Slavic language was spoken in the communes, the use of the Glagolitic script was still predominantly in use in the Dalmatian hinterlands and the islands, and among monastic communities, while written production in the communes was predominantly Latin.

For these reasons, the transmission of the contents of the pseudo-letters during the fifteenth century did not result from the adoption of the Glagolitic translation, but from transcriptions in Latin or the Italian vernacular. This theory is also supported by the Glagolitic edition of *Transitus* printed in Senj in 1508, which was based not on the existing Glagolitic translation, but on a translation of the Italian incunabula *Transito de Sancto Girolamo* (Venice, 1487).⁵⁵²

Based on the existing scholarship on Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, we can conclude that before the printing of the *Senj Transitus*, the contents of the letters remained relatively unknown to the general audience, in a range that it was in Venice, for example. Yet, as this thesis discusses in several

⁵⁵¹ Štefanić, "Glagoljski transit," 106.

⁵⁵² Nazor, "Senjski transit," 251.

instances, the direct and indirect influence of its content can be found in the written and visual production, thus we can assume that the copies circulated in the ecclesiastical and humanist circles. Such assumption is supported by the archival sources.

The archival records show that *Transitus* was read among the canons of the Cathedral of Saint Anastasia in Zadar. Considering the humanist inclinations of the Bishop of Zadar, Maffeo Valaresso, the formation of the humanist circle among the canons of Zadar does not come as a surprise. One of them was a certain presbyter Simeon. His testament, composed in 1467, reveals that he possessed works by classical authors, which he left to his friends, among which was a copy of *Transitus*, given to him by a certain presbyter Nicholas.⁵⁵³ In 1490, canon Andrew of Bribir (Andrija Bribiranin) stated in his testament that a copy of *Transitus* written on parchment should be given back to Mauro de Grisogonis, from whom he has borrowed it.⁵⁵⁴ As a result of the invention of the printings press, devotional literature became more popular and accessible. For that reason, other literature about Jerome, and works written by Jerome, including the incunabula of *Transitus*, printed mainly in Venice, were part of the monastic libraries in Dalmatia.⁵⁵⁵

This research has managed to identify the manuscript containing, as of now, the only known surviving copy of Pseudo-Eusebius's letter of Dalmatian provenance. The manuscript (Bridwell MS5), is currently kept in the Bridwell Library of the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, was transcribed by the hand of Chrysogonus de Nassis in 1469. The front page of the manuscript bears his family's coat of arms at the bottom with his initials written on the sides and until now, it was unknown in the secondary literature.

It consists of three parts: Pseudo-Eusebius' letter to *Epistola ad Damasum et Theodorum Senatorem de morte Hieronimi* (ff. 1–38v), *vita* of Saint Jerome by Nicholas Maniacoria *In vita Hieronimi presbyteri* [unattributed by the scribe], (ff. 39–53v), and Saint Paulinus of Aquileia's *De admonitione ad comitem Aurelianum*, whom Chrysogonus mistakenly identifies as Augustine (ff. 54-

⁵⁵³ Runje, "Knjige glagoljaša," 171; Aleksandar Stipčević, "Djela antičkih pisaca u srednjovjekovnom Zadru" [Works of ancient writers in medieval Zadar], *Croatia et Slavica Iadertina* 8, no. 1 (2012): 55. *Item reliquit Ser Paulo de Georgiis unum suum Luchanum. Item reliquit suprascripto Ser Antonio de Grisogonis unum suum Valerium. Et Ser Mauro filio dicti Ser Antonii reliquit suas Trayedias cum suo commento super Trayedias. Item reliquit supradicto presbitero Nicolao primicerio Transitum Sti. Hieronimi.* DAZd, SZB, Nicolaus de Benedictis, 1467, 5. II.

⁵⁵⁴ *Item voluit restituisset ser Mauro de Grisogonis eius Transitum Sancti Hieronimi in carta bona.* DAZd, SZB, Hieronymus Vidolich, B un, F V, nr.26. 1490. 28. VI. I would like to express my gratitude to Emil Hilje, who brought to my notion the existence of this document and shared the transcription with me. Emil Hilje, "Šibenski slikar Juraj Čulinović [Šibenik Painter Juraj Čulinović]," *Juraj - Bilten društva za očuvanje šibenske baštine Juraj Dalmatinac* 2 (2013): 50. Andrija Bribiranin also conducted a business in Šibenik, where his representative was no one else that the Šibenik painter Juraj Čulinović, about whom we will discuss later in this thesis.

⁵⁵⁵ Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula IV - 1.dio". In Dubrovnik a copy of *La vita el transito* printed in Venice in 1475 by Gabriele Petri can be found.

86r).⁵⁵⁶ It is dated twice, November 18, 1469, and December 10, 1469.⁵⁵⁷ In the manuscript, the author states that it was *scripta per me Chrissogonum quondam domini Raphaelis de Nassis legum doctoris*.⁵⁵⁸ His father, Raphael de Nassis, doctor of law, was a judge in Zadar and served as an adviser to the Venetian Rector on several occasions between 1444 and 1468. The choice of Pseudo-Eusebius' letter, which describes the death and passing of Saint Jerome (*transitus* to heaven), and the transcription of the manuscript could be seen as a way of paying honor by Chrysogonus, to his deceased father.

Unfortunately, the current state of scholarship does not bring us closer to the identification of Chrysogonus and his possible role in the social or ecclesiastical life of Zadar. Carlo Federico Bianchi, in his book on the history of Christianity in Zadar, brings information that at the end of the fifteenth century, a certain Chrysogonus de Nassis served as the proctor of the *fabbrica* of the Cathedral church in Zadar, when the relic icon of Saint Martin was repaired in 1496.⁵⁵⁹ Without further research into the Nassi family, we still cannot identify the author Chrysogonus with the proctor Chrysogonus. Yet, a closer look at the manuscript and its contents reveal that Chrysogonus was a very pious man who underlined some parts of the texts or emphasized them with a mark. The last text in the manuscript, the one by Paulinus of Aquileia, wrongfully attributed to Saint Augustine by Chrysogonus, consists of the rules for pious living, arranged in chapters.

This manuscript also contributes to the notion of the presence of another hagiographic text, a *vita* of Saint Jerome composed by Niccolò Maniacoria, written in the twelfth century. As the title says, *Vita sanctii Hieronymi collecta ex tractatibus eius ac sanctorum Augustini, Damasi, Gregorii, Gelasii, et aliorum patrum sanctorum* was extracted from the writings of other Church fathers and Jerome's contemporaries. In the library of the Franciscan monastery in Zadar, the incunabula of Jerome's epistles *Epistolae I-II*, printed in Parma in 1480, has five inserted parchments containing

⁵⁵⁶ "MS 5 Pseudo-Eusebius of Cremona and Pseudo-Augustine," accessed January 28, 2020, <https://sites.smu.edu/bridwell/specialcollections/bridwellwesternms/ms5.htm>.

⁵⁵⁷ The first dating can be found in the explicit after the Pseudo Eusebius' epistle (f.38v): *Explicit Epistole Beati Eusebii ad Sanctus Damasium portuniensem episcopem et ad Theodorum Romanorum Senatorem de morte gloriosissimi Ieronimi mirifici doctoris scripta per me Chrissogonum quondam dominus Raphaelis de Nassis legum doctoris in MCCC sexagesimo nono die decimo octavo novembris*. The second dating is found in the last folio of the manuscript, after Paulinus's De admonitione (f.43v): *Explicit liber Sancti Augustini De admonitione ad comites Aurelianus et nominatur viridarium fidelium orthodoxorum et nobilium catholicorum. Scriptum per me Crisogonum de Nassis filius quondam dominus Raphaelis legum doctoris in MCCCLXVIII die X decembris*.

⁵⁵⁸ Bridwell MS5, f.38v

⁵⁵⁹ Carlo Federico Bianchi, *Zara cristiana: dell'arcidiacono capitolare*, vol. 2 (Zara: Tipografia Woditzka, 1877), 164. *Paulus, Martinus, et Mladenus Corvatiæ Praesides S. C. P. fieri iusserunt. Donatus vero Britannicus Canonicus et Chrysogonus Nassius Fabricae Procuratores vetustate deformatum Joannis Robobelli Antistitis cosensu in melius restituerunt 1496.*; Ivo Petricioli, "Najstariji inventar riznice zadarske katedrale" [The oldest Zadar cathedral treasury inventory], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 26 (1986): 160–61.

the transcription of this *vita*, written in the gothic minuscule at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁵⁶⁰ The presence of Maniacoria's text in Dalmatia shows that despite the ongoing tradition of Jerome's local origin, imported devotional material was an essential factor in the development of Jerome's cult.

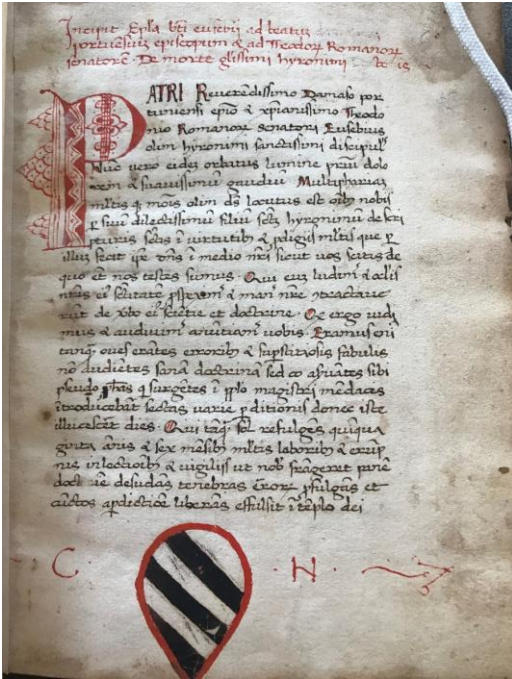


Figure 37 Chrysogonus de Nassis, *The Nassi Manuscript* (Bridwell MS5), Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas (f.1).

Source: <https://sites.smu.edu/bridwell/specialcollections/bridwellwesternms/ms5.htm>

(Last accessed 22 June 2020)

The presence of various expressions of devotion to Saint Jerome among the Nassi family in Zadar, from the endowment of the chapel to the possession of the manuscript with Jerome's *vita* and the Pseudo-Eusebius's letter on his death gives a clue on another possible devotional object to the saint that was in the possession of this aristocratic family from Zadar. In the Museum of Fine Arts in Split, the small-scale relief representing "Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto" one from the series of similar reliefs modeled upon the one in the baptistery of Trogir. In the lower framed part, the relief has a carved coat of arms with two outstretched wings.

Kruno Prijatelj has already noticed that the Nassi family can be counted among the potential owners of the relief, but he has not made decisive conclusions.⁵⁶¹ The reasons for this lie in not knowing of the special devotion

to the saint that was nurtured among the members of the family. Comparing the coats of arms from the relief and the manuscript, it is clear that in both cases, it is the coat of arms of the Nassi family, which was blue with three left-handed gold beams.⁵⁶² Although traces of color are not visible on the relief, it is highly possible that the coat of arms was painted, since traces of color were also found on other reliefs from the series, about which I discuss in chapter 7.

⁵⁶⁰ Frkin, "Katalozi inkunabula IV - 1.dio," 136.

⁵⁶¹ Kruno Prijatelj, "Andrija Aleši u Splitu", 46.

⁵⁶² Jelena Kolumbić, „Grbovi zadarskih plemićkih obitelji“ [Coats of Arms of the Zadar Nobility], Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru, 47 (2005), 71.

Martin Mladošić and Saint Jerome



Figure 38 Vittore Carpaccio, *Zadar Polyptych*, c. 1480-1490, Museum of Sacred Art, Zadar, Source: © Croatian Conservation Institute, <http://www.h-r-z.hr/index.php/djelatnosti/konzerviranje-restauriranje/staf2/2600-konzerviranje-i-restauriranje-poliptiha-sv-martina-vittorea-carpaccia> (Last accessed 22 June 2020)

The veneration of Jerome among the canons of the cathedral in Zadar was not merely limited to the possession of the devotional literature on the saint. At the end of the fifteenth century, when Jerome's cult was already deeply rooted in Dalmatia, the canon of the Cathedral church, Martin Mladošić commissioned a polyptych from Vittore Carpaccio for the altar of his patron saint, Saint Martin (Fig. 38). The commission should further be noted in light of the information brought by Bianchi, that the existing reliquary of Saint Martin was renovated in 1496. Mladošić was among the most prominent ecclesiastical officials in Zadar during the period, where he also served as a notary and was a member of the humanist circle gathered around Zadar's bishop Maffeo Valaresso.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶³ Jadranka Baković, "Restauracije poliptiha sv. Martina Vittorea Carpaccia iz zadarske katedrale" [Restorations of Vittore Carpaccio's polyptych of St. Martin from Zadar Cathedral], *Portal: godišnjak Hrvatskoga restauratorskog zavoda* 8 (2017): 43–71.



Figure 39 Vittore Carpaccio, *Zadar Polyptych*, Saint Jerome and donor Martin Mladošić (detail), c. 1480-1490, Museum of Sacred Art, Zadar. Source: © Croatian Conservation Institute, <http://www.h-r-z.hr/index.php/djelatnosti/konzerviranje-restauriranje/staf2/2600-konzerviranje-i-restauriranje-poliptiha-sv-martina-vittorea-carpaccia>

(Last accessed 22 June 2020)



Figure 40 Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Jerome (drawing)*, (17.2cm x 10.5 cm) Metropolitan Museum New York. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/334692> (Last accessed 22 June 2020)

The six-paneled polyptych depicts six saints in two registers, with the titular of the altar, Saint Martin, offering his cloak to a beggar in the central panel of the lower register, together with Saint Anastasia and Saint Simeon, local patrons of Zadar. In the upper register, the central panel depicts *Penitent Saint Jerome* (111,5cm x 75cm), along with Saints Peter and Paul. It is assumed that a painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary was once in the uppermost register, but it has since been lost.

Following the established iconography of the Venetian painterly school of the period, Saint Jerome is presented in a rocky desert setting, kneeling semi-naked in front of a cross, with a book lying open before him, at the foot of the cross.⁵⁶⁴ Between the saint and the cross, another pair of books is found on the ground, together with a stone, a clear allusion to his penitential character. Surprisingly, he is not alone. Facing the saint, in the same posture, is a portrayal of the donor, Martin

⁵⁶⁴ The early days of Carpaccio's career are still uncertain, but scholars agree that most probably he was trained in Bellini's workshop. During the 1490s and early 1500s, he made several narrative cycles for Venetian scuole: Scuola di Sant'Orsola, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Scuola degli Albanesi, Scuola di Santo Stefano and contributed to the one in Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista. On Carpaccio, see: Pietro Zampetti, *Vittore Carpaccio* (Venezia: Alfieri, 1966); Augusto Gentili, *Carpaccio* (Firenze: Giunti Editore, 1996); Peter Humfrey, *Carpaccio* (London: Chaucer Press, 2005).

Mladošić, dressed in ceremonial liturgical attire. Compared to the usual practice of endowment, the scene is highly unusual as we would expect the donor to appear alongside his namesake, Saint Martin, to whom the altar was dedicated. Why did Martin choose Jerome?

The reason could be found in the parallel of *Saint Jerome and Supplicant* by Piero della Francesca, where the donor was depicted in the similar manner, kneeling in front of the saint, witnessing his profound piety to the saint whose life he imitated. In both paintings, the Zadar polyptych and the Piero's painting, the donors are present in the depicted scene, both focusing their gaze and attention on the saint. Besides standing as the expression of deep devotion of both donors, both scenes could be read as a lesson by the saint on how to contemplate Christ's passion on the cross.

In both of them, Jerome imposes as a teacher. While on Piero's painting, Jacopo Anastagi listens to the lesson from the saint, Zadar panel has a different narrative. Daniel Russo noticed that the donor is not facing the crucifix, but he is observing the mirror image of a suffering Christ embedded in Jerome's penitential act. With his chest completely uncovered, Jerome meditates on the example of the Savior, whom he strives to follow in suffering by exposing himself to pain by hitting himself with a stone. The scene of penitent Jerome in front of the crucifix is a visual translation of the text of *Transitus* in which is stated that he is the one who best imitates Christ out of all the saints and the blessed.⁵⁶⁵

This example from Zadar should be also observed in the context of the new devotional practices, where emphasis was put on the meditative aspects of the prayer, where one was encouraged to imagine himself being present in the scene over which one is contemplating. In this case the representation could be interpreted as the representation of the mystic vision by Mladošić, who by meditating over Jerome's suffering in desert, imagined to be a witness of the penitential act.

Although this painting, which by its artistic characteristics belongs to the Venetian humanist circle, by direct commission from the painter, it speaks much about the financial abilities of a canon to commission such monumental altarpiece, which was longer than three meters, and higher than two. The choice to be represented next to the saint came evidently from the donor himself, who decided to express his honor by showing that he venerates the saint and contemplates upon his suffering, in the same manner the saint is venerating Jesus. These embedded reflections of the contemporary devotional practices, once more point out for the further studies on the spiritual atmosphere in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, with the focus on the individual practices. This representation mirrors an

⁵⁶⁵ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 211–14.

inclination towards the saint in the form of self-identification and a profound devotion to Jerome by being portrayed in this manner. In a sense, it could be read as the prefiguration of the mentioned portraits of the humanists who represented themselves disguised in the image of the saint, matching their virtues with those of saint.

The presence of Carpaccio's painting in Zadar at the period is not so unusual compared with the archival sources which reveal that during the second half of the fifteenth century, the individuals from Zadar bought or commissioned the paintings from Andrea Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini, Lazzaro Bastiani, and Vittore Carpaccio.⁵⁶⁶ But the donor's connection with the young Venetian painter, serves as the example of the networks through which these innovations reached Zadar. At the period, the bishop of Zadar was Maffeo Valaresso, a member of the Venetian patrician family, which has nurtured the belief that they were of the ancient city of Salona, a capital of Roman province of Dalmatia.⁵⁶⁷

It was due to this belief that the family has been closely involved with the Schiavoni confraternity in Venice, where they sponsored the cycle representing the scenes from the lives of confraternities' patron saints – Tryphon, Jerome and George. This cycle, about whom I will discuss later in the text, was made by Vittore Carpaccio between 1502 and 1507. Although the Zadar polyptych is earlier commission, the research has shown that the family has known Carpaccio from their parish, Sant'Angelo, and should have known the painter from his early years.⁵⁶⁸ This connection leads to the conclusion that Martin Mladošić must have placed the commission with the painter through the mediation of his own bishop, Maffeo Valaresso. The connections of the family, confraternity in Venice and the Zadar cathedral chapter, will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, the aspect which we should consider when discussing the private devotion in Dalmatia, is the saint's identification in the ethnic terms, the main reason for the strong presence of Jerome's cult. As discussed later, already by the end of the fifteenth century, Jerome's position as a Dalmatian patron saint was entirely ingrained among Dalmatians. Not every commission was done primarily for this aspect, but the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin certainly was embedded in the examples of private devotion discussed in this chapter.

⁵⁶⁶ Emil Hilje, "Prihvaćanje renesansnog slikarstva u Zadru u drugoj polovini 15. Stoljeća" [The acceptance of renaissance painting in Zadar in the second half of the 15th century], in *Sic ars deprenditur arte - Zbornik u čast Vladimira Markovića* (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti; Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti, 2010), 255–64.

⁵⁶⁷ Dizionario storico-portatile di tutte le Venete patrizie famiglie: Così di quelle, che rimaser' al serrar del Maggior Consiglio, come di tutte le altere, che a questo furono aggregate (Venezia: Bettinelli, 1780), 153.

⁵⁶⁸ Guido Perocco, *Carpaccio nella Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni* (Venezia: F. Ongania, 1964), 7–8; Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 523.

5.2 TROGIR AS A CRADLE OF THE CULT

Among the communes where humanism made a profound mark was Trogir. The early interest in ancient epigraphy and the classical authors was already present at the beginning of the century through the activities of Petar Cippico. However, humanism in Trogir reached full swing only around the middle of the century. The adoption of a new mindset among the local aristocracy and the clergy resulted in the town's *renovatio urbis* expressed in a new architectural, artistic, and urban vision which placed Trogir on the early Renaissance map.⁵⁶⁹ Such an undertaking was an expression of the advanced humanist atmosphere supported by both secular and sacral institutions. Furthermore, the involvement of members of the leading aristocratic families like Cippico, Andreis, Sobota, and Stafileo, both with humanism and the local government, facilitated the adoption of new ideas and artistic expressions. Among the novelties, we should count the cult of Saint Jerome, whose feast day was officially celebrated in Trogir from 1455.⁵⁷⁰

Even though the development of humanism and the Renaissance in Trogir should be seen as an expression of communal activity, in terms of the broader involvement of different social strata, several names stand out. The first one is the Bishop of Trogir, Jacopo (Giacomo) Turlon (1452–1483), a member of an aristocrat family from Ancona. Most likely he studied theology in Bologna, after which he held a number of significant roles in the Roman *curia*, including the post of *cappellanus* under Pope Nicholas V.⁵⁷¹ Considering the impact the bishop had in the city, he was perhaps the most instrumental, together with the intellectual elite, in spreading the veneration of Saint Jerome in Trogir. Due to the long period of his mandate, similar to that of the Bishop of Zadar Maffeo Vallaroso (1450–1494), his name is connected with major interventions in the town during the second half of the fifteenth century, which began with the construction of new sacristy around 1460, baptistery in 1467 and the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* in 1468. The execution of the baptistery is of importance for our discussion because it was ornamented with the monumental reliefs, the *Trogir relief of Saint*

⁵⁶⁹ For the development of the Renaissance style in Trogir consult: Igor Fisković, ed., *Ivan Duknović i njegovo doba* [Ioannes Dalmata and his age] (Trogir: Muzej grada Trogira, 1996); Radovan. Ivančević, *Rana renesansa u Trogiru* [Early Renaissance in Trogir] (Split: Književni krug, 1997); Radoslav Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac i trogirski renovatio urbis* [Niccolo di Giovanni and the Trogir renovatio urbis] (Split: Književni krug, 2012).

⁵⁷⁰ Daniele Farlati and Jacopo Coleti, *Trogirski biskupi: S dodacima i ispravcima Jacopa Coletija* [Daniele Farlati Bishops of Trogir. With additions and corrections by Jacopo Coleti] (Split: Književni krug, 2010), 347; Ivan Strohal, ed., *Statut i reformacije grada Trogira*, 10 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1915), 259–60.

⁵⁷¹ Unlike the common practice where the bishops rarely spent time in their bishopric, Bishop Turlon was an active protagonist of Trogir's life during the long period of his mandate and left an active mark in the town's history. He was born in Ancona but educated in Rome. Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 51–52; Irena Benyovsky Latin, "Razvoj srednjovjekovne operarije - institucije za izgradnju katedrale u Trogiru" [The development of the medieval operaria: The institution for the construction of the Cathedral in Trogir], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 34 (2010): 16; Farlati and Coleti, *Trogirski biskupi*, 346–352.

Jerome representing “Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto” (Fig. 73) and the *Baptism of Christ* (Fig. 71) by Andrea Alessi.

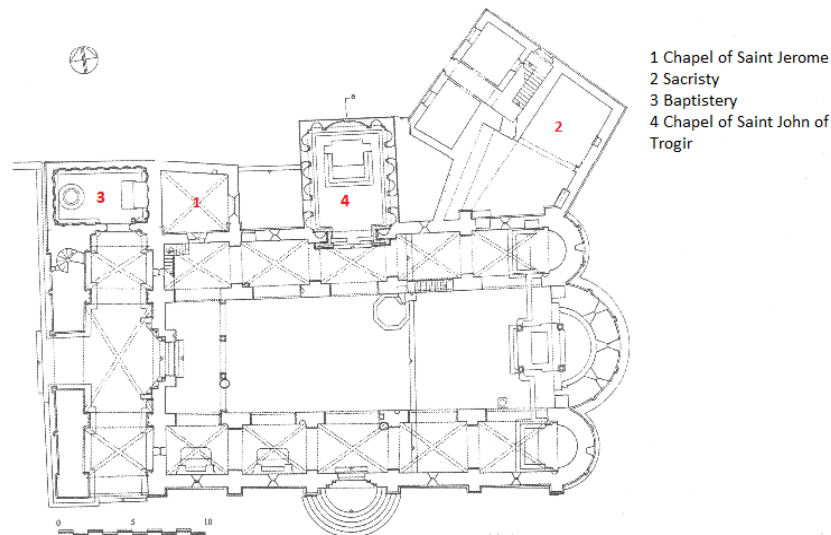


Figure 41 Cathedral of Saint Lawrence, Trogir. Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, p.209

The local aristocratic families were vital for Trogir’s cultural and political progress, due to their political connections and cultural commissions. Among them, the Cippico family stands out, and in particular, Coriolano Cippico (1425–1493), the son of Petar Cippico. He received an early education in his hometown and continued his studies in Padua, where he was mentioned several times between 1445 and 1453. After returning to home, he performed many duties as a most outstanding member of society, which is supported by the occurrence of his name as a witness in juridical and other legal documents. Between 1470–1474 he was a *sopracomito*, a captain of the Trogir galley in the Venetian anti-Ottoman expedition to Asia Minor under the general supervision of Pietro Mocenigo. Coriolano described this event in his memoirs *Petri Mocenici imperatoris gestorum libri III* (The deeds of commander in chief Pietro Mocenigo in three books), also known as *De bello Asiatico*, printed in Venice in 1477.⁵⁷²

Still, even far from Padua and Venice, which he visited frequently as a town legate and for his personal and business affairs, he maintained contacts with the Venetian humanists. He nurtured a close friendship with Venetian magistrate and later ambassador Marcantonio Morosini (c.1435–

⁵⁷² Coriolano Cippico, *Coriolani Cepionis Dalmate Petri Mocenici imperatoris gestorum liber primus*, (Venetiis: Per Bernardum, 1477); Coriolano Cippico, *O Azijskom ratu* [On Asian war], ed. Vedran Gligo (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1977); Coriolano Cippico, *The Deeds of Commander Pietro Mocenigo in Three Books*, ed. Kiril Petkov (New York: Italica Press, 2014).

1509), and Marcantonio Sabellico, a Venetian historian.⁵⁷³ Coriolano and his son Alvisé, who was named a bishop of Famagusta in 1488, and an archbishop of Zadar in 1503, were close friends with Palladio Fusco, who even visited them in Trogir, where he spent some period to teach grammar and rhetoric.⁵⁷⁴ Together with Bishop Turlon, Coriolano was one of the key Renaissance figures in the city. They surrounded themselves with a circle of excellent artists that included Andrea Alessi (Andrija Aleši, 1425–1505), Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino (Nikola Firentinac, 1418–1506) and Ioannes Dalmata (Ivan Duknović, 1440–1514). Since Coriolano served several times as an *operarius* of the Cathedral church of Saint Lawrence, he was also directly involved in the architectural modifications in the cathedral during the second half of the fifteenth century.⁵⁷⁵

Although his is associated with numerous ventures during this period, it would be wrong to see him as the only promotor of the new humanist and renaissance ideas. Representatives are found among the members of the executive government and within ecclesiastical circles. Among those who contributed heavily to the humanist movement were Jacopo Andreis,⁵⁷⁶ Ivan Sobota, Jerome of Trogir, Ivan Lipavić, and others less documented,⁵⁷⁷ but Coriolano's connections with the Venetian humanist circles represent an important link in the process. The lack of written production and the

⁵⁷³ Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 36-37. The introductory epistle of his *The Deeds of Commander in Chief Pietro Mocenigo* is addressed to Morosini. The close friendship between Coriolanus and Sabellico is evident in a letter Sabellico sent to Coriolano in 1492 after the tragic death of Coriolano's wife, Nicolotta Andreis.

⁵⁷⁴ On the connections of Koriolan with Italian humanists see: Bratislav Lučin, "Petronije na istočnoj obali Jadrana: Codex Traguriensis (Paris. lat. 7989) i hrvatski humanisti" [Petronius on the Eastern shore of the Adriatic: Codex Traguriensis (Paris, BNF, lat. 7989) and Croatian Humanists], *Colloquia Maruliana* 23 (2014): 153–54; About Morosini's and Sabellico's interest in the antiquity see: Barbara Marx, "La tentazione dell'Impero. Roma antica e Venezia umanistica a confronto," in *Antike als Konzept Lesarten in Kunst, Literatur und Politik*, ed. Gernot Kamecke, Bruno Klein, and Jürgen Müller (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2010), 101–6.

⁵⁷⁵ Benyovsky Latin, "Razvoj srednjovjekovne operarije," 14. Members of the Trogir aristocratic families alternated the position of *operarius*. Coriolano performed this duty several times. He was the *operarius* who, in 1460, paid Andrea Alessi for the work on the sacristy.

⁵⁷⁶ Jacopo Andreis (Jakov Andreis, Jacobus Andronicus, c.1440–c.1491), a member of an aristocratic family, had a degree in canon and civil law from Padua, where he was mentioned in 1462. We do not know much about his interest and humanist involvement, but taking into consideration his education, we can assume his active role in the Trogir humanist circle. For his education, he performed an administrative task for the commune, serving as the town's representative in Venice on several occasions. Indeed, the prominence and high social status that he enjoyed among his fellow citizens, was part of the reason why he was chosen, together with Coriolano Cippico, as the *sopracomito* of one of the galleys in 1470, for the Venetian anti-Ottoman expedition at Negroponte. In 1480, he served as the *operarius* of the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence. On Andreis family see: Vjeko Omašić, "Opremanje galije suprakomita Jakova Sndreisa godine 1470." [Outfitting of the galley of the supercomitus Jakov Andreis in 1470.], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 22 (1980): 86–106; Andreis, *Trogirsko plemstvo*, 118–28.

⁵⁷⁷ Špoljarić, "The First Dalmatian Humanists and the Classics," 49. Ivan Sobota corresponded with several Venetian humanists from aristocratic families like Maffeo Vallaresso, Barbone Morosini, Nicolò Canal, and Pietro Morosini. Lučin, "Litterae Olim in Marmore Insculptae," 51-52. At the turn of the sixteenth century Hieronymus Tragurinus (Jerome of Trogir), a doctor of both laws, was known for his epigraphical work and the possession of the classical work, but his production did not survive. Ana Plosnić Škarić, "Trogir in a Poem by Ivan Lipavić (1465)," in *Towns and Cities of the Croatian Middle Ages: Image of the Town in the Narrative Sources: Reality and/or Fiction?*, ed. Zrinka Pešorda Vardić and Irena Benyovsky Latin (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2018), 259–67. Ivan Lipavić composed a poem in 1465, where he praises the glory and the beauty of Trogir.

preserved archival documents makes it difficult to adequately portray their importance and place in the larger European context of humanism in detail. Their personal connections with primarily Venetian humanist circles, as seen on the example of Coriolano Cippico who facilitated the adoption of new artistic ideas, together with devotional practices, in which the cult of Saint Jerome should also be counted in.

Andrea Alessi had learned his craft in the workshop of Giorgio Dalmata (Juraj Dalmatinac, Giorgio da Sebenico, 1410–1473), sculptor, architect, and engineer, with whom he worked closely before establishing his own workshop in 1456 in Split.⁵⁷⁸ In Trogir, Alessi's first works were the sacristy of the cathedral and the new baptistery finished in 1467.⁵⁷⁹ His production is often labeled as the transitional style between the *gotico fiorito* in which he was trained, and the Renaissance whose forms he adopted from Giorgio Dalmata and after meeting Niccolò Fiorentino in 1468. For an extended period, Alessi and Fiorentino worked as close associates, because of which the attribution of the artworks made in Trogir is not so simple.⁵⁸⁰ Together with Giorgio Dalmata, Niccolò Fiorentino

⁵⁷⁸ Duško Kečkemet, *Juraj Dalmatinac i gotička arhitektura u Splitu* [Giorgio Dalmata and the Gothic architecture in Split] (Split: Književni krug, 1988); Predrag Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku: Prvih 105 godina* [The Cathedral of St. James in Šibenik. The First 105 Years] (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2010); Predrag Marković, “Juraj Dalmatinac i Andrija Aleši u Splitu - Majstori, radionice i suradnici” [Giorgio da Sebenico and Andrija Aleši in Split - master craftsmen, workshops and associates], *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 43 (2016): 151–91. Giorgio Dalmata is one of the most significant artists of the Croatian Middle Ages. It is assumed that he was trained in Venice in the workshop of Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon, where he adopted Venetian *gotico fiorito*. The sculptural and architectural production, mainly those works that he made after return to Dalmatia in the early 1440s, reveal the influence of the Tuscan Renaissance, with which he introduced the new style to Dalmatia. He worked in Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, Split, Venice, and Ancona, and is also mentioned in Rimini, Ravenna, and Fano. His most well-known work is undoubtedly the Cathedral of Saint James in Šibenik, where he participated as the leading builder and as a sculptor. For this discussion, it is important to mention that in 1448 he built the chapel of Saint Anastasius in the Cathedral of Split, where beneath the stone canopy, the figure of the lying saint is sculpted. Below, on the front, the four church fathers are depicted. Among them is Saint Jerome with the model of the church in his hand.

⁵⁷⁹ Radovan Ivančević, “Trogirska krstionica (1467) i montažne konstrukcije dalmatinske graditeljske škole [The Baptistery of Trogir (1467) and the prefabricated structures of the Dalmatian School of Construction],” *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 30 (1990): 145–85; Ivan Josipović, “Nikola Firentinac i Alešijeva krstionica Trogirske katedrale [Niccolò Fiorentino and Alessi's baptistery of the Trogir cathedral],” *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 33 (2009): 47–66; Predrag Marković, “Dekonstrukcija rekonstrukcije: o krstionici trogirске katedrale ponovo i s razlogom [Deconstructing the reconstruction: Revisiting the baptismal font in the cathedral of Trogir, and with a good reason],” *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 37 (2013): 45–60. There are still discussions on the date when the baptistery was completed and on the authorship of some sculpted parts. The dedicatory inscription bears the year 1467. However, a document compiled in 1468 mentions the payment to Niccolò Fiorentino for some works in the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, i.e., the baptistery. While some scholars see this as the confirmation of his participation in the construction of the baptistery, others see it as a notarial mistake that was supposed to be referring to the planned *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*. This question is still open to discussion, so here, the year 1467 will be taken as the year when the baptistery and the *Relief of Saint Jerome* within it, were executed. For the proposed hypotheses and the relevant bibliography, consult the works cited above.

⁵⁸⁰ Igor Fisković, “Majstori i majstorske radionice: Andrija Aleši i Nikola Firentinac [Masters and master workshops: Andrija Alessi and Nikola Firentinac],” in *Majstorske radionice u umjetničkoj baštini Hrvatske* (Zagreb: FF Press, 2014), 63–82. Among the works that Fiorentino and Alessi have executed together, or with the partial participation were: the *Tomb of Ivan and Šimun Sobota* in the Dominican Church (1469), the *Tomb of Petar Cippico* in the Church of Saint John the Baptist (c. 1469), the relief *Allegory of Justice* in the town's loggia (1471) and the *Church of Saint Sebastian* (1477–1480).

is the foundational name of the Croatian Renaissance. This architect and sculptor, of the still debatable origin and formation, has been the author of the masterpiece of this early Renaissance style, both in architecture and sculpture, the chapel of town's patron saint, Blessed John of Trogir. Even though he signed the contract in 1468, the chapel and its decoration were executed between 1475 and 1490.⁵⁸¹

The chapel itself speaks to the cultural avant-garde in Trogir during the second half of the fifteenth century. Its complex iconography and the quality of the artistic execution serve as a reference point for the analysis of the other production of the period. Its artistic and historical significance in the development of the Renaissance style is best reflected in the conclusions by Radovan Ivančević, a scholar deeply immersed in the research and re-evaluation of Croatian Renaissance production: "Judging by the design invention, problematic complexity, iconographic completeness and the quality of the overall artistic solution, I have not found in Italy or Europe any nearly adequate architectural and sculptural monument."⁵⁸² The execution of such artistic and architectural masterpiece is important for understanding the achievements of the cultural environment of Trogir in the second half of the fifteenth century, within which Jerome's image received its iconographic particularities.

The impact of Niccolò Fiorentino on the development of the Renaissance in the Eastern Adriatic Coast went beyond Trogir. His sculptural signature is found on works in Zadar, Šibenik, Hvar, Orebić, Split, and beyond Dalmatian borders (Termiti Islands and possibly Venice).⁵⁸³ Out of

⁵⁸¹ Radovan Ivančević, "Ikono-loška analiza ranorenesansne kapele sv. Ivana Ursinija u Trogiru" [Iconological analysis of the early Renaissance chapel of St. Ivan Ursini in Trogir], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 26 (1986): 287–338; Igor Fisković, "'Nebeski Jeruzalem' u kapeli blaženog Ivana Trogirskog" ['Heavenly Jerusalem' in the Chapel of Saint John of Trogir], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 32 (1992): 481–529; Radoslav Bužančić, "Raj - literarni predložak za ranorenesansnu kapelu sv. Ivana Trogirskog" [Paradise - a literal model for the Early Renaissance Chapel of St John of Trogir], in *Renesansa i renesanse u umjetnosti Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti; Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti, 2008), 123–36; Josip Belamarić, "Jedna Albertijeva pathos-formula u kapeli bl. Ivana Trogirana" [A pathos-formula by Alberti in the chapel of Saint John of Trogir], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 42 (2011): 137–59.

⁵⁸² Ivančević, *Rana renesansa u Trogiru*, 293.

⁵⁸³ Anne Markham Schulz, *Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino and Venetian Sculpture of the Early Renaissance* (New York: NYU Press, 1978); Anne Markham Schulz, "Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino in Venice: The Documentary Evidence," *The Burlington Magazine* 141, no. 1161 (1999): 749–52; Samo Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca i njegovog kruga [Sculpture by Niccolò Fiorentino and his Circle]* (Split: Književni krug, 2006); Emil Hilje, "Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine [Niccolò Fiorentino in Šibenik in 1464]," *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 26 (2002): 7–18. Despite the importance of Niccolò Fiorentino for the development of the Dalmatian Renaissance, little is known about his life, and his biography and early works are still debatable. Anne Markham Schulz places him in Donatello's workshop in Padova in the late 1440s, which was later dismissed by Samo Štefanac, who proposed that Fiorentino was trained in Donatello's workshop in Florence in the late 1450s and early 1460s. Markham Schulz also attributed many Venetian sculptural works from the late 1450s and early 1460s to Fiorentino, including the tomb of Doge Francesco Foscari in the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, emphasizing his Venetian phase before proceeding to Dalmatia. However, her attribution made on the stylistic characteristics, has been refuted by Croatian scholars. Reasons for this lie in the documents which place Fiorentino in the Venetian parish of Santa Marina, together with his alleged testament. They do not bring enough information, which would confirm that the mentioned Nicholas of Florence in Venice is Niccolò

them, the most significant, was his contribution to the construction of the Cathedral in Šibenik, which he took over after the death of Giorgio Dalmata, the story of which will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter. Here, of interest are the artworks representing Saint Jerome in Trogir, mainly executed by Niccolò Fiorentino, Andrea Alessi, and their workshops, within the domain of private devotion.

The Funerary Chapels

The first examples of private devotion to Saint Jerome in Trogir are related to his role as a personal patron saint, for which he appears in a funerary context: the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* endowed by Nicoletta Sobota (1438–1446), the chapel in Saint Mary church (1468) and the Cippico family chapel in Saint Peter church (beginning of the sixteenth century). Of these, only the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* still survives. The other two have been largely mainly reconstrued based on written sources. However, the lack of archival documents, given the damage and loss of the material over the centuries, poses a challenge to untangling the provenance of many preserved artworks in Trogir, as it is shown in this chapter.

The most valuable surviving information on Trogir's sacral heritage is to be found in the apostolic visitations, ranging from the end of the sixteenth, until the beginning of the eighteenth century, often referring to the position of altars and their consecration. Besides these, scholars have relied on the works of local history written by the two Trogir citizens. Johannes Lucius (Ivan Lučić, 1604–1679), a member of one of Trogir's noble families, who was educated in Rome. After returning to his hometown, he served in a number of public offices, while engaging in historical research, publishing several integral works on the history of Dalmatia *De regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae* (Amsterdam, 1666) and his hometown *Memorie istoriche di Tragurio ora detto Traù*, (Venice, 1673).⁵⁸⁴ His extensive consultation of the primary sources has marked him as the “father of the Croatian historiography”.

For our discussion, the more relevant sources are those by Paolo Andreis (c.1610–1686). Like other famous Tragurians during the long period of Venetian rule, Andreis followed the same life

Fiorentino. The new piece of mosaic in the timeline of Fiorentino's production was a document published by Emil Hilje which shows that the first documented work in Dalmatia by Fiorentino was not the chapel in Trogir in 1468, but the chapel of Saints Sebastian and Bernardino in the Franciscan convent in Šibenik in 1464. Therefore, the Venetian production attributed to Fiorentino should be taken with great caution. But regardless of the debate whether he was active in Venice or not, the influence of the Venetian, that is Paduan artistic circle on his works has been noted and discussed at length.

⁵⁸⁴ Ivan Lučić, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru. I* [Trogir in historical literature I], Split: Čakavski sabor, 1979); Ivan Lučić, *Povijesna Svjedočanstva o Trogiru. II* [Trogir in historical literature II], (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1979); Ivan Lučić, *O kraljevstvu Dalmacije i Hrvatske* [On the Kingdom of Dalmatia and Croatia], (Zagreb: Latina et Graeca, 1986);

pattern; he studied abroad in Padua, performed public services upon his return home, and complemented his engagement with intellectual work and production. In his *Storia della città di Traù*, together with the manuscript *Chiese di Traù*, probably the preparatory notes for the book, Andreis has acknowledged the names of the most important artists that worked in Trogir: Niccolò Fiorentino, Andrea Alessi, and Tripun Bokanić.⁵⁸⁵ The details he brings in the description of the churches and the altars of the city are often the only source we can rely upon to untangle the provenance of their Renaissance masterpieces.

The Chapel of Saint Jerome by Nicolotta Sobota

Unlike other monuments, the construction of the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* is well documented.⁵⁸⁶ In 1438, Nicolotta Sobota (Sobotich), a widow of Jacopo (Jakov) Sobota, received permission from the cathedral's chapter to build a chapel joined to the cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir. It was the earliest annex to the cathedral, followed by the sacristy and the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* (Fig. 41). Judging from surviving documents, the construction finished in 1446.⁵⁸⁷ Nicolotta died without heirs, so the executor of her will Petar Andreis (Petrus Nicole de Andreis), became the heir of all her goods.

By doing so, the Andreis family inherited the right of patronage over the chapel, which continued through the coming centuries, as reported in the apostolic visitations. The practice of changing patrons over altars and chapels was widespread during the period, and due to it, we must include the Andreis family among those who have nurtured devotion towards the saint. We should also mention that Petar Andreis had a notable career as a diplomat and military commander, having served as an advisor to King Ladislas of Naples (1386–1414) in addition to being his representative at the Hungarian court. Upon his return to Trogir, he served as a *sopracomito* of the town's galley in 1445.

In a description of the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* in the cathedral church, Paolo Andreis mentions that the altar was ornamented with an altarpiece by the painter Palma without specifying which Palma, Jacopo Palma the Elder (1480–1528) or Palma the Younger (1548–1628).⁵⁸⁸ In her will, Nicolotta

⁵⁸⁵ Paolo Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*; Danko Zelić, "Chiese in Traù – Rukopis Pavla Andreisa u Muzeju grada Trogira" [Paolo Andreis's manuscript in Trogir Municipal museum], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 33 (2009): 91–114.

⁵⁸⁶ The transcription of the documents is brought in the article: Danko Zelić, "Nekoliko priloga povijesti umjetnosti 15. stoljeća u Trogiru: Samostan sv. Križa na Čiovu, zlatar Matej Pomenić i kapela sv. Jeronima u katedrali sv. Lovre" [Contributions to the History of Art in the Fifteenth Century Trogir], *Peristil* 50 (2007): 63–80.

⁵⁸⁷ Fisković, "Poliptih Blaža Jurjeva," 116, 122; Zelić, "Nekoliko priloga," 69.

⁵⁸⁸ Zelić, "Nekoliko priloga," 109.

tasked her executor and eventual heir with providing the chapel with all the necessary liturgical equipment, but without mentioning the altarpiece. Previous scholarship has assumed that the polyptych by Biagio di Giorgio da Traù could have been placed originally on the altar in the chapel, because in one period it was placed there, but the archival research by Cvito Fisković has shown that it was made for the altar of Saint Jerome in the Benedictine church of Saint John the Baptist.⁵⁸⁹

Another document opens the possibility that the altarpiece was put in the chapel only decades later. In the will of a certain Nikola Varičić, composed in 1511, it was stated that Jacopo Andreis must pay ten small *libri* for the production of the altarpiece in the chapel of Saint Jerome.⁵⁹⁰ Jacopo Andreis, the already-mentioned doctor of laws and *sopracomito*, was the nephew of the above-mentioned Petar Andreis, and in the name of the family, had accepted the role of procurator over the chapel. If a painting was executed as stated in the document, then we can deduce that the painting by painter Palma, which Paolo Andreis mentioned more than a hundred years later, could have been by Jacopo Palma the Elder (1480–1528).⁵⁹¹ The painting, which could correspond to the description and the mentioned artist, is not preserved in Trogir, so these conclusions stay at the level of assumption.

The documents also do not reveal why Nicolotta decided to consecrate the chapel to Jerome. There are no records of anyone in her immediate family being named after the saint. Due to the lack of archival documents that could help us reconstruct her particular affiliation to the saint, we can assume that it grew out of the growing appreciation of Jerome in Trogir, which culminated with the inclusion of his feast day among the officially celebrated days in 1455.⁵⁹² The popularity of Jerome's saintly figure in Trogir should be seen in the general growing importance of Jerome within the Latin Christianity in the different contexts, like I elaborated earlier on the chosen Italian examples.

Funerary Chapel of Saint Jerome in Santa Maria de Platea

In *Chiese di Traù*, Paolo Andreis mentions that another funerary chapel consecrated to Saint Jerome was built in the church of *Saint Mary*, know also as *Santa Maria de Platea*, whose altar was *marble with a sculpture*, presumably Jerome's. The transcription of the dedicatory inscription reveals that the altar was made in 1463 by John and Nicholas in the name of their "very pious brother

⁵⁸⁹ Fisković, "Poliptih Blaža Jurjeva."

⁵⁹⁰ DAZd, Općina Trogir, 41/3, f.13v

⁵⁹¹ Zelić, "Nekoliko priloga," 109.

⁵⁹² The apostolic visitations, especially one by Didak Manola mentioned before, reveal that in later centuries, the chapel also received a public function for the celebration of Jerome's feast day.

Bartholomew.”⁵⁹³ The early medieval church consecrated to Saint Mary stood on the main square of Trogir until the nineteenth century when it was demolished. Its typical early medieval Dalmatian architectonic type, with a central plan and six semicircular apses has only been partially reconstructed today. In *Storia di Traù*, Andreis also confirms that the church housed a chapel consecrated to Jerome, in one of its apses.⁵⁹⁴

Which sculpture is the one that Andreis mentions? Out of several sculpted representations of Jerome in Trogir, it is not clear which one would have been placed on the altar. Samo Štefanac discussed the possibility that the altar was ornamented with one of the small reliefs modeled upon the relief in the baptistery in Trogir, the *Liverpool relief* (Fig. 95). The base of this relief, kept in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, is decorated with the figure of a two-headed eagle and the initials AL, referring to the Venetian Rector of Trogir, Alvise Lando (1470–1472). For him, the small dimensions of the altarpiece could have been conditioned by the narrow apse of the church in which the altar probably stood.⁵⁹⁵

When Štefanac discussed this question, the description of the altar and the dedicatory inscription were not known to scholarship. Today we can refute the hypothesis that such a small relief was on the altar. The small reliefs were all modeled upon the monumental one in the baptistery, so they were all executed after 1467. Furthermore, based on the transcription of the dedicatory inscription, the names of the commissioners of the altar were known. With this in mind, it would be unusual that the relief with the initials of the rector of Trogir, Alvise Lando, would be placed on an altar endowed by other people.

The more plausible hypothesis is the one offered by Igor Fisković, who argued that the sculpture of *Saint Jerome as a Hermit* (Fig. 43), today in the Museum of Religious Art, was initially made for this altar in the late 1470s. Fisković has also successfully offered a new attribution, listing this statue among the works by Niccolò Fiorentino, and not among those by Andrea Alessi as

⁵⁹³ Ivo Babić, *Trogir: Grad i Spomenici* [Trogir: Town and monuments] (Split: Književni krug, 2014), 429; Zelić, “Chiese in Traù,” 94. IOANNES NICOLAUSQUE EX INSTITUTO BARTOLOMEI MAR. T. GERMANI SUI PISSIMI HOC ALTARE OB HONOREM DIVI HIERONIMI FECERUNT MCCCCLXIII. Zelić did not manage to identify the commissioners of this altar, except that they do not belong to any known aristocrat family in Trogir.

⁵⁹⁴ Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*, 308. “La chiesa di S. Maria di Piazza, antichissima, è di figura rotonda, ha quattro altari: il maggiore dedicato all’Assunta, altro dedicato a S. Girolamo, fabbricato di pietra e pregiato di scultura, e gli altri due dedicati a S. Maria di Loretto et a S. Lucia. Consiglio de’ nobili ha iuspatronato di questa chiesa e instituiscono i rettori a questo beneficio, eh’ è semplice, e dotato u’ undeci stabili, catastati con gli altri beni ecclesiastici.”

⁵⁹⁵ Samo Štefanac, “Osservazioni sui rilievi,” 113; Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 152; Babić, *Trogir*, 429.

discussed previously in the scholarship.⁵⁹⁶ The reasons for attributing the work to Alessi were found in the location of the statue. While today the statue rests in the museum, at some point in the past, it was transferred to one of the niches in the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, whereby the statue was modified to fit the niche, with visible cuts on its base of Jerome's feet and the lion.

Regardless of these modifications, the statue did not also fit thematically among the representations of the apostles placed in the niches of the chapel. Besides the stylistic analysis, Fisković has relied on the mentioned written sources by Andreis, and apostolic visitations, which describe the altar; in 1625, Ottaviano Garzadori writes that that *iconia est elegantam in marmore sculpta*. Based on these arguments, Fisković proposes the altar of Saint Jerome as the place where the sculpture originally stood.⁵⁹⁷

Jerome's position in popular devotion has produced different visual media through which his devotees could have appealed to the saint, these encompassed primarily paintings, reliefs of smaller dimensions, and devotional plaquettes, but his image was not a subject of many monumental reliefs and or free-standing sculptures. This practice became more common in the ecclesiastical setting only after the Council of Trent, where Jerome's image became joined with other Church fathers, in the promotion of the reform mission and its ideals.

Still, there are a few examples before the cinquecento where Jerome's statue was the subject of a private commission. In Venice, around the middle of the fifteenth century, in the Church of Santo Stefano, Andrea Corbelli conceded a burial altar and dedicated it to San Nicholas of Tolentino.⁵⁹⁸ The altar was ornamented some twenty years later when Pietro Lombardo and his workshop made the sculptures of Saint Jerome, Saint Nicholas from Tolentino, and Saint Andrew for the altar. Similar to the example from Trogir, Jerome is dressed in hermit clothes, but there is a significant difference. In Venice, Jerome's penitential nature is emphasized by a rock that he holds in his hand. Similar representations are found some hundred years later, in the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Gloriosa

⁵⁹⁶ Igor Fisković, "Firentinčev kip svetog Jeronima u Trogiru" [The Statue of Saint Jerome by Nicholas of Florence in Trogir], *Peristil* 38 (1995): 59–66; Babić, *Trogir*, 331–333. For a long time, historiography considered that the sculpture was made by Andrea Alessi for the Chapel of the Saint John of Trogir. Fisković argued that due to its artistic characteristics, the attribution should be passed to Niccolò Fiorentino and not Alessi. Additionally, he argued that the sculpture was initially made for the Church of Saint Mary, and in one moment, was moved and remodeled to fit one of the niches of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*.

⁵⁹⁷ Fisković, "Firentičev kip," 64. See the footnote 40a.

⁵⁹⁸ Ian Holgate, "The Early History of Antonio Vivarini's 'St Jerome' Altar-Piece and the Beginnings of the Renaissance Style in Venice," *The Burlington Magazine* 143, no. 1174 (2001): 22. The church of Santo Stefano had a chapel dedicated to Saint Jerome under the patronage of the da Molino family. The polyptych of Saint Jerome (1441) by Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna, today at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, was originally placed on the altar. The choice of Jerome is also connected with the Augustinian order which praised Jerome extensively.

dei Frari and in 1565 in the Dominican church of San Giovanni e Paolo. Girolamo Priuli, a wealthy Venetian merchant, had his funerary chapel in the church of San Salvador for which Tommaso da Lugano made a sculpture of Saint Jerome in 1547.



Figure 42 Pietro Lombardo, *Saint Jerome*, 1475-1480, Church of Santo Stefano. Source: Chorus Venezia, Cameraphoto Arte, Venezia <https://www.chorusvenezia.org/en/opere/saint-jerome/293> (Last accessed: 22 June 2020)



Figure 43 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Saint Jerome as a Hermit*, 1470s, Museum of Religious Art, Trogir. Source: Author

What is common to all of these mentioned sculptures is that they depict penitent Jerome, according to the prevalence of this type in private devotion. The saint is depicted in hermit's clothes, with a stone in his hand or beating himself with it on the chest. The depicted atmosphere of the statue in Trogir differs significantly. As Fisković has already noted, it is “filled with narrative rather than symbolism in the name of more convincing representations of the living environment in which he once affirmed his sacred mission”.⁵⁹⁹ Jerome's skinny frame, and torn clothes, serve as a reference to his desert days. But his face and body are entirely deprived of penitential fervor. The pensive saint is depicted with the lion behind, and the cardinal's galero under his feet. The compositional harmony

⁵⁹⁹ Fisković, “Firentičev kip,” 60.

emphasized with the tree stump on which Jerome rests, with the snake coming out of its cavities, and of which he seems to be unaware of, contribute to the illustration of saint's meditative state of mind.

Furthermore, the meditative position where Jerome leans on his hand is characteristic posture found in representations of “Saint Jerome in his Study”, where he sits pensively at the desk and over his books, and not in the desert. This is not the only innovation we find in this piece. The tree trunk, which upholds the old hermit, could be read as an element of the compositional harmony and a structural support inspired by ancient sculptures. Although it is not usually found in representations of the saint, it is a part of Jerome's iconography, which derives from the most common source for representations of the saints—the *Legenda Aurea*.



Figure 44 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Saint Jerome as a Hermit* (detail), 1470s, Museum of Religious Art, Trogir. Source: Author

Following Voragine's established practice where he opens the saint's legends by the etymological interpretations of their name, connecting it with their saintly virtues, he explains that *Hieronymus* comes from *gerar*, i.e., holy and *nemus*, i.e., grove (wood).⁶⁰⁰ Its reflection in the saint's iconography was elaborated by Susan Donahue Kuretsky, in examples of northern artistic production from the sixteenth century onwards. The presence of a dead tree or a stump with the crucifix stands as a symbolic expression of redemption and salvation.⁶⁰¹ In a letter to Pope Damasus, Jerome emphasized the theological typology between the two: “(...) we have been reconciled to God, having as propitiator the Lord Jesus, who forgave us our sins and expunged what was the handwriting of death against us, nailing it to the cross, and He made principalities and powers a show, triumphing over them on the tree.”⁶⁰² The visual reference to this can be seen on the Piero della Francesca's *Saint Jerome and Suppliant*, where the cross rises out of the tree stump.

Further clarification of the presence of the tree stump or a barren tree is brought by Leopoldine Prosperetti in her study on the Jan Brueghel the Elder, when discussing the Albrecht Dürer's print *Saint Jerome in Wilderness* (1492). Her reading of the tree stump is the symbolic one, where it signals the state of mind of Jerome, but also of the viewer, who must have been an educated humanist who knew how to read the “code” embedded in the landscape. In one of his desert letters, *Letter XIV To*

⁶⁰⁰ Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 597; Susan Donahue Kuretsky, “Rembrandt's Tree Stump: An Iconographic Attribute of St. Jerome,” *The Art Bulletin* 56, no. 4 (1974): 574.

⁶⁰¹ Kuretsky, “Rembrandt's Tree Stump,” 573.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

Heliodorus, Jerome describes the spiritual failure with the image of the barren tree to be cut and thrown into the fire.⁶⁰³ She draws the parallel with the Psalms, where the assessment of the miserable condition of the soul represent the beginning of the spiritual journey.

For the viewer, depending on his knowledge and lines of thought, such motif could have stood for “the withered heart of the Psalmist (Ps. 101), the barren tree of Matthew, for all the misery that is human condition, and ultimately for the promise that through the work of sacred eloquence it might regain its verdancy (*viriditas*), become its antitype, and take the shape of the blessed man of the first psalm who is ‘like a tree which is planted near the running waters’.”⁶⁰⁴ The conclusions by Prosperetti once more draw the line between the Psalms and the representations of Jerome, underlining the communicative aspects of the image which aided the viewer in his meditative interrogation of his own soul.

With this elaboration, it is evident that the barren tree trunk on which Jerome leans on does not only have the functional purpose of serving as the compositional and structural element, but that it represents iconographic motif which reflects the broader narrative of Jerome’s life. It does not merely reflect the ascetic nature, but it is derived from Jerome’s letters and the Biblical symbolism, pointing out that the commissioner must have been a person with very tangible knowledge of saint’s written production, and familiar with such interpretative and meditative symbolism as it was in the Italian examples.

From which earlier representation could Niccolò Fiorentino have adopted this element? The stump as an attribute in the northern production, as seen in the art of Albrecht Durer, Joachim Patinir, and Rembrandt, has already been discussed, but its presence in Italian production, together with the presence of the barren tree, is still a question for further research.⁶⁰⁵ Preliminary research of the Italian production of the second half of the fifteenth century reveals that a tree stump and a dead tree are found more often than expected. In the *Penitent Saint Jerome* by Piero della Francesca, some trees in the woods in the background of the kneeling saint are cut, leaving only stumps rising from the ground. *Saint Jerome Reading in Wilderness* by Giovanni Bellini, today in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts

⁶⁰³ Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy*, 175.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶⁰⁵ “St. Jerome,” Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, accessed February 19, 2020, <https://www.mfab.hu/artworks/st-jerome/>. In the later centuries in the northern countries, the stump tree became an essential element in the iconography of the saint. In the Museum of the Fine Arts in Budapest, a small wooden statuette by German sculptor from the seventeenth century is kept. The saint is dressed only in a loincloth, leaning on the tree stump with a lion beside. Although these two examples cannot be brought in the direct correlation, this raises a question of the possible model which served for both and circulated through the artistic networks for a long period. The dimensions are 24.5x13x9cm.

in Birmingham, England (c.1450), has a dead tree in the background of Jerome and a lion sitting in front of the cave.

Jacopo da Valenza, active in Veneto at the turn of the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, depicts *Jerome Contemplating in Wilderness*, today in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, with the tree stump in the foreground. The same motif can be found on several representations of “Penitent Jerome” by Jacopo del Sellaio, such as one from the end of the fifteenth century, where penitent Jerome is accompanied by Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist from Museo Bandini in Fiesole, surrounded by tree stumps, or *Saint Jerome in Wilderness* (Fig. 65), kept in the Louvre, where tree stumps surround the saint in his penitential fervor. Among the mentioned drawings by Jacopo Bellini, one of the sketches *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (Louvre f.23v) (Fig. 74) shows Jerome kneeling in the rocky landscape, surrounded by the animals and the numerous dead trees and stumps.⁶⁰⁶

However, this research managed to find only two examples that could be compared with the Trogir sculpture. The painting *Saint Jerome in Wilderness* by Ercole de Roberti (c. 1475) today at J. Paul Getty Museum, where Jerome is sitting with one of his legs drawn up, in front of an unusual cave-like construction, leaning on a tree stump, holding a cross in his hand.⁶⁰⁷ Another similar example, due to the presence of tree stump which, is found in the wooden sculpture of *Penitent Saint Jerome* (Fig. 45) executed around the middle of the fifteenth century, today displayed in the Pinacoteca Comunale di Faenza.⁶⁰⁸ Its attribution to Donatello was first proposed by Giorgio Vasari: “In the city of Faenza, also, Donatello executed a San Giovanni and a San Girolamo, which are no less esteemed than are the other works of this master,”⁶⁰⁹ but the scholars do not agree with this assessment and propose to attribute the work to his student Bertoldo di Giovanni (?–1491).⁶¹⁰

The firm conclusions regarding the used models cannot be made here without thorough research into the Italian visual production of the quattrocento, especially on the drawings and sketches. But the influence of the Florentine and Paduan production on Niccolò Fiorentino, especially

⁶⁰⁶ Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 422.

⁶⁰⁷ H. D. Gronau, “Ercole Roberti’s Saint Jerome,” *The Burlington Magazine* 91, no. 558 (1949): 243–46. The similar posture of figure can be found in Florence, on the roundels by Michelozzo in Palazzo Medici. Gronau suggests that the motif was brought to Venice by Donatello, where it was adopted by Andrea Mategna on the drawing of Saint Jerome attributed to him, today in Berlin, and in a drawing of Saint John by Giovanni Bellini at Ince Blundell Hall, near Liverpool.

⁶⁰⁸ Francesco Lanzoni, *La controriforma nella città e diocesi di Faenza* (F. Lega, 1925). The scholars date the statue to around 1455 and connect its execution with the commission of the Manfredi family for the funerary chapel of Astorgio II Manfredi (1412-1468), in the church of the Observant Franciscans. In 1444, the Pope Eugene IV, already mentioned in the previous chapter for his reform efforts around San Giorgio in Alga, has allowed the Franciscans to take over the former Benedictine monastery in Faenza and changed its dedication to Saint Jerome.

⁶⁰⁹ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (London: G. Bell, 1910), 483.

⁶¹⁰ See: Francesco Caglioti, “Il Crocifisso del Bosco ai Frati di fronte ai modelli di Donatello e di Brunelleschi,” in *Mugello culla del Rinascimento: Giotto, Beato Angelico, Donatello e i Medici* (Firenze: Polistampa, 2008), 124–63.

of Donatello and his workshop has been discussed at length by scholars, so we believe that the further insight into this problem will bring new conclusions, not only on the formation of Fiorentino but on the circulation of the artistic models during the period.⁶¹¹ The artistic ingenuity that Niccolò Fiorentino demonstrated in his other works, sculptural and architectural, which will be discussed more in this thesis, directs conclusions that the composition could have been his invention.

This sculpture stands as the witness of the sincere and profound devotion of the commissioner. The choice of depicting a different atmosphere, by combining the “Saint Jerome in Dessert” type with the elements of “Saint Jerome in his Study” in the artistic sense, and applying the symbolism based on the letters, shows that the commissioner was fervent devotee of Jerome. In a sense, the commissioner identified with Jerome in the same way as the Venetian commissioners of a series of Giovanni Bellini’s paintings did. The emphasis is evidently put on Jerome’s spiritual journey through prayer and meditation, and not on his acts of repentance. The departure from the established iconography indicates that, in this case, Fiorentino had successfully implemented the commissioner’s religious views and preferences, by employing the contemporary developments of Jerome’s iconography during the fifteenth century.

Since this sources consulted in this study did not indicate another possible conclusion, I would agree with the proposition of the work’s initial location in the church of Saint Mary, and its dating to the late 1470s proposed by Fisković. However, I cannot claim with certainty who the commissioner was. Whether they were the brothers of “pious Bartholomew,” who commissioned the sculpture a decade after the funerary chapel was made, or someone else who could have taken over the patronage of the altar, he was a fervent devotee of the saint who ornamented his private altar with the statue of the saint, not

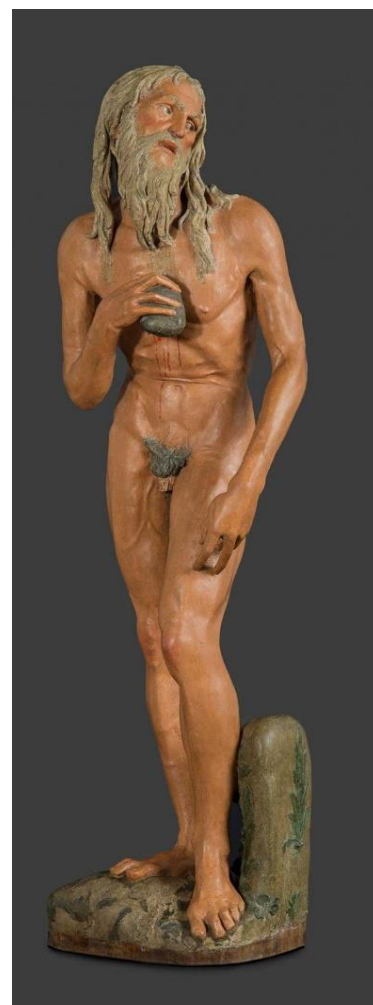


Figure 45 Donatello and Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Saint Jerome*, Pinacoteca Comunale, Faenza, c. 1465–66, (147 × 35 × 26 cm).

Source: <https://www.frick.org/exhibitions/bertoldo/18> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

⁶¹¹ For a detailed discussion, consult the bibliography listed in the article: Samo Štefanac, “Nikola Firentinac i toskansko kiparstvo generacije poslije Donatella”[Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino and the Tuscan sculpture of the generation after Donatello], in *Razmjena umjetničkih iskustava u Jadranskom bazenu*, ed. Jasenka Gudelj and Predrag Marković (Zagreb: FF Press, 2016), 69–77.

saving money on such a generous commission.⁶¹² Still, the developed iconography, narrating Jerome's days in the desert, underlines the education of the commissioner, evidently familiar with Jerome's production, making the unknown commissioner one of the significant fragments in the ongoing, and quite popular, veneration of Jerome in Trogir.

The Cippico Family Chapel

The apostolic visitations inform us about yet another chapel consecrated to Saint Jerome, this one in the Benedictine church of Saint Peter. At the end of the sixteenth century, Agostino Valier mentions that next to the main entrance of the monastery, there was another smaller door through which one entered the chapel of Saint Jerome.⁶¹³ He also adds that the altar was ornamented with a respectful altarpiece.⁶¹⁴ Some decades later, Michele Priuli informs us that the masses served on the altar in the chapel were from the legacy of Petar Cippico.⁶¹⁵ Giordano Pace repeats the same information.⁶¹⁶ A year later, Ottaviano Garzadori brings more details, stating that the altar was located in a separate chapel on the left side of the church.⁶¹⁷

Who was Petar Cippico, whom the apostolic visitor mention? The testament of the before-mentioned Petar Cippico and his son Coriolano Cippico do not mention the altar in the church. A clue to the answer lies in the *Chiese di Traù* by Pavao Andreis, who mentions that the descendants of Hector Cippico consecrated the altar.⁶¹⁸ Hector was from another branch of the family, descending from Michael Cippico, a brother of the already discussed Petar Cippico. In this case, the endowment

⁶¹² Josipović, "Nikola Fiorentinac i Alešijeva krstionica," 49. Josipović mentions that the price of freestanding sculpture by Fiorentino, based on the calculations and the price of the sculptures in the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, was between 25 and 36 ducats.

⁶¹³ Babić states that in the room next to the main entrance, a remained Renaissance arch is preserved, with the features characteristic of the workshop of Niccolò Fiorentino. This arch could have been an integral part of the chapel. Babić, *Trogir*, 377; Ivo Babić, "Barokna preinaka samostanske crkve sv. Petra u Trogiru i graditelji iz roda Macanović-Raguseo [Baroque interventions in the monastic church of St Peter in Trogir and builders from the Macanović-Raguseo kindred]," *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 40 (2016): 132.; ASV, Congregatio concilii n. 57, Agostino Valier, *Visitatio ecclesiarum urbis et dioecesis Traguriensis 1576 – Visitatio Traguriensis 1579.*, ff. f. 26r, f.513. Copies consulted in NAS.

⁶¹⁴ASV, Congregatio concilii, Visite apostoliche 80, Agostino Valier, *Visitatio ecclesiarum urbis et dioecesis Traguriensis 1576 – Visitatio Traguriensis 1579.* f.513 *Altari Sancti Hieronymi est angustiam et non consecratum. Habet pala honorificam (...).* Copies consulted in NAS.

⁶¹⁵ ASV, Misc.Arm. VII, vol. 100, *Visitatio Apostolica Dalmatiae Michele Priuli, Visitatio Traguriensis a. 1603*, f. 508. *Visitavit altare Sancti Hieronymi non consecratum: ordinavit altare portatile ad mensam decem pro octo uncias. In detto altari celebrantur ex legato quondam Domini Petri Cepici missis ut dicunt quarantenes.* Copies consulted in NAS.

⁶¹⁶ NAS, Giordano Pace, *Visitatio canonica episcopi Pacis Iordani 1625*, f. 257v

⁶¹⁷ ASPF, Visite e collegi 2, Ottaviano Garzadori, *Visitatio Dalmatiae – Traguriensis ann. 1624. et 1625*, f. 584. Copies consulted in NAS.

⁶¹⁸ Zelić, "Chiese in Traù," 94.

of the chapel and the altar was done by Petar (c.1521–before 1570), son of Hector Cippico, who left a further endowment for masses to be performed at the altar.⁶¹⁹

Jerome as a Political Symbol?

Among the Trogir artworks that represent Jerome, the most intriguing, is the stone triptych *Virgin Mary with Saint Jerome and Saint Ladislav*, today preserved in the Museum of Religious Art in Trogir, in the church of Saint John the Baptist. The stone relief depicts the Virgin Mary with child in the central panel, with Saint Jerome as a hermit holding a stone in his hand and the lion behind his legs on the right, and Saint Ladislav as a knight on the left. The figures are positioned in the shallow carved niches, separated with fluted pilasters and semi-capitals. The winged circles ornamented with laurel wreath, decorate the base of the polyptych. The polychromic traces are still visible on the background, while some traces of the coloring can be found on the figures as well.



Figure 46 Niccolò Fiorentino (workshop), *Polyptych with Virgin Mary, Saint Jerome and Saint Ladislav*, 1480s, Museum of Religious Art, Trogir. Source: Author

Like many other Renaissance artworks in Trogir, the commissioner, the artist who made it, and its original position cannot be claimed with certainty. Not much is known of its provenance, except that before being moved to the museum, it had been built into the wall of the cathedral. Because

⁶¹⁹ Andreis, *Trogirsko plemstvo*, 185; Babić, *Trogir*, 384. The church also houses the tombstone of Jerome Cippico, the commander of the galley, and his wife Ivana, commissioned by their children in 1522.

of this, researchers assumed that it used to be a part of an altar in the cathedral. The archival documents, apostolic visitations and the works by Paolo Andreis, do not mention anything that could lead to the untangling of its original position. Previous scholars have already discussed this altarpiece, mainly arguing for its attribution to Niccolò Fiorentino or his workshop.⁶²⁰ As this thesis does not attempt to go into profound art historical analysis, it will accept the attribution to the workshop of Niccolò Fiorentino, keeping in mind the dominant Renaissance language, especially in the architectonic decorations, typology, modelling of the figures and drapery, leaving the possibility that Fiorentino himself may have carved parts of it.

The most intriguing part of this artwork lies in the choice of depicted saints. The form of triptych, where the Virgin Mary is shown in the central panel surrounded by saints, follows the established practices of Marian devotion commonly seen in the paintings, but not unusually found in sculpture. The choice of Saint Jerome is unsurprising, considering his immense popularity in Dalmatia and Trogir at the period. However, the choice of Saint Ladislav (1046–1095), the Holy Hungarian king, a symbol of the Hungarian kingdom, a longstanding Venetian rival, raises questions about the commissioner and the possible political connotations of the representation.

The only study which has dealt with the altarpiece in detail is by Radoslav Bužančić, in which he proposed the reconstruction of the altar on which the altarpiece stood, assuming its original position under the pulpit in the cathedral and naming the Dragazzo (Dragač) and Borgoforte families as the commissioners. He sees the presence of the saints as an expression of humanism to which the commissioners adhered, leaving aside the possibility that the image of Saint Ladislav had anti-Ottoman connotations connected with the expedition to Negroponte in which Trogir galleys participated, and on which he based his dating to the early 1470s.⁶²¹

In this subchapter, I question the proposed location, commissioners, and the reasons for its executions, proposing its greater value than a simple expression of growing humanist interest, which indeed did contribute to its production, but beyond this, we see the existence of the depicted saints as political symbols which reflected the unstable political situation during the second half of the fifteenth century, largely caused by the penetration of the Ottoman army into the Balkan peninsula.

⁶²⁰ Schulz, *Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino*, 75; Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 139; Milan Pelc, *Renesansa* [Renaissance] (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2007), 296. In his monumental work on the Croatian Renaissance, Pelc lists the altarpiece as the product of Niccolò Fiorentino. Štefanac supports the hypothesis of Anne Markham Schulz that the quality of execution is lower compared to other works by Fiorentino. Both suggest that it is quite probable that it was a product of his workshop, rather than the master himself.

⁶²¹ Radoslav Bužančić, “Gospin oltar Nikole Firentinca u trogirskoj katedrali” [The Altar of the Virgin in Trogir cathedral, Work of Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino], *Klesarstvo i graditeljstvo* 20 (2009): 44.

Relying on the apostolic visitations, Bužančić positions the altarpiece on the altar of the Virgin Mary, which was once under the Romanesque pulpit in the cathedral church of Saint Lawrence.⁶²² The apostolic visitor Agostino Valier in 1579 describes the altar of the Virgin Mary, which was under the pulpit: *Altariolum subtus pulpitem Beatae Mariae habet palam marmoream parvam, duo candelabra ex auricalcho, tres mappas et pallium ex tela nigra. Ibi celebratur quotidie.*⁶²³ The later apostolic visitations repeat the same description of the position of the altar.

Although the author states that the dimensions (95cm x 75cm) correspond to marks on the floor in the place where the altar once stood, the choice of words by the apostolic visitor Agostino Valier suggests that the original altarpiece probably was not the proposed one. The visitor mentions that the altar was smaller in size (*altariolum*) and that it contained a small marble altarpiece (*palam marmoream parvam*), both used to describe the narrow space in which the altar was situated. Keeping in mind the dimensions of the preserved altarpieces, which originally should have had an elaborated corbel and frame, it seems highly unlikely that the visitor would use such words to describe the appearance of the altar. For stated reasons, I would suggest further research to consider that the altar was furnished with another marble altarpiece of smaller dimensions, representing the Virgin Mary. During the Renaissance, reliefs of the *Madonna with Child* were present in the production of Florentine sculptors, and as recent research has shown, occupied a considerable segment of the oeuvre of Niccolò Fiorentino.⁶²⁴

A further contribution to the argument that the carved triptych was not located on the altar under the pulpit is related to the possibility of the Borgoforte and the Dragazzo families being the original commissioners. The earliest mention of the families' legacy related to the altar under the pulpit is in the apostolic visitations from the beginning of the seventeenth century. In his visit of 1603, Michele Priuli mentions that masses were celebrated every day on the altar out of the legacy left by Ioannes Sanmitel but that due to quarrels inside the Borgoforte family, who had inherited patronage rights over the altar, those masses were no longer served.⁶²⁵

⁶²² Ibid. The altar was dismantled during the baroque renovations of the church in the 18th century.

⁶²³ ASV, Congregatio concilii, Visite apostoliche 80, Agostino Valier, *Visitatio ecclesiarum urbis et dioecesis Traguriensis 1576 – Visitatio Traguriensis 1579*, f. 31v. Copies consulted in NAS.

⁶²⁴ Štefanac, "Nikola Firentinac i toskansko kiparstvo," 71-74. The reliefs *Madonna with Child* in Hvar and Orebić have already been recognized by scholars as the product of Niccolò Fiorentino, together with the relief built into the city walls of Split, which is attributed to his workshop. Štefanac brings other examples that should be considered as the product of Fiorentino and his workshop: *Madonna Borgherini* (Palazzo Borgherini – Rosselli del Turco, Florence), *Madonna with Child* (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid) and *Madonna with Child* (Church of Saint Jerome, Sant'Agata Feltria).

⁶²⁵ ASV, Misc.Arm. VII, vol. 100, *Visitatio Apostolica Dalmatiae Michele Priuli, Visitatio Traguriensis a. 1603*, f. 498.

Further mentions can be found in the visitation of Giordano Pace in 1624, and one year later in the visitation of Ottaviano Garzadori. The latter one mentioned that the altar was not consecrated and poorly equipped and that the masses served at the altar out of the legacy of the Borgoforte and Dragazzo families were moved to the altar of the Holy Sacrament.⁶²⁶ Based on the written sources, we cannot discuss the existing legacy of the families before the seventeenth century. Another reason why the family should not be connected with the commission of this altarpiece, which was not initially placed on the altar beneath the pulpit, lies in the iconography of the triptych, particularly in the representation of Saint Ladislav.

During the Late Middle Ages, Ladislav's image became a model for Hungarian rulers, especially in the period of change of the ruling dynasties where his figure was used as to help legitimate a new king. Maja Cepetić has discussed that during the fifteenth century, the cult of Saint Ladislav was promoted in Medieval Croatia, especially in Zagreb and its bishopric, which had been established by a Hungarian king in 1094.⁶²⁷ The cult and images of Hungarian kings in the southern, peripheral parts of the Hungarian Kingdom was in some ways purposefully promoted as political propaganda in favor of Hungarian kings.⁶²⁸ On the other hand, it was also a reflection of the genuine popularity of Ladislav's cult within the kingdom, where he was the most popular patron saint during the Angevin and Luxemburg dynasties.⁶²⁹

The figure of Saint Ladislav is also known to have appeared on golden florins minted in Hungary during the reigns of Louis the Great and Sigismund of Luxemburg, for whom Ladislav and other *sancti reges Hungariae* served as holy predecessors.⁶³⁰ The royal veneration and the appropriation of Ladislav's figure continued during the reign of King Matthias (1458–1490), when the

Copies consulted in NAS. *Vidit altare tituli Sanctae Mariae sub Pergamo. Est consecratum quod in eo celebrator quotidie ex legato quondam Joanni Sanmitei. Heredes idest illi de Borgofortis tenentur ad praedictum legatum sed propter discordiam ipsorum de presenti non celebratur. (...) Ordinavit enim duo candelabra auricalchi, crucem, tres mappas ac imaginem Beatae Virginis accommodavit et ad decentiorem formam reduce.*

⁶²⁶ ASPF, Visite e collegi 2, Ottaviano Garzadori, *Visitatio Dalmatiae – Traguriensis ann. 1624. et 1625*, f. 242v. Copies consulted in NAS. Bužančić, “Gospin oltar,” 38. See footnote 8. *Visitavit altare sanctae Mariae sub umbone interdictum, quia non sacratum et male de omnibus necessariis proscisum, quod habet onus celebrandi tot missas quot centum libris paruorum soluendis per heredes Borgoforte et Dragatias dici possunt, translatum tamen ad altare Sanctissimi Sacramenti.*

⁶²⁷ Maja Cepetić, “The Cult of St. Ladislav in Medieval Continental Croatia – Its Political and Cultural Context,” in *Slovakia and Croatia: Historical Parallels and Connections (until 1780)*, ed. Neven Budak, Martin Homza, and Jan Lukačka (Bratislava: Department of Slovak History of the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University, 2013), 315; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 365.

⁶²⁸ Consult also: Maja Cepetić and Danko Dujmović, “St Peter at Novo Mesto Zelinsko - New Iconography for Claiming Political Continuity,” *IKON* 5 (2012): 323–30.

⁶²⁹ On a question, consult: Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers.*; Dragos-Gheorghe Nastasoiu, “Between Personal Devotion and Political Propaganda: Iconographic Aspects in the Representation of the Sancti Reges Hungariae in Church Mural Painting (14th – Early-16th Century)” (PhD, Budapest, Central European University, 2018).

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 232; *Ibid.*, 61–62.

images of the Ladislás and the Virgin Mary was put on the kingdom's golden florins from 1471. Matthias' reverence for the Holy Hungarian kings and for the Virgin Mary who during this period began to be viewed as the *Patrona Hungariae*, is seen in the joined representations of the mentioned saints,, marking them all as the dual heavenly protectors of the Hungarian kingdom.⁶³¹

The mentioned golden florin depicts Ladislás as a Knight-King, due to Ladislás' embodiment of the ideal knight and the legend of his crusade in the Holy Land in 1095, fighting for the Christian faith while defending his own country against pagan invaders.⁶³² Regarding the legend of Ladislás' participation in the First Crusade, Gabor Klaniczay has argued that this story was invented later by King Béla III (1172–1196) during his plans to participate in the crusade in 1190, which was only later realized by his son.⁶³³ The elements of the Knight-King personified in Ladislás could be easily transposed to the image of King Matthias (1458–1490), whose reign was marked by anti-Ottoman expeditions following the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463.⁶³⁴

Given the strong symbolic meaning comprised in the Ladislás' figure was conditioned by his royal status, and stands at the core of his saintly figure, his representations cannot be read as merely the representation through which saintly intercession was requested. The already mentioned examples of the promotion of the image of the Hungarian Holy king(s) in favor of the bishopric of Zagreb and the Hungarian kingdom in medieval Croatia, do not raise questions since it was an integral part of the kingdom. In Trogir, a commune integrated into the Republic of Venice however, the image of Saint Ladislás certainly had strong political connotations, rendered more poignant because he was paired with the image of Saint Jerome, who at the moment was already recognized as a symbolic representation of Dalmatia. The installment of such artwork, in a prominent place in the cathedral, right under the pulpit, would have had broader social and political implications in Trogir, whose citizens, as already mentioned, participated in the first Venetian-Ottoman war between 1463 and 1479, and in that sense had been loyal to their ruler.

Who could have been the commissioner of this artwork? Through the centuries, the communes had nurtured special bonds with the Hungarian kings, mainly reflected in the royal privileges which

⁶³¹ Nastasoiu, "Between Personal Devotion and Political Propaganda", 139–40.

⁶³² On the formation of Ladislás' image as the knight-king consult: Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 173-194.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 418.

⁶³⁴ Borislav Grgin, "The Ottoman Influences on Croatia in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century," *Povijesni Prilozi* 21, no. 23 (2002): 87–102; Alexandru Simon, "Crusading between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Hungary, Venice and the Ottoman Empire after the Fall of Negroponte," *Radovi: Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 42 (2010): 195–230.

provided a level of communal autonomy within the Hungarian Kingdom.⁶³⁵ With the consolidation of the rules and statues with those of the Venetian Republic, Trogir's patrician strata lost many of their executive powers once belonging to them, mainly through the decisions made by the Great Council in Venice. Despite this, most of the patrician families found ways to still be the part of the executive government in one way or another, as can be seen with the Cippico family.⁶³⁶

Therefore, the commissioner of the stone triptych, with the depiction of Saint Jerome as the symbol of Dalmatia and Saint Ladislav as the symbol of the Kingdom of Hungary, should be sought for among those who were not pleased with the Venetian government in Dalmatia and were inclined towards the Hungarian king.⁶³⁷ Could the Dragazzo and Borgoforte families mentioned in the visitations be considered the initial commissioners of this work, as suggested in a previous study? Given their political background, and loyalty to Venice, such a commission could be understood as the betrayal of their political allies. The Borgoforte family was a wealthy merchant family, for whom we do not have much historical data, especially about the activities of their members in the Humanist circle of the fifteenth century. The earliest mention in Trogir is in the sixteenth century, so we can assume that they rose to greater prominence during the Early Modern period.⁶³⁸

The Dragazzo family on the other hand, was of greater importance, especially during the fifteenth century, when this merchant family was accepted into Trogir's aristocracy, and imposed themselves as leaders among the other wealthy merchant families seeking greater privileges from their new Venetian ruler. In the collective memory of Trogir, the family was remembered as among those who opened the door to the Venetian army in 1420 after a long siege. Their fidelity to Venice was awarded with administrative functions and offices in the town, which members of the family

⁶³⁵ Novak, *Autonomija dalmatinskih komuna*, 11.; Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 20-23. However, most of the royal privileges (Coloman's from 1105, Stephen II from 1124, Géza II from 1142, and Bela IV from 1242) invoked by the Trogir people, were proved to be the forgeries of the fourteenth century and used in the negotiations during the establishment of the Venetian government in 1322. Regardless of this, such privileges, like the one that the commune allegedly received during the reign of King Coloman (1095–1116), underpinned the commune's judicial system and formed the basis for its local autonomy. Here I should mention another example of the special bond between Trogir and the Hungarian rulers, which indeed precedes the period discussed here but provides more evidence of the town's preference for Hungarian rule. On the main façade of the cathedral church, above the rose window, is a relief of the Angevin dynasty. It was installed in the second half of the fourteenth century after the re-establishment of Hungarian rule after the Venetians had controlled it for a short period (1332–58). It was a response to Louis the Great confirming the city's rights and privileges, but it also related to the royal family's financial contribution to the construction of the cathedral. See: Ivo Babić, "Anžuvinski grbovi u Trogiru i Šibeniku" [Angevin coat of arms in Trogir and Šibenik], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 20 (1976): 39.

⁶³⁶ Tomislav Raukar, "Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u XV. i prvjoj polovici XVI. stoljeća", 88–90.

⁶³⁷ Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 36–40. The political significance of the Trogir nobility was greatly diminished after 1420, but their social position remained intact, mainly due to continuing respect for the social stratification and the communal honors still given to its members. On the political divisions among the families of Trogir see the following: Janeković-Römer, "Grad i građani."

⁶³⁸ Andreis, *Trogirsko plemstvo*, 25.

occupied, together with a privilege granted by the Venetian senate in 1483, a deliberation *da tutti le fazioni reali e personali in perpetuo*.⁶³⁹ The close ties of the family with the Venetian authorities make it appear impossible that they would procure a stone altarpiece depicting Saint Ladislav, a symbol of the Hungarian Kingdom. I do not refute the possibility that the Borgoforte or Dragazzo family had the patronage for the altar under the pulpit,⁶⁴⁰ but they could not have been the commissioners of this altarpiece.

The question of the potential commissioner requires an in-depth analysis of intercommunal relations. To date, scholars have not dealt with this question to the extent that it could bring us closer to a firm conclusion as to the name of the commissioner. Considering the long periods of perturbations between Venice and the King of Hungary, in which Trogir found itself at the very end of the fourteenth century, a quiet opposition certainly existed, but due to the scarce sources, we cannot adequately portray its impact.⁶⁴¹

Although the Venetian rule in Dalmatia was unthreatened during the fifteenth century, especially by the possible pretensions of the Hungarian kings, it is likely that after the fall of the Bosnian Kingdom, during the unstable period of the Ottoman threat, doors to more liberal expressions of political views were opened. We can, therefore, interpret this account of Saint Jerome alongside Saint Ladislav as propaganda in favor of the Hungarian king and kingdom during the period of the consolidation of Venetian rule.

Representation of the Hungarian saint in Trogir should be interpreted less like a nostalgic longing for Hungarian rule, than as fondness for the civic and legal privileges which the commune once held, granted by the Hungarian kings. As Irena Benyovsky Latin points out, these privileges were the foundation of the special relations which commune had with the Hungarian crown until 1420, which continued, although not in the legal and juridical sense, even after the establishment of the Venetian government.⁶⁴² In addition, these representations stand as a reminder that Dalmatia had once been united with the other Croatian lands, as the integral part of the Kingdom of Croatia, under

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 193–97; Tatjana Radauš, “Dragač,” in *Hrvatski Biografski Leksikon* (Zagreb: Leksikografski Zavod Miroslav Krleža), <http://enciklopedija.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=56059> ; See also: Babić, *Trogir*, 248–50.

⁶⁴⁰ Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 54. Nicholas Borgoforte was canon and archdeacon of the Cathedral of Trogir, and during 1459 he was bishop in the absence of Jacopo Turlon.

⁶⁴¹ At the turn of the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, the Berislavić family, originally Slavonian nobility, is mentioned in Trogir. Not much is known about their presence in Trogir, except for Petar Berislavić (1513–1520), a Croatian Ban born in Trogir, and known for his confrontations with the Ottoman army. The family members were known for their participation in the Hungarian-Ottoman wars at the end of the century.

⁶⁴² Benyovsky, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 34 See footnote 161. The preserved inscription in the courtyard of the monastery of Saint Nicholas mentions king Louis II of Hungary (1516–1526).

the Hungarian crown. Nonetheless, definite conclusions on who was the commissioner and the original placement of the altarpiece remain to be defined in future research.

Jerome Among the Local Saints

Here, I should mention another similar representation, which depicts Jerome's position as "a protector and enduring advocate" of the citizens of Trogir as underlined in the decision on official veneration of the saint in the commune from 1455, discussed later. Indeed, this representation demonstrates that he was perceived as equal to the already long established patron saints of the city, Saint Lawrence to whom the cathedral was consecrated and Blessed John of Trogir, an eleventh-century bishop whose veneration started after his death, and whose cult had an important role in the formation of the civic identity of Trogir.⁶⁴³



Figure 47 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Polyptych with Saint Jerome, Saint John of Trogir and Saint Lawrence*, Trogir, c. 1480. Church of Saint Dominic. Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 296.

⁶⁴³ Ana Marinković, "The Birth and the Agents of an Episcopal Civic Cult: St John of Trogir (12th -15th Century)" (PhD, Budapest, Central European University, 2013).

In the Dominican church in Trogir, a carved triptych was built into the wall, with a representation of Saint Jerome in the central panel dressed as a cardinal with a model of the church in his hand, and a lion at his feet. On his right and left side are the patron saints of Trogir, Saint Lawrence, and Blessed John of Trogir. Like other artworks representing Jerome, this one is of uncertain provenance and has been subject to much discussion as to its authorship.⁶⁴⁴ However, the architectural decorations speak of a new renaissance language visible in the rich profiles of the base, pilasters, and the shell-like niches in which the figures of saints stand, and here I would agree with the attribution to Niccolò Fiorentino. The main sources consulted for this thesis, the works by Paolo Andreis and the apostolic visitations, does not mention the altarpiece or give any clue as to its possible initial location. Since it has been preserved in the Dominican church, we can assume that it was originally placed on one of the private altars in the church.

Because of its omission from the apostolic visitations, Krsić assumes that it could have been brought from some other church.⁶⁴⁵ Regardless of the visitation records being a valuable sources, especially for art historians, they are primarily of an ecclesiastical nature, written in order to report whether the decisions of the Council of Trent have been applied, and many times they do not offer extensive details about the liturgical equipment of the altars with the altarpieces. Taken together, no new conclusions can be brought regarding the matter of original placement.

Two other items give indications as to its status, however. The first one relates to the iconographic depiction of Jerome. Unlike other sculpted works of the saint, where he is shown as a hermit, here, the saint is represented as a cardinal, holding a model of the church in his hand, with the ever present lion at his feet. The choice of this type of representation was conditioned by the ecclesiastical ranks of the depicted saints, Saint Lawrence was a deacon, and Saint John of Trogir was a bishop. Any other way of portraying Jerome would not be appropriate to demonstrate his importance for the church, and his cardinal title.

The second indicative thing is that Jerome is depicted among the local patron saints, where he stands not only as a symbol of Dalmatia, but he is being promoted as equally efficient heavenly patron

⁶⁴⁴ Joško Belamarić, “Nota za Tripuna Bokanića i Koriolanoviće (Uz razgovor o Duknovićevom sv. Ivanom Trogirskom)” [A note on Tripun Bokanić and the Koriolanovići (with a discussion of Giovanni Dalmata’s Saint John of Trogir)], in *Studije iz srednjovjekovne i renesansne umjetnosti na Jadranu* (Split: Književni krug, 2001), 485; Pelc, *Renesansa*, 296; Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 118.

⁶⁴⁵ Krsić Stjepan, “Crkva i samostan sv. Dominika u Trogiru” [The church and monastery of St. Dominic in Trogir], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 41 (2008): 43; Babić, *Trogir*, 402. Babić brings the information that this artwork was once on the main altar of the church. However, this research did not manage to find confirmation in other sources or within the secondary literature.

of Tragurians, like their already proven patron saints.⁶⁴⁶ Because of the choice of saints, I would support the hypothesis by Bužančić that this could have been the communal commission,⁶⁴⁷ but still I would not neglect the possibility that it was a private commission of someone especially inclined towards these three saints. Still, it is important to bear in mind that this research and previous scholarship has not identify the altar as consecrated to Saint Jerome, which was under the patronage of the local government.

“Out of the devotion to Saint Jerome of Stridon and in the memory of the brave father”

Out of the practice of personal devotion to Jerome, evolved for some, an individual self-identification with the saint through living in a virtuous and pious manner, these devotees appropriated Jerome to themselves. The practice was present in written and visual works, where individuals portrayed themselves in the image of the saint, as in the example of Niccolò Albergati, or rested in the image along with the saint, as in the example of Jacopo Anastagi or Martin Mladošić. There are only a few examples of such practice in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, and none of them represent the saint as a cardinal in the study. The one which follows the practice of identifying portraits surpasses the timeframe discussed in this thesis, but it is crucial for our understanding of Jerome’s polyvalent figure by the people of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, and the perception of Jerome outside of the general timeframe of this thesis.

The statue of Saint Jerome as a cardinal, with a model of the church in his hand, is kept in the Museum of Fine Arts in Split. It was made by Tripun Bokanić (1575–1609) in 1604, for the chapel of the Cippico family castle, built by Coriolano Cippico in the Kaštel Stari, near Trogir.⁶⁴⁸ The devotional inscription on its base reads that it was commissioned “out of the devotion to Saint Jerome of Stridon and in the memory of the brave father, Alvis Cippico, son of Jerome.”⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁶ Tadić, *Građa o slikarskoj školi*, 1222; Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*, 346. Similar positioning of Jerome along with locally venerated saints is also visible in other examples. Besides the already discussed altarpieces of Franciscan provenance, we find this positioning in Dubrovnik at the end of the sixteenth century when the sculptor Nikola Lazanić (Nicolaus Lazaneus) made statues of Saint Blaise and Saint Jerome for the sacristy of the church of the local patron saint, Saint Blaise.

⁶⁴⁷ Bužančić, “Gospin oltar,” 43.

⁶⁴⁸ Belamarić, “Nota za Tripuna Bokanića”, 466. Tripun Bokanić is one of the important names of the Renaissance in Trogir, whose biggest contribution was the participation in completing the construction of the cathedral’s bell tower, for which he was contracted by Alvis Cippico (1515-1606), procurator of the cathedral.

⁶⁴⁹ Belamarić, “Nota za Tripuna Bokanića”, 463. ET : BEATI : HIER(ony)MI : STRIDONIE(n)SIS : PIETATI : ET : PARE(n)TIS : OPTIMI : MEMORIAE : ALOYSIVS : CIPP(icv)S HIER(onymi) . FILIVS . HOC. MARMOREV(m). SIGNV(m). AD. VERA(m). SVI. EFFIGIE(m). EXPRESSV(m). FACIE(n)DV(m). CVRAV(i)T. A(nno) D(omini) MDCHIII.

The characteristic facial features of this sculpture have been noted by Joško Belamarić, who proposed its reading as the double portrait of Saint Jerome and Jerome Cippico, as is stated in the inscription. Furthermore, he proposed that such individualized distinctions were a characteristic trait found in other sculptures by the Cippico commissioners, first seen some hundred years earlier on another sculpture. In 1482, Giovanni Dalmata (Ivan Duknović, Ioannes Dalmata c. 1440–c.1514) made a statue of Saint John the Evangelist, with the accentuated youthful features of the face, and the characteristic traits, such as the distinct nose. According to Belamarić, the sculpture was commissioned by Coriolano Cippico, and corresponds to the portrait of Alvise Cippico (1456–1504), Coriolano’s son.⁶⁵⁰ He did so to present his son as the successor of the saint in terms of moral and spiritual values.⁶⁵¹

This Alvise Cippico, who commissioned the statue of Saint Jerome in the memory of his father, obviously is not the same Alvise portrayed in the statue of Saint John the Evangelist. He was Coriolano’s grandson from his youngest son, Jerome, and nephew of Alvise Cippico, the Elder. The commission of this artwork had a memorial purpose as an *ex-voto* since Alvise had lost three of his sons. Due to the unfortunate destiny that befell him, it is understandable that while he made a private shrine in the memory of his father, and his only surviving son was named Jerome, it was probably also a votive offering in the unstable times of the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Belamarić also notices an essential element in the execution of the sculpture—Bokanić used the



Figure 48 Tripun Bokanić, Statue of Saint Jerome, 1604, Museum of Fine Arts Split. Source: Belamarić, *Studije iz srednjovjekovne i renesansne umjetnosti na Jadranu*, Split, 2001, 486.

⁶⁵⁰ Josip Belamarić, “Duknovićev sv. Ivan Evanđelist u kapeli bl. Ivana Trogirskog” [The statue of St. John the Evangelist by Ivan Duknović (Iohannes Dalmata) in Trogir Cathedral], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 37 (1998): 155–81; Belamarić, “Nota za Tripuna Bokanića.”

⁶⁵¹ Alvise was known as a poet and humanist. In the year 1483, the city of Trogir elected him as their new bishop, but the Venetian Council did not approve this nomination. Instead, he was named as Bishop of Famagusta in 1488, and he also served as a secretary to Pope Alexander IV. Even though he was named Bishop of Zadar in 1503, he spent most of his time in Rome where he died.

central relief of the triptych from the Dominican church as a model which he copies in its entirety, besides the facial features.⁶⁵² While this poses a question of the possible commission of the mentioned triptych by the Cippico family, through whose copying, Alvise Cippico wanted to express double honor to his ancestors, the solution used here seems to be a question of available sculptural models in Trogir. Unlike other sculptural production of Jerome that is preserved in Trogir, and which represents the saint as a hermit, this one is the only sculpture which shows Jerome as a cardinal, and thus it was used as a model for the portrayal of Jerome Cippico as Saint Jerome. Indeed, it imitates another practice already applied by the Cippico family a century and a half earlier—the practices of identifying portraits.

5.3 OTHER COMMUNES

Although this chapter, due to the available sources and the preserved artworks, focused on the communes of Zadar and Trogir, which represents the focal point of devotion to Jerome during the second half of the fifteenth century, there are indications that the same practices, not in such an elaborated format and numerous artistic production, were present in other communes. This question will have to be elaborated separately, with the systematic archival research that could bring to light other similar commissions and the endowments of the altars and chapels which have not been preserved until the present day. Here, I will present some examples from the Republic of Ragusa, which contribute to the presence of Jerome's cult even beyond Venetian Dalmatia, supporting the thesis of the adoption of Jerome's cult through the adoption of humanism and new devotional practices.

It also shows how unlike other civic cults in the communes, Jerome's was polycentric and does not stand as the determinant of the civic identity of a specific commune, as it was with Saint Blaise in Dubrovnik or Saint John of Trogir in Trogir. It is this polycentricity, not only in the geographical sense but also in the different traditions of worship, from private devotion, Franciscan and Glagolitic veneration, to the celebration of his feast day on the communal level, that contributed to the spatial spread of the cult.

Sources indicate that in the cathedral of Šibenik, already in 1448, a chapel consecrated to Saint Jerome existed in the southern aisle. The document mentions only that the bishop Juraj Šižgorić

⁶⁵² Belamarić, "Nota za Tripuna Bokanića," 465.

(1437–1453) made a contract for the execution of one tombstone in the chapel.⁶⁵³ Taking into consideration that the bishop was involved in the transaction, it is highly likely that it was a private altar. The apostolic visitation of Agostino Valier from the year 1579 reveals that twice a week a mass was served on the altar, out of the legacy of the mentioned bishop Šižgorić, what confirms that already around the middle of the fifteenth century, the cult of Saint Jerome was nurtured in the Cathedral of Šibenik, and was supported by the bishop himself.⁶⁵⁴ In Šibenik, besides the monumental relief of Saint Jerome on the northern façade of the Cathedral of Saint James, we find another smaller relief, on the façade of the private house on the Dobrić square, of a somewhat rustic modeling and unknown dating and the attribution. It reflects the practice of placing the images of the family's patron saints on the façade of the house as the apotropaic objects, invoking the saint's protection over the house and the people who live in it.

In Split, we find one of the finest expressions of the personal affiliation of the saint in the example of Marko Marulić, one of the greatest Dalmatian humanists, who at the beginning of the sixteenth century wrote a new life of the saint, discussed in detail in chapter 8. In it, he identifies with the saint saying: *Ille meus est, et ego suus*. Some published sources indicate that even in Split, Jerome's cult started to gain its prominence around the middle of the fifteenth century. It is noted that the painter Dujam Vučković, in his will, leaves the sum for the altar of Saint Jerome in the church of Holy Spirit in Split.⁶⁵⁵ During the second half of the fifteenth century, a small hermitage church consecrated to Saint Jerome was built on the hill of Marjan, in Split.⁶⁵⁶ In it, the sculptor Andrea Alessi made an altarpiece with the relief of representing "Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto", for the presbyter John in 1480.⁶⁵⁷ While the further archival research is indispensable for adequate presentation of the extent of veneration of Jerome in Split, applying the comparative approach with other communes, where the cult was blooming, it seems very hardly possible that Split was immune to the growing appreciation of the saint.

⁶⁵³ Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 462.

⁶⁵⁴ The transcription was borrowed from: Stjepan Krasić, "Dva priloga o Jurju Dalmatincu" [Two contributions about Giorgio Dalmata], *Arhivski vjesnik* 17–18, no. 1 (1975): 304. *Altare Sancti Hieronymi in quo celebratur bis in hebdomada vigore cuiusdam legati reverendissimi episcopi Sığorei, habet palam honorificam et magnam, tobaleas tres, candelabra ferrea duo, tabellam secretorum, scabellum pro missali et pannum rubeum ex panno.*

⁶⁵⁵ Joško Belamarić, "Nove potvrde za Dujma Vuškovića" [Some new evidence for Dujam Vušković], in *Studije iz srednjovjekovne i renesansne umjetnosti na Jadranu* (Split: Književni krug, 2001), 321.

⁶⁵⁶ Duško Kečkemet, "Crkva i eremitaža sv. Jere na Marjanu" [The church and the hermitage of Saint Jerome in Marjan], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 11 (1959): 92–105.

⁶⁵⁷ Kruno Prijatelj, "Andrija Aleši u Splitu," 52.

The Republic of Ragusa

The vivid civic cult of Saint Jerome was present in the Republic of Ragusa, where we find the earliest documented veneration of the saint on the communal level. In 1445, the feast day of Saint Jerome was included on the list of officially celebrated holidays. The Republic of Ragusa, since 1358, has been enjoying the high level of autonomy within the Hungarian Kingdom, due to which its political, economic, and social progress has been following a different route than other communes. Due to the privileges gained with the *Treaty of Zadar*, Dubrovnik's position has been firmed even after 1420 and the establishment of the Venetian government over the other cities on the Dalmatian coast.

The stability of the Republic at the time of geopolitical changes in the Balkans was also contributed by the famous Dubrovnik diplomacy, which noticed the danger of the Ottoman army in time. In order to preserve trade privileges in the Balkans, whose lands were slowly falling under Ottoman rule, together with the right to trade the larger cities of the empire, the people of Dubrovnik began paying tribute to the sultan in 1458.⁶⁵⁸ This type of alliance also gave Ragusans powerful protection in case of the possible Venetian attempt to incorporate Dubrovnik in the borders of the Venetian Dalmatia.

The relative political stability and economic growth are reflected in the number of artistic and architectural works executed during the period of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, commissioned by local governments and prominent local families. For that reason, these two centuries in Dubrovnik are usually referred to as the *golden age*.⁶⁵⁹ In Dubrovnik, local humanist circles developed a bit later than in the other communes like Zadar and Trogir, which is understandable due to the correlation between the establishment of the Venetian government and the rise of humanism in Dalmatia. However, the ideas of humanism were present through the appointment

⁶⁵⁸ Vesna Miović, “Turske priznanice o uplaćenom dubrovačkom haraču” [Turkish receipts on the Ragusan payment of tribute (harač)], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku*, no. 42 (2004): 53–77.

⁶⁵⁹ During this period, Renaissance elements started to penetrate artistic forms, which resulted in the eclectic style in which Gothic and Renaissance forms are often present at the same time. While in architecture the new style was adopted later than in other communes, in the visual arts the Renaissance elements were adopted rather earlier as seen in the paintings by Lovro Dobričević (Lorenzo di Cattaro, c. 1420–1478) and later by Nikola Božidarević (Nicholas of Ragusa, Niccolò Raguseo, c. 1460–1517), and Mihajlo Hamzić (1460–1518). See more: Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*.

of the foreigners into public positions such as it was with Giovanni Conversini of Ravenna, who was employed as a notary in Dubrovnik between 1384–87.⁶⁶⁰

Humanism in Dubrovnik took blossom around the middle of the fifteenth century through the work of another foreigner, Filippo de Diversis (d. c.1452), who was employed by the local government as a teacher, but is better known for his work *laudes civitatum* of Dubrovnik written in 1440—*Situs aedificiorum, politiae et laudabilium consuetudinum inclytae civitatis Ragusii ad ipsius senatum descriptio*—in which he describes and praises the city.⁶⁶¹ Regardless of the contacts of Ragusan individuals with the Italian humanists such as Nikola Restić who sent a letter to Francesco Barbaro in 1451, asking, among other things, for help in getting some manuscripts for him, and the Vuk Bobaljević (1419–1457) who wrote Latin poetry, the local humanist circle, formed only at the end of the fifteenth century and flourished during the first half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁶²

The Gozze Family

This research has managed to identify some members of Dubrovnik’s elite, who especially venerated the saint through the generations of the family. However, it is important to emphasize here that the development of Jerome’s cult in Dubrovnik deserves more intensive research, which would focus primarily on the extensive archival documents which could reveal further examples of expressions of the cult in Ragusa, especially among the prominent humanist families, within the specific context of the construction of the Ragusan civic and political identity. Taking into

⁶⁶⁰ Neven Jovanović, “Dubrovnik in the Corpus of Eastern Adriatic Humanist Laudationes Urbium,” *Dubrovnik Annals*, no. 16 (2012): 23–36. Relja Seferović, “Razočarani notar: iz kasnog dubrovačkog prijepisa djela *Historia Ragusii* Giovanniija Conversinija” [A discontented notary: from a late Ragusan transcript of Giovanni Conversini’s *Historia Ragusii*], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 55, no. 1 (2017): 131–70. Dissatisfied with his job and the lack of time that would allow him to pursue literary and intellectual work, he wrote down criticisms at the expense of the people of Dubrovnik, describing the city as intellectually unstimulating: “They have no use for the scholarship, they do not educate their minds... Here there is no place for exercising a more refined talent... They live for their stomachs, the main thing is to be covered and fed.” Still, he explored the history of Dubrovnik, which he published under the title *Historia Ragusii*.

⁶⁶¹ During this period, foreign teachers alternated in this position. In the history of Dubrovnik, De Diversis, he was not remembered for his pedagogical work; in fact, the Republic was rather dissatisfied with his job. What made him famous were his public speeches in honor of the Hungarian kings Sigismund (1438) and Albert (1439) held in the Cathedral of Dubrovnik, reflecting the characteristics of the humanist genre, following rhetorical patterns and general places, and the description of Dubrovnik. See: Filip de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika* [Philippus de Diversis. The description of the famous city of Dubrovnik], ed. Zdenka Janeković-Römer (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2004). Filip de Diversis, *Dubrovački govori u slavu ugarskih kraljeva Sigismunda i Alberta* [Orations in honor of the Hungarian Kings Sigismund and Albert, delivered in Dubrovnik], trans. Zrinka Blažević, Zrinka Pešorda Vardić, and Gordan Ravančić (Dubrovnik: HAZU, Zavod za povijesne znanosti, 2001).

⁶⁶² Among the most prominent representative were Karlo Pucić (1458–1522), Ilija Crijević (1463–1520), Jakov Bunić (1469–1500), Damjan Beneša (1477–1539) and Ludovik Crijević Tuberon (1458–1527).

consideration the large numbers of volumes in Ragusan archives, such detailed research was beyond the limits of this thesis, but hopefully, it will be conducted in the future.

Even so, with the published documents and surviving artworks, it is possible to name at least some of those individuals who nurtured a private devotion to the saint, such as the Gradi (Gradić) and Gozze (Gučetić) families, both prominent aristocratic families from Dubrovnik whose members served the Republic honorably through the various administrative and governmental positions they held. We can consider them as those who were, to a great extent, responsible for the implementation



Figure 49 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Saint Jerome (The Gozze Relief)*, c. 1470–1480. Museum of Cultural History (Rector's palace), Dubrovnik. Source: Author

and dispersion of the cult in late medieval Dubrovnik. Members of the Gozze family, one of the oldest noble lines in Dubrovnik, made many contributions to life in the Republic of Ragusa.⁶⁶³

An example of Gozze devotion is an altarpiece commissioned in 1488 by Bartholomew (Bartol) Gozze, a highly positioned member of the family who was appointed Rector several times and served the Republic in several diplomatic functions, including visits to the kings of Hungary and Aragon, and to Pope Nicholas V. Among the six figures in the altarpiece he commissioned for the family's chapel of Saint Bartholomew on the island of Lokrum, is Saint

Jerome, depicted as a hermit and holding in his hand a large piece of stone.⁶⁶⁴ Significantly, Jerome was depicted as a penitent saint, differently than he was imagined in the depictions in Trogir, where we find the locally preferred iconographic type of Jerome as a hermit saint who read in a cave, as it was for example on the relief from the baptistery or pensive Jerome from the altar in the church of Holy Mary. The presence of "Penitent Saint Jerome" in Dubrovnik arises from contemporary devotional practices, possibly also coming from the strong Franciscan influence in the town. Another example of the family's connection to Jerome is the chapel, which the family built for their summer house in Trsteno in the sixteenth century and had consecrated to Saint Jerome.

⁶⁶³ More information about the Gozze and Gradi families can be found in: Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela Grada Dubrovnika. Sv. 2, Vlasteoski Rodovi: (A-L) [The nobility of Dubrovnik. Vol.2, The noble families (A-L)]*, (Zagreb; Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti; Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2012).

⁶⁶⁴ Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj školi* chap. 640. [...] *sanctus Hieronymus in heremo cum saxo in manu*. DAD. Div. Not. 67, f.49.

Another artwork demonstrates that among the members of the family, Saint Jerome was venerated with great devotion. A relief representing “Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto” (Fig. 49) is one in a series of smaller reliefs made by Andrea Alessi and Niccolò Fiorentino and their workshops, modeled upon the relief in the baptistery in Trogir and executed in the 1470s and 1480s. Today it is preserved in the Cultural History Museum in the Rector’s Palace. The carved coat of arms connects the commission of the relief with the Gozze family.⁶⁶⁵ The relief is partially damaged, especially Jerome’s figure, which is missing the head, one arm, and a leg. Not much is known about the provenance and purpose of this relief, except that it came from Slano, a site near Dubrovnik, and that it once belonged to the Gozze family.

So far, there have been identified no other documented or attributed works by Niccolò Fiorentino or Andrea Alessi in Dubrovnik, which shows that someone from the Gozze family commissioned it directly from the artist. The circulation of the artists and the artworks, especially sculpted ones, around the Dalmatian coast has already been acknowledged at large at scholarship, so the presence of the artwork produced in Trogir or elsewhere where the artists were at the given moment, does not represent such particularity. However, it is indicative that the individuals far from Trogir knew about the relief in Trogir and wanted to possess their own copy.



Figure 50 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Saint Jerome (The Dubrovnik Relief)*, c. 1470-1480 Museum of Cultural History (Rector’s palace), Dubrovnik. Source: Author

The popularity of the Trogir iconographic type is seen in another small relief (Fig. 50), and today also kept in the same museum. Similarly to the Gozze piece, not much is known about the provenance of this one, and its initial owner is unknown. Same as the previous one, it is damaged, with Jerome’s head missing. This one shows traces of paint, suggesting that these small reliefs were originally painted. Kruno Prijatelj, who was the first to publish these reliefs, together with a few others from the series, informs us that the relief was mounted in the wall next to the church of Saint Mary of Castello (Sveta Marija od Kaštela) and that it probably originates from another of

⁶⁶⁵ Kruno Prijatelj, “Novi prilog o Andriji Alešiju” [New contribution on Andrea Alessi], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 6 (1950): 23–26; Štefanac, “Osservazioni sui rilievi,” 116; Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*, 339.

Dubrovnik's churches.⁶⁶⁶ Their possible function will be discussed in a separate chapter, together with the other examples of similar iconography and the authorship.

The Gradi Family

As I already discussed, the Gradi (Gradić) family financed the construction of a Franciscan church in Slano near Dubrovnik in 1420 and dedicated it to Saint Jerome, as is written on the dedicatory inscription on the façade of the church.⁶⁶⁷ The family's influence and wealth are seen in the patronage of altars in the cathedral and the Dominican church, for which they commissioned some of the finest examples of painting in medieval Croatia. In 1494, Jerome (Jeronim) Gradi signed a contract with Božidar Vlatković and his son Nikola Božidarević (Nicholas of Ragusa) in the name of his brothers and himself for an altarpiece for the family's chapel in the Dominican church. The triptych was to have three figures: Saint Matthew the Apostle, Saint Jerome as a hermit in the desert, and Saint Stephen the Martyr together with the Virgin Mary.⁶⁶⁸ The choice of saints was not accidental. Jerome, Matthew, and Stephen were namesakes of the Gradi brothers. Here, we can see the adoption of popular devotional practices, similar to Italian examples mentioned before, where the same name conditioned a devotion to the saint. In this case, Jerome stood as the symbolic representation of the commissioner of the painting, Jerome Gozze.

Jerome in the Popular Devotion

Even though after 1522, Jerome's feast day was no longer on the list of the most important feast days celebrated in the Republic of Ragusa, its cult did not lose its relevance in the domain of ecclesiastical and private devotion. Even though the figure of the saint was no longer popular as the symbol of political opposition to the Venetian Republic as the Republic of Ragusa had by then firmly established its borders, it was still present in the sphere of popular devotion. Among the documents regarding the Dubrovnik painterly school published by Jorjo Tadić are two entries which tell us more about the presence of Jerome in domestic devotion, and among those social layers for whom we do not have many sources to illustrate the real impact of Jerome's popularity in Dalmatia.

⁶⁶⁶ Prijatelj, "Novi prilog o Andriji Alešiju," 24.

⁶⁶⁷ Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 257.

⁶⁶⁸ Joško Belamarić, "Nikola Božidarević," *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 34 (1994): 121–40. Tadić, *Građa o slikarskoj školi* chap. 674. [...] *unam iconam ponendam in ecclesia Sancti Dominici ad altare ipsorum nobilium de Gradi, secundum designum datum ipsis Boxidaro et Nicole, videlicet cum tribus figuris: sancti Mathei apostoli, sancti Hieronymi in deserto seu heremo et sancti Stephani*. DAD. Div.not. 73. f. 173v

The inventory of the goldsmith Jerome, made after his death in 1548, lists *unum sanctum Hieronimum de marmore*.⁶⁶⁹ It is not possible to make assumptions which artwork this could be or to assume that the relief of unknown provenance in the Rectors palace could have belonged to the goldsmith Jerome. However, once more, the work shows that Jerome's veneration was primarily connected with people who had the same name as the saint, and for that, they saw him as their patron. Yet, as other examples discussed in this thesis have shown, Jerome's patronage was not exclusively reserved for his namesakes. A similar entry can be found in the inventory of the house that belonged to Tristan, a cloth dyer, who possessed a painting of Saint Jerome.⁶⁷⁰

The prevalence of Jerome in popular devotion, supported by the local government is seen in the official commission of the figure of Saint Jerome at the end of the sixteenth century when sculptor Nikola Lazanić (Nicolaus Lazaneus) was hired to make two statues for the sacristy of the church of Saint Blaise. The contract does not specify which two figures should be made. The preserved statues, with the author's signature at the bottom, confirm that they were statues of Saint Blaise and Saint Jerome.⁶⁷¹ The church of Saint Blaise was under the direct patronage of the Republic of Ragusa, and the inclusion of Saint Jerome in its decorative and sacral repertoire had both religious and political components.

Another similar commission made to Lazanić before those in Dubrovnik is also relevant to the case. He was commissioned to make sculptures of the Dalmatian patrons, including Saint Jerome, for the church of Saint Jerome in Rome, which are now lost. While working and living in Rome (1581–1584), Lazanić became a member of the Illyrian College of Saint Jerome. During his stay, he received another commission. In 1582, he was asked to make twenty reliefs of Saint Jerome to be placed on the facades of the houses which belonged to the confraternity. None of these reliefs survive, but a description from the eighteenth century reveals that the relief represented the penitent Saint Jerome, kneeling and holding a rock in one hand and a cross in the other.⁶⁷²

It is not known exactly what the procession and the celebration of Jerome's feast looked like in the city, especially considering that there was no church consecrated to Jerome in Dubrovnik, and it is further not known whether a chapel or altar dedicated to the saint existed under the official patronage of the government. Nonetheless, there are other manifestations of official veneration of Saint Jerome, which were expressed in artworks commissioned by the local government, as it was

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 1145. [...] *et unum sanctum Hieronimum de marmore*.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 1235 [...] *un'altra icona dipinta de Santo Hieronimo in tavola*.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 1244; Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*, 346.

⁶⁷² Pelc, *Renesansa*, 374.

with the already mentioned representation of Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist in the Great Council room in the city hall.

Unfortunately, due to the Great Earthquake in Dubrovnik in 1667, not much of the written production has survived beyond the archival sources, especially of the once rich monastic libraries, making it difficult to detect the presence of Jerome's *vita* or other devotional literature like *Transitus*. Still, some of the 'preserved documents reveal that devotional literature on Jerome circulated among the Franciscan friars. After the death of the friars, if it was not explicitly stated to whom the books and other liturgical possessions should be passed, they would be given to the monasteries and the friars of the province. The codex *Sermones festivi et dominicales et de communi sanctorum fr. Ioanni de Rupella ex Ordine Minorum* that was once in the fourteenth century in the possession of the monastery of Holy Mary in Krbava and is today in the library of the monastery of Little Brethren in Dubrovnik has an added note which reveals more about this practice. In it is stated that brother Angelo from Arezzo should receive various works by Jerome, including the letter to Eustochium, and that brother Nicholas from France should also receive a volume of Jerome's works written on paper.⁶⁷³

⁶⁷³ Brlek, *Rukopisi knjižnice Male braće*, 8.

6 THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF JEROME'S CULT

*Cumque praecipue deceat Dalmatinos ipsum
beatissimum sanctum a quorum provincia
originem habuit, summopere colere.*⁶⁷⁴

(... and particularly for Dalmatians, from
whose province the blessed saint originates,
befits that they honor him the most.)

The formation of peculiar characteristics of the cult in Dalmatia, which have contributed to the formation of Jerome's Dalmatian identity, started with Glagolites' adoption, continued with the naming of Jerome the patron saint of the Franciscan province of Dalmatia and intensified considerably during the fifteenth century through the adoption of Jerome as a personal patron saint. As mentioned in introduction and the previous chapter, the educated elites had a substantive role in the formation of Jerome as a patron saint of Dalmatia and its formation as the national saint for Illyrians.

Because of their involvement in the different governmental and administrative roles, like it was with Marin Kršava, they represent the point in which all the traditions meet. Although the Glagolitic aspect of the cult, based on the sources explored in this dissertation, did not have a direct influence on the veneration in the communes, which does not mean the notion of special veneration among Glagolites was not present outside their communities. On the contrary, the adoption of the idea by the humanists in the literary production within national history genre, show that the reminiscent idea on the invention of Glagolitic letters gained more relevance with the development of the national discourse from the end of the fifteenth century and during the sixteenth century, where the discussion on the language as one of the determinants of the nation became the focal point of

⁶⁷⁴ Strohal, *Statut i reformacije grada Trogira*, 259–60; Marin Berket, Vladimir Rismondo, *Trogirski statut* (Književni krug: Split), 259-260. 64. *Quod dies sancti Hieronymi sit festus.*

distinction of the peoples, as seen in the works by Vinko Pribojević *De origine successibusque Slavorum* (1532) and Mavro Orbini *Il Regno de gli Slavi* (1601).⁶⁷⁵

The increase of the use of Croatian vernacular language is also connected with the growing importance of commoners as a social stratum to which the Venetian government gave increasing rights, as opposed to the restrictions of those traditionally held by the nobility. The common use of Croatian vernacular, along with Italian vernacular, i.e. Venetian dialect and the Latin as the administrative language, is also supported by the office of the official translator, an office which for some time Simon Begna held.⁶⁷⁶ While all traditions of the veneration have contributed to the geographical dispersion and the presence of Jerome's cult, the conclusion on their influence could be formulated in short.

The Glagolitic tradition nurtured the idea of Jerome's origin, which, due to the long existence of the idea, has been known to the wider population, with or without accepting the alleged attribution of the invention of Glagolitic letters. The growing Renaissance cult, emerging in Italy, and spreading through the humanist and trading networks, has offered the constructive elements of the cult—devotional literature, religious practices, detailed information on saint's life and miracles, various artistic representations, and the elaborated theology of penance and salvation through which the saint could have been adopted as the personal patron saint—which the Glagolitic veneration did not nurture.

The Renaissance appropriation of the saint among the humanists and the clerics represent the first step in the formation of the civic cult of Jerome in the communes, which due to the several factors—Italian appropriation of the saint, a complex historical context where Dalmatia and other Croatian lands faced the common enemy, the expanding Ottoman Empire, and the general development of the humanism—have been transformed into the patron saint of Dalmatia. Compared to other saints whose civic cults have been embedded in the civic identity of the communes, the critical difference must be noted when it comes to Jerome. Unlike the local patron saints, which communes appropriated for their saintly intercession and as the reflection of their civic identity, like it was with Saint John of Trogir for example, Jerome becomes a sort of universal saint whose intercession is granted equally for all the Dalmatians and beyond. Gradually, Jerome's saintly figure

⁶⁷⁵ Consult the bibliography listed in footnote 5. Orbini adopts Pribojević's pan-Slavic ideas, promoting Jerome as the inventor of Glagolitic letters, and using him as the evidence that Slavic language was spoken in the territory of Illyria even in the ancient times.

⁶⁷⁶ Ivan Pederin, "Mjesto i uloga hrvatskog jezika u mletačkom Zadru i mletačkoj diplomaciji" [The place and role of the Croatian language in Venetian Zadar and Venetian diplomacy], *Jezik: časopis za kulturu hrvatskoga književnog jezika* 31, no. 3 (1983): 74.

received characteristics beyond the simple protection of those who considered him to be their compatriot.

The written production of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists show that his saintly image gradually transformed into the symbolic representation of the unity of the people based on the language shared history and geographical presence, which depending on the context and the imagined community that appropriated the saint—Dalmatians, Slavs, Croats or Illyrians—extended from the borders of Croatian kingdom before 1420, over the whole Eastern Adriatic Coast, to the pan-Slavic unity in the borders of what would be Illyria. According to context, Jerome’s universal protection also extends from the narrower territory of Dalmatia and medieval Croatia, to the broader territory of the ancient Illyria. For the presence of Jerome’s cult in the different political entities—Venetian Dalmatia, Croatian Kingdom, Venetian and Habsburg Istria, Republic of Ragusa—it is not possible to draw the exact line of the territorial presence of perception of Jerome as the common patron saint.

The same can be applied on the limits of the imagined Dalmatian, Croatian, Slavic or Illyrian communities, since this ethnic determinant was not defined by the actual state borders, but rather with “a combination of factors such as mythic common origin and history, common language, religion, customs, territorial vicinity and so on,”⁶⁷⁷ very often depending on the perception of the author of the source. Before proceeding to the detailed discussion on the question, it is important to underline that regardless of which ethnic determinant was given to Jerome, he had the same role for all of them. For that reason, the basic understanding of the Slavic, Illyrian, Croat, or Dalmatian should be seen as the close synonym, particularly when discussing the saint’s cult. However, before proceeding how Jerome reflects these aspects and how they reflect the establishment of Jerome’s image as a national saint, I will present how that image was gradually promoted through the interplay of the civic and the ecclesiastical institutions in Dalmatia, and outside of the homeland, through the migrant *Schiavoni* communities in the Italian peninsula.

Regardless of the compatible equivalence of devotional practices in the sphere of the private devotion, one of the essential difference between the cult of Jerome in the Apennine peninsula and that in Dalmatia was the collective devotion seen through the inclusion of Jerome’s feast day on the list of officially celebrated days in the communes, documented in Trogir and Dubrovnik. Keeping in mind that the Dalmatian communes have nurtured their civic identity through the local patron saints,

⁶⁷⁷ Lovro Kunčević, “Civic and Ethnic Discourses”, 150.

established already in the medieval tradition, the inclusion of new fest days in the official calendar was not very common practice, and very often it bore political connotations.

Meri Kunčić points out another aspect that has contributed to the veneration of Jerome. Due to the plagues and the Ottoman presence, several reformations were added to the Statute of Trogir, including the one on the veneration of Saint Jerome.⁶⁷⁸ As I will discuss in the following chapter, these two factors have been crucial in the formation of Jerome's public image in Trogir and Šibenik, where two monumental reliefs were placed in the 1460s, as the expression of the high honor Jerome had among those who considered him a compatriot, and as the collective *ex-voto* for the protection in the unstable times. Therefore, the introduction of Jerome's feast day on the list speaks of the change of the collective sentiments among the people in Dalmatia, who have put their hopes in the intercession of the saint.

Yet, the inclusion of feast day was not the only expression of uniquely communal attachment to Jerome as, from the middle of the fifteenth century, several confraternities under the protection of Jerome or nurturing Jerome's cult were formed by Slavic migrants in Italy. Therefore, the second half of the fifteenth century should be seen as the period of complete formation of Jerome's image as a patron saint of Dalmatia and of those who considered him a compatriot and their national saint, expressed in artworks and written works. This sub-chapter analyzes how Jerome served as a unifying point for people living in Dalmatia and in the other Croatian lands, but more importantly, for those living outside of their homeland. For, Jerome represented a firm link with the homeland serving as a distinctive mark in opposition to other migrant communities and Italians among whom they were living.

6.1 CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST DAY

The archival sources and the preserved artistic heritage reveal that a significant change in the perception of Jerome in the Dalmatian communes occurred around the middle of the century when his feast day was included on the list of officially celebrated feast days in a number of the communes. In the medieval system of commemoration, saints' feast days were usually introduced into the official calendar after the acquisition of their relics or in order to mark events of essential importance for the community, such as the end of the plague epidemics or a victory in the battle. The recognition of the

⁶⁷⁸ Meri Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas*, 16.

saint's celebration through official channels also had political connotations and reflected aspirations.⁶⁷⁹

The saints' feast days celebrated by the whole community had greater importance than just being the commemoration of saint's deeds and life. It was also a celebration of the communal spirit where everyone would participate in the liturgical celebrations, usually followed by the solemn procession.⁶⁸⁰ According to these established practices, the iconographic and hagiographic image of Jerome was formed and expressed in public rituals and other forms of veneration. Although we do not know precisely how the celebration of the feast day looked like, besides the common practice of the liturgical and processional celebrations, some components reveal that it enjoyed a high rank in those communes where it was celebrated. The saint's feast day was an official holiday, so the decisions of such a proclamation and the inclusion in the calendar reveal the reasons why everyone should celebrate the saint.

The earliest documented veneration of the saint was in Dubrovnik in 1445. The Rector and certain members of the Minor Council were obliged to participate in the procession and the subsequent celebration of the mass, which reflects the high rank his feast day enjoyed.⁶⁸¹ In Trogir, the decision was brought in 1455, and it prohibited working on the feast day, and non-observance of this rule was punishable by law. As the discussed examples in this chapter will show, the proclamation of the official celebration of Jerome's feast day was only a confirmation of an already established popular devotion. Still, such proclamations also had political undertones, best seen in the example of Dubrovnik.

⁶⁷⁹ Thompson, 116–19. The adoption of new patron saints, with the construction of narrative according to the established medieval genre of *translatio*, has often been linked to changing political situations, especially in the period of change of rulers. It can be seen as the expression of the alliance with a new ruler or distancing from the former one. The promotion of a particular saint as patron, was often a reason for quarrels within the commune itself, reflecting the various interest groups which supported different political entities' right to rule. Such can be seen in the example of medieval Zadar, and the rivalry between the proponents of Saint Anastasia and Saint Chrysogonus, which reflected the rivalry between the Venetian Republic and the Hungarian Kingdom, see: Trpimir Vedriš, "Communities in Conflict: The Rivalry between the Cults of Sts. Anastasia and Chrysogonus in Medieval Zadar," *Annual of medieval studies at the CEU* 11 (2005): 29–48; Laris Borić, "Patron Saints and Respective Cult Areas in Service of Political Propaganda and the Affirmation of Communal Identity: Case of the Dalmatian town of Zadar in Mediaeval and Early Modern Period," in *Arhitektura in politika 3*, ed. Renata Klemenčić Novak (Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, 2016), 9–22.

⁶⁸⁰ For the general introduction and the overview of the role of the saints in the formation of communal identities, through liturgical, cultural and other religious practices, see the introduction to the volume: Nils Holger Petersen, "Introduction," in *Symbolic identity and the cultural memory of saints*, ed. Anu Mänd, Sebastián Salvadó, and Nils Holger Petersen (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018).

⁶⁸¹ Nella Lonza, "Građa državnih institucija kao hagiografsko vrelo: dubrovački primjer" [State documents as hagiographic sources: the example of Dubrovnik], in *Hagiologija. Kultovi u kontekstu*, ed. Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš (Zagreb: Leykam International, 2008), 106.

The Earliest Official Celebration – Dubrovnik

The civic cult of Saint Jerome in Dubrovnik was confirmed in 1445 when it was decided:

It is decided that the feast day of Saint Jerome should be honored and celebrated, especially by us and other Dalmatian of whose nation he was. He, among other doctors (of the Church), gloriously illuminated the Church by serving God with many deserving examples and teachings.⁶⁸²

Officially, this proclamation was the first recognition of the cult and occurred earlier than the other Dalmatian cities. Unofficially, the official induction of the cult to civic life reflected the existence of the notion on Jerome's origin. However, the line from the text which underlines that Jerome should be celebrated by "us and the other Dalmatians of whose nation he was", acknowledges Jerome's Dalmatian origin, but also shows that at the period, veneration of Jerome was not much widespread. Based on the surviving expressions of the cult, such decisions have been a trigger for the growing civic cult of the saint in the communes. The commanding tone of the decision should also be understood in terms of the growing veneration of Jerome that was blooming in the Apennine peninsula, where the saint evidently received more honor and prominence than in its native region. This discrepancy gained more attention by the end of the century, when Dalmatian humanists, namely Georgius Sisgoreus, Marko Marulić, and Vinko Pribojević engaged in the dispute over Jerome's origin with their Italian counterparts.

After the establishment of Venetian rule over Dalmatia and the consolidation of the rule and influence upon the economic market, most of the communes followed a similar pattern of progress. All except the Republic of Ragusa. The reason for this was because Dubrovnik had negotiated their status under the *Treaty of Zadar* in 1358 when the Republic of Venice was forced to surrender control of Dalmatia and its islands to the King of Hungary. In the wake of the *Treaty of Zadar*, all the Dalmatian communes recognized the Hungarian king as their respective ruler. Among the first successes of the famous Ragusan diplomacy, however, was the negotiation of autonomy within the kingdom, achieved by invoking the fact that they had never before recognized the authority of the Hungarian king.⁶⁸³ The complexity of Ragusan civic and ethnic identity—their unique position, political, and juridical system—ask for a separate study on the development of the cult of Saint

⁶⁸² Branislav Nedeljković, *Liber Viridis* (Beograd: SANU, 1984), 320. [...] *a nobis ac ceteris Dalmaticis de quorum natione fuit.*

⁶⁸³ On the relations of Republic of Ragusa and Hungarian king see: Zrinka Pešorda Vardić, "Kruna, kralj i Grad: odnos Dubrovnika prema ugarskoj kruni i vladaru na početku protudvorskog pokreta" [The crown, the king and the town – the relation of Dubrovnik community toward the crown and the ruler in the beginning of movement against the Court], *Povijesni prilozi* 23, no. 26 (2004): 19–36.

Jerome within the Republic, primarily due to the political connotations that his figure bore.⁶⁸⁴ Nevertheless, some contributions can be brought here.

With such privileges, the Republic of Ragusa had an advantaged position among the Dalmatian communes, which enabled its independent juridical, commercial, and economic development. Due to its highly developed trade with the Italian cities, not only those in its proximity like Bari or Ancona but also with its biggest rival, the Venetian Republic, the city also prospered in a cultural sense. During the fifteenth century, the Republic of Ragusa was forming its civil and republican identity modeled upon that of Venice and expressed symbolically through the figure of its patron saint, Saint Blaise. This new civic identity was also represented by the construction of new public buildings, such as Rector's palace or the church of the city's patron saint, which was refurbished during the fifteenth century.

From the decision on the veneration of Saint Jerome in Dubrovnik, we can see that during the first decades of the consolidation of Venetian rule in Dalmatia, for some reason, the Republic of Ragusa began to emphasize their Dalmatian ethnic affiliation. Such a proclamation should not be read as identifying with Venetian rule, but rather quite the opposite. Even after the half-century of independence gained through skillful diplomatic negotiation enshrined in the Treaty of Zadar of 1358, the Republic of Ragusa still felt a constant threat from the proximity of its biggest rival, Venice, especially after the establishment of Venetian rule over Dalmatia post-1420. To weaken Venetian pressure and influence, the Republic's authorities insisted on the introduction of the Observant reform in all Franciscan monasteries in the Ragusan territory, as elaborated in the previous chapters. Such action was taken to prevent the Serenissima from reinforcing its position through the Dalmatian Franciscans, who were mostly Conventuals and suspected of attachment to Venice.

It is further in keeping with the proclamation that during the fifteenth century, the Republic of Ragusa emphasized its Dalmatian ethnic affiliation. In 1444, a group of Ragusan citizens was forced to pay an "Italian" tax in Barcelona. In the letter of complaint which the Republic of Ragusa sent in 1446 to the authorities in Barcelona, it was explicitly written that "(...)it is clear to the nations of the whole world(...)that Ragusans are not Italians(...)quite the contrary, that both judging by their language and by criteria of place they are Dalmatians."⁶⁸⁵ From this, one can see that the identification

⁶⁸⁴ On the complexity of the present and perceived identities in pre-modern Dubrovnik, together with the elements through which Ragusans identified within culturally defined identities (Slavs, Illyrians, Croats, Dalmatians) consult the works by Lovro Kunčević listed in bibliography.

⁶⁸⁵ Kunčević, "Civic and Ethnic Discourses," 159; Jovan Radonić, ed., *Dubrovačka akta i povelje* [Ragusan Decrees and Charters], (Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1935), 492–93; Vinko Foretić, "Godina 1358. u povijesti Dubrovnika" [The Year 1358 in the History of Dubrovnik], *Starine* 50 (1960): 258.

as Dalmatian was based on a common language and territorial integrity in a geographical sense, not a political one. The arguments used by Ragusans on this occasion were used in a similar one, some hundred years later, when they opposed paying the “Italian tax” in England.⁶⁸⁶

In both cases, the criteria of language and place were used, not to express the definite affiliation to some community, but to prove that they were not Italians. As Lovro Kunčević explains, in this case, the political community of Ragusans was included in the wider community of Ragusans, which is defined through its common language (*ex suo idiomate*) and common territorial context (*ex situs ratione*).⁶⁸⁷ As will be discussed later in a few instances, the question of language represented the most important criteria of belonging to the ethnic community.

We should also observe the veneration of Saint Jerome in this context together with the political connotations it bears: the saint stands as the symbol of common belonging defined by the criteria of language and place, in addition to common customs and history. The political connotations and aspirations reflected in the veneration of Jerome can be understood as expressions of otherness and togetherness: otherness through differentiation from Italians on an ethnic level, as part of efforts to prevent the constantly-feared re-establishment of Venetian government over Dubrovnik, and togetherness through the expression of the cultural, linguistic and historical sphere shared by Dubrovnik and other Dalmatian cities, regardless of a different political entity.

Regardless of how big the imagined community based on the ethnic determinants was—narrower Dalmatian or Croatian, or broader Slavic or Illyrian—Jerome is always described as the most illustrious representative. And the roots of such understanding are found in these moments when his cult received its public expressions. The polycentric impulses of a celebration of Jerome as Dalmatian, Croatian, Slav, or Illyrian, which could here all be seen as the close synonym, show the existence of the complex network within these communities that promoted veneration of the saint, which surpasses the political borders.⁶⁸⁸ And it is best seen in the given Ragusan example.

In Dubrovnik, after 1522, the cult of the saint was no longer to be found on the list of mandatory holidays for which the Rector and members of the Minor Council were obliged to attend the mass and participate in the feast celebration. Nella Lonza sees this as a political consequence after

⁶⁸⁶ Kunčević, “Ethnic and Civic Identity,” 75. As the crucial elements of distinction, the criteria of language “very different from Italian, just as English is different from the Italian,” and the territory “separated from Italy by the Adriatic Sea and we are neighbors of Dalmatia, and this region borders Hungary, a country very far from Italy,” were used.

⁶⁸⁷ Kunčević, “Civic and Ethnic Discourses,” 160.

⁶⁸⁸ Špoljarić, *Venecijanski skjavoni*, 44. Špoljarić has already noted how Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia and Croatia spread through the ecclesiastical network of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists and priests.

the Republic of Ragusa had established its territorial borders and positioned itself on the political map of Europe.⁶⁸⁹ There was no longer a necessity for greater integration and identification with the other inhabitants of the Dalmatian territory, even though such identification was not always exclusively imposed. But the perception of the imagined communities has changed. However, the veneration of the saint continued in religious circles. Even though the figure of the saint was no longer employed as a symbol of the political competition between the Venetian Republic and the Republic of Ragusa, as they had now firmly established their borders, it was still present in the sphere of popular devotion.

It is not known what the procession and the celebration of Jerome's feast looked like, especially considering that there was no church consecrated to Jerome in Dubrovnik, and it is further not known if a chapel or altar dedicated to the saint existed under the official patronage of the government. Nonetheless, there are other manifestations of the official veneration of Saint Jerome, which are expressed in the artworks commissioned by the local government. The firmest evidence of the official cult of the saint in Dubrovnik is his representation in the room of the Great Council in the city hall. There, the image of Saint Jerome, dressed in a cardinal's robe, was commissioned by the City Council from Nikola Božidarević in 1510, matching the height and form of an existing figure of Saint John the Baptist in the same hall.⁶⁹⁰

The pairing of these two saints was due to their penitential character, and emphasized their eremitical and ascetic nature, and reflected the same iconographic representation by the Petrović brothers on the portal of the Franciscan church in Dubrovnik, from 1498. The catalog entry of the exhibition *The Golden Age of Dubrovnik* explains that the figure of Saint John the Baptist represents "the firmness of Christianity in the period of the onslaughts of the Turks, in contrast, the figure of Saint Jerome represents "the cultural and spiritual unity with Dalmatians under the Venetian occupation."⁶⁹¹ Although I agree with the interpretation of the figure of Saint Jerome as a symbol of unity with the other Dalmatian cities, I see it as a secondary layer laid upon the statues' more universal symbolic meaning.

The more basic symbolic meaning lies in the iconographic interpretation of this type: the pairing of the saints by their ascetic nature. Knowing the postulates for which Observant Franciscans were striving and which have been explained previously in this thesis, the choice of these two figures

⁶⁸⁹ Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 258–59.

⁶⁹⁰ Tadić, *Građa o slikarskoj školi*, 841. *Pro sala Maioris Consilli unam figuram sancti Hieronymi in vestibus cardinalium, secundum designum per eum factum et eis presentatum in tela ad telarium de altitudine, forma et qualitate figure Sancti Johannis Baptiste existentis in dicta sala*. DAD, Div.Not. 89, f 33.

⁶⁹¹ Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*, 341.

for the portal of the Franciscan church does not surprise. Furthermore, these two saints are paired in the already established iconographic type, based on the teaching in *Transitus*.⁶⁹²

Jerome as “Protector and Enduring Advocate” in Trogir

A decade after Dubrovnik, the commune of Trogir, included the feast day of Saint Jerome in its official calendar of celebrations in 1455:

The blessed Jerome, one of the four pillars of the universal Church and the world, very famous for his splendid and distinguished holiness, should be reverently celebrated by all his devotees throughout the world who profess the Christian faith, not only for virtue and penitential living but also for perseverance in the tireless work of exposing Scripture, as well as for the splendor of the countless miracles he performed during his life and after his death. In the place (...) the apparition revealed that this blessed doctor was in eternal beatitude equal to (...) and particularly for Dalmatians, from whose province the blessed saint originates, befits that they honor him the most. Therefore, a decision was brought by rector and his judges to commemorate the glory of the almighty God henceforth and to commemorate the praise and celebration of the precious aforementioned learned Saint Jerome, every year on his feast day September 30. That everyone solemnly celebrates and honors him, in such a way that none of the people and persons in the city, gardens (fields), and district of Trogir, no matter what their social status is, should do nothing on that day but restrain themselves completely of every activity in order for him to be our protector and enduring advocate.⁶⁹³

The text of the decision, names Jerome as *gloriosissimus doctor*, as was common from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.⁶⁹⁴ In the seventeenth-century history of Trogir, *Storia della città di Traù*, Paolo Andreis (1610–1686) wrote that the cult was officially introduced under Bishop Turlon at the beginning of the rule of Rector Giovanni Alberto. He names the saint as the greatest adornment of the Church, and thus as the greatest adornment of the Illyrian people.⁶⁹⁵ The text states that Jerome

⁶⁹² See pp. 73, 102-107.

⁶⁹³ Strohal, *Statut i reformacije grada Trogira*, 259–60; Marin Berket, Vladimir Rismondo, *Trogirski statut*, 259-260. 64. *Quod dies sancti Hieronymi sit festus. Cum gloriosissimus doctor, beatus Hieronymus, unus ex IIII universalis ecclesiae Dei cardinalibus orbi, sit sanctitatis excellentia ac praestantia celeberrimus, sitque fidelibus, christianam religionem testantibus, per versus orbem exigentibus meritis et exemplis devotissimus, tum propter eius beatæ vitæ asperitatem, tum propter laborum intollerabilium, circa expositionem sacrarum scripturarum, assiduitatem, tum etiam propter miraculorum innumerabilium, quibus perfulsic(?) in vita et post mortem claritatem. Cumque praecipue deceat Dalmatinos ipsum beatissimum sanctum, a quorum provincia originem habuit, summopere colere; vadit pars magnifici domini praetoris et suorum egregiorum iudicum. Quod deinceps ad honorem et gloriam omnipotentis Dei, et ad laudem et triumphum pretiosissimi doctoris sancti Hieronymi memorati, annis singulis ipsum festum ipsius sancti, quod colitur XXX. mensis septembris, solemnizetur, cultivetur, et custodiatur ab omnibus ita et taliter, quod omnes homines et personae civitatis, hortorum et districtus Tragurij, cuiuscunque status, gradus et conditionis existent, laborare et quidquid facere non debeant illa die, sed ab omni opera prorsus cessare die festo solemnitatis sancti Hieronymi saepedicti. Ad hoc, ut ipse sit nobis apud Deum protector et perpetuus intercessor. Et quod praesens pars poni debeat in volumine statutorum et pro statuto perpetuo observari.*

⁶⁹⁴ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 58.

⁶⁹⁵ Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*, 163. “Successo Conte il Dottor Giovanni Alberto, nei principi della cui reggenza fu preso dal Consiglio di solennizzar la festa del Dottor S. Girolamo, fregio come principale di santa chiesa, così decoro eterno del popolo Illirico.”

is to be venerated for his devoted and hard life, for his explanation of the Holy Scripture, for his innumerable miracles during his life and after his death, and for his Dalmatian origin. The text of the decision should not be seen as the starting point in the veneration of Jerome in Trogir, but as the confirmation of the established concepts of Jerome's origin, which was later enriched by the numerous expressions of the cult due to the expanding humanism and Renaissance. At first glance, the text seems to follow the established juridical model of council decisions, but a closer reading reveals several components that bring out a notion on the perception of the saint at the given period.

First, it emphasizes two poles of Jerome's sanctity—the intellectual and the ascetic—which was propagated in Italy and beyond. Second, it shows that his compatriots recognized Jerome's Dalmatian origin and that the reason for the solemn celebration of his feast day was a way to most honorably praise his glory so that he might protect them and serve as their heavenly advocate. The component of local origin is the key to Jerome's official celebration in Trogir. The high rank for a feast day was given – no one should perform any work on September 30– to reflect the importance Jerome had in Dalmatia.

We do not know the exact practices for the celebration of the feast day or if any specific liturgical celebrations followed his new status. The eighteenth-century apostolic visitation by Didak Manola states that on the feast day of Saint Jerome, the whole clergy and the archbishop served *prima missa post matutinum*. Importantly, he adds that the mass was followed by the reading of the life of the saint in the Croatian vernacular language *in Illyrico idiomale*.⁶⁹⁶ Considering the rank of the feast day and the reasons for saint's celebration, we can assume that from 1455 it was solemnly commemorated with an elaborated liturgical celebration. One earlier text shows that the practice of public and performative veneration of the saint included the reading of his *vitae*, probably according to the established custom of reading during the liturgical celebration, as the mentioned example from visitation by Didak Manola.

One such sermon was preserved in Trogir in the nunnery of Saint Nicholas, today in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences. It is known in the literature as the *Trogirski život svetog Jeronima* (Trogir Life of Saint Jerome).⁶⁹⁷ The text written in the vernacular Croatian language is preserved in a transcription from the sixteenth century, most probably based on an earlier version of the text. Previous scholarship assumed that the text was written for the nuns of the

⁶⁹⁶ NAS, *Prima visitatio generalis civitatis et dioecesis illustrissimi et reverendissimi domini Didaci Manola episcopi Traguriensis de anno 1756*, f. 13v.

⁶⁹⁷ Josip Bratulić, "Trogirski (Jagićev) Život svetog Jeronima," 27–41.

Benedictine monastery of Saint Nicholas by some Augustine monk who served the mass for nuns since the friendship between Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine is emphasized throughout the lines.⁶⁹⁸

A closer reading of the text, however, clearly identifies the episodes of Jerome's life, which could be found in the apocryphal letters contained in the *Transitus*. Citations of Pseudo-Augustine's letter can be found, especially in the events of Jerome's death⁶⁹⁹ and Augustine's vision of Jerome's soul,⁷⁰⁰ together with mention of Cyril's letter.⁷⁰¹ The text shows that regardless of the lack of preserved manuscript copies of *Transitus* of Dalmatian provenance, or our notion on the presence of the printed copies, its content was known and probably circulated as the devotional material, which served as an aid for the composition of the mentioned sermon for the nuns.

The third element that we could read from the text of the decision concerns the devotional literature about Jerome, which would have been known in Trogir, even before its spread through the printed copies. So far, scholars have not managed to identify any manuscripts of local origin, which were owned in Trogir during the period. The phrase *numerous miracles during life and after death* in the text of the decision of the official veneration reveals that in Trogir, even though we do not have any preserved manuscript copies, the text of *Transitus* was known and read around the middle of the fifteenth century. Further, Jerome's miracles enumerated in the epistle of Cyril most probably circulated in the Latin transcription.⁷⁰²

Another part of the decision, probably lost in the later transcriptions of Statue of Trogir, reveals another reference to the text of *Vita et Transitus*. The phrase "the apparition revealed that this blessed doctor was in eternal beatitude equal to (...)" is a reference to the vision of Saint Augustine in which Jerome appeared in the company of Saint John the Baptist, who emphasized that the two of them were equal in their sanctity. The pairing of two saints is found in the cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir. In 1489, Gentile Bellini executed a commission for the shutters of the cathedral organ decorated with the figures of Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist.⁷⁰³ They were modeled upon the organ shutters previously made by him for the basilica of San Marco in Venice around 1465.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 40.11a.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 40-41.12b.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 40-41.12.

⁷⁰² Strohal, *Statut i reformacije grada Trogira*, 259.

⁷⁰³ Radoslav Tomić, *Trogirska slikarska baština: od 15.-20. stoljeća* [Trogir painting heritage: 15th-20th century] (Zagreb; Split: Matica hrvatska; Ministarstvo kulture Republike Hrvatske, 1997), 12.

⁷⁰⁴ The shutters of the doors in San Marco were ornated with the figures of Penitent Saint Jerome in desert, Saint Mark, Saint Theodore and Saint Francis.

Other Communes

Unlike Trogir and Dubrovnik, we do not have preserved decisions for the inclusion of Jerome's feast day on the list of publicly celebrated feast days in other communes. However, there are several reasons to assume that his feast day was celebrated none the less. First, we can assume that the communes of Dubrovnik and Trogir were not the only ones which celebrated Jerome on the communal level. The mutual dependence of the communes in terms of trading and business, and the correlation of the local aristocracy through family ties, allow us to suggest that the word of celebration in Trogir and Dubrovnik spread even beyond. Second, the presence of Jerome's feast day in liturgical calendars and mentions of its celebration in other sources, allows us to assume that Jerome's feast day was solemnly celebrated all along the Dalmatian coast, if not on the communal level, then certainly in the ecclesiastical and monastic setting.

Georgius Sisgoreus (c. 1445–1509), the leader of the Šibenik humanist circle, and one of the most notable names of Croatian humanism, in his collection of poems *Elegiarum et carminum libri tres* published in 1477 provides valuable information on the celebration of the feast of Saint Jerome in Šibenik, which was held with great honor, on the last day of September.⁷⁰⁵ Further supporting evidence of the solemn celebration and the privileged status of Jerome in Šibenik is the monumental relief depicting the penitent saint on the north facade of the Cathedral of Saint James, overlooking the main city square (Fig. 56).

The present-day scholarship does not give much information on the official celebration on the communal level in Zadar, where we find the earliest examples of personal veneration of the saint. The preserved liturgical calendars of the leading churches: the Cathedral church of Saint Anastasia, the monastery church of Saint Mary, and the church of the monastery of Saint Chrysogonus, reveal that Jerome's feast day was commemorated in the ecclesiastical and communal circles.

The calendar of the Cathedral church of Saint Anastasia from the fifteenth century, once a part of the bigger codex, today is kept in the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences under the title *Kalendarium, rubricae et orationes Jadrensis Ecclesiae S. Anastasiae*.⁷⁰⁶ The surviving ten folios, together with an additional one today found in another location, contains calendar, litanies,

⁷⁰⁵ Juraj Šižgorić, *Elegije i pjesme = Elegiae et carmina* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1966), 127. *Ultima Septembris magno veneratur honore ad decus excelsi condita Hieronymi*.

⁷⁰⁶ Marijan Grgić, "Kalendar zadarske stolne crkve iz 15. stoljeća" [The calendar of cathedral church in Zadar from the 15th century], *Radovi Instituta Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zadru* 20 (1973): 120.

officium, and prayers.⁷⁰⁷ The calendar marks the feast day of Saint Jerome, September 30th as *duplex minus*, among the principal feast days of the highest rank, although level below *duplex maius*. The feast day is also found in the earlier liturgical calendars in Zadar. In the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century calendars from the church of Saint Chrysogonus and Saint Mary, Jerome's feast day is marked in red, indicating its importance.⁷⁰⁸

Carlo Bianchi, in his *Zara Cristiana*, published at the end of the nineteenth century, uncovered the inclusion of Jerome's feast day in the calendar of the *Missal of Deodat Venier*.⁷⁰⁹ The abbot of the monastery of Saint Chrysogonus, commissioned four new liturgical books at the end of the fifteenth century in Venice, among them, a missal finished in 1480, today of unknown location.⁷¹⁰ Earlier calendars, Saint Mary's calendar from 1290 and Saint Chrysogonus' calendar from 1322 reveal that saint was venerated in the monastic circles of Zadar even before its big revival in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Bianchi lists Jerome's feast day among the most important ones, together with other locally venerated saints like Saint Anastasia, Saint Simeon, Saint Chrysogonus, or Saint Donatus, the local bishop.⁷¹¹ The inclusion of Jerome in this list of solemnly celebrated feast days of local patrons in the monastic church of Saint Chrysogonus, reveals that the main reason for this distinction was Jerome's regional origin. Still, it is here to mention that the inventory of the monastery and the church of Saint Chrysogonus from the year 1449, mentions three wooden sculptures, of Saint Jerome, Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica.⁷¹² Having in mind that the monastery of Saint Francis in Zadar had been the seat of the Dalmatian Province of Saint Jerome since 1393 and that the feast day of Jerome in the cathedral church was among those of highest rank, we can assume that in Zadar his feast day was also celebrated in other churches of the city.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 121. Among the prayers are those: *Against enemies*, *Against Turks (Ottomans)*, *Against plague* and *For the peace*.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 132.

⁷⁰⁹ Bianchi, *Zara cristiana*, vol. 2, 291.

⁷¹⁰ Milan Pelc, "Picov Majstor i kodeksi zadarskog opata Deodata Veniera" [Pico Master and the codices of abbot Deodat Venier in Zadar], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 36 (2013): 113–24; Ana Šitina, "Nova razmišljanja o kodeksima zadarskog opata Deodata Veniera" [New reflections on the codices of the Zadar abbot Deodat Venier], *Peristil : zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti* 57 (2014): 47–55.

⁷¹¹ Bianchi, *Zara cristiana*, vol. 2, 291.

⁷¹² Emil Hilje, *Gotičko slikarstvo u Zadru*, 169. See footnote 79 on p.196.

6.2 THE SCHIAVONI COMMUNITIES

Jerome's role as the patron saint of Dalmatians, Croatians, Slavs or Illyrians, to whom he stood as the symbol of a common language, origin, territorial integrity and shared history among the inhabitants of the Eastern Adriatic Coast, regardless of which political entity they belonged to, or how they called it, started to be more emphasized more from the middle of the fifteenth century. The symbolic embodiment of Jerome as a unifier of these peoples was further reflected in the foundation of the *Schiavoni* confraternities located outside of the homeland, particularly in the Apennine peninsula, where his cult flourished.

Through the centuries regularly saw migrations between two shores of the Adriatic Sea, mostly from the Eastern Coast to the Apennine peninsula, this flow intensified at the end of the fourteenth century. The movement continued during and after the war for the Hungarian throne and even after the death of Louis the Great and his confrontations with the Venetian Republic. After the complete inclusion of Dalmatia into the Venetian commonwealth in 1420, people started to more intensively migrate out to the city in the lagoon. The progress of the Ottoman army in the Balkan peninsula was simultaneously causing migrations from the hinterlands down to the coast. The most significant wave of migrations, understandably, started after the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia under the Ottoman rule in 1463, when people from the hinterlands migrated to the coastal area and then from there across the sea to Italy. The regions in which *Schiavoni* migrated most abundantly were Friuli, Veneto, Marche, Puglia, and Molise.

The communities of newcomers were gathered around the confraternities and the churches through which they nurtured communal spirit and the ties with the homeland.⁷¹³ Several confraternities were founded at the very beginning of the 1450s, and through consecration of the most important of them to Saint Jerome, a further embodiment of Jerome's figure as the patron of Dalmatia continued. Among them was one in Pesaro, a town with a high number of *Schiavoni*. In 1453 a confraternity *Confraternità di San Pietro e San Girolamo* was established, consecrated to Saint Peter and Saint Jerome, who had an altar in the cathedral church.⁷¹⁴ In 1452, the *Confraternità di S.*

⁷¹³ Lovorka Čoralić, “‘S one bane mora’ – Hrvatske prekojadranske migracije (XV.-XVIII. stoljeće)” [‘From that side of the sea’ – Croatian Trans-Adriatic migrations (From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century)],” *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 21 (2004): 189–91. One of the earliest mentions of such a community in Puglia was in Otranto, where church *Santus Vitus de Sclavonibus* existed already in the 1360s. In Marche, also several confraternities existed. The earliest documented was in Recanati, and its existence can be followed from 1375 until the end of the sixteenth century.

⁷¹⁴ Čoralić, 191; Marcello Luchetti, “La confraternita di San Pietro e San Girolamo degli Schiavoni,” in *Le confraternite a Pesaro dal XIII al XVII secolo*, vol. 2, Studi pesaresi, 2013, 49–53.

Girolamo degli Schiavoni was founded in Udine. Its confraternal building was marked visually - the image of Saint Jerome was painted on the façade, above the main entrance.⁷¹⁵ For our discussion of importance are the communities in Rome and Venice.

San Girolamo degli Schiavoni/ degli Illirici

In 1453, Pope Nicholas V permitted the members of the *Dalmatiae et Schiavonae nationum* community to establish a hospice for pilgrims coming to Rome from their homeland and allowing them to rebuild and rededicate the church of Santa Maria to Saint Jerome, in the Ripetta area, in the vicinity of Mausoleum of Augustus.⁷¹⁶ The present-day church, known as *San Girolamo dei Croati* was built at the end of the sixteenth century in a significant renovation begun in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V, the former titular cardinal of the church. As Jasenka Gudelj elaborates in the several recent publications on the role of this institution, its foundations were often presented in a simple narrative: *Venerabilis Societas Confallonorum Slavorum Burghi S. Petri* led by a hermit Jerome of Potomje (Hieronymus de Petoma) got permission to build the hospice near the church of Santa Marina, where the reasons of the establishment are related with the growing number of refugees from fleeing from the Ottoman conquest, and that the consecration to Jerome was due to his Dalmatian origin. As Gudelj argues, the narrative and the process of the establishment was not so smooth and linear. Moreover, it was supported directly by the Roman Curia and Pope Nicholas V, probably through the mediation of hermit Jerome of Potomje.⁷¹⁷

With the papal support, the *Schiavoni* community in Rome received their “national” church, or rather complex with the adjacent buildings for the pilgrims and later, a smaller number of refugees. Such endeavor should be seen in the broader context of the renovations initiated by Pope Nicholas V

⁷¹⁵ Marino Manin and Lovorka Čoralić, “Bratovština svetog Jeronima u Udinama” [The confraternity of Saint Jerome in Udine], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 19 (1995): 93–110.

⁷¹⁶ Luka Jelić, “Hrvatski zavod u Rimu” [Croatian College in Rome], *Vjestnik Kraljevskog hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskog zemaljskog arkiva* 4 (1902): 59–108; Iva Mandušić, “Bibliografija radova o bratovštini sv. Jeronima u Rimu” [Bibliography Of The Works About The Confraternity Of St. Jerome In Rome], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 30 (2006): 197–203; Jasenka Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati a Roma: gli Schiavoni e il Cantiere Sistino,” in *Identità e Rappresentazione. Le Chiese Nazionali a Roma. 1450-1650*, ed. Alexander Koller and Susanne Kubersky-Piredda (Rome: Campisano, 2015), 297–325; Jasenka Gudelj, “The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni / Illyrian Confraternity in Early Modern Rome,” *Confraternitas* 27, no. 1–2 (2016): 5–29; Jasenka Gudelj and Tanja Trška, “The artistic patronage of the confraternities of Schiavoni/Illyrians in Venice and Rome: proto-national identity and visual arts,” *Acta historiae artis Slovenica* 23, no. 2 (2018): 103–21. Jasenka Gudelj, “San Girolamo degli Schiavoni (Also: Degli Illirici/ Dei Croati) in Roma Communis Patria,” ed. Susanne Kubersky-Piredda and Tobias Daniels, *RIHA Journal - Special Issue “Constructing Nationhood in Early Modern Rome”* 0237–0243 (2020), <https://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2020/0237-0243-special-issue-Constructing-Nationhood/0242-gudelj>.

⁷¹⁷ Gudelj, “San Girolamo degli Schiavoni”, 6.

in preparation for the Jubilee of 1450, where the foundation of national churches and hospices was granted to English, Germans or Spanish.

The granting of such privilege to the *Schiavoni* community had an essential role for the further development of the (proto)national identity of Slavs, Illyrians, and Croats, which the Roman church has nurtured through the subsequent centuries, even more since *Schiavoni* did not have the political center or the state within which such sentiments could develop and with which they could identify. Instead, the members were coming from the parts of the Eastern Adriatic Coast and beyond in the hinterlands, from the territories of the Venetian Republic, the Hungarian kingdom, the Kingdom of Bosnia, which from 1463 was ruled by the Ottomans, and the Republic of Ragusa.

So how the right to membership was granted to the individuals? As Kunčević explains, the main criteria were the language and the place of birth. Those who wanted to become a member of the confraternity or use the guesthouse had to demonstrate with the baptismal certificate that they were coming from the territory of *Illyricum* (Dalmatia and its hinterland in a broader sense), and shows that they speak its vernacular language.⁷¹⁸ As it was mentioned already in the introduction, and then it will be elaborated further, the language was the most salient criteria for defining ethnic community, with other shifting criteria depending on the sources, as seen in the previously mentioned example of Ragusans identifying as Dalmatians in terms of language and the place of origin.

The conclusions by Kunčević on the development of the civic and ethnic identity of Ragusans could be applied on other communes, where the political jurisdiction over peoples who considered themselves Slavs or Illyrians, was in the hands of the “several foreign states“ but that „never brought into question their “national’ belonging“.⁷¹⁹ The example of the national church in Rome, contributes to our understanding of the feelings of the common belonging of the peoples living in the mentioned lands, mainly determined by the spoken language and the territorial presence, which could be understood roughly in the historical borders of the Croatian kingdom.

The reasons for the consecration of the church in Rome to Saint Jerome could be seen from two different angles. The first one relates to the growing popularity of Jerome’s image as a scholar-saint, who, at the given moment yet, did not have church consecrated to him in Rome. Another, “speculative reason” as Gudelj presents it, could lie in the already existing notion on Jerome’s origin. In 1453, Flavio Biondo wrote his work *Italia Illustrata*, and dedicated it to Pope Nicholas V. In it, besides arguing on Jerome’s Istrian and with that Italian origin, Biondo mentions that Dalmatians

⁷¹⁸ Kunčević, “Civic and Ethnic Discourses,” 162.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

considered Jerome as their own and falsely presumed that Jerome invented letters different from Greek and Latin for them.⁷²⁰ The belief in Jerome's local origin nurtured in Istria and Dalmatia could have been known to the pope and partially contributed to the choice of the patron saint of the church given to *Schiavoni*. However, the pope was certainly aware of the existence of such a tradition about Saint Jerome in the Croatian lands from other channels, the Franciscan ones. It was he who was actively involved in resolving the disputes between the observant and conventual currents in the province of Dalmatia, and his decisions gave impetus to the establishment of observant reform in the province of Dalmatia. Since the Bosnian Vicariate was subordinated to a special papal protectorate, the pope was very well acquainted with the political situation in Dalmatia, Croatia and Bosnia.

There is another possible stream of influence, which deserves more attention in some future research – the mentioned hermit Jerome. Even though already noted in Dalmatia from the thirteenth century, during the fifteenth, the Third Order of Franciscans started to gain more prominence, which led to the foundation of the autonomous province in 1473. Unlike regular Franciscans, they were Glagolites, and in the sources often referred to as *eremita* or *pauperes heremita*, or *de littera Sclava* and *fratres illirici*.⁷²¹ Could Jerome of Potomje actually have been a member of the Franciscans of the Third Order?

Such possibility is not so easily refuted knowing that the Glagolites served the mass in the Slavonic language and could easier communicate with the pilgrims coming to Rome, possibly also without the knowledge of other languages. Another reason that this connection should be considered regarding this question relates to the already mentioned journey to Rome and Assisi, that Marin Kršava undertook with some hermits from Zadar in 1447, in order to resolve the disputes over the land and the monastery of Škojić.⁷²² From the documents published by Petar Runje, it seems that the problem continued for years until the intervention of Pope Nicholas V, who wrote to Maffeo Valaresso in 1453, the bishop of Zadar, and asked him to grant the right of ownership for the hermits of Franciscan Third Order.⁷²³ Even though this question cannot be explored here, some indications suggest that further research on this question could reveal more on the widespread notion of Jerome's origin and the monastic affiliation at the early stage of the development of his cult in Dalmatia.

⁷²⁰ Biondo, *Roma ristavrata et Italia illustrata*, 196; Flavio Biondo, *Italy Illuminated (Vol. 1 -4)*, ed. Jeffrey A White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 22.

⁷²¹ Runje, *Prema izvorima II*, 57.

⁷²² See pp. 195–196.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, 57,60,148-150.

Regardless of on whose initiative the consecration to Jerome happened, the papal bull to Schiavoni confraternity had a political meaning as well. It was issued during the siege of Constantinople and could have come as the consequence of the failed attempt of Nicholas V to send help. Such a gesture could be seen as the support for the ethnic group in the first line of defense from the intruding Ottoman army.⁷²⁴ The close connection of the Schiavoni community in Rome with the *curia* continued with the subsequent popes as well. In 1455, when the community has faced the problems, Pope Callixtus III (1455–1458) granted an indulgence for everyone who participated in the works on the construction site, being of Schiavoni nation, but also of Bohemian and Hungarian.⁷²⁵

The growing community has established itself in the area, expanding the ownership of the lands near the church, and buying more properties, providing a secure economic system. In the sixteenth century, the church has received another papal sponsorship, this time in the figure of Pope Pius V (1565–1572) who completely renovated the church using the Apostolic chamber fund, which became the only papal commission in Rome after 150 years that was finished in its envisioned plan, including the construction of the church and its decoration. The reason for papal grateful donation lies in the fact that prior to his papal nomination, he was cardinal titular of the church, which gained that right in 1566.⁷²⁶

However, for our understanding of the outcome of the complex process of the formation of Jerome's image during the fifteenth century, elaborated in this dissertation, of importance is the fresco cycle executed in the church. The Sistine painters, Antonio Viviani, Andrea Lilli, Paris Nogari, Avanzino Nucci and Paolo Guidotti Borghese led by Giovanni Guerra painted the cycle of the most representative *Schiavoni*. Although the renovation of the church was supported by the high levels of the Church, the envisioning of the program has been certainly dictated by the members of the confraternity and the clerical party of the church, namely Alessandro Comuleo (Aleksandar Komulović), a canon of the cathedral of Split, who favored the idea of transforming the church into the college for the formation of priests, which resulted with the formation of the national chapter in 1589.⁷²⁷

Evidently, Saint Jerome, as the church patron saint, is in focus. In the presbytery, his life is represented with three narrative scenes—*Jerome's ordination to the priest in Antioch*, *St. Jerome*

⁷²⁴ Gudelj, "The Hospital," 6–7; Gudelj, "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni," 11.

⁷²⁵ Gudelj, "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni," 13.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 17; Gudelj, "The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni," 10.

⁷²⁷ Gudelj, "The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni," 11. Gudelj, "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni," 19. The "national" chapter was established of the priests that, as sources, show spoke Illyrian language and had Illyrian origin, that is they spoke Slavic vernacular and were coming from the Croatian lands.

explains the difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures, St. Jerome disputes with two doctor-saints of the Orthodox Church, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus. The highest honor to the saint is expressed in the vault above the shrine in which he is presented in glory, followed by the inscription *Sancto Hieronymo Illyricorum, Sixtus V Pontifex Maximus.*⁷²⁸ Jerome's position here is not only that of the patron of the church, but he is represented as the national saint, a heavenly protector, and the intercessor of the *Schiavoni* or *Illyrian* nation. This position is also supported by the representation of other national saints—Saint Cyril and Methodius—whose cult, unlike Middle Ages where their veneration was limited to the few monastic communities,⁷²⁹ received a strong push in the promotion with the inclusion in this cycle, standing as the symbolic representation of the apostolic mission of the church.⁷³⁰



Figure 51 Giovanni Guerra and his workshop, *St. Jerome explains the difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589–1590. Source: photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo, Gudelj, *San Girolamo degli Schiavoni*, 24.

On the other hand, their figures stand as the reflection of the language used among the members of the chapter, which, as mentioned before, was one of the decisive criteria for the affiliation with the confraternity and the chapter. Other national saints represented in the program were medieval

⁷²⁸ For a detailed discussion on the iconography of the cycle see: Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati a Roma,” 306–15; Gudelj and Trška, “The artistic patronage of the confraternities,” 112–14.

⁷²⁹ See pp. 53–54.

⁷³⁰ On the iconography of the other national saints in the church of Saint Jerome see also: Daniel Premerl, “Nacionalni sveci u ranom novom vijeku – Ikonografija identiteta”.

Dalmatian popes—Pope Caius and John, followed by the two saints, Domnius and Rainerius, particularly venerated in the diocese of Split. The inclusion of the saints from the Split diocese correlates to the influence of the Split clerics in the church chapter, particularly the above-mentioned Aleksandar Komulović, which have certainly contributed to the vision of the iconographic program.

Roman Influence on the Veneration of the Saint in Dalmatia?

The foundation of the national church in Rome for an ethnic group that did not have a central place of power nor it was limited to the political borders represents an interesting example for the discussion on the development of the proto-national identities. Even more, as in the subsequent centuries, the connections of the members of the chapter, coming from the Croatian lands, with the Roman curia had a strong impact on the development of the cultural and political institutions in the homeland. The question that arises is the impact of such strong papal support for the institutional veneration of Jerome in Rome on the veneration in Dalmatia, where from the middle of the century, Jerome's cult began to gain in importance, with a strong impetus in cathedral chapters.

Although this research has focused only on the communes of Trogir, Šibenik, and Zadar, it is difficult to imagine that the other communes have not to answer to it by establishing the same practice of expressing the honor to the Dalmatian saint by publicly celebrating its feast day. The first reason for such assumption lies in the polycentric aspects of the cult, which at the moment of the middle of the fifteenth century has been primarily promoted by the Glagolites and the Franciscans already, and the elements of the growing private devotion to the saint started to be more and more present in the urban setting. Regardless of some beliefs that Jerome was born in their city, like in the mentioned example brought by Pero Tafur where he was informed in Split that saint was born there,⁷³¹ it has never resulted in the strong appropriation of the saint in a civic cult exclusively related for one commune.

Even in those where the cult has been actively present like it was in Trogir, it was never promoted only as of the exclusive protector of the Tragurians. The emphasis on his Dalmatian origin, the uncertain location of Stridon, the polycentric incentives of veneration, did not allow such appropriation. Jerome's universality as a Dalmatian saint is supported by the sources, where there is no evidence that the communes and the cathedral chapters have been engaged in the dispute over the veneration and the possible appropriation of the saint between themselves. The only dispute, elaborated in detail in chapter 8, was that on the Italian appropriation, triggered by the Biondo's words

⁷³¹ See p. 62.

on Jerome's Istrian, that is Italian origin. Although, as the same chapter shows, there was also no consensus among the Croatian humansits on a question of a location of Stridon, there are no documented internal disputes among them.

Another reason which indicates that besides the Venetian influence in the veneration of the saint, primarily seen in the examples of the private devotion and the circulation of the devotional material and the iconographic types of the saint, existed the Roman as well. Due to the promotion of the saint through the official ecclesiastical channels, Dalmatian cathedrals became the focal points of veneration. The most obvious example is the two already mentioned monumental reliefs executed in the cathedrals of Trogir and Šibenik during the 1460s, which as such, represent the significant change compared to the expressions of public veneration in the Italian peninsula. Another illustrative example is the canons of the cathedral of Zadar, among which Jerome evidently had a special status.

The connections which are not visible at first sight lie in the connections of the Dalmatian bishops and the Roman Curia, where during the pontificate of Nicholas V, several new bishops were appointed, including those in two Dalmatian archbishoprics – Split and Zadar. With the establishment of the Venetian government, the question of appointing the bishops became the political question between the Venetian senate, which proposed the individuals that would be in their favor, and the juridical and the ecclesiastical confirmation of the pope through the laws imposed by the canon law. Jadranka Neralić argued that contrary to the traditional view of the Croatian scholarship that the appointment of the bishops was influenced by the Venetian senate, the processes of appointment were long and gradual, following the procedures of the canon law, where popes often used their right to appoint “their people” by refuting the proposal coming from Venice.⁷³²

One such person was the bishop of Trogir, Jacopo Turlon, mentioned in the documents of the Trogir cathedral chapter from 1453. He was a member of an aristocrat family from Ancona, but most likely, he studied theology in Bologna, where he earned a degree in canon law. His ecclesiastical career was marked with the number of significant roles in the Roman *curia*, including the post of *cappellanus* under Pope Nicholas V.⁷³³ The sources related to the official veneration of Saint Jerome in Trogir, as elaborated above, even those from the later centuries such as Paolo Andreis' work, mention the bishop as the one who is most instrumental for such honor expressed to the saint. Even though such mention reflects the established tradition of commemorating important events with the

⁷³² Jadranka Neralić, “Svi papini ljudi: dalmatinska biskupska sjedišta u 15. stoljeću između Rima i Venecije” [All the Pope's men: 15th Century Dalmatian bishoprics between Rome and Venice], *Istorijski zapisi*, no. 1–2 (2016): 53–82.

⁷³³ Benyovsky Latin, “Razvoj srednjovjekovne operarije,” 16; Farlati and Coleti, *Trogirski biskupi*, 346–352. Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 51–52.

period of the rule of certain bishop, it also points out that the bishop Turlon, coming to Trogir from Rome, must have been aware of the importance of this Church Doctor, and the theory of his Dalmatian origin, which he could have got familiar with even in Rome in the circle around Pope Nicholas V, who granted the right to *Schiavoni* to build their “national” church.

However, by observing the series of nominations of the new bishops in Dalmatia, around the middle of the fifteenth century, it is evident that Pope Nicholas V appointed most of them, and all of them previously held the posts in the Roman Curia. The archbishop of Split, Lorenzo Zane (1452–1478) was a protonotary apostolic during the pontificate of Eugene IV and got appointed to the see of the Split archbishopric at the age of 27.⁷³⁴ The Bishop of Šibenik, Urbano Vignaco (1454–1468), was an archdeacon in Venice, who was appointed on the recommendation of the Pope’s close associates and cardinals.⁷³⁵ Maffeo Valaresso (1450–1494), an archbishop of Zadar, was a notary in the Apostolic Chancery of Pope Nicholas V.⁷³⁶

It was during the offices of these bishops, that the cult of Saint Jerome in Dalmatia received the strong ecclesiastical support and that the ecclesiastical institutions in Dalmatia and abroad, like it was with the case of the church of Saint Jerome in Rome, formed a network of ecclesiastical dignitaries and clerics. They, with their expressions of devotion, like it was with Zadar canon Martin Mladošić, have contributed to the recognition of Jerome as Dalmatian. During the pontificate of Jacopo Turlon, Jerome was not only introduced in the communal *communio sanctorum*, but his high rank was presented in the monumental relief executed in the baptistery of the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence in 1467. Similar expression of Jerome as a universal patron saint of Dalmatia is found in Šibenik, where we do not have the official confirmation of the feast day on the communal level, but the monumental relief of the saint, on the northern façade of the cathedral, was executed when Urbano Vignaco (1454–1468) was a bishop.

Still, I would not argue that the foundation of the “national” church in Rome has been the main incentive for the veneration of the saint in Dalmatia, but the close correlation of the appointed bishops with the pope who granted such privilege to *Schiavoni*, and who have been familiar with the humanism and the position Jerome held at the period, have found common ground in the communes where the cult was growing due to another influence coming from already elaborated Venetian veneration, continuing on the existing notion of Jerome’s origin which circulated in Dalmatia.

⁷³⁴ Neralić, “Svi papini ljudi,” 64.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷³⁶ Jadranka Neralić, “Judicial Cases in the Court of Maffeo Valaresso, Archbishop of Zadar (1450-1494). Zadar and Its Church in the First Half of the 15th Century,” *Review of Croatian History* 3, no. 1 (2007): 274.

Furthermore, their appointments also happen in the period when Jerome's image as a church father and the ecclesiastical authority, especially during the Council of Florence-Ferrara, has been used in the main theological debates. With their own understanding of Jerome's image and the cult, by arriving in their chosen bishoprics, they could have only enriched and induce the veneration of Jerome among the people where the notion of his origin already circulated.

Scuola San Giorgio degli Schiavoni

Another institution which further contributes to our understanding of the network through which Jerome's image as Dalmatian was formed and promoted is the *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice. After 1420 and the establishment of Venetian suzerainty over Dalmatia, a growing number of people coming from the Eastern Adriatic Coast, an area stretching from Istria to the Bay of Kotor (Boka Kotorska), began migrating to Venice.

Apart from the previously mentioned political reasons, Dalmatians migrated as it was relatively easy to assimilate into the big cosmopolitan city, with many other ethnic groups living in it, including Germans, Greeks, Armenians, and others. The advantage which *Schiavoni* had, compared with Greek or Armenians, was the fact that they belonged to the same political unit—the Republic of Venice. Furthermore, they already knew the language since Veneto dialect was spoken on the Eastern Adriatic Coast, and they were Catholics. Most of the newcomers were from Dalmatia, with the biggest number coming from Zadar and its surroundings, followed by Split, Trogir, Šibenik, Makarska, and the islands of Brač, Hvar, Rab, Pag, Korčula, and Vis.⁷³⁷ There were also migrants from the hinterland and Bosnia but in a smaller number. Another large group of migrants came from Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska.⁷³⁸

In 1451, a confraternity named the *Confraternità di San Giorgio e San Trifone* was established in Venice.⁷³⁹ Due to the large number of *Schiavoni* in Venice, in 1451, the confraternity was founded with more than 200 members present.⁷⁴⁰ The reason for the establishment was given in a letter to Venetian Senate the same year that: a large number of war veterans were living poorly, and without

⁷³⁷ Čoralić, "S one bane mora," 193.

⁷³⁸ Lovorka Čoralić, "Iseljenici iz grada Kotora – posjednici na mletačkoj terrafermi"[Migrants from the city of Kotor as estate owners in the Venetian Terraferma], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku*, no. 45 (2007): 391–408; Lovorka Čoralić, "Kotorski iseljenici i hrvatska bratovština Sv. Jurja i Tripuna u Mlecima (XV.–XVIII. St.)" [Emigrants from Kotor and the Croatian fraternity of St. George and Triphon in Venice (15th–18th c.)], *Croatica Christiana periodica* 32, no. 61 (2008): 18–34.

⁷³⁹ The confraternity is known also under the names: *Scuola degli Schiavoni*, *Scuola dei SS. Giorgio e Triffone* and *Scuola Dalmata*.

⁷⁴⁰ Čoralić, "Kotorski iseljenici," 21.

adequate housing, many of them were spending days in front of the Doge's palace and begging for money and food, with many of them dying alone in the prisons in Venice, without anyone to visit them or to arrange proper burial.⁷⁴¹ One of the primary tasks of the confraternity was to take care of their members and to provide caritative activities in order to help the growing population of *Schiavoni* migrants in Venice.

This example of a shared expatriate identity under the protection of a patron saint whose cult was usually brought from their homeland and connected with the town whence majority of members originated, cannot be seen as a unique practice among the migrants in Venice, but as a practice with an established pattern. Venice was home to several national confraternities, for example, the *Scuola de Santa Maria Elisabetta* gathering citizens of the city of Bormio was consecrated to the Virgin Mary, Saint Elisabeth as well as Protasio and Gervasio, saintly martyrs and patrons of this small Alpine town on the route between Venice and the German lands.⁷⁴² There are similar examples of "imported" saints in other *scuole* as well. For instance, citizens of Lucca were united in the confraternity under the protection of *Volto Santo di Lucca* (the Holy Face of Lucca), a miraculous crucifix still kept in the cathedral of Lucca.⁷⁴³

Saint Jerome was never officially added to the confraternity's name, but his cult had a special place in the devotional practices of the members. While the presence of Saint Tryphon is not surprising due to the role of Kotor merchants and migrants in the formation of the confraternity, that of Jerome could certainly be seen as such. He was not a patron of any commune in the Eastern Adriatic from where the cult could have been transferred directly, nor was there a central place of his veneration. However, the Venetian example of appropriating Saint Jerome as one of the patrons is not exceptional; it was rather common among *Schiavoni* in the Apennine peninsula. The perception and acceptance of Jerome as the universal patron of people coming from the different parts of the Eastern Adriatic Coast, including from the Bosnian and the Croatian Kingdoms, unified through geographical origin, language, and religion, was a reflection of ideas already thriving in their homeland. Although Jerome's name has not been added to the official name of *Scuola*, he frequently

⁷⁴¹ Lovorka Čoralić, "'Scuola della nation di Schiavoni' - hrvatska Bratovština sv. Jurja i Tripuna u Mlecima" [Croatian confraternity of Saint George and Saint Tryphon in Venice], *Povijesni prilozi* 18 (2000): 58.

⁷⁴² Gastone Vio, *Le scuole piccole nella Venezia dei dogi: note d'archivio per la storia delle confraternite veneziane* (Costabissara (Vicenza): Angelo Colla, 2004), 433.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 535–38.

appeared in texts and decisions of the confraternity, and in its iconography, where saint George, Tryphon, and Jerome were depicted together.⁷⁴⁴

The pioneering work of Lovorka Čoralić on the activities of the confraternity published in several articles, demonstrate its role as a mediator between the homeland and Venice. She analyzed different aspects of the migration to Venice and named prominent individuals. In one of the works, she examined a special connection between Cardinal Bessarion and the Croatian lands in different aspects – from monastic patronage and intervention in the problems of Dalmatian monasteries to his friendship with Nicholas of Zadar (Nikola Zadranin), the Bishop of Duvno in the Kingdom of Bosnia, and Juraj Dragišić, both Franciscan friars.⁷⁴⁵

Bessarion's friendship with mentioned friars from whom he learned about the terror of the Ottoman army invading Bosnia, certainly contributed to the indulgence which was given to the *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice in 1464, one year after the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia. This indulgence was first among several papal indulgences to follow, granting forgiveness of the sins on the official feast days of its holy patron saints, with the goal of promoting a crusade against the Ottomans of which Bessarion was an avid supporter. Among the feast days upon which an indulgence was granted, was that of Saint Jerome, as a patron of Dalmatia. With this indulgence, Jerome's cult was officially introduced into the confraternal pantheon.⁷⁴⁶

The indulgence symbolically supported the position of the Croatian lands as the liminal stronghold between the European West and the Ottomans, and with that, the last line of the resistance between Christianity and Islam. As Ana Marinković explains, the anti-Ottoman agenda further conditioned a second indulgence in 1481. In that year, Pope Sixtus IV granted a reward for every person that participated in the military expedition against Ottomans.⁷⁴⁷ A further indulgence granted to the confraternity issued in 1502 by the papal legate Angelo Leonini, acting on behalf of Pope

⁷⁴⁴ Ana Marinković, "Saints' Relics in Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni: An Anti-Ottoman Pantheon," *Il Capitale Culturale*. Supplementi 7 (2018): 29; On the artistic production, see: Trška, "Venetian painters and Dalmatian Patrons";

⁷⁴⁵ Lovorka Čoralić, "Kardinal Bessarion i Hrvati" [Cardinal Bessarion and Croats], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 40 (1998): 143–60. Bessarion and Nicholas met in Venice in 1463, where the bishop migrated after the Ottomans conquered his bishopric. The fact that the bishop experienced firsthand what Christian Europe was afraid of and what Bessarion preached against made him a perfect advocate of the new crusades against Ottomans. For that, he was named as the main preacher in favor of crusades, in Istria and Furlandia.

⁷⁴⁶ Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 509; Marinković, "Saints' Relics in Scuola Di S. Giorgio Degli Schiavoni," 28. *In ecclesia Sancti Georgii de sclavonibus Venetiis [...] qui ecclesiam in qua dicta Societas congregabitur in festis sancti Georgii, Corporis Christi, sancti Hieronymi, sancti Triffonis, et in prima Dominica post Ascensionem Domini devote visitaverint (10 Feb 1464).*

⁷⁴⁷ Marinković, "Saints' Relics," 29. *Pro expeditione contra perfidos Turchos, Christiani nominis hostes in deffensionem insule Rhodi et fidei Catolice [...] Omnes illas personas, que aliquid elargite, ibant sanctam contra Turchos expeditionem» (27 Sept 1481).*

Alexander VI, mentions the most important feast days, including Saint Jerome's and in addition, the renovation of the confraternal building.⁷⁴⁸ The renovation, undertaken from 1502, included a commission of a pictorial cycle from Vittore Carpaccio, which represented scenes from the lives of



Figure 52 Vittore Carpaccio, *Funeral of Saint Jerome*, 1502 (141 cm × 211 cm), Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice. Source: WikiCommons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore_Carpaccio_Funeral_of_St_Jerome.jpg (Last accessed 02 July 2020)

the confraternity's patron saints, executed between 1502 to 1507.⁷⁴⁹ Thus, while Jerome was never included in the official name of the confraternity, his cult and veneration had an important place among the confraternity members.⁷⁵⁰

The reasons for the inclusion of Jerome into the saintly pantheon in *Scuola* indeed came from the local Schiavoni community, which during the 1450s and especially after 1463 only grew in size. Another aspect that contributed to the affirmation of Jerome's

cult within the confraternity was the fact that the man who had granted them the indulgence—Cardinal Bessarion, had a strong affection for the saint, arrived at through his close friendship with Girolamo Valresso. The Venetian Valaresso family, whose members had been appointed to different functions in Venetian Istria and Dalmatia through the centuries, played a key role in the confraternity at the turn of the sixteenth century. Their membership was further marked by the giving of valuable donations, such as the relic of Saint George in 1502.⁷⁵¹

Taking into consideration the close friendship of Cardinal Bessarion and Girolamo Valaresso, it is likely that Girolamo was a connection point between the cardinal and the confraternity.⁷⁵² After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Bessarion arrived in Venice, intending to pursue the Doge and the

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁴⁹ The existence of the *Scuola di San Girolamo* in Venice, founded in the fourteenth century in Cannaregio, could be a reason why Jerome's name was not added to the patrons of *Scuola degli Schiavoni*.

⁷⁵⁰ Perocco, *Carpaccio nella Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni*; Terisio Pignatti, *Le Scuole di Venezia* (Milano: Electa, 1981); Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 510;

⁷⁵¹ Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 510. Girolamo Valaresso, his sons Vittore and Luca, together with their cousin Paolo, were all assured an impressive funeral in which the governing board of the confraternity and hundred twenty-five members of the confraternity were to participate.

⁷⁵² Ibid., 521–523. Girolamo Valaresso was connected with another, earlier translation of the relics of Saint George to Venice. In 1462, he obtained the head reliquary of Saint George in the Greek island of Aegina, which was later that year deposited in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore. The monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore is another connection point between the Valaresso family and Bessarion since the cardinal moved into the monastery after finally settling in Venice in 1463. When Bessarion set sail for Ancona in 1464, the *sopracomito* of his galley was none other than Girolamo Valaresso.

Venetian senate to initiate an offensive against the Ottomans. Among other things, he was closely involved with the purchase of ancient texts, with the assistance of Girolamo.⁷⁵³

The execution of the cycle, which began in 1502, should be observed in the broader context of Venetian-Ottoman relations at the turn of the sixteenth century, and as a visual confirmation of the saint's feast days ratified by the indulgence afforded by Cardinal Bessarion in 1464. The same year, Paolo Valaresso has gifted a relic of Saint George to the *Scuola*, which he had allegedly received in Corone from the dying patriarch of Jerusalem. On April 24, 1502, the relic was taken in a solemn procession from the family's church of Sant' Angelo Raffaele to the altar in *Scuola*.⁷⁵⁴



Figure 53 Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Jerome and the Lion*, 1502 (141 cm× 211 cm) Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice. Source: Wikimedia Commons https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/12/Vittore_carpaccio%2C_San_Girolamo_e_il_leone_nel_convento_01.jpg (Last accessed 02 July 2020)

Among the nine executed panels, two represent scenes from the Life of Christ, the *Sermon in the Gethsemane garden* and the *Vocation of St. Matthew*, and seven are dedicated to the scenes of the lives of the patron saints. Three scenes narrate the *vita* of Saint George: *Saint George and the Dragon*, *Triumph of Saint George*, and *Baptism of the Selenites*. The scene *Saint Tryphon and the Basilisk* is the only one that relates to Saint Tryphon. Saint Jerome is represented in three scenes: *Saint Augustine in his Study*, *Saint Jerome and the Lion*, and the *Funeral of Saint Jerome*.⁷⁵⁵ One of the scenes in particular, has caused long debates among scholars. For a long time, the portrait of the cardinal in the study room was read as a traditional representation of *Saint Jerome in his Study*. Helen Roberts however, suggested the identification of the scene as the *Vision of Saint Augustine*, based on the description of his vision in the Pseudo-Augustine letter, a standard part of *Transitus et vita Santi Hieronymi*.⁷⁵⁶ Patricia Fontini Brown then

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 522. In her article on the iconography of the representation of Saint Augustine in the study, Patricia Fontini Brown elaborates on the close connections of cardinal, the Valaresso family and the confraternity in Venice, reading the execution of the cycle as an homage to the prominent members of the family and the cardinal. In one of the letters that Bessarion sent to Michele Apostolis in Greece, in which he asked him to send him some manuscript, he points out that Girolamo Valaresso would act as his agent and reimburse him all the costs.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 510.

⁷⁵⁵ Gudelj and Trška, "The artistic patronage of the confraternities," 104. Initially, the cycle was housed in the Hospice of St. Catherine, the Scuola's first provisory seat. It was later moved to the present-day building, after its reconstruction mid-sixteenth century.

⁷⁵⁶ Roberts, "St. Augustine in 'St. Jerome's Study'". The influence of *Transitus* on the St. Augustine representation in Scuola degli Schiavoni, has another hidden trace to the textual model, a sculpture in the back—Saint John the Baptist.

elaborated in detail what Guido Perocco had hinted previously, that not only did the panel illustrate the *Vision of Saint Augustine*, but the depiction of Saint Augustine is a double portrait that represents no one other than Cardinal Bessarion who had been portrayed in this way in several other paintings.⁷⁵⁷ Among the attributes which point out to the cardinals' identity is an almond-shaped seal on one of the documents depicted in the painting, referencing to the indulgence given to the confraternity in 1464.

Her research has further shown that the Valaresso family was directly connected with the commission and the execution of the cycle. The involvement of the Valaresso family reflects not only the close connections of the family and the confraternity, especially seen in the donation of the reliquary, but in the possible referencing to the members of the family in the paintings. Girolamo (Jerome) Valaresso was an uncle of Paolo Valaresso, a family member who initiated the cycle, and who, besides, paying the honor to the patron saint of the confraternity, also incorporated members of his family in the cycle together with the memory of Cardinal Bessarion.

It is important to emphasize that unlike other major Venetian *scuole*, the *Schiavoni* was a *scuola minor*, mainly consisting of artisans and sailors. The patronage of the cardinal, together with the later indulgences by popes, had a significant weight, taking into consideration the uncertain position in which Croatian lands, and with that Venetian Dalmatia, have found themselves during the Ottoman conquest of Balkans. The scholars have argued that even this cardinal position of Croatian lands as the defender of Christian Europe in the middle of the Ottoman invasion, can be read in the cycle. Jasenka Gudelj and Tanja Trška have argued that the depiction of turban-wearing, presumably Muslim figures, could be interpreted, with caution, as a reference to the position of the community and their homeland in the Ottoman wars.⁷⁵⁸

Although the identification of Girolamo Valaresso should be understood in the already discussed personal devotion to the saint popular among Venetian patricians and humanist, it should also be observed as an expression of family's Dalmatian connection and the alleged ancient origin of the family from the city of Salona, at that period especially emphasized through the appointment of the already mentioned Bishop of Zadar, Maffeo Valaresso (1450–1494), possibly represented by the painting *The Calling of the Matthew*.⁷⁵⁹ Furthermore, it seems that the painter was chosen due to his personal connection with the family, as they were living in the same district in Venice, in the parish

⁷⁵⁷ Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine."

⁷⁵⁸ Gudelj and Trška, "The artistic patronage of the confraternities," 111–12.

⁷⁵⁹ Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 525.

of Sant'Angelo Raffaele.⁷⁶⁰ As explained earlier, the family's connection with the painter, even before the commission of this cycle, is seen through the commission of the altarpiece by Martin Mladošić in Zadar, which must have come through the mediation of bishop Valaresso, or his brother Giacomo who has been named a bishop of Koper, present-day Slovenia, in 1482.⁷⁶¹

I believe that further research into the Valaresso family and their connections with the confraternity, and then beyond with the Dalmatian aristocracy and local elites, will contribute to a better understanding of the importance which the confraternity had in the spiritual support of the fifteenth-century anti-Ottoman crusade. This example, once more, reflects the layers of meaning embodied in the image of Saint Jerome, which here intertwines the private devotion with his role as a national saint. The close connection of Girolamo Valaresso with Cardinal Bessarion and the confraternity, raises a question of his devotion to Saint Jerome, not only in the already established



Figure 54 Vittore Carpaccio, *The Calling of Matthew*, 1502 (141cm x 115 cm), Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore_carpaccio_vocazione_di_san_matteo.jpg (Last accessed 02 July 2020)

practice of self-identification with the saint on the level of his being a namesake but also through his confraternal devotion.

One source from the end of the century, written among the members of the *Schiavoni* community in Venice, shows how such communities cannot be observed excluded from the ecclesiastical network in the homeland, which extends to the limits of the presence of the Dalmatian and Croatian priests which have nurtured the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin and for whom he becomes the most reverend representative of their ethnic group, regardless of how they called it—*Schiavoni*, Dalmatians or Illyrians. Such a network should not be seen limited only to the ecclesiastical narrative. Moreover, it is the inclusion of the Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, who have given the stronger push to the promotion of idea by adopting Jerome in the narratives of the national history, that transformed

his saintly image in one of the main indicators of the development of the proto-national discourse in the Dalmatian and Croatian *republic of letters*.

⁷⁶⁰ Perocco, *Carpaccio nella Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni*, 7–8; Fortini Brown, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine," 523.

⁷⁶¹ On Valaresso family and Zadar cathedral chapter see: Luka Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni", 45–46.

The Schiavoni Historical-Liturgical Booklet from 1498

Among the written legacy of the Zadar humanist, canon and notary from the end of the fifteenth century Jerolim Vidulić (c. 1440–1499), a booklet with the texts referring to Saint Jerome, are preserved. According to an argumentative discussion by Luka Špoljarić, they were written by the *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice at the very end of the fifteenth century.⁷⁶² The first text *Preface on Jerome's origin* was written in Venice, by still unidentified author *V.S.*, while the second one is *Hymn to Saint Jerome the Illyrian*, also written by still anonymous author *N. Ia. Sa.*

For this discussion, these texts are essential for two main reasons. The first relates to the content of the texts, which show how by the end of the fifteenth century the narrative on Jerome's Dalmatian origin has already been narrowed to the common *topoi*—he is Dalmatia born, he is most illustrious representative of the nation, and he is a heavenly intercessor for those who see him as a compatriot.

The two other aspects are also found in the written production of the Dalmatian humanists – Jerome's heavenly aid in the anti-Ottoman ventures and the narrative on the invention of the Glagolitic script. As it is shown on this example, the last aspect, of accepting and promoting Jerome as the inventor of the Glagolitic script and the translator of the Bible and the mass into the Slavonic, even in the Latin production, shows how by the end of the fifteenth century the Glagolitic tradition has intertwined with the humanist veneration, and that the exact division line between them is impossible to be determined. Still, it must be noted that the adoption of Glagolitic narrative is present in the production of those humanists who were active in the circles where the presence of the Glagolites was more substantial, namely Zadar and its region, mentioned already on the example of Petar Zoranić.

The second one relates to the position of Jerome within the broader network of clerics and individuals who have promoted the idea of him being Dalmatian, including him in the national narrative. The identification of institutionalized context in which the texts were produced, together with the individuals who promoted such an idea, illustrates how the process of the exchange of the ideas between two coasts of the Adriatic Sea has functioned, backed up with the cathedral chapters, clerical involvement, and the humanist participation.

The production of such texts shows how Jerome's cult gradually gained more importance within the confraternity, starting from the 1464 and the Curial support through the indulgence of

⁷⁶² Ibid.

Cardinal Bessarion. Špoljarić notes another reflection. The growing cult of Jerome, who has been equated with the initial patron saints of the confraternity, Saints Tryphon, and George, best seen in the mentioned Carpaccio's cycle, shows the change among the structure of members. Initially founded by large numbers of the merchants from Kotor and Bar, gradually started to expand by accepting the individuals coming from central and northern Dalmatia and its hinterland, transforming the character of the confraternity from the locally correlated to the peoples coming from Kotor Bay to the universally determined Dalmatian and Croatian confraternity.⁷⁶³

Although, I will elaborate later how the ideas presented in the texts fit the broader framework of the adoption of Jerome in the national narrative and its adaptation into the national saint, here it is indispensable to position how the Venetian confraternity represents one of the centers which largely contributed to the establishment of Jerome's cult not only in Dalmatia but among those that are in the sources named as *Schiavoni*. In this example, the evident connection is that between the Zadar cathedral chapter and the confraternity in Venice. Such direct line does not surprise if we recall that the bishop of Zadar, for the most of the second half of the fifteenth century, was Maffeo Valaresso, whose family served as the patrons of the confraternity at the period.

Regarding the texts, the exact link is represented by Jeronim (Jerome) Vidulić.⁷⁶⁴ Born in the family of the builders and constructors, he chooses a priestly life as his invocation, where he became the canon of the Zadar cathedral chapter, where he possibly served also as the personal secretary of the bishop Valaresso. Due to his close connections with the family, it is assumed that he could have lived in their household during his study in Venice in the 1470s and early 1480s.⁷⁶⁵ After return to his hometown in 1483, he became the public notary. The notarial records reveal his humanist education, seen in the transcription of the humanist and the vernacular literature found among the notarial documents. Due to his stay in Venice, where he must have communicated with the members of the *Schiavoni* community, and the close connections with the Valaresso family, the channel through which he obtained the texts which he transcribed, must have been personal.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁶⁴ On Vidulić' life and production see: Tomislav Bogdan, "Jeronim Vidulić i počeci hrvatske ljubavne lirike" [Jeronim Vidulić and beginnings of Croatian love poetry], in *Muzama iza leđa. Čitanja hrvatske lirike*, ed. Tvrtko Vuković (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet, 2010), 9–29; Luka Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni", 43–71.

⁷⁶⁵ Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni," 46.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., 58. See a footnote 49. Špoljarić assumes that the possibility that Vidulić received the texts from their author or some other *schiafone* is more probable, rather from Paolo Valresso who donated the relic of Saint George in 1502. Paolo was from another branch of the family, and not the one of Zorzi Valresso with whose sons Maffeo, Giacomo and Luca Vidulić was close friend.

From the other examples discussed in this dissertation, it is evident that Zadar cathedral chapter has been nurturing devotion to Jerome, and that several individuals during the last decades of the fifteenth century have had direct or indirect connections with the confraternity in Venice. The central figure of connections is the archbishop of Zadar, Maffeo Valaresso, and his family. The author of the *Preface*, refers to the saint as *Ieronimi compatriotae mei*, opening the text with the remarks on the appropriation of the saint by some Italians, precisely Flavio Biondo whom he names later in the text, indicating that the following lines have the purpose of disputing the belief that Jerome was born in Istria. For him, Stridon was on the territory of Bosnia, which he positions in the ancient Lower Pannonia, intending to show that Stridon was not on the border of the Dalmatia and Hungary, but on the border of Dalmatia and Bosnia, i.e. in the heart of *Illyricum*.⁷⁶⁷ I will return later to this discussion. But here, I want to point out the one aspect which the author of the text uses as the argument on Jerome's Illyrian origin. In the closing remarks of the *Preface*, he asks the Italians how come he could have been of their origin if he invented the script, which corresponds to the Illyrian language.⁷⁶⁸ The same idea is repeated in the *Hymn* that follows the *Preface*.⁷⁶⁹

The reasons why this aspect was praised in the booklet, for which we do not know if it ever got its printed edition, lies in the introduction of the Slavic liturgy among confraternity. It is not known when did that happen, but the disputes from the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth with the hospice of Saint Catherine and the Order of Saint John, where the confraternity was located before receiving the present-day building in the district of Castello, indicate that this question received much attention by the end of the century. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the abbot Sebastian Michiel wrote a letter to a patriarch complaining that the *Schiavoni* introduced innovation in the liturgical service. Špoljarić points out that although such complaint could be related with the wish of the prior to drifting apart from the community, it also indicates that the adoption of such practices was gradual and should be observed within the context of the expansion of the Glagolitic prints and the widespread use of Glagolitic liturgical manuals, missals, and breviaries, which occurred in the 1480s and 1490s. It was in Venice, where the already mentioned *Baromić breviary* was printed in 1493.⁷⁷⁰

The main reason for the compilation of such booklet was the plague outburst in Venice, due to which members of the confraternity ask their patron saint for the protection. But it also serves to

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., 66. *Claruisti miraculis, opem ferens vernaculis, dans litteras Illyricis, devotis compatriis.*

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 57.

the legitimization of the Slavic liturgy and the Glagolitic tradition, coming from *Schiavoni* desire to emphasize their own national identity and a unique tradition in a multicultural environment, which they associate with Jerome. In a fraternal address to Pope Julius II in 1511, it is pointed out that its members have long had the right to serve Mass “either in Latin or in Dalmatian (i.e. Croatian) language, according to the rite and decree of Saint Jerome.”⁷⁷¹ In the mentioned connection between the Zadar cathedral chapter and the confraternity could lie the main reason for the introduction of the Slavic liturgy in the confraternity, taking into the consideration that the city of Zadar and its region were known as the Glagolitic stronghold. But, this question stays for the further scholarly inspections.

Before proceeding to more elaborate discussion on the various symbolism embedded in the figure of Saint Jerome as the national saint in the written production of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, it is necessary to present the important step in the evolution of Jerome as the universal protector of his compatriots, during the period of 1460s, when his cult received public aspects by placing the two monumental reliefs representing the saint in Trogir and Šibenik. Such progress can be interpreted with the development of the Renaissance in the communes, through which expressions of Jerome’s cult were adopted in the visual repertoire. Also, it can be seen as the natural outcome of the growing importance of the cult promoted through the ecclesiastical network. The following chapter demonstrates how such venture was a result of the intertwining institutional support in the form of the cathedral’s chapters and the communal governments, with the strong support of the educated clerical and humanist elite, who have transformed Jerome’s image into the patron saint of Dalmatia in the period of the great political instability and the fear of the possible Ottoman conquest after the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

7 THE VISUAL FORMATION OF JEROME AS A DALMATIAN

“He is present with us and yet seems so absent,
 he is both here and somewhere else:
 The grotto may hold his body,
 but the soul has the freedom of Heaven.”⁷⁷²

Guarino of Verona

The previous chapters have demonstrated that the turning point in the perception of Jerome in Dalmatia was around the middle of the fifteenth century when the interaction of the Glagolitic, Franciscan and humanist traditions of veneration, resulted in the formation of a ubiquitous civic cult in the Dalmatian communes, followed by visual manifestations of the cult. The interaction of ecclesiastical, communal, and private veneration resulted in the formation of Jerome as the patron saint of Dalmatia. Between the promotion of the cult through ecclesiastical channels around the middle of the fifteenth century, and the full formation of his image as a Dalmatian by the end of the century, an important step in the process occurred during the 1460s—Jerome’s image went public. The term public in this context should be understood in the already borrowed definition of Michael Baxandall, referring to the commissioner and not the public, in a collective sense—ecclesiastical or communal, which in the examples discussed here are very often inseparable.⁷⁷³

Following this definition, this chapter analyzes the execution of two monumental reliefs, one in the Baptistry of Trogir (1467) and another on the northern façade of the Cathedral in Šibenik (1465–1468), observing them through two different approaches, identifying different layers of meaning and interpreting. It is not without reason that Jerome’s cult took on such a form in these two towns, where we find the most excellent examples of the early Renaissance art outside Italy—the already mentioned *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* and the Cathedral of Saint James in Šibenik.

The first approach taken, focuses on the image itself. The commissions are observed in the broader cultural context of developing humanism and the Renaissance, where the image of Saint

⁷⁷² Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 92.

⁷⁷³ Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 10–11.

Jerome is observed as a cultural commodity adopted through existing channels of communication, heavily relying on the personal connections between Dalmatian humanists and their Italian counterparts. The adaptation of the iconographic models dominant in private devotion, “Penitent Saint Jerome” and “Saint Jerome in Wilderness”, into public images, shows that at a certain point, the cult of Saint Jerome in Dalmatia made a turn away from established Italian practices. The public display of Jerome’s image, in the sculpted medium, as an expression of his universal protection, is the first significant difference between the Italian and Dalmatian examples. Although reliefs with Jerome’s image are found in Italy, they are of smaller dimensions and intended for private devotion.⁷⁷⁴

By employing the iconographic analysis from a comparative perspective, this chapter questions whether any present variations of the iconography in these two displays could be named as a local variant? Is the new role of Jerome as the patron saint of Dalmatians reflected in the uniqueness of the pictorial representation? Can we speak of the existence of a particular iconographic type? Special attention is put on the relief in Trogir, discerning its compositional models and proposing the present iconographic innovations as a local particularity. In this regard, a series of small-scale reliefs modelled upon the one in the Baptistery of Trogir will be analyzed. The iconography and composition of twelve preserved reliefs derive from the relief in the baptistery. Why were they made, who owned them, and what was their function? The second approach was inspired by the broader theoretical approach of visual studies, where in the past several decades images have come to be analyzed beyond the mere artistic, stylistic and iconographic qualities. Instead, the methodology of the researchers, historians, and art historians, is “concerned with images as a historical phenomenon, with the story of their making, their reception and their effects.”⁷⁷⁵

Following the approach used by Baxandall, approaching Renaissance visual production with a “period eye”, reading images considering through the experience and the knowledge of those who observed the them, I will explore questions “beyond the iconography”. Can such representations be read beyond the simple expression of honor granted to the saint born in Dalmatia? How do they mirror the cultural achievements of the communities of Trogir and Šibenik which commissioned such images of the saint and placed them in public and semi-public space? In which way did the dialogue between ecclesiastical circles, artists, and prominent individuals with humanist education, contribute to the visual formation of Jerome as Dalmatian? What meaning did they have for the citizens of Trogir and Šibenik?

⁷⁷⁴ See pp. 285-286.

⁷⁷⁵ Peter Burke, “Interrogating the Eyewitness”, 435.

Regardless of their renaissance language, the execution of the reliefs should not be observed merely



Figure 55 *The Cathedral of Saint James, Šibenik* (1431–1536). Source: Wikimedia Commons (Licence: CC BY 3.0), author Jerzy Strzelecki [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0ibenik_Cathedral#/media/File:Cathedral_of_St._James,_Sibenik1_\(js\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0ibenik_Cathedral#/media/File:Cathedral_of_St._James,_Sibenik1_(js).jpg) (Last accessed: 04 July 2020)

as the expression of a new artistic and decorative language. Moreover, it shows that the transformation of Jerome's image from that of a church father, a patron of the Franciscan province, and a penitent model to the patron saint of Dalmatians, was also conditioned by the historical context in which it occurred: the consolidation of the Venetian government, the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, and the frequent outbreaks of plague and periods of famine. From this point on, we can also follow the discernable change in the perception of Jerome through the ethnic determinants added to Jerome's name in literary production—Dalmatian, Croatian, Slav, Illyrian—mirroring his appropriation by those who saw him as a compatriot.

Precisely because in the sources, the veneration of Jerome is not specifically associated with any commune, but rather his universal protection over those who considered him a compatriot, is constantly emphasized. These depictions should be viewed in the context of a broader understanding of common belonging to the imaginary community of Dalmatians or Croats, Slavs or Illyrians, based on shared language, geographical origin, common ancestry, common customs, and ancient origin, regardless of the political entity to which they belonged, and of which Jerome served as the unifying symbol. The confirmation of this symbolic meaning behind the visual representation is confirmed by emphasizing Jerome as the most prominent individual of their kind in the literary production, elaborated in chapter 8.

7.1 THE ŠIBENIK TONDO OF SAINT JEROME

In the middle of the fifteenth century, Šibenik Cathedral, whose construction was decided upon at the end of the fourteenth century, began to take its first form. The construction of the new cathedral (1431–1536) had a symbolic meaning as the confirmation of the city's ecclesiastical and communal autonomy, which was especially emphasized after its establishment as the seat of a new

bishopric in 1298, and the inclusion of Šibenik in the Hungarian kingdom after 1358.⁷⁷⁶ Unlike Trogir and other communes in the period, which inherited their origins from ancient times, the commune of Šibenik held a distinctive place since its urban structure was formed only in the thirteenth century.⁷⁷⁷ The cathedral stands as an example of progressive early Renaissance culture supported by humanist interest, and it positions the commune on the map of artistic exchange within the Republic of Venice and between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea—the cultural sphere to which it belonged.⁷⁷⁸

The growing economic potential of the area, enabled the ecclesiastical and communal authorities to start the construction of a new cathedral church, strongly supported by their fellow citizens. The communal effort is seen in the archival documents of the inhabitants of Šibenik who participated in the construction by leaving money in their wills, regardless of their social status or origin. In his study, Zoran Ladić, explains the symbolic meaning of the community embedded in the cathedral:

The construction of the Cathedral of Šibenik should also be seen as an act of religious inspiration and unification of all the inhabitants of Šibenik, worldly and spiritual persons, elite, citizens, residents, foreigners, peasants and poor in the joint effort to build the cathedral as a symbol of a sense of communal spirit and belonging to a clearly defined urban-rural community, on the road to the realization of the Šibenik commune as *civitas sacra*.⁷⁷⁹

The uniting of citizens in this joint venture, supported by the ecclesiastical and communal authorities, can also be read as an *ex-voto* of the citizens to their patron saint, Saint Jacob, to whom the cathedral was consecrated, together with other saints venerated in Šibenik, like Saint Mark, the

⁷⁷⁶ Danko Zelić, “Šibenske crkve, postanak grada i utemeljenje Šibenske biskupije” [Churches in Šibenik, origin of the town and foundation of the Šibenik Diocese], in *Sedam stoljeća Šibenske biskupije*, ed. Vilijam Lakić (Šibenik: Gradska knjižnica Juraj Šižgorić, 2001), 798; Zoran Ladić, “Šibensko ‘vrijeme katedrale’. Doprinos stanovnika kasnosrednjovjekovne šibenske komune izgradnji katedrale sv. Jakova” [The “Age of the Cathedral” of Šibenik. The contribution of the citizens of the late medieval šibenik commune to the construction of the St. James Cathedral], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 31 (2013): 39.

⁷⁷⁷ On the formation of the urban core of Šibenik, which arose from the earlier, Late Antique communication routes, together with the formation of its urban identity through the establishment of a diocese and construction of sacral objects, see: Zelić, “Šibenske crkve.”

⁷⁷⁸ The cathedral of Saint James, in Šibenik, due to its importance in the development of early renaissance style and architecture, has been frequently discussed in scholarship. Here we point out to the most recent and relevant studies in which a further bibliography is listed, together with the main scholarly debates on the topic. Igor Fisković, “Ecclesia cathedralis Sibenicensis - djelo biskupije, komune i umjetnika” [Ecclesia cathedralis Sibenicensis - Achievement of the Bishopry, the Commune and the Artists], in *Sedam stoljeća Šibenske biskupije* (Šibenik: Gradska knjižnica “Juraj Šižgorić,” 2001), 805–29; Hilje, “Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine”; Predrag Marković, “‘Malipierova partija’ i izgradnja svetišta šibenske katedrale (1461.–1473.): počeci renesanse u arhitekturi Dalmacije” [The ‘Malipiero section’ of the St. James Cathedral in Šibenik (1461–1473.): the beginnings of the Renaissance in Dalmatia], in *Renesansa i renesanse u umjetnosti Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti; Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti, 2008), 99–122; Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*.

⁷⁷⁹ Ladić, “Šibensko ‘vrijeme katedrale’”, 39.

patron of Venice, Saint Michael and Saint Jerome, whose images are present in the iconography embedded in the cathedral church.

Unlike Trogir, where we have several examples of private commissions, in Šibenik such examples have not been identified by the present scholarship, which makes it difficult to adequately portray the significance of Jerome's cult in the construction of the civic and religious identity of the commune. Besides Georgius Sisgoreus' mention from 1477, no other document reveals whether his feast day enjoyed the same rank as it did in Trogir or Dubrovnik.⁷⁸⁰ The mentioned chapel of Saint Jerome in which the Bishop Šižgorić, an uncle of humanist Georgius Sisgoreus, commissioned a tombstone, and for whose altar, according to the apostolic visitor Valier, he left a legacy for the masses to be served daily, shows that even in Šibenik Jerome's cult was growing from the middle of the century.⁷⁸¹ Antonio Fosco in his publication on the cathedral of Šibenik, reveals that the mentioned chapel of Saint Jerome was a private one, under the patronage of the Sisgoreus (Šižgorić) family to which the bishop belonged, and that besides Jerome, it was consecrated to another Dalmatian saint, Pope Caius (d. 296), who was born in Salona and died as a martyr during the reign of Diocletian.⁷⁸²

The bishop's private veneration of Jerome as the family patron, must have contributed also to the official celebration in the cathedral church, but without documentary evidence we can only speculate about it. Regardless of the lack of documentary evidence, the monumental relief placed on the façade of the northern chapel of the Cathedral of Saint James in the 1460s, overlooking the main city square, speaks to Jerome's status in the popular piety of the people of Šibenik and confirms the existence of persistent civic cult. Its execution during the office of Bishop Urbano Vignaco (1454–1468), shows that even after the death of Šibenik born bishop Šižgorić, the cult of Jerome continued to develop with the strong support of the cathedral chapter, which at the end had to approve the execution of the relief at the façade of the cathedral.

Due to the harmonic synthesis of Venetian late Gothic style with elements of Tuscan Renaissance, the cathedral serves as the emblematic example of the exchange of artistic styles, forms, and ideas between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. The engineering and architectural endeavor, together with the particular stone construction techniques used in the vaulting and cupola of the church, makes the cathedral, together with the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, a turning point in the

⁷⁸⁰ See p. 253.

⁷⁸¹ See p. 233.

⁷⁸² Antonio Fosco, *La cattedrale di Sebenico e il suo architetto Giorgio Dalmatico* (Tip. Demarchi-Rougier, 1873), 38.

development of the Renaissance in Dalmatia. Because of the mentioned stylistic syncretism and the participation of Giorgio Dalmata and Niccolò Fiorentino, the cathedral has been widely discussed, although primarily in Croatian scholarship. The scholars agree upon the three main phases of the construction, each with its distinctive stylistic feature, corresponding to the style characteristic for its *protomagister*. Some of the sub-phases and stylistic layers embedded in its execution are still subject to scholarly debate.

The construction of the cathedral began in 1431, with the position of the *protomagister* changing between several Italian architects.⁷⁸³ Its unique architectural features are based on the project proposal of Giorgio Dalmata (1441–1473), who planned and built the sanctuary with the three apses together with the baptistery in the foundations of the southern apse, and adjacent to it, the sacristy on the upper level. During this phase, the lateral walls of the church body were erected together with the arcades in the interior. After the death of Giorgio Dalmata, Niccolò Fiorentino accepted the role of *protomagister* in 1473, holding it until his death in 1505/1506. By applying an assembly construction technique using stone slabs grooved to fit into one another, which he adopted from Giorgio Dalmata, Niccolò Fiorentino, among other things, vaulted the church and built the cupola.

The Malipiero Segment

An ongoing debate in the scholarship relates to the northern wall of the sanctuary, where the new decorative language of the *all'antica* Tuscan Renaissance is present, different than the style present in the baptistery and on the apses, which were sculpted by Giorgio Dalmata, mainly using elements of the Venetian-Paduan Renaissance. This segment is known as the *Malipiero Segment* (Malipierova partija), dated between 1465 and 1468, based on the coat of arms of the rector Stefano Malipiero.⁷⁸⁴ It is here that the *Tondo of Saint Jerome* is located. Traditionally, Croatian art historians have attributed this segment to Giorgio Dalmata.⁷⁸⁵ The presence of two layers of Renaissance style

⁷⁸³ Those were Bonino da Milano, Francesco di Giacomo, Antonio di Pierpaolo Busato and Lorenzo Pincino.

⁷⁸⁴ Hilje, “Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine,” 9.

⁷⁸⁵ Stanko Kokole, “O vprašanju renesančnih elementov v kiparskem opusu Jurija Dalmatinca” [On the question of Renaissance elements in the sculptural opus of Giorgio Dalmata], *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino* 21 (1985): 105–21; Stanko Kokole, “Renesančni vložki portala kneževoga dvora v dubrovniku” [Renaissance imposts in the portal of the Rector’s Palace in Dubrovnik], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 26 (1986): 229–45; Janez Höfler, *Die Kunst Dalmatiens: vom Mittelalter bis zur Renaissance (800-1520)* (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 212–213. Janez Hofler and Stanko Kokole promoted the hypothesis that the artist adopted new decorative elements during his stay in Dubrovnik (1465–1466), where he met the Florentine architect and sculptor Bartolomeo Michelozzi, and therefore saw it as Giorgio Dalmata’s work.

and the sudden change of the renaissance language is explained by the different influences on the sculptor.

Predrag Marković, the author of the most recent monograph on the cathedral, has offered a comprehensive analysis and explanation of the problem. The earlier Renaissance ornaments on the apses have their origin in the Venetian-Paduan painterly circle, specifically in the painterly school gathered around Francesco Squarcione, whom he assumes were brought to Šibenik by Giorgio Schiavone (Juraj Čulinović, 1463–1504).⁷⁸⁶ In 1456, Giorgio Schiavone, a young painter from Skradin, a town in the vicinity of Šibenik, made a contract with the painter Francesco Squarcione (1397–1468) of Padua to live, work and study in his workshop.⁷⁸⁷ In 1461, Čulinović left his master, taking from him money, some items, and importantly, some drawings. Scholars have assumed that these drawings could have had a great influence on the development of the Renaissance in Dalmatia, due to the presence of some motives of architectural decoration originating in Squarcione's circle.⁷⁸⁸

The introduction of the new elements of the Tuscan renaissance among the sculptural repertoire of Giorgio Dalmata after 1465 is explained by his stay in Dubrovnik, where he met the sculptors from the circle of Michelozzo di Bartolomeo Michelozzi (Florence, 1396–1472). Marković assesses the influence of Donatello in the modeling of Jerome's ascetic physiognomy, together with the high level of the expressionism of his figure. However, he stresses that the template is Tuscan, which could have reached Šibenik through the adoptions of the Florentine models in Venice, as was the case with other Renaissance elements present in this segment, but he does not identify the works from which the artists drew inspiration for his composition.⁷⁸⁹ Francesco Squarcione played a significant role in the dissemination of the Florentine Renaissance in Venice and Padua, which is especially evident in the paintings of his students repeating or altering Tuscan motifs and compositions. The large collection of exemplars and drawings, as well as the originals of ancient

⁷⁸⁶ Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 294–95.

⁷⁸⁷ Hilje, "Šibenski Slikar Juraj Čulinović" [Šibenik Painter Juraj Čulinović], 47; In 1456, Juraj Čulinović joined the workshop of the Paduan artist Francesco Squarcione (1397-1468). In the development of northern Italian painting, he has an important place, not so much for his production as for his interest in ancient art and culture. He collected the ancient sculptures and architectural fragments, together with drawings he made on his journeys. The private painterly school that he established was attended by 137 students and shaped the first-generation of Venetian and Paduan Renaissance painters, "squarcioneschi", among which the most famous are Andrea Mantegna, Marco Zoppo, and Cosmè Tura. For more on Squarcione's work and workshop see: Alberta de Nicolò Salmazo, ed., *Francesco Squarcione: pictorum gymnasiarcha singularis: atti delle giornate di studio Padova, 10-11 febbraio 1998* (Padova: Il poligrafo; Musei civici di Padova, 1999).

⁷⁸⁸ Prijatelj, "Juraj Čulinović i slikarska zbivanja," 238. We do not know much about the drawings which Čulinović brought and what they represented, except that there were around 70 of them and that one of them was a drawing of a nude by Antonio del Pollaiuolo.

⁷⁸⁹ Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 328–29.

reliefs, plaster and terracotta casts of Donatello's works and those of his associates, certainly contributed to this.⁷⁹⁰

The only scholar who has questioned this hypothesis was Emil Hilje, who saw this change of style as the sign of the possible, earlier participation of Niccolò Fiorentino.⁷⁹¹ The main point of the argument is based on the publication of a document, which places Fiorentino in Dalmatia earlier than was previously believed. Instead of arriving to Trogir in 1468, he would have arrived to Šibenik in 1464, where he was paid for his work on the chapel of Saint Bernardino and Stephen in the Franciscan convent in Šibenik.⁷⁹² Based on the elaborated comparative stylistic analysis, by identifying the elements which are characteristic for the sculptural production of Fiorentino, he expressed doubts that Giorgio Dalmata could have suddenly changed his style so drastically, so late in life. He therefore proposed the attribution of the whole segment, including the *Tondo of Saint Jerome*, to Niccolò Fiorentino.⁷⁹³ Marković however, refutes the possible interventions of a young Niccolò Fiorentino in such a critical segment, once more emphasizing that based on the stylistic components, it should be attributed to Giorgio Dalmata.⁷⁹⁴

The complexity of the matter does not allow us to engage further with the question of the attribution of the segment and the authorship of the relief. Still, this subchapter will contribute to this discussion, positioning the production of the relief in Šibenik in the broader context of the evolution of the image of "Penitent Saint Jerome", focusing on the identification of the possible models used for the innovative composition of this relief which points to the Florentine origin of the model(s). For that reason, here I will refer to Giorgio Dalmata as the author of the relief, mainly due to its general acceptance in the literature.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 310.

⁷⁹¹ The earliest documented commission from Fiorentino was in 1464 when he sculpted statues of Saint Bernardino and Saint Stephen for the eponymous chapel in the Franciscan monastery. Hilje, "Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine," 8; The new attributions of Fiorentino's opus in Šibenik are discussed in: Meri Zornija, "Dopune šibenskom opusu Nikole Ivanova Firentinca" [Additions to the Šibenik opus of Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino], in *Šibenik od prvog spomena: Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa "950 godina od prvog spomena Šibenika,"* ed. Iva Kurelac (Šibenik: Zagreb: Muzej grada Šibenika ; HAZU ; Odsjek za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti HAZU, 2018), 463–89.

⁷⁹² See more: Hilje, "Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine," 8; Joško Belamarić, "Kipovi s nepoznate kapele Nikole Firentinca u Šibeniku" [The statues from the unknown chapel by Niccolò Fiorentino] in *Sedam stoljeća Šibenske biskupije : zbornik radova sa Znanstvenog skupa Šibenska biskupija od 1298. do 1998.*, ed. Josip Čuzela (Šibenik: Gradska knjižnica Juraj Šižgorić, 2001), 893–906; Zornija, "Dopune šibenskom opusu Nikole Ivanova Firentinca."

⁷⁹³ Hilje, "Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine," 11.

⁷⁹⁴ Marković discusses this question in: Marković, "Malipierova partija"; Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 324–29.

The Šibenik Tondo



Figure 56 Giorgio Dalmata, *The Šibenik Tondo (Saint Jerome in Penance)*, Cathedral of Saint James, Šibenik, 1465-1468 (detail). Source: Marković, *Šibenska katedrala*, p.329

The relief *tondo*, in the uppermost zone of the segment, framed by a semicircular arch, reveals the penitent saint kneeling in front of a crucifix, according to the established iconography of this scene. The composition is simplified, reduced to the essential elements of iconography—a saint in penitential fervor in the center, kneeling in a rocky landscape in front of the crucifix. The lion, the saint's attribute, emerges from the rock below the crucifix on the left. The whole composition is deprived of the diverse flora and fauna usually found in this type of representation, besides the trees, possibly laurel, on the rock behind the saint. The narrative embedded in the scene relies on Jerome's letter to Eustochium, and the description of the temptations he suffered in the desert, as already discussed in this text.

Contrary to the usual portrayal of the half-naked saint, dressed in sackcloth, or with only a loincloth around his hips, here he wears a robe that resembles a monastic habit.⁷⁹⁵ The depiction of Jerome in this manner, in a monastic habit, as was customary in Tuscan painting and established among the reform congregations, indicates the Tuscan origin of the model that inspired the

⁷⁹⁵ For example, in Andrea Mantegna's *Saint Jerome in the Desert* (c.1455) today kept in Sao Paolo, Jerome is dressed in monastic habit, but the atmosphere depicted is different. Jerome is not shown in penitential fervor, but in meditation, reading the book in front of the cave. The similar meditative atmosphere is present on the painting by Bartolomeo Montagna's *Saint Jerome in the Desert* (c.1500) from Pinacoteca di Brera.

composition in Šibenik. Although this type was also adopted in Venetian and Paduan painting, Daniel Russo points out that it did not happen before the 1470s and 1480s thus postdating the work in *Šibenik* which was made in the late 1460s.⁷⁹⁶ Another contribution to the argument of Tuscan origin is the form of the *tondo*, present in the painting and the sculpture of the period. A *tondo*, a circular form of painting or relief which emerged around 1430, and was well-received among the leading Florentine artists, including Sandro Botticelli, Piero di Cosimo, Filippo Lippi and Donatello, Luca and Andrea della Robbia, and Desiderio da Settignano.

It is necessary to underline that before the 1470s, which we take as the *terminus ante quem* for the comparative material of the *Šibenik Tondo*, the form of *tondo* was mostly limited to the representations of the *Virgin and Child*. The variations of the scenes presented in *tondi* happened only closer to the end of the century. Among those dated with certainty is Donatello's *Chellini Madonna* (1456), for which Roberta Olson suggests, as for the other early *tondi*, origins in the small-scale sculpture made in more malleable materials that could be used experimentally, like wax (later cast in bronze), terra-cotta, and stucco.⁷⁹⁷

The form of *tondo*, in painting and sculpture, was predominantly reserved for the private and semi-public places, such as the frieze decorated with *tondi* in the courtyard of the Palazzo Medici dated to 1455–1460,⁷⁹⁸ or the painted *tondo* of Virgin with the Child by Sebastiano Mainardi in the *Cappella del Podestà* (also known as *Cappella della Maddalena*), in the palazzo, today Museum Bargello in Florence, dated to 1490s.⁷⁹⁹ The adoption of this form in public sculpture happened gradually, as was the case with the stemma of the *Arte dei Medici e Speziali* designed by Luca della Robbia from 1455 to 1465, situated on the façade of Orsanmichele in Florence,⁸⁰⁰ or with the *tondi*

⁷⁹⁶ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 201.

⁷⁹⁷ Roberta J. M. Olson, "Lost and Partially Found: The Tondo, a Significant Florentine Art Form, in Documents of the Renaissance," *Artibus et Historiae* 14, no. 27 (1993): 50-51. Another example by Donatello, supports this hypothesis. A bronze relief dated c.1443 in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna has been integrated in a marble tabernacle carved by Desiderio da Settignano, which suggests that before 1440s *tondi* were not always created as autonomous works of art and were still in a state of transition from roundels and medallions. See also Donatello's stucco *tondi* in the Sagrestia Vecchia in the church of San Lorenzo in Florence, dated around 1435.

⁷⁹⁸ Tamara Smithers, *Michelangelo in the New Millennium: Conversations about Artistic Practice, Patronage and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 118–22; Ursula Wester and Erika Simon, "Die Reliefmedaillons Im Hofe Des Palazzo Medici Zu Florenz. I. Teil. Die Tondi, Ihre Vorbilder Und Die Meisterfrage," *Jahrbuch Der Berliner Museen* 7, no. 1 (1965): 15–91.

⁷⁹⁹ Olson, "Lost and Partially Found," 47. The chapel's semi-public character was due to the function it had where those condemned to death came to pray before the execution. This aspect was supported also with the fresco of the Last Judgement, together with a fresco of Dante.

⁸⁰⁰ Geraldine Karnbach, "Homage to the Florentine Tondo" (MA, New York, CUNY Hunter College, 2017), 18–19, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc_sas_etds/150.

made by Andrea della Robbia on Brunelleschi's porch in the *Ospedale degli Innocenti* in Florence, in 1485.

The *tondo* in Šibenik comes from the same artistic tradition, established in Florence, where its circular form indicated the divine status of the depicted figure, regardless of its position in the church or other secular space.⁸⁰¹ The circular form, with its compositional limitations, forces the viewer to concentrate on the center of the composition, where a more developed background would only draw the attention from the depicted subject.⁸⁰² Based on these aspects, it is clear that the sculptor in Šibenik had a good understanding of the contemporary Florentine artistic postulates and innovations and knew how to handle such a demanding format, for which he reduces the overall composition to a few elements, putting the focus on the figure of Jerome.

The circular form and its adoption in renaissance art and architecture rely heavily on its symbolism, promoted by the Renaissance artists and theoreticians, of which the most influential was Leon Battista Alberti who saw the circle as the perfect shape created by Nature: "It is obvious from all that is fashioned, produced, or created under her influence that nature delights primarily in the circle. Need I mention the earth, the stars, animals, their nests, and so on, all of which she has made circular?"⁸⁰³ In Christian symbolism, the circle represented God's creation and eternity since it has neither a beginning nor end, and for that reason, Alberti promoted the use of the central plan for the churches. It was at the Council of Florence where Nicholas of Cusa became familiar with Alberti's ideas, which he adopted in his theological treatises.⁸⁰⁴

For Cusanus, mathematics was a tool for understanding the knowledge of God, who was the most perfect geometrical shape—a circle.⁸⁰⁵ The adoption of the circular form, at first in the depictions of the Virgin Mary, and later for the saints, as is evident in the Saint Jerome in Šibenik, reflects the symbolism of sanctity embedded in the image. Geraldine Karnbach sees the circle form in the representation of the Virgin Mary as *a hortus conclusus*, a symbolic representation of her being cloistered in the heavenly realm.⁸⁰⁶ The same conclusions can be applied in the case of the *Šibenik Tondo*, where the circle is an indication of Jerome's divine status and heavenly abode.

⁸⁰¹ Roberta J. M Olson, *The Florentine Tondo* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35, 227.

⁸⁰² Karnbach, "Homage to the Florentine *Tondo*," 18.

⁸⁰³ Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 196.

⁸⁰⁴ On connections between Cusanus and Alberti, see: Charles H. Carman, *Leon Battista Alberti and Nicholas Cusanus: Towards an Epistemology of Vision for Italian Renaissance Art and Culture*, Visual Culture in Early Modernity (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).

⁸⁰⁵ See: Erich Meuthen and David Crowner, *Nicholas of Cusa A Sketch for a Biography*, 2012, 30–32.

⁸⁰⁶ Karnbach, "Homage to the Florentine *Tondo*," 2.

However, this research did not manage to trace the direct model, in the same form and composition, which could have been used by the artist in Šibenik. Furthermore, the depictions of the saintly figures in *tondo* form were not usual for the period, where the image of the Virgin occupied most of the religious production. From the middle of the fifteenth century, the image of “Penitent Saint Jerome” has been established in sculptural production, in the reliefs of the smaller dimensions, intended for personal use. We find the sculptural representations of the theme in the production of Desiderio da Settignano (1428–1464), Antonio Rossellino (1427–1479), and their later citations in the works of Giovanni Antonio Amadeo (1447–1522), Giovanni Pietro da Rho (1464–1465/1513), and Giovanni da Nola (1478–1559).

Several innovations should be noted in the *Šibenik Tondo*, its dimensions and monumentality, the change of the setting in which such representations are usually found, and the compositional particularities. Despite being placed on the church, the function of the relief is public due to its position over the main square of Šibenik. In an artistic sense, the choice of *tondo* form and the understanding of its symbolic meaning, as elaborated before, reflect the clear understanding of renaissance artistic postulates applied in Šibenik.

Marković has previously noted that “Giorgio Dalmata and his *ingegno* stand in the very essence of the appearance of the Cathedral of Saint James as a whole,” in accordance with Alberti’s conception of *ars*, referring primarily to construction techniques, but also interpretations of Alberti’s *all’antica* in the construction and decorative language.⁸⁰⁷ It is therefore not surprising that the principle of *inventio* advocated by Alberti—read in the whole concept of the cathedral and especially on the apses where Giorgio Dalmata confirmed his invention with a signature—was applied in formal and compositional terms to the relief depicting Saint Jerome.

Yet, in the end, it cannot be interpreted differently, given the elements of the Tuscan Renaissance present in the decorative language on the *Malipiero segment*. This indicates that the *Šibenik Tondo* was made as a part of a uniform project. For that reason, the artistic model for the relief should be sought in the same place of origin as the other elements of the architectural decorations.

⁸⁰⁷ Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 13, 22.

Jerome's Image in Popular Devotion

A large number of painterly representations of Saint Jerome made during the fifteenth century reveal his place in popular devotion. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the painterly production was reserved for only one segment of society, those with substantial financial resources to place a commission with some of the greatest artists of the period. The visual culture of the Renaissance was not limited only to the fine arts. Woodcuts and prints of saintly images or depictions of the Bible were in broader circulation for their accessibility and affordability for different social strata.⁸⁰⁸ Here we should recall the woodcut images of Jerome that Bishop Niccolò Albergati distributed among the members of the confraternity he founded and named after the saint, to be placed in their homes.⁸⁰⁹ The key to Jerome's popularity lies in the growing private piety and the emphasis on the sacrament of penance, with the image of Jerome the penitent becoming one of the most numerous images of domicile piety. The archival documents of the sixteenth century reveal that in the inventories of Venetian homes the image of Saint Jerome reports more than a hundred times, together with other penitential saints.⁸¹⁰

Such objects are often overlooked in reviews of Jerome's iconography and artistic production, mainly due to a significantly lower number of preserved examples than the paintings, leaving behind a large corpus of comparative material that contributed to the spread of veneration of Jerome because of its affordability and easy transportability. For that reason, this type of medium served to transfer the iconographic types or provided a model for other artworks.⁸¹¹ In the practical sense, the need for such objects comes from growing personal devotion, in which, as already explained, the images served as mnemonic objects for meditative prayer.

Among the mass-produced objects used for such purposes were devotional plaquettes, a new sculptural genre that emerged around the 1440s. Although initially copies of antique models, with time, sacral, mainly saintly images, started to be reproduced. The earliest examples are found in

⁸⁰⁸ Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe*. The research by David Areford is a very valuable contribution to the perception of the image in the Late Middle Ages, especially in mass-produced images like woodcuts and prints. As he emphasizes, they were not regarded as aesthetical objects, but as functional ones, a tool for devotion intended to provoke emotional and spiritual response. The variety of the contexts in which such images were used is reflected in their meaning, from private devotion to apotropaic practices.

⁸⁰⁹ See pp.149-150.

⁸¹⁰ Margaret Anne Morse, "The Arts of Domestic Devotion in Renaissance Italy: The Case of Venice" (PhD, College Park, University of Maryland, 2006), 184–85, <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/4127>.

⁸¹¹ The best example is the plaquette that scholars attribute to Donatello, the so-called Walters' Madonna, dated to the 1440s and considered to be cast in Padua. Today, sixteen direct copies of the work are preserved, with numerous variations of the composition in plaques and carved stone reliefs. Allison Lee Palmer, "The Walters' 'Madonna and Child' Plaquette and Private Devotional Art in Early Renaissance Italy," *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 59 (2001): 73–84.

Padua, dated between 1440 and 1456, largely attributed to Donatello and his associates, mostly representing the Madonna with Child. Donatello's composition of Madonna has influenced the sculptural production of the same motifs, alongside painterly production, especially among the painters of Squarcione's circle in Padua and Venice.⁸¹² In Rome, the Venetian Cardinal Pietro Barbo also had a formative role in the development of the genre, since he installed a bronze foundry in the Palazzo Venezia around 1455 to produce antique gems in bronze reliefs. The same year, Antonio di Pietro Averlino, known as Filarete (1400–1469), executed a pair of bronze doors for the church of Saint Peter.⁸¹³

A low relief cast in metal, usually bronze, was affordable, portable, and easily produced in large quantities. Due to their mass production, they are usually not signed and dated, with unknown provenance, for which reason the research about them has been focused on their attribution to individual workshops. The recent book by Marika Leino is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the visual culture of the Italian renaissance, providing insight into the function of such objects, its artistic value, and devotional use, together with the categorization of the formats and the motives cast on them.⁸¹⁴

Their use was not uniform. The multifunctionality of these objects contributed to their popularity and prevalence. By being mounted into tabernacles or furniture, and other objects like lamps, they had a decorative purpose. Some of them, with elaborated frames, served as *pax*, a liturgical object used during the mass for the *Kiss of peace* part of the mass. Those with holes were hung on walls. Many of them show the signs of wear, which indicates that they were associated with divine protection and worn on the body or carried in the pocket as amulet objects, not necessarily only as of the sign of devotion, but also to prevent possible misfortune.⁸¹⁵ Despite their early emergence, the plaquettes with representations of the saints became popular only in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, among the first post-Donatello generation of artists and goldsmiths in northern Italy, prevailing over the depictions of Virgin and ancient motifs.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹² Anna Jolly, *Madonnas by Donatello and His Circle* (Peter Lang, 1998), 77-78. Marco Zoppo's Wimbourne Madonna (1453-5) and his drawing of the same scene kept in the British Museum are the earliest references of Donatello's composition in the paintings. The direct reference of Donatello's composition is seen in the work attributed to Giorgio Schiavone (Juraj Čulinović), today kept in the Museo Corer in Venice.

⁸¹³ Gordon Campbell, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts: Two-Volume Set* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 220–21.

⁸¹⁴ Marika Leino, *Fashion, Devotion and Contemplation: The Status and Functions of Italian Renaissance Plaquettes* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

⁸¹⁵ Generally and introductory on the plaquettes see: Campbell, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts*, 220–23.

⁸¹⁶ Leino, *Fashion, Devotion and Contemplation*, 164.

Among them, the most established artist was Galeazzo Mondella, called *Moderno* (1467–before 1528), together with *Andrea Briosco* called *Riccio* (c. 1470–1532), *Giovanni Bernardi* (1494–1553), and *Francesco di Giorgio Martini* (1439–1502).⁸¹⁷ In their production, several variations of the iconography of *Saint Jerome* are found which show the market need for such objects and reflect the popularity of the saint at the period, supported by the occurrence of his image in painterly production.



Figure 57 *Moderno* (attributed to), *Saint Jerome*, c. 1485–1530 (8.6cm x 6.6cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. Source: <https://www.mfab.hu/artworks/saint-jerome-3/> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)



Figure 58 *Antonio di Pietro Averlino (Filarete)*, *Saint Jerome Plaque*, Fitzwilliam museum Cambridge, c.1450 (18.5 x 12.7 cm). Source: Fitzwilliam museum Cambridge

The analysis by *Marika Leino* has shown that among the saintly figures which appear on these devotional objects, *Jerome* is the frontrunner—as many as a third of the preserved examples portray him as a penitent.⁸¹⁸ However, none of these representations can be brought into a close correlation with the composition in *Šibenik*. Among the few dated before the 1470s is the one from the Fitzwilliam museum in Cambridge (Fig. 58), attributed to *Filarete* and dated to the 1450s by *Ulrich*

⁸¹⁷ *Douglas Lewis*, “The Plaquettes of ‘Moderno’ and His Followers,” *Studies in the History of Art* 22 (1989): 105–7; *Anthony Radcliffe*, “The Debasement of Images: The Sculptor *Andrea Riccio* and the Applied Arts in Padua in the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Sculpted Object, 1400-1700*, ed. *Stuart Currie* and *Peta Motture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 87–98; *Denise Allen* and *Peta Motture*, *Andrea Riccio: Renaissance Master of Bronze* (London: Philip Wilson, 2008).

⁸¹⁸ *Leino*, *Fashion, Devotion and Contemplation*, 164. Out of 107 different designs found on the plaquettes, 20 depicts the *Virgin and Child*, and 29 show saints, out of which 11 depicts *Saint Jerome*. *Leino* adds that “none of the *Saint Jeromes* depicted appear to show the saint in his scholarly guise”, which only shows that the image of penitent *Jerome* was one that everyone could identify with, regardless of their social status or education.

Middeldorf, one of the pioneers in the research of renaissance medals and plaquettes.⁸¹⁹ Unlike other plaquettes, this one has not been discussed much in the scholarship. The reason for this lies in its probable production in Rome and its uniqueness, which differentiates it from the production of the northern Italian masters. We accept the proposed attribution to Filarete, although with caution. The whole scene is framed with an *all'antica* frame with Corinthian-style pilasters and a Latin identifying inscription (*s. Hieronymus*). Due to the high-quality modeling and casting, it has been proposed that it was commissioned by “an erudite and discerning patron as well as to aid his or her private devotions.”⁸²⁰



Figure 59 Giorgio Dalmata, *The Šibenik Tondo* (Saint Jerome in Penance), Cathedral of Saint James, Šibenik, 1465-1468



Figure 60 Antonio di Pietro Averlino (Filarete), *Saint Jerome Plaquette*, Fitzwilliam museum Cambridge, c.1450 (18.5 x 12.7 cm)

Already, at first sight, the compositional similarities are visible between the *Šibenik Tondo* and the plaquette. The saint kneels in front of the cross, raising his hand in penitential fervor. The whole scene is placed in a rocky landscape and, unlike the *Šibenik Tondo*, is filled with wild animals—snakes, scorpion, two lions, and, unusual for Jerome’s iconography, two bears. The motifs represented in the *Šibenik Tondo*—the lion under the cross in the right corner, the posture of Jerome’s body dressed in the habit and the trees in the background, differ in the manner of the modeling and

⁸¹⁹ Ulrich Middeldorf, “Filarete?,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 1973, 75–86 Another copy of lower quality is kept in the Harvard Art Museum.

⁸²⁰ Maya Corry et al., eds., *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy* (London; New York: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), 64. I would like to express gratitude to Victoria Avery from the Fitzwilliam Museum for her help and discussion on this piece.

the execution, but in the idea, they are the same. Although the trees in the background could be interpreted as the elements of the landscape to achieve the compositional harmony, in the representations of Jerome, the trees represent an iconographic element. Like the tree stump or dead tree, the depictions of ivy or laurel trees, both evergreens, symbolically allude to Jerome's chastity and to the victory of the spirit over the temptations of the flesh.⁸²¹

In the Museum collection of the Franciscan friary in the town of Hvar, a wooden image dated to the turn of the sixteenth century (Fig. 61), which copies the composition of the *Filarete's plaquette*, is preserved.⁸²² The existence of a direct copy of Filarete's composition in Dalmatia shows that this composition circulated during the second half of the fifteenth century, and that in the case of Šibenik and Hvar the same artistic model was used. However, sculptural inelegance in the execution of Hvar wooden relief, distorted proportions, and the lower quality level of the execution, suggest that the work was done by a master who followed a high-quality Filarete template, but failed to achieve the same level of artistic quality.

Given that it is preserved in a Franciscan monastery, it is very likely that it was used for the private piety of a friar. In the case of Hvar, we must speak of the direct copy of the plaquette. Nevertheless, this copy represents an important point in the study of the artistic alteration between the two Adriatic coasts, especially since other examples of the copy of Filarete's plaquette are unknown to us. Moreover, this example is the only known direct copy of the composition this research managed to identify, besides the copy of plaquette in the Harvard Art Museum. While it stands as an example of the circulation of the art between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, the conclusion about its direct connection with the *Šibenik Tondo* is a hasty one.



Figure 61 Anonymous artist, *Saint Jerome in Penance*, Franciscan monastery in Hvar, c. 15th/16th century Source: Registry of Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia (entry no. RST-212)

⁸²¹ Cheney, *Giorgio Vasari's Teachers*, 164. The laurel as a symbol of chastity dates back to ancient times, when the laurel branch was consecrated to the vestal virgins.

⁸²² This example is recorded in the Registry of Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia (entry no. RST-212), but this research did not find previous references in the literature. I would like to thank Professor Igor Fisković for his thoughts and discussion about this piece.

The simplification of the composition in Šibenik in order to accentuate the constructive elements of the scene expresses the ingenuity of a master who does not blindly copy a template, but based on the established iconographic type, presents an invention. The master's elaboration of some aspects of the template, which he combines into a harmonious representation and adapts to the circular form of the relief, reflects his understanding of renaissance principles. Admittedly, the composition in Šibenik has its origin in Filarete's composition, but not through direct adaptation. Florentine artists varied this composition largely during the second half of the fifteenth century, and the compositional and iconographic model for the *Šibenik Tondo* should be sought in the painterly production of the period.

The representation of Jerome supports this. Regardless of the overall citations, especially the gesture with which Jerome unfolds his garments, there is a big difference in the portrayal of the saint. Filarete's Jerome is a youthful saint with tousled hair and beard, immensely reminiscent of Christ. This example supports the argument discussed on pp. 104–107, on the early formation of Jerome's iconography, modeled upon the idea of "the new Christ," adopting the iconography of Saint Francis, where Jerome's posture highly resembles that of *poverello* in the moment of receiving the stigmata. In Šibenik, Jerome is older, with shorter beard and hair, which emphasized his dolichocephalic head shape even more. Art historians have already noted that the other sculpted examples from Dalmatia, from the period, all have the head sculpted and shaped in the same manner.⁸²³ The position of Jerome's legs, conditioned by the form of the *tondo*, clearly repeats the same posture of Francis in the already mentioned act of Stigmatization.

The Florentine Models

Around the 1450s, the images of "Penitent Saint Jerome", reserved for predella depictions and the joint representation with Saint Francis next to the Crucifix, gradually started to develop into an independent scene, and not only in the Florentine painting but even beyond, in Ferrara as with Taddeo Crivelli's illumination in *Gualenghi d'Este Book of Hours*, Jacopo Bellini's *Penitent Jerome* today in Verona (Fig. 14), or Marco Zoppo's *Penitent Saint Jerome* today in Pinacoteca Nazionale di

⁸²³ Hilje, "Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine," 12. Hilje had an opportunity to examine the relief close by during the restoration of the cathedral, and has reported the relief has been considerably damaged by exposure to the weather due to which it has lost some of its original volume, but the composition and balance of the masses reflect the Renaissance spirit. Hilje compared the physiognomy of Saint Jerome's face with other sculptures made in the period - sculptures by Niccolò Fiorentino for the chapel of Saint Bernardino in the Franciscan church in Šibenik, the statue of Saint John the Baptist in the baptistry of Trogir, already mentioned Saint Jerome from the church of Saint Mary in Trogir, emphasizing the striking similarity in the execution as an argument for the attribution of the relief of Saint Jerome in Šibenik to Niccolò Fiorentino.

Bologna.⁸²⁴ Filarete's composition should be added among the early representations of this type, possibly as a model for later variations. The earliest variations of the motives of the plaquette are found on the marble relief by Desiderio da Settignano (Fig. 62), dated around 1461, today in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.⁸²⁵ Applying Donatello's *rilievo schiacciato* technique—a very low almost flattened relief—Desiderio made one of the more unique representations of this theme, in the artistic modeling and the iconographic inventions.⁸²⁶



Figure 62 Desiderio da Settignano, *Saint Jerome in a Desert*, c.1461 (42.7cm x 54.8 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington. Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.1252.html> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

To the scene of Jerome in penitence, Desiderio incorporated the scene of *Jerome and the lion*; not the one where the saint takes the thorn out of the paw, but the moment when lion appeared in the monastery and all the brothers run away in the fear, except Jerome who tames the animal.⁸²⁷ The

⁸²⁴ Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*, 211.

⁸²⁵ Desiderio da Settignano was one of the finest sculptors of the Florentine Renaissance, highly influenced by Donatello. His early formation is debatable, but the scholars assume that it is plausible that it took place in the workshop of brothers Bernardo and Antonio Rosellino (original surname Gamberetti). See: Ida Cardellini, *Desiderio da Settignano* (Milano: Edizioni di Comunità, 1962); Anne Markham, "Desiderio Da Settignano and the Workshop of Bernardo Rossellino," *The Art Bulletin* 45, no. 1 (1963): 35–45; Marc Bormand et al., *Desiderio Da Settignano: Sculptor of Renaissance Florence* (Milano; Washington; [Paris: 5 Continents; National Galley of Art; Musée du Louvre Éditions, 2007); Joseph Connors et al., eds., *Desiderio da Settignano: [atti del convegno, 9-12 maggio 2007, Firenze, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Max-Planck-Institut]* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2011).

⁸²⁶ Rudolf Wittkower, "Desiderio da Settignano's 'St. Jerome in the Desert,'" *Studies in the History of Art* 4 (1971): 7. Rudolf Wittkower brings another copy of the same work, kept in the private collection of Michael Hall in New York, which repeats the same composition as the one in Washington.

⁸²⁷ The same scene is visible in the Carpaccio's cycle in the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* from the beginning of the sixteenth century, only in the elaborated version, and in the frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli in Montefalco.

figure of a frightened monk, fleeing in fear of the lion, can be seen behind the kneeling Jerome. The reference to the plaquette is found in the right corner of the relief, where Desiderio borrowed the motif of the rock with the smaller crucifix, with the head of a lioness emerging behind the rock on which a crucifix stands. While Filarete's lion is immersed in the rock in the left lower corner, Desiderio's is depicted jumping towards Jerome and the young monk. The merging of two scenes could be the reason for the unusual depiction of two crucifixes in the scene, one in front of Jerome, and another in front of the lioness.

Rudolf Wittkower made a detailed and valuable analysis of this piece, pointing to several influences on Desiderio, together with the influence of his composition on the later representations of penitent Jerome. He does not refer to the composition of the plaquette or mark its existence, but notices the unusual motifs of the lion and lioness and their "occasional appearance in a limited Florentine circle" due to which all the works with their presence are interrelated.⁸²⁸ For him, the merging of the scenes is the influence of Filippo Lippi's *Saint Jerome in Penance* today in the Lindenau-Museum of Altenburg, Germany, dated to 1455.⁸²⁹ Jerome appears two times: in the background as the young penitent kneeling with the cross in hand, and in the foreground as a monk taming the lion. Additionally, Wittkower marks Filippo Lippi's work as the earliest example where the lion and lioness are depicted together.

The motifs of the lion and the lioness are adopted from Ghiberti-Donatello's tradition,⁸³⁰ particularly from the Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* finished in 1451. On the upper right part of the *Ark panel* we find the motifs of the lion accompanied by the lioness in the rocky landscape, with an ox and bear that crawl out behind the pyramid. The presence of the same motifs on the Filarete's plaquette indicates the same origin. Although the question of Filarete's authorship is raised here, we will leave the question of the possible authorship of some other artists from Ghiberti's circle in Florence for future research.

The connection of Filarete with the aforementioned circle is already known; he mastered the art of the bronze molding, for which reason scholars assume that he was trained in Ghiberti's workshop. With Donatello's brother Simeone, he executed the masterful work on the bronze doors of Saint Peter in Rome between 1433–1445. I propose that further research on the plaquette should

⁸²⁸ Wittkower, "Desiderio da Settignano's 'St. Jerome in the Desert,'" 29.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29; The painting is often dated to 1439 based on the letter sent by Filippo Lippi to Piero Medici asking for the payment for the painting. Since it was noted in the Medici's inventories, scholars have assumed that it was this one. But recent hypothesis suggest that it was another altarpiece with Medici's stemma on it.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

consider its execution in the Florentine circles, also due to the iconography of the penitent saint, which emerges among the reform monastic congregations in Tuscany, here reflected in Jerome's garment—evidently Hieronymites' gray habit with a leather belt. Jerome wears similar garment in several of Hieronymites works, the earliest being the altarpiece by Zanobi Strozzi *Virgin with Saint Cosmas, Damian, Jerome, John the Baptist, Francis and Lawrence* dated around 1460s, today in the Musée du Petit Palais (Avignon), once on the main altar of the Hieronymite church in Fiesole, Andrea del Castagno's fresco in Santissima Annunziata (1455–1456) or the later Botticini altarpiece for the same church (c.1490).⁸³¹



Figure 63 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Saint Jerome in Penance*, Private collection, c. 1470-1493 (66cm x91 cm). Source: Fondazione Zeri <http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/scheda/opera/17667/Jacopo%20di%20Arcangelo%2C%20San%20Girolamo%20penitente%20nel%20deserto#lg=1&slide=0> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)



Figure 64 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Penitent Saint Jerome*, c. 1480 (50.5cm x 31.2cm), Ringling Museum of Art – Sarasota. Source: <https://emuseum.ringling.org/emuseum/internal/media/dispatcher/92569/resize%3Aformat%3Dfull;jsessionid=8E2C716F11A6ECD A91FA129F79ACC048> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

The composition established in the Filarete's plaquette, and later partially adopted by Desiderio da Settignano, has been further varied in the paintings by Jacopo del Sellaio (Fig. 63–65). Jacopo di Arcangelo (Florence, 1442–1493), known as Jacopo da Sellaio, was a student of Filippo Lippi and was also influenced by Sandro Botticelli. He specialized in the devotional panels of smaller dimensions, among which the penitential saints had a special place—*Saint Jerome* and *Saint John the Baptist*—in the spirit of the reform movements in Tuscany at the period. The number of preserved paintings and the difference in the execution of the same motifs suggest that he had an active

⁸³¹ Kanter and Palladino, *Fra Angelico*, 264.

workshop. Unfortunately, most of his works are undocumented, which presents an obstacle in the research due to uncertain dating. However, we know that he was active after 1470.

For Wittkower, Sellaio has drawn inspiration from Desiderio's relief, especially the representation of *Penitent Jerome* with the lion and lioness next to the crucifix.⁸³² Although his compositions have direct citations of Desiderio's work, and of the plaquette—especially the position of the lion and the crucifix in the right corner of the composition—his Jerome is dressed in monastic habit, opening his clothes in the same manner as it is on plaquette and in Šibenik. Jacopo da Sellaio's paintings have an important difference—Jerome is depicted as an older man with a bald head and a long beard.



Figure 65 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, c. 1475-1486 (61cmx41cm), The Louvre Museum. Source: Gallerix <https://gallerix.org/storeroom/1014246250/N/193646580/1/> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

habit, opening his clothes in the same manner as it is on plaquette and in Šibenik. Jacopo da Sellaio's paintings have an important difference—Jerome is depicted as an older man with a bald head and a long beard.

Jacopo del Sellaio is not known as one of the prominent Florentine painters, and his production was mostly limited to devotional objects, including a series of devotional paintings and decorative arts such as cassone fronts. For this reason, I propose the existence of some other model, template, or sketch that was circulating among the Florentine artists after the 1450s. In support of this are several later examples where the lion is placed in the right corner, under the crucifix, and where Jerome is dressed in a long garment, with the distinctive gesture of baring of chest to perform the act of penance.

One such example is the fresco in the already mentioned Cappella del Podestà in Palazzo Bargello in Florence, from the second half of the fifteenth century, attributed to Bartolomeo di Giovanni (Firenze, 1458–1501), sometimes referred to as l'Alunno di Domenico (Ghirlandaio), paired with the aforementioned *tondo* of the Virgin Mary.⁸³³ The previously mentioned altarpiece by Francesco Botticini made for the Hieronymites church in Fiesole in 1490 repeats the same composition with the lion in the left corner. It is even found on the woodcut from a Bible printed in Strasbourg in 1497. In

⁸³² Wittkower, "Desiderio da Settignano's 'St. Jerome in the Desert,'" 30.

⁸³³ Jean K. Cadogan, "Reconsidering Some Aspects of Ghirlandaio's Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 65, no. 2 (1983): 286. The fresco is inscribed by a certain Alessandro Fiorentino and dated 1490.

support of the circulation of an as yet unidentified model, which derives from Filarete's composition, and based on which Desiderio da Settignano, Jacopo del Sellaio, and Giorgio Dalmeta made their depictions of Jerome, are the relief representations of the same scene in Lombard art.



Figure 66 Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, *Saint Francis Receiving Stigmata and Penitent Saint Jerome*, Cathedral of Cremona, 1484. Source: <https://www.cattedraledicremona.it/opera/formelle-amedeo-2/> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

Between 1482 and 1484, Giovanni Antonio Amadeo carved the reliefs for the shrine of Saint Arealdo in the cathedral of Cremona (Fig. 66), which are no longer in their original position since the tomb was dismantled.⁸³⁴ Among them were scenes of *Saint Francis Receiving Stigmata* and *Penitent Saint Jerome*, today placed one next to each other, but keeping in mind the discussion on the similarities of their iconographies, and the typological connections in their sanctity, their original placement was certainly the same. This example is of interest, not only because it serves as the perfect example of the comparative approach to the iconography of two saints, but also because the composition of Jerome's panel is very similar to the one in Šibenik. The composition and the iconography are limited to the basic elements: the lion under the rock on which the crucified Christ is shown on the left, the penitent saint in the center, and the rock formation behind him.

The whole scene is deprived of other elements or a developed background. The posture of the saint, dressed in the monastic habit, is very reminiscent of that in Šibenik, especially the position of

⁸³⁴ Laura Cavazzini, "Nell'orbita di Amadeo: marmi del Rinascimento lombardo alla Fondazione Giorgio Cini," *Saggi e Memorie Di Storia Dell'arte* 27 (2003): 181–98; Roberto Cara, "Ricerche intorno a Giovanni Antonio Amadeo e alla scultura del Rinascimento in Lombardia," University of Padua, Ph.D. thesis, 2015, <http://paduaresearch.cab.unipd.it/7962/>.

the legs, for which this research did not find other comparative material among the depictions of penitent Saint Jerome. It is known that Amadeo used other media as models, such as plaquettes and antique coins as was the case for the Stigmatization relief, where the composition is copied from the fourteenth-century seal, today in the Metropolitan Museum.⁸³⁵ The similarity of the *Šibenik Tondo* and the relief in Cremona, executed with some twenty years difference, confirm the earlier hypothesis that some other, yet unknown model, circulated. Possibly it could have been some other plaquette, with the simplified composition of the one by Filarete, which Amadeo copied as he did with the composition of Saint Francis.

The Šibenik Model

How does the *Šibenik Tondo* fit in the general development of this type? We would argue that this example should be placed between the emergence of the type as individual subject in Tuscany around the 1450s and its general adoption in Venetian and Paduan painting after the 1470s, and the sculpture of Amadeo. The Šibenik example should be observed along with the Florentine production of the second half of the fifteenth century. The closest similarities are those with the paintings of Jacopo del Sellaio: the monastic habit that the saint is wearing with a similar gesture of baring his chest, long beard, which emphasized the saint's older age, together with the lion placed in the corner under the crucifix. More strictly, it should be observed in the context of the production of other smaller reliefs of penitent Saint Jerome, though in smaller dimensions and with a different purpose, Desiderio da Settignano's relief (Fig. 62) and one by Antonio Rossellino (Fig. 98), specifically for the elaborated iconography, more precisely the number of animals around the saint.



Figure 67 Antonio Pollaiuolo (after), *Saint Jerome in Penitence, with Two Ships in a Harbor*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, c.1480/1500 (20.1cm x 28 cm). Source: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.4548.html> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

⁸³⁵ "Relief with St. Francis Receiving Stigmata (Nr.21)," Sotheby's Catalogue: European sculpture & works of art: medieval to modern 2013, accessed May 12, 2020, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.21.html/2013/european-sculpture-works-of-art-medieval-to-modern>; "Seal Matrix, St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata | Italian | The Met," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/465933>.

The radical adaptation of the Florentine composition in Šibenik is explained in the form of the *tondo*. However, it also shows that the artists were familiar with the forms of artistic production, understanding the elaborated background in *tondo* forms would only draw the attention of the observer, as explained above. Although, we might consider the possibility that the model could have been adopted through Giorgio Schiavone and the drawings he brought from Squarcione's workshop, since it is known that among the drawings that Giorgio Schiavone brought to Šibenik was one of Pollaiuolo's works. Among the variations of penitent Saint Jerome, deriving from Filarete's plaquette and Desiderio's relief is the drawing by Antonio Pollaiuolo (Fig. 67), today in the Uffizi gallery in Florence, also preserved in the engraving, showing beardless Saint Jerome, praying in front of the crucifix, with the motif of a lion attacking the lioness, dated to the 1460s–1480s.

The variations in the depiction of Saint Jerome in penance, like Filippo Lippi's merging of "Jerome in Penance" and "Jerome and the Lion", in Desiderio da Settignano's relief, or the drawing by Pollaiuolo, Jacopo del Sellaio's narrative representations of "Jerome in the Wilderness" with other penitent saints, show that at the period the artists were still exploring the way of presenting the narrative of Jerome's life in the desert in pictorial form. Although this example cannot be brought in



Figure 68 Marco Zoppo, *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, ca. 1450 - 1455, (39cm x 29cm), Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid Source: ©Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/collection/artists/zoppo-marco/saint-jerome-desert> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

direct correlation with the *Šibenik Tondo*, the presence of Pollaiuolo's drawings in Padua, and their subsequent presence in Šibenik, show how the drawings of contemporary works could be adopted from Florence to Šibenik.

The argument against this hypothesis lies in the overall presence of this iconographic type and the compositions in the early Paduan and Venetian paintings only from the 1470s among the painters of Squarcione's circle. Among the painters who adopted the penitent Saint Jerome was Marco Zoppo. The panel (Fig. 68), today in the National Museum Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, is dated to the middle of the fifteenth century. This example was probably painted in Padua, during his training in the Squarcione's workshop, what is seen also on the shape of the cave which resembles the one on the painting by Andrea Mantegna, today in Sao Paolo. Zoppo

varies this scene several times: on the painting, today in the Walter Arts Museum in Baltimore dated around 1465, the predella of the altarpiece in the church of San Clemente of the Colegio de España in Bologna was painted around 1460,⁸³⁶ and the painting today in Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (c.1470).

The elements of the collage technique in the formation of the composition referred to here to support the attribution to Giorgio Dalmata was promoted by Marković and by those on whose conclusions he builds his argument. However, recent research by Samo Štefanac that debates Niccolò Fiorentino's early formation in Florence, marking him as the member of the generation to which Desiderio da Settignano belonged, raises a question of his role in the transfer of the model, unrelated to the attribution of the relief.⁸³⁷ Regardless of this elaborated analysis, I believe that, still, we do not have firm evidence to support any of the given theories on the attribution, given that both artists, Giorgio Dalmata and Niccolò Fiorentino, are noticeably influenced by the Florentine art. Even without the visible signature of the artists, the renaissance composition, which stems directly from the Florentine models, and is executed in the unusual adoption of *tondo* form for the public sculpture, speaks of its value and place in the development of renaissance sculpture.

Since this analysis only deepened the discussion on *The Malipiero Segment*, which will undoubtedly be opened again, I would like to point out the additional importance of this relief, which was not adequately noted in the literature. Despite the popularity of Jerome's cult in the fifteenth century in Italy, which stems primarily from his adoption in popular private devotion, his image was never transformed into monumental representation. We do find other examples where Jerome's sculpted image was placed on the façade of churches, but none of the examples can be compared with the one in Šibenik, due to its dimensions and the dominant position over the main square. In Cingoli, in the province of Macerata, a church of Saint Jerome built in 1336, has a small relief on the façade, above the portal, portraying the saint in the iconography of the fourteenth century, as a scholar, sitting at a desk, reading the book (Fig. 69). However, the church was renovated in the seventeenth century

⁸³⁶ Giacomo A. Calogero, "Il polittico di San Clemente di Agostino de Marchi e Marco Zoppo: documenti, cronologia e stile," *Prospettiva: rivista di storia dell'arte antica e moderna*, no. 163–164 (2016): 28–49.

⁸³⁷ Samo Štefanac observed Fiorentino's production in the context of the Florentine Renaissance sculpture, proposing his formation in Florence in the 1450s and early 1460s. If we accept it, then Niccolò Fiorentino should be seen as the sculptor which belonged to the same generation as Antonio Rossellino, Desiderio da Settignano, Mino da Fiesole, Andrea della Robbia, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci, Gregorio di Lorenzo, Benedetto da Maiano. It is evident that among the sculptors of this generation we find the innovative solutions of the composition "Saint Jerome in Wilderness", especially those by Desiderio da Settignano and Antonio Rossellino, who made the reliefs of the smaller format, for the personal devotion, and by Francesco di Giorgio Martini, who made the medal with the representation with the Jerome. The form of the reliefs mentioned here, especially Desiderio da Settignano and Antonio Rossellino, is the same one that Niccolò followed in Trogir, where he sculpted several smaller reliefs following the composition in the baptistery, what will be discussed a bit later in this text. See: Štefanac, "Nikola Firentinac i toskansko kiparstvo".



Figure 69 Anonymous artist, *Saint Jerome*, 14th century, Church of Saint Jerome, Cingoli. Source: <http://www.antiqui.it/doc/monumenti/chiese/sgirolamo.htm> (Last accessed: 04 July 2020)

and the nineteenth century, so the position of the relief is not original. It is assumed that it once stood in the lunette of the original portal.⁸³⁸ Another relief is found in Cremona, on the façade dedicated to Saint Jerome and Saint Eusebius of Cremona, built in 1386. The relief was made by Giovanni di Pietro da Rho, a follower of Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, whose composition of penitent Jerome from the tomb of Saint Arnaldo, Giovanni adopted and executed several times, including the relief on the façade of the church (Fig. 70).⁸³⁹ Still, the reliefs in Šibenik and Trogir are the first monumental and public sculptures of Saint Jerome in Renaissance.

Instead of “Jerome as a Cardinal”, which would be expected due to the placement on the church façade, surprisingly, “The Penitent Jerome” is presented, which points to another possible origin of the composition in Šibenik, which is not related to the artists, but to the contracting authorities or other representatives of the construction who could have owned some depiction of Jerome for private devotion. Such a theory is not so easily dismissed, given the widespread presence of Jerome’s character, already clearly recognized by his compatriots at those moments; it is possible that some devotional objects, like the copy in Hvar, were present in Šibenik, but due to scarce sources, this remains on the level of the assumption.

The process of adopting a visual representation resulting from private piety and its transformation into a public display reflects the process of transforming Jerome’s character from a personal patron saint to a national saint. As the previous chapter has shown, the more solid veneration of Jerome and the interest in his life further intensified the awareness of his local origins, which is why he began to be collectively celebrated. The importance of relief in the urban setting of



Figure 70 Giovanni di Pietro da Rho, *Saint Jerome in Penance*, Church of Saint Jerome, Cremona. Source:

<https://www.touringclub.it/voci-del-territorio/lombardia/cremona/cremonavisita-guidata-alla-chiesa-di-san-gerolamo> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

⁸³⁸“Chiesa di S.Girolamo di Cingoli,” accessed May 20, 2020, <http://www.antiqui.it/doc/monumenti/chiese/sgirolamo.htm>.

⁸³⁹ “Opera d’arte San Girolamo di Giovanni di Pietro da Rho (1464-1465/ Post 1513), a Cremona - Beni-Culturali.Eu,” accessed May 20, 2020, https://www.beni-culturali.eu/opere_d_arte/scheda/-san-girolamo-giovanni-di-pietro-da-rho-1464-1465-post-1513-03-00077890/265409.

Šibenik is attested with its use as the determinant of the place in the documents of the period.⁸⁴⁰

Jerome as Part of “Ecclesia Militans”

Besides the mentioned problems of the stylistic influences and the contribution of the *protomagistri*, another segment of the cathedral is still debated in the literature. At the foot of the northern apse, Giorgio Dalmata has created a unique gallery showing seventy-one heads in full size. The differences in the execution suggest that they were not all made at the same stage, with the earliest being positioned from 1441 through 1443, and the others made before the 1460s when the construction proceeded to the walls.⁸⁴¹ Their interpretation has been subject to many studies, still without unanimous conclusions on whom they portray.

Traditional interpretations see the frieze as a series of portraits of Giorgio’s fellow citizens of Šibenik, the ordinary people who have contributed to the construction of the cathedral, or famous people of earlier literature (Dante, Petrarch). Among recent and new interpretations are those that see the production of this frieze in the historical-political context of the anti-Ottoman alliance and the idea of *Ecclesia militans* born at the Council of Basel–Ferrara–Florence.⁸⁴²

Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić interprets the frieze as the portrayal of the ecclesiastical dignitaries, leading proponents of the union of churches, and the anti-ottoman alliance, Pope Eugene IV, Cardinal Bessarion, Cosimo Medici and others. As a model, she proposes a similar depiction of *ecclesia militans* and *ecclesia triumphans* in the Spanish Chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella, where the last section of the council was held, executed by Andrea di Bonaiuto between 1366–1368. The depicted individuals, like Pope Urban V, Emperor Charles IV, Amadeus VI, the Count of Savoy or Catherine of Siena, were all the protagonists of the historical events of the period, from the Alexandrian and Savoyard Crusade to the return of Pope Urban V to Rome in 1467. It was here that the ideas of the conciliarism and the union of the churches were born.

⁸⁴⁰ Hilje, “Nikola Firentinac u Šibeniku 1464. godine”. See footnote 16. [...] *actum Sibenici ad bancas lapideas penes ecclesiam Sancti Iacobi sub Sancto Hieronymo*. DAZd, 11/VII, Antonio Campolongo, F 10/Vb, fol. 123.

⁸⁴¹ Marković, *Katedrala Sv. Jakova u Šibeniku*, 213.

⁸⁴² Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, “Pokušaj identifikacije pojedinih glava Jurja Dalmatinca na šibenskoj katedrali” [An attempt to identify individual heads by Juraj Dalmatinac at the Šibenik Cathedral], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 18 (1994): 7–22; Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, “O nekim prikazima Ecclesiae militans u umjetnosti Dalmacije. Prilog teoriji alegorizma u umjetnosti Dalmacije” [Some examples of representing of Ecclesia Militans in Dalmatian art. A contribution to the theory of allegory in Dalmatian Art], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 36, no. 1 (1996): 121–31; Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, “Ecclesia militans na apsidama šibenske katedrale” [Ecclesia militans on the apses of the Šibenik Cathedral], in: *Sedam stoljeća šibenske biskupije*, ed. Vilijam Lakić (Šibenik: Gradska Knjižnica, 2001), 859.

In 1369, the Byzantine emperor John V Palaeologus met Pope Urban in Rome, where he offered to submit the Byzantine Church to Roman supremacy if, in return, the Pope and the Western rulers help to defend the empire from the Ottomans. However, the emperor's clergy and people refused to support him, and so the Greek and Latin churches remained separated.⁸⁴³ The question of possible papal support remained until the council of Basel–Ferrara–Florence. Even though the question had been opened several times since 1054, the council was one of the unique opportunities to close the gap between the Western and Eastern churches. The importance of the event is supported by the sizeable Byzantine delegation of over 700 participants, led by the emperor John VIII and the Patriarch Joseph of Constantinople.

Marković refutes the possibility that the frieze was a part of the pre-established plan of the *ecclesia militans*, considering that such interpretation of the big historical event did not have much influence on small and marginal society, where the fear of the possible Ottoman invasion was far from popular imagination. As such, these ideas could not be echoed in Šibenik, at least not in such a manner and place as it is in the apses.⁸⁴⁴

Although such a conclusion could be accepted at first, I believe that the idea that the portraits reflect the conclusions and the ideas promoted on the council cannot be so easily refuted and that this question deserves a more thorough discussion in the future. Here I would like to point out that from the beginning of the fifteenth century, in the West, the idea of the Ottoman threat was not so distant.⁸⁴⁵ Influential Franciscans preachers like Bernardino of Siena preached against it already in the first half of the fifteenth century, while in the second half, Roberto da Lecce appears at the fore.⁸⁴⁶ As John Jefferson explains, by the late 1430s, the political situation changed so much due to the advancement of the Ottomans in the Balkans, that the reaction of the West was politically urgent.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴³ Prijatelj Pavičić, "O nekim prikazima Ecclesiae militans", 863–64.

⁸⁴⁴ Predrag Marković, "Prijedlog ikonološke interpretacije 'Firentinčeve katedrale' - Prostor i vrijeme Dalmacije u drugoj polovini 15. stoljeća" [Proposal of the iconological interpretation of Firentino's cathedral] - The space and time of Dalmatia in the second half of the 15th century], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 28 (2005): 60.

⁸⁴⁵ It is also to note here, that the Venetian conflicts with Ottomans started as early as 1396 and continued until the escalation of the first Venetian-Ottoman war (1463–1479), and that the early Hungarian encounters with Ottomans happened same year in the Battle of Nicopolis.

⁸⁴⁶ On Franciscan preaching against Ottomans see: Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Images of Saracens on the Pulpit of Santa Croce in Florence," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani*, ed. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Johnatan Riley-Smith (Aldershot [England]; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 425–36; Steven J. McMichael, "Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce and His Sermons on Muhammad and the Muslims (C. 1480)," in *Franciscans and Preaching* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 327–52.

⁸⁴⁷ See the first chapter *The church, the council and the crusade* in: John Jefferson, *The Holy Wars of King Wladislas and Sultan Murad: The Ottoman-Christian Conflict from 1438-1444* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 27.

He emphasized that most of the historians dealing with the Council of Basel–Ferrara–Florence focused on the doctrinal differences between the Churches and that the primary goal of the council was the unification of the churches and the reconciliation of Western and Eastern theology. Although this is not far from the truth, the reasons for the possible union did not lie in the wish of reconciling the churches, but in the hope of Byzantine Emperor that with such an act, he would thus receive the help he needed to save his empire. The very fact that the emperor considered such an option speaks of the seriousness of the situation. Therefore, in his book, among the goals of the council, Jefferson presents theological issues as secondary to the anti-Ottoman coalition. The idea that the most prominent prelates of the Council are depicted in Šibenik should not be so easily dismissed due to the presence of the same idea in Italian art of the period where the choice of the depicted *uomini illustri* conveys an anti-Ottoman message.⁸⁴⁸

Carrie Chism Lien argued that the two fresco cycles, Andrea del Castagno's *Famous Men and Women* (1448–1451) created for the private residence of the Carducci family, and Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Apotheosis of St. Zenobius and Famous Men* (1482–1483) in the *Sala dei Gigli* in the Palazzo Vecchio, recall the Council.⁸⁴⁹ She points out that unlike other already noted cycles of famous people connected with the Council, such as Benozzo Gozzoli's *Journey of the Magi* from 1459 in Palazzo Medici in Florence, these were not previously considered as a reflection of the decisions of the Council, especially their prophetic tone in the anti-ottoman crusades.⁸⁵⁰

Still, we should keep in mind that the Council had another influential role; it was a cultural meeting of the East and the West, where the intellectuals from both sides have participated, sharing knowledge and exchanging the manuscripts. Among the names that participated were Leon Battista Alberti, Nicholas of Cusa, George Gemistos Pletho, Ambrogio Traversari, Basilios Bessarion, Leonardo Bruni, and Pletho. The presence of the Greeks in the town and the manuscripts that they brought significantly influenced the development of humanism in Italy. The Council was a place where most of the most Christian learned men of the period met in one place.

⁸⁴⁸ On the influence of the ideas of the Council on the other artworks see: Marica Tacconi, *Cathedral and Civic Ritual in Late Medieval and Renaissance Florence: The Service Books of Santa Maria del Fiore* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 160–67.

⁸⁴⁹ Carrie Chism Lien, "Recalling the Council of Ferrara and Florence: Two Fifteenth-Century Florentine 'uomini Famosi' Cycles" (PhD, University of Alabama Libraries, 2015), <http://ir.ua.edu/handle/123456789/2337>.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 54–55. Among the depicted figures in the Castagno's cycle is soldier Farinata degli Uberti, a major player in the Guelph and Ghibelline conflicts of 1250–1270. Chism Lien explains that „by alluding to the defense of Florence and the guarding of Eastern boundaries, Castagno aligned the figures with the Council of Florence and its hope that, through aligning the Eastern and Western Catholic Churches, a united front would be formed to defend against the Ottomans, east of Constantinople“.

Although it is still challenging to untangle whether the decisions of the Council could have had such a strong impact in Šibenik, due to the lack of sources, I believe that such idea should not be refuted easily. Although this question deserves a separate research study, the importance of the Council happening in Italy, with the majority of the Greeks reaching Florence through Venice, should have been echoed in Šibenik. Furthermore, because the Ottoman threat was interpreted as a danger to all of Christendom, only a united church could fight back the enemy at the gate. However, Marković does not refute completely the idea of *ecclesia militans* being embedded in the iconography of the church, but only in its later phase, (1475–1506), when Niccolò Fiorentino builds and completes the sanctuary of the cathedral, with the sculptures of the local patron saints on its roof. He sees this “not as a pre-conceived iconographic program and perhaps some canonical variant, but as its subsequent, more popular, ‘apocryphal’ interpretation.”⁸⁵¹

In the 1470s, Niccolò Fiorentino made a small relief of Saint Michael, one of Šibenik’s patron saints, on the headstone of the partition arch of the north chapel, with the relief of the lion of Saint Mark on the arch facing the southern chapel. Both correspond to the statues erected on the roof of the transept, Saint Michael on the northern wing of the transept and facing the city, and Saint Mark on the southern end of the transept facing the sea. Following the patron saint of the church, the statue of Saint James was placed right above the altar.⁸⁵² The sculptural program was supposed to be concluded with a presumed but unrealized figure of Christ Triumphant at the top of the western façade of the church. The presence of Saint Mark here shows the particular relationship between the Venetian Republic and Šibenik, but it also highlights the Venetian role as the Defender of the Faith. To the reading of this program, Marković adds the *Šibenik Tondo*, executed a bit earlier than the other statues.⁸⁵³

We cannot entirely exclude the possibility of the interpretation of the frieze as the early initiative of the idea of *ecclesia militans*. Although the interpretation that the frieze is reminiscent of the ideas propagated during the Council sounds appealing, here I would rely on the basic idea embedded in both interpretations; the portraits as the representatives of the human race preoccupied with the theme of religious salvation. In the same vein, we can read the other representations of the saintly figures, namely Jerome’s, whose cult started to gain more prominence during the Council, as

⁸⁵¹ Marković, “Prijedlog ikonološke interpretacije ‘Firentinčeve katedrale’”, 60.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, 55.

explained in pp. 117–118. The humanist encounter with Greek literature and Scripture renewed interest in Biblical studies, which gave Jerome more prominence.

The idea present in the apse could have evolved later in the same way Marković reads the sculptures of the local patron saints and Jerome's. The iconography of the architecture could be read from the bottom to the top—from the leaders of the earthly army on the apses to the heavenly one on the façade and the roof. Although Jerome's relief was not made in the unique project with the frieze of heads, the symbolism behind both was the same—to serve in the fight against the Ottomans—and they could be observed as the part of the bigger scheme.

Jerome and the Fear of the Ottomans

After the relatively calm and prosperous period of the first half of the fifteenth century, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 began a series of events which largely determined the developing history and position of Croatian lands in the next few centuries, marking its territory as the liminal one between the East and the West, between Christianity and Islam. This position was symbolically evoked with the political concept *antemurale Christianitatis*, the term used in the letter of Pope Leo X, sent to the Ban Petar Berislavić in 1519.⁸⁵⁴ If the Fall of Constantinople could have been perceived as something distant, the Fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463 indeed did not. With it the Ottoman Army came within striking distance of the Croatian-Hungarian Kingdom and the Republic of Venice, where in the integral sense of the latter, the Dalmatian communes were directly threatened.

The sporadic intrusions of the Ottoman army during the 1460s intensified during the 1470s. In a poem *Elegia de Sibenicensis agri vastatione* (Elegy on the devastation of Šibenik district) written in 1477, Georgius Sisgoreus describes the first encounter of Šibenik citizens with the Ottoman raids from the position of the witness, probably the one in 1468 when the Ottomans reached both Zadar and Split. Although the troops reached the city walls of Šibenik, they were repelled three times, leaving behind horrible damage in the district, in which they burned the crops, cut the trees, and desecrated the churches with their altars and liturgical equipment, especially the holy images, before burning them.⁸⁵⁵ Its significance lies in being an early written statement on the perception of the

⁸⁵⁴ Although deeply embedded in the Croatian national narrative, the metaphorical position is present in the narrative of the nation-building of many other European countries, especially those which had close encounters with the Ottomans, such as Hungary and Poland. Magdalena Najbar-Agičić and Damir Agičić, "National Narratives in Croatia," *Geschichtsbuch Mitteleuropa. Vom Fin de Siècle bis zur Gegenwart*, 2017, 287–314.; Liliya Berezhnaya, Heidi Hein-Kircher, and Kerstin Weiland, eds., "The Origins of Antemurale Christianitatis Myths: Remarks on the Promotion of a Political Concept," in *Rampart Nations: Bulwark Myths of East European Multiconfessional Societies in the Age of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 31–57;

⁸⁵⁵ Šunjić, *Dalmacija u XV. stoljeću*, 89; Grgin, "The Ottoman Influences on Croatia", 99–100.

Ottomans of the period, together with Coriolano Cippico's *De Bello Asiatico* published in the same year, portraying them as the barbaric infidels introducing the topoi (sinfulness, lust, dishonesty, cruelty) that are rooted in the specific genre of the Dalmatian-Croatian literature called *antitursica*.⁸⁵⁶

The Šibenik inhabitants also had contact with the Ottoman threat through their participation in the Venetian military expeditions during 1464 and 1465, for which they equipped two galleys.⁸⁵⁷ In addition to the Ottoman threat, the city was beset by other tribulations. This applies primarily to plague outbreaks several times throughout the century, out of which the most devastating was during 1456 and 1457, as evidenced by numerous wills composed because of it. Among other troubles, it is worth mentioning the great fire that devastated the city during 1458, in which the bishop's palace was damaged.⁸⁵⁸ The plague that struck Dubrovnik in 1465 and left a significant mark on Trogir during 1465 and 1466 was recorded in Šibenik during 1466 and 1467.⁸⁵⁹

Considering the whole series of adversities that affected the citizens of Šibenik during the period between 1450 and 1470, which collectively influenced the lives of its citizens, as well as the shared feelings of fear, panic, and powerlessness, it is understandable that piety grew as a collective response to powerlessness in the situation. It is precisely in such a political and historical situation where Jerome's transformation from an ordinary saint to a patron saint of Dalmatians happened, where his divine protection was necessary in times of general endangerment, not only of the inhabitants of Šibenik but of the whole region, which is also manifested in an equally monumental, albeit different, artistic expression in Trogir.

Such a process was fueled by the centuries-old tradition of Jerome's Dalmatian descent, originally nurtured among the Glagolites, who, through the interplay of humanism, took on the forms of a pervasive civic cult, which gradually acquired new features due to its historical context, leading the veneration of Jerome in a different direction from that present in the Apennine peninsula, and other parts of Europe. Even though the very existence of the relief in Šibenik certainly reflects the saint's Dalmatian origin and the intercession he provides to his compatriots, this aspect is not reflected in the particular depiction of the saint, which follows the established iconographic practice. The image

⁸⁵⁶ Neven Jovanović, "Antitursica iterata – ponovni pogled na hrvatsku renesansnu protutursku književnost" [Antitursica Iterata – another look at Croatian anti-Turkish writings during the Renaissance], *Colloquia Maruliana* 25 (2016): 101–46.

⁸⁵⁷ Goran Budeč, "Svakodnevni život stanovnika Šibenika u drugoj polovini XV. stoljeća u zrcalu inventara i oporuka s posebnim osvrtom na razinu materijalne kulture" (PhD, Zagreb, Hrvatski Studiji, 2013), 43.

⁸⁵⁸ Ladić, "Šibensko 'vrijeme katedrale'", 44. See footnotes 21 and 22. Danko Zelić, "Gradski statut kao izvor za povijest urbanog razvoja Šibenika" [City statute as a source for the history of urban development of Šibenik], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 19 (1995): 44. See a footnote 25.

⁸⁵⁹ Budeč, "Svakodnevni život stanovnika Šibenika," 43.

of Jerome, the Dalmatian, will only get its distinctive artistic features with the execution of the relief in Trogir.

Regardless of the iconographic representation following the established models, several other aspects which can be read only when asking questions beyond the those relating to the artistic features, reveal the meaning which citizens of Šibenik, and those who were visiting, could have read from it. Like in many other examples discussed here, the polyvalent meaning of Jerome's figure can be read in two layers. The first one, evidently, relates to his general saintly image, which here does not emphasize his intellectual side, but mirrors the popular cult of the saint where he is promoted as the model of the Christian living where his penitential nature becomes the point of the self-identification.

Still, promotion of this aspect in such an expressive manner with placing the representation on the façade of the newly built cathedral church seems a rather unusual compared to the established practices of the popular cult, primarily on the other side of the Adriatic Sea. Although, we do not have preserved sources related to the execution of the relief, the broader context where Jerome has been already praised as the patron saint of Dalmatia, particularly elaborated in the literary works by Georgius Sisgoreus, a nephew and namesake of the mentioned bishop Šižgorić, support the hypothesis that the relief stood as the reminder of the saint's elevated status among his compatriots. Also, it stood as the *ex-voto* of the citizens of Šibenik for the further protection and the saintly intercession in the times when not only Šibenik but all of the Croatian lands felt an immediate threat from the Ottomans now being present in the close vicinity. Such function of *Šibenik tondo* is also supported by the execution of the relief in Trogir.

7.2 THE RELIEF OF SAINT JEROME IN TROGIR

In 1467, Andrea Alessi marked the end of the construction of the new baptistery in the northwestern corner of the cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir with the inscription written on the inner side of the entrance door lintel: IACOBO TVRLONO PONTIFICE CAROLO CAPELLO PRAETORE ANDREAS ALEXIVS DYRRACHINVS OPIFEX MCCCCLXVII.⁸⁶⁰ The baptistery is one of several fifteenth-century annexes of the cathedral, together with the new sacristy (after

⁸⁶⁰ Babić, *Trogir*, 323.

1446), the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* (1446), and the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* adjoined to the medieval cathedral (Fig. 41).

The project for the construction of the new baptistery was entrusted to Andrea Alessi, a sculptor, and architect, who was formed in Zadar, in the workshop of *magister* Marko from Troia in Puglia. The first important step in his career was a collaboration with Giorgio Dalmata, whose associate he was in Šibenik until 1448, when he settled in Split. Predrag Marković noted that the two artists were continuous collaborators during the next decade, working together on residential architecture in Split, the choir screen in the Church of Saint Francis in Zadar (1444–1449) and the *Loggia dei Mercanti* in Ancona (1450–1452).⁸⁶¹ Their close collaboration is further confirmed by the strong influence of Giorgio Dalmata in the manner of sculpting and modeling seen in Alessi's production, predominantly of Venetian late Gothic style. According to the information provided by Paolo Andreis, the construction of the baptistery began in 1460 and lasted for many years.

The reasons for the long construction period are to be sought in the preparatory work undertaken by Alessi, but also in the plague epidemic of 1465 and 1466, which was quite devastating and which paused all the ongoing and planned activities in the commune.⁸⁶² Similarly to the second phase of the cathedral in Šibenik, the baptistery is considered a work of the transitional style due to the gothic and the renaissance motifs present mainly in the sculptural decoration. For that reason, Bužančić asserts that “the baptistery’s architecture surpasses other Alessi works and remains isolated in his *oeuvre*.”⁸⁶³

Due to the visible change in the sculptural decoration, mainly in the Renaissance frieze with angels holding garlands, and despite the dedicatory inscription that mentions only Alessi, scholars have already noted the difference in the quality of the sculptural execution, suggesting the collaboration of Niccolò Fiorentino. Although the attribution of some frieze *putti* to Niccolò Fiorentino has been accepted in the scholarship, many other segments are still debatable.⁸⁶⁴ The renaissance spirit of the baptistery is strongly reflected in the monumental relief above the entrance door representing the *Baptism of Christ*, which Alessi sculpted, adapting the composition of the painting by Piero della Francesca, today at the National Gallery in London or even the composition by Donatello, made for the baptismal font in cathedral of Arezzo executed in the 1420s.

⁸⁶¹ Marković, “Juraj Dalmatinac i Andrija Aleši u Splitu”

⁸⁶² Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas*, 49.

⁸⁶³ Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 61.

⁸⁶⁴ Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 41–42; Josipović, “Nikola Firentinac i Alešijeva krstionica,” 49–52; Pelc, *Renesansa*, 184. Pelc sees the frieze with angels and garlands as the Fiorentino's design.



Figure 71 Andrea Alessi, *The Baptism of Christ*, Baptistery of the cathedral of Saint Lawrence, 1467. Source: Wikimedia Commons, reproduction from HLE, LZMK, Zagreb 2005. https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:Trogir-Pro%C4%8Delje_krstionice_katedrale_s_reljefom_Kr%C5%A1tenja_Kristova.jpg (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

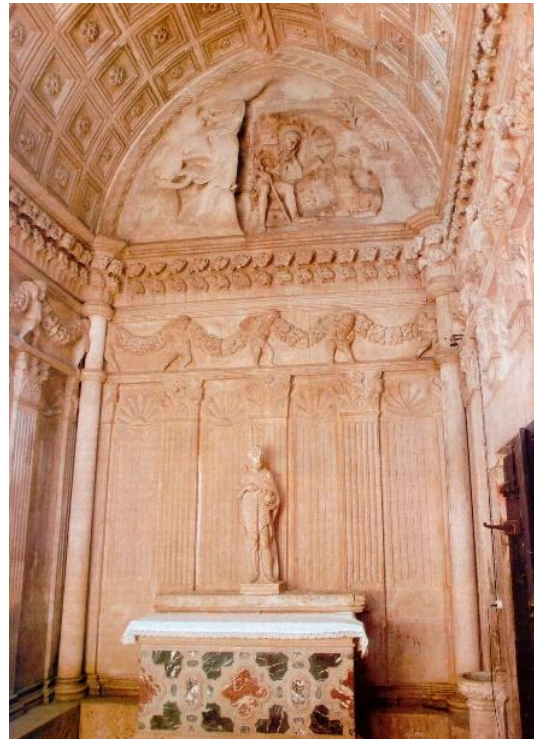


Figure 72 Andrea Alessi, *Baptistry of Cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir*, 1467 (interior). Source: Wikimedia Commons, reproduction from HLE, LZMK, Zagreb 2005. https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:Trogir-Unutra%C5%A1njost_krstionice_katedrale.jpg (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

Milan Pelc suggested that compositional model could have reached Trogir through the mediation of Niccolò Fiorentino.⁸⁶⁵ Of interest for our discussion is another renaissance component of the baptistery, the relief with the representation of Saint Jerome in the *grotto*, in the interior of the baptistery, on its eastern wall above the altar. The composition of the relief is subordinated to the form of the pointed arch lunette, depicting the saint reading inside a cave.

Although today hardly visible due to the recent cleaning of the baptistery, it is not made out of monolith stone, but of two stone slabs, inserted into each other. The right section rises above the middle of the relief and does not reach the top of the lunette, but is cut off at right angles, and inserted into the left section, is the portrayal of Saint Jerome in front of the improvised stone desk with the books, lion in the lower right corner, and the trees in the right outer edge. The left piece is a bulging rock with recesses of a cave through which snakes and dragons pass. Before the restoration of the baptistery between 2003 and 2006, the relief was covered with stone patina, where the difference in

⁸⁶⁵ Radovan Ivančević, “Slikarski predložak renesansnog reljefa krštenja (1467) u Trogiru” [Model for Renaissance relief Baptism of Christ in Trogir] *Peristil* 27–28 (1984–1985): 75–92; Pelc, *Renesansa*, 207.

color could have been seen, which led Radovan Ivančević to suggest that one part might be older than another.⁸⁶⁶ After the cleaning, the division in two parts is more visible, together with slight differences in the color between them, suggesting the difference in the coloring might be from a different type of stone, rather than a different period of execution.⁸⁶⁷



Figure 73 Andrea Alessi, *Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto*, Baptistery of Cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir, 1467.
Source: Author

However, unlike other debatable components of the baptistery, the scholarship has given little attention to this piece, besides the general discussion on the development of the renaissance sculpture in Dalmatia and the *oeuvre* of the Andrea Alessi. The reason for this probably lies in the incomplete harmony of the composition and the execution, when compared to the *Relief of Baptism* or some of the reliefs of the smaller dimensions modeled upon this one. Given the noticeable expressions typical for Alessi's sculpting and modeling of figures, together with an understanding of the baptistery mainly as his project, scholars have not questioned his role in the overall compositional and iconographic design. As will be discussed later in this chapter, more attention was given to the reliefs

⁸⁶⁶ Ivančević, "Trogirska krstionica (1467)," 151.

⁸⁶⁷ Due to the high position of relief, the close examination was not possible, so the questions on the type of stone used for relief are still to be examined.

of smaller dimensions than to the iconographic reading of the one which served as a model for all the later sculptural production of the same representation.

Here, I follow the conclusions of Radovan Ivančević, who, in his analysis of the pictorial model for the *Relief of Baptism*, has observed the compositional and artistic qualities of both reliefs, proposing that the *Relief of Saint Jerome* should not be observed through the lens of Late Gothic style. Moreover, he correctly proposes observing the reliefs as an expression of two regional variants, but also as two distinct individual Renaissance styles. While the *Relief of Baptism* derives from the Florentine models, primarily the composition of Piero della Francesca and Donatello, the *Relief of Saint Jerome* continues on the painterly production of Venice and Padua, or more precisely, according to Ivančević, on Mantegna's production.⁸⁶⁸

This subchapter does not have the aim to observe and analyze the artistic qualities of the *Relief of Saint Jerome* or to engage in an in-depth analysis of the authorship by employing the stylistic and Morelian analysis. It addresses the questions that have been noted by now in the scholarship but have not been given the attention they deserve. In the first place, it explores the possible compositional models. As mentioned in a previous discussion on the relief in Šibenik, although Jerome's image was ubiquitous in the Italian Renaissance, we do not find it to be a sculptural work of monumental dimensions, especially not among the sculpture that we might characterize as public sculpture. In this case, the term public does not necessarily refer to the placement of a figure in public space, but the collective commission, where representation had symbolic votive meaning for the larger group of people, likely the whole commune, as it did in Trogir and Šibenik. For that reason, the analysis also examines the position of this representation in the general cult of Saint Jerome, focusing on its particularities.

Second, this subchapter engages with the unique iconographic program presented in the composition, and observes the correlation between the image and the text, placing its production in the broader context of the humanism and Renaissance, underlining its place within the framework of developing humanist thought in Trogir. Keeping in mind that the years of the 1460s, in which the relief was planned and executed, were the transformative years of Jerome's cult, this chapter correlates the historical context with the reasons for its execution. How did the period of plague outbreaks, famine, and the fear of the possible Ottoman invasion influence the formation of Jerome's image as Dalmatian patron saint, and in what way is it reflected in the iconography of the relief? And lastly, it analyses the function of a series of smaller reliefs, as many as twelve, on which the variations

⁸⁶⁸ Ivančević, "Slikarski predložak renesansnog reljefa," 90.

of the composition of the *Relief of Saint Jerome* are present. Due to the difference in the quality of the execution, they are attributed to Alessi and Fiorentino and their workshops.⁸⁶⁹ By placing this representation in the overall iconography of Saint Jerome, I am proposing this iconographic representation as Dalmatian particularity originating in the Trogir humanist circle, with its apotropaic function due to the saint's role of a regional patron saint of Dalmatia.

The Placing in the Baptistry

Among the several research questions about this relief and the particularities correlated to it, the first one that needs to be answered is the one concerning its placement in the baptistry. Although the baptistry of Trogir extends to the church, it is not an integral part of it. Its eastern wall rests on the chapel of Saint Jerome, while the main access to it is through the narthex of the cathedral, built in the thirteenth century. The liminality of the baptistry emphasized with its function, and the place of spiritual liminality where the rite of passage for the believers happens can be understood in spatial terms also, between the ecclesiastical and public space.

Furthermore, the liminality between the ecclesiastical and communal can be applied to the question of the commissioners. Although the baptistry is part of the ecclesiastical setting, the construction of the church, as seen in the example of Šibenik, is an expression of communal endeavor and efforts. For that reason, the placement of the relief in the newly constructed baptistry should be perceived as the expression of communal spirit and devotion to the saint.

The position of Jerome's image, however, in the sculptural medium and monumental dimensions, is not something found in the renaissance representations of Jerome. Generally speaking, the presence of Jerome in the iconography of baptism is quite unusual. Although he is found in pictorial decorations of the baptistry, like in Parma and Florence, there he is always in the company of other church fathers, symbolically representing the foundation and the early teaching of the Church. One of the possible connections between Jerome and Baptism could be found in his first known miracle – the taming of the lion. As Eugene Rice explains, the removing of the thorn from the lion's paw could be understood as the symbolic representation of cleansing from the Original sin, where the thorn is Sin, and “the holy man who tames a lion by removing the thorn from its paw possesses divine powers and is a type of Christ, who conquers sin and death.”⁸⁷⁰ However, as such, this symbolic representation has never settled in the visual repertoire of baptistry decoration.

⁸⁶⁹ The attributions are discussed in several publications. See the bibliography listed in footnote 45.

⁸⁷⁰ Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, 39–40.

In Trogir's case, the reasons for Jerome's placement in the baptistery should be sought in the established pairing of Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist, based on the *Transitus*, discussed in several places in this dissertation.⁸⁷¹ The approach to their pairing is unusual because it happens within the architectural setting, where the saints are paired in the idea of their equal sanctity, contrary to the usual portrayal in the artistic representations, where saints complement each other iconographically by being placed next to each other or corresponding to each other in polyptych compositions. The innovative approach to this segment of Jerome's saintly image is also visible in the visual pairing of the saints. The *Relief of Saint Jerome* corresponds to the sculpture of Saint John the Baptist made by Niccolò Fiorentino for the altar beneath the relief.⁸⁷²

This research has not found any comparative material that could serve as the model for such iconographic pairing within the architectural setting, which leads us to conclude that its uniqueness comes from the initiators of the project who were well acquainted with written works about Jerome, especially *Transitus*. As we have already discussed, we do not have any preserved manuscripts of Trogir provenance or documentary evidence of possession of copies of *Transitus*, as we do in Zadar. Along with the reference to the elements of the text in the decision of official veneration, this example shows that such work was known and read in Trogir. Furthermore, it shows that the concepts of Jerome's sanctity were clearly understood and expressed in a specific way.

However, this idea only complemented the primary reason for placing the relief in the baptistery. The choice of the baptistery was conditioned by the fact that it was the first significant project related to the cathedral, and which could be understood as the public part of the church. Access to the sacristy was only allowed for clerics, the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* was a private one, and in the iconographic concept of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, Jerome's figure would differ among the statues of the apostles placed in the niches around the chapel. One should bear in mind that at the same time, the *Šibenik Tondo* was done or being executed. Unlike the medieval cathedral in Trogir, Šibenik cathedral was built during the fifteenth century, and the sculptural representation of patron of Dalmatia could have been ideally and compositionally harmonized with the project of the cathedral that was being built. As the baptistery was the only project, equally supported by the communal and

⁸⁷¹ Josipović, "Nikola Firentinac i Alešijeva krstionica," 48. In essence, every baptistery is the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, which is also confirmed by other sources for the history of Trogir which refer to the baptistery as the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, such as the apostolic visitation of Bishop Valier.

⁸⁷² Ivan Matejčić, "Prilozi za Nikolu Firentinca i njegov krug" [Contributions for Niccolò Fiorentino and his circle], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 27 (1988): 181–94. Although the present altar in the baptistery is a later Baroque altar, we can assume that the original earlier altar was in its place.

the ecclesiastical authorities, it is of necessity the only possible place where such honorable expression to Jerome could have been placed.

The Venetian Model

Previous researchers have already noted that the composition of the relief relates to painterly production of the same motif by Andrea Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini. Ivo Petricioli already noted that it is not possible to observe the production of the relief in Trogir and the smaller reliefs that were modeled upon it without exploring the influence of the Venetian painterly circle.⁸⁷³ Still, no study up till now has explored in detail the similarities between the Venetian and Dalmatian production of representations of Saint Jerome.

In his analysis of this representation, mostly focusing on reliefs of smaller dimensions, Samo Štefanac has already noted its unique nature contained in the merging of the two most common iconographic types, “Saint Jerome in the Desert”, suggested by his hermit outfit, and “Saint Jerome in his Study, suggested by the books he is reading.⁸⁷⁴ In the scholarship, Jerome’s iconography is often reduced to two basic types “Jerome in his Study” and “Jerome in the Desert or Wilderness”. However, as this thesis and all other previous research on the same matter has shown, the division of iconographic types has been far more complex, and as such, reflects the different contexts of veneration and different aspects of his holiness.

The precise definition of the iconographic types contributes to distinguishing the various influences and contexts of veneration, and together with the adoption of the art forms contributes, in the Dalmatian case, to a clearer picture of the exchange of ideas between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. As discussed earlier, the *Šibenik Tondo* relies heavily on Florentine art and accordingly takes on the iconographic type of “Penitent Saint Jerome”. The iconography of the *Relief of Saint Jerome*, as this sub-chapter shows, comes from a different tradition, Venetian and Paduan painterly production.

I have already noted that during the fifteenth century, owing to the growing influence of Franciscan Observance and private piety, as well as the development of humanistic thought, a new iconographic type of “Saint Jerome in the Desert” was formed in Venice, where the saint was depicted in solitude, reading the Bible in a rocky landscape in the company of a lion and sometimes of other animals. Hans Belting explains that the visible change in the painted atmosphere, from penitential fervor to meditative environment, is a reflection of the spirituality of the time, where Jerome’s figure

⁸⁷³ Ivo Petricioli, “Alešijev reljef Sv. Jeronima u Zadru”, 151.

⁸⁷⁴ See: Štefanac, “Osservazioni sui rilievi.”

imposed itself as a meditative model for devoted and educated Venetian humanists. The emphasis is on Jerome's intellect and the choice of desert and peace for meditative prayer and the work of translating the Bible, and not the repentant aspect of his life. Due to the dimensions of the paintings, except for the *Contini Bonacossi Jerome*, and the specific iconography, we can conclude that they were intended for private devotion.

Although this iconographic type is usually connected with the production of Giovanni Bellini and his workshop, and the earliest dated painting is considered to be painted by him at the age of fifteen—*Saint Jerome in the Desert* (c.1455) (Fig. 29) found today at the Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham. We find the variations of the theme in the works by Antonio Vivarini, Andrea Mantegna, Bartolomeo da Montagna, and others. Even though Giovanni Bellini popularized this type of representation, the innovation is attributed to his father, Jacopo Bellini.

In the British Museum in London and the Louvre Museum in Paris, two sketchbooks by Jacopo Bellini (c.1400–c.1470), are preserved with more than 300 drawings of architectural compositions, landscapes, and figure drawings, dated between the 1450s and the 1470s.⁸⁷⁵ Jacopo Bellini, one of the foremost students of Gentile da Fabriano (c.1370–1427), has been already acknowledged as one of the forerunners of the Venetian Renaissance. In 1423, he followed his master to Florence, where he had the chance to become familiar with the works of young Florentine artists, Brunelleschi, Donatello and Masaccio, whose influence is seen mainly in his modeling of the figures and the accurate perspective employed in his drawings and his surviving works. Although his production is mainly Venetian, Jacopo has been present in other more northern Italian cities such as Verona, Padova, and Ferrara, where he was in the service of the Duke d'Este.

Among the drawings, five depict Saint Jerome in the desert landscape, filled with wild animals: dragons, snakes, lion, lioness, deer, and others.⁸⁷⁶ The depictions of the penitent Saint Jerome represent the Florentine influence, but the two drawings of Saint Jerome have a central place in the development of the Venetian iconographic type “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”,

⁸⁷⁵ Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*. Marcel Röthlisberger, “Notes on the Drawing Books of Jacopo Bellini,” *The Burlington Magazine* 98, no. 643 (1956): 364. The frontispiece of the one in the British Museum is dated 1430, which could refer to the execution of its earliest drawings. The scholars still disagree on this matter, but it is likely that the books include the studies made through a long period, which overlap chronologically, instead being in the consecutive order of production. Marcel Röthlisberger dates them even more precisely around 1455, due to the visible influence of Donatello's Paduan reliefs and Andrea Mantegna's and Bono da Ferrara's frescoes.

⁸⁷⁶ The reproductions are brought together in: Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 419, 421. The penitent Saint Jerome can be found on f.17, f63v of the British Museum book, and on f.23v of the Louvre book.

being the ones that are dated earliest. Unlike the painters of his circle, Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna, Jacopo did not paint this subject, or at least copies of it are not preserved today.



Figure 74 Jacopo Bellini, *Penitent Saint Jerome*, Louvre Sketchbook, f.23v. Source: Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 422



Figure 75 Jacopo Bellini, *Saint Jerome in Wilderness*, British Museum Sketchbook, f. 87v. Source: Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 418

The *Penitent Saint Jerome* (Fig. 14) by Jacopo Bellini, in Museo Castelvecchio in Verona, painted around 1460, has many common points with his drawings, from the sharp-edged rocks to the various animals around the saint—two dragons, a lion, a wolf, a genet, a bird, and an eagle resting on a dead tree. In the background, on the hill, another dead tree is paired with a blossoming one.

The drawing from the British Museum (f.87v) (Fig. 75) shows the saint in the rocky landscape, deprived of elements other than the saint and the lion, and the depiction of the camel caravan in the background. In the lower-left corner, the older Jerome with a long beard rests on the rock with the book in his hand and the rod leaning on his body. His only company is the lion. In front of the saint, Jacopo includes another element of the iconography, the tree stump. Several tree stumps and dead trees surround penitent Jerome in another drawing from the Louvre sketchbook (23v). Another drawing from the Louvre (f. 19v) (fig. 76) displays the saint in a far more elaborated landscape, filled with various animals: lion and lioness, snakes, rabbits, dragons, and even a turtle. Jerome sits on the rock, reading the book, unconscious of the snake approaching him, and the dragon by his side. Jerome

is barefoot, with the pair of shoes in front of him, the same motif we find on the painting by Andrea Mantegna.



Figure 76 Jacopo Bellini, *Saint Jerome in Wilderness*, Louvre Sketchbook, f. 19v. Source: Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*

The citations of the elements of the drawings in paintings of Venetian production of the second half of the fifteenth century mark Jacopo Bellini as one of the most important contributors to the establishment of Venetian Renaissance painting. The adoption of his compositions of by other painters, mark him as the inventor of the new iconographic type: “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”.

Regardless of being local invention, this type did not prevail over the representations of “Penitent Jerome” in Venetian and Paduan painting. The reason probably lies in its specific iconography and symbolism due to which, as Hans Belting argued, it was reserved for a select group of people who could have read such complex visual narration. Due to its dating, not many examples of Venetian and Paduan production can be considered as comparative material. Besides drawings by Jacopo Bellini, those are the aforementioned works by Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome in the Desert*

(the 1450s) (Fig. 29), *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (Fig. 27) by Andrea Mantegna dated around 1455, and *Saint Jerome in the Desert* (Fig. 30) by Alvise Vivarini painted in 1476.

Ridderbos mentions another painting (Fig. 77) from the circle of Jacopo Bellini, once in the Thyssen collection in Lugano dated around 1445, depicting Jerome reading in the cave, dressed in monastic garment with the lion at his side. The background is far more elaborated than in the other representations from Bellini's circle.⁸⁷⁷ On the left, two hunters are approaching the cave, while on the right two monks are leaving in the direction of the monastery in the upper right section. The depiction of the church and the monastery is the clear allusion to Bethlehem, for which Ridderbos

says it represents the place of penitence.



Figure 77 Jacopo Bellini (circle), *Saint Jerome in the Cave*, Thyssen collection Lugano, c.1445 (?).
Source: Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 35

As I already discussed, the depiction of Jerome reading in the wilderness do not contain penitential aspects since they are not emphasized in any way in the representations like this one. The meditative aspect points to Jerome's intellectual work in Bethlehem and his meditations over the Bible on which he wrote the commentaries. The similarities in the saint's physiognomy, the shape of the cave, and the general poeticism of the painted atmosphere connect the relief of Trogir to Venetian examples. Nevertheless, the vital difference is noted, it is only in the production of Giovanni Bellini that the saint is depicted as a hermit, in ascetic clothing, different that Mantegna's and Vivarini's painting where he is wearing a monastic habit.

In the Venetian examples, the contrast between the desert in the foreground and the city in the background is emphasized, contrasting solitude in the desert as an indispensable environment for intellectual work against the fast-paced urban life. In Trogir, the focus is the depiction of a saint in a cave as he reads the book thoughtfully, unaware of the danger around him, similarly to the depiction in the painting by the school of Jacopo Bellini. The atmosphere of the desert is enchanted by zoomorphic representations, with no urban elements in the background. Although the depictions of animals, an important element in Jerome's iconography, can be understood as an emblematic

⁸⁷⁷ Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*, 33–35, footnote 113. This research did not manage to trace the painting today, mainly because in 1978 it was sold in Florence on the art-market (Sotheby's) as noted by the author. Still, due to the developed composition, including the monastery in the background, which is found in Venetian painting only during the second half of the fifteenth century, I think that the dating should be reconsidered to the second half of the century.

depiction of the desert, described in the letter to Eustochium or as the zoomorphic representation of the Satan that we continuously encounter in Bible, we do not find this group in any other depiction of Jerome in the desert: two dragons, three snakes, a scorpion, and a lion.

The importance of the animals for the depiction of the dangerous and unpleasant environment in which Jerome is, is seen in their abundant occurrence in renaissance paintings. The aforementioned drawings by Jacopo Bellini are filled with studies of animals. The one from the Louvre (f. 19v), (Fig. 76) has depictions of a lion, a lioness, two dragons, two rabbits, two roe deers, a monkey, a tortoise, and two eagles. Another from the sketchbook in the British Museum (f. 17), has a lion, a lioness, three deer, two dragons, and a rabbit.

The visible differences suggest an evident variation of the theme, whose particularities are also reflected in the smaller reliefs of later production. The first one relates to the depiction of the saint inside the cave, not in front of it. Moreover, Andrea Mantegna's *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (Fig. 27) is the only one where the saint is in the cave-like formation of the rocks, with the improvised table in front of him. In this case, the cave is a prefiguration of Jerome's study room, found on some other representations of penitent Saint Jerome, like *Penitent Jerome* by Piero della Francesca (c. 1450) or the illustration of *Saint Jerome Kissing the Feet of Christ* by Taddeo Crivelli in the Gualenghi d'Este Book of hours (c. 1469). The form of the cave in Trogir is closest to the one in Mantegna's painting, which also served as the model for Vittore Crivelli's *Saint Jerome* (c.1489), which borrows other elements form Mantegna, but does not reach the quality of his painting.⁸⁷⁸

Another illustrative difference is seen in the motif of the book, which in the Venetian examples is found in the saint's hand, while in Trogir, it is placed on a makeshift stone desk in front of him. The posture is repeated on almost all of the smaller reliefs, except two, attributed to Niccolò Fiorentino and his workshop, the relief from Santa Maria del Giglio in Venice, and the relief today in the Musée Jacquemart-André.⁸⁷⁹ The gesture of Jerome leaning thoughtfully on his hand is the prefiguration of "Saint Jerome in his Study" type in which Jerome leans over the book on the desk in

⁸⁷⁸ "Vittore Crivelli (Venice 1444/9–after 1501 Fermo), The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness," Christie's, accessed May 3, 2020, https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=6165153. It is known that Mantegna had an influence on Vittore's more famous brother, Carlo Crivelli, in his early days. Vittore's painting has been in the collection of the Villa Vinci in Fermo. It is dated around 1489, when it is known that he settled in Fermo. The influence of Mantegna is not only visible in the shape of the cave, but also on the motif of the sandals next to the saint, found in Mantegna's painting.

⁸⁷⁹ Ștefanac, "Osservazioni sui rilievi," 144-145. Regardless of the differences in the quality of the sculptural carvings among the reliefs attributed to Alessa and Fiorentino, Ștefanac points out that the ones we consider to be Fiorentino's works are actually works of the workshop. Such attribution is acceptable given the format and production in a series done by other members of the workshop according to the master's drawings, while Fiorentino worked on larger and more significant commissions.

the same manner. One is here reminded of the sculpture of Saint Jerome in the church of Saint Mary, where the saint is leaning over the dead tree in the same way, confirming it as a local particularity. (See fig. 81 and 82)



Figure 78 Andrea Alessi, *Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto*, 1467

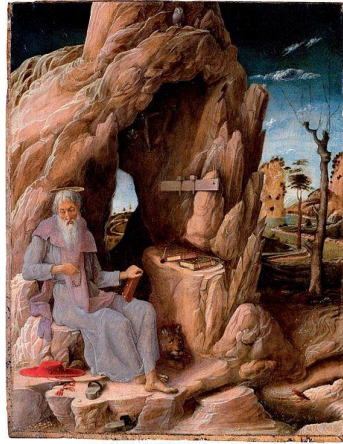


Figure 79 Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, c. 1455-1460 (48cm x 36cm)



Figure 80 Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Jerome in Desert*, c. 1450 (44 cm x 39 cm)

Another specific element is found in the depiction of Jerome as a hermit in Trogir, a rod in his hand. This motif has been directly adopted from Jacopo Bellini's drawing (f.87v) (Fig. 75) from the British Museum sketchbook.

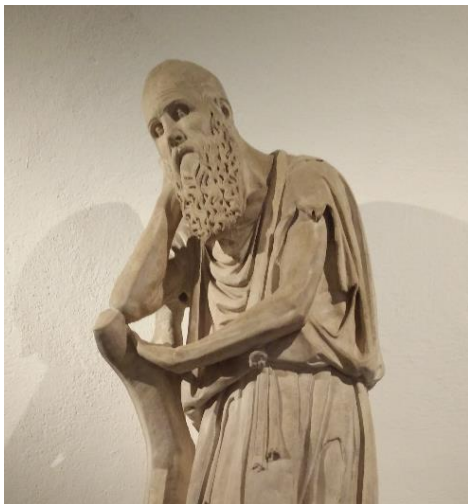


Figure 81 Niccolò Fiorentino, *Saint Jerome*, Museum of Religious Art in Trogir, c.1480 (detail). Source: Author



Figure 82 Andrea Alessi, *Saint Jerome Reading in the Grotto*, Baptistery of Cathedral of Saint Lawrence in Trogir, 1467 (detail). Source: Author.

Regardless of his sketchbooks being the initial model for these representations, we do not find the rod in the other representations of this type from the period, especially not among those from Bellini and Mantegna circle. The motifs of the blossoming leafless tree have been already noted in Jacopo's *Saint Jerome* from Verona. This motif of the dead, lifeless, or truncated tree, which became common in the Venetian and Northern iconography of the saint, in different variations,⁸⁸⁰ points to the Venetian origin of the motif in Trogir. The symbolism of trees lies in the medieval tradition that the dead tree of Life may only become green again if the Crucified Christ is grafted upon it and revives it with His blood.⁸⁸¹

The Symbolic Representation of Animals

Among the motifs present in the relief, the zoomorphic representations, that is, the two large dragons emerging from holes, the three snakes that are running through narrow holes, a hard to notice scorpion near the saint, and his faithful lion companion in the recess of the cave on the right, deserve more profound analysis. The varieties of animals present in the depictions of Jerome have been analyzed in the encyclopedic corpus by Herbert Friedmann, based on more than a thousand images of Jerome. Starting from his research, following the conclusions by Simona Cohen on the reliance of the symbolism on the Scriptures, and complementing it with the additional research into Jerome's depiction in painting, sculpture, and prints, I did not find patterns from which the artist of the *Relief of Saint Jerome* could directly copy the depictions of animals. No other artwork with Saint Jerome has this group and number of animals.

As previously discussed in this thesis, the depictions of snakes and scorpions are not uncommon in the representations of Jerome in the desert, but the depictions of dragons, together with the motif of an eagle opposing the snake, found on the *Liverpool Relief*, are quite uncommon.⁸⁸² The motif of serpents emerging from stone cavities has not been found in the comparative material, except the statue of Saint Jerome from the church of Saint Mary in Trogir, where they emerge from the truncated tree on which Jerome leans. The Biblical symbolism of the snake is directly connected with the representation of Satan, and as such, also appears in the later patristic and theological texts. The

⁸⁸⁰ Andrews and Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 26, 36. The predella of Giovanni Bellini's *Pesaro altarpiece* (1471 and 1483), has the depiction of penitent Saint Jerome, in the similar landscape as other Bellini's representations of Jerome. Behind the saint the bare tree is painted.

⁸⁸¹ George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 39.

⁸⁸² Friedmann, *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome*, 209. We find dragons on only a few other examples. Friedmann lists the aforementioned work by Jacopo Bellini of Verona, together with drawings from his notebooks kept at the Louvre and the British Museum, as well as one by Carlo Crivelli, Antonio Rossellino and Vincenzo Civerchio.

medieval bestiaries very often do not distinguish between the snakes, vipers, and dragons, seeing them all under the common term *serpent*.

I have already written about the symbolic meaning of the paintings representing “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”, especially the landscape and the presence of the animals in it. Augusto Gentili and Hans Belting have noted elsewhere that people who possessed such paintings must have been highly educated humanists engaged with Classical, Patristic, and Bible studies, evidently, with strong affection towards Jerome, who knew how to read such paintings and to whom they served as contemplative apparatus. Malcolm Andrews, in his study of Renaissance landscape, especially those in the representations of Jerome, has shown how the painters manipulated the landscape in which the saintly figure is depicted, in order to represent different ideas on solitude, the tensions between the city and the countryside, and the contrasts between nature and humanity.⁸⁸³

Although the relief in Trogir originates in the same artistic tradition as the Venetian examples, its location, the variation in the composition, and the iconography, reveal that it was conceived in a different context and with different meaning and purpose. The multifunctionality of Jerome’s image has been emphasized with the liminal position of the relief between the ecclesiastical and public, but also between the religious and political. The first reason behind the execution is found in the praise of his saintly figure, underlined in the text of the official veneration in Trogir from 1455, where the duality of his image is emphasized, the ascetic and the intellectual. This duality is reflected precisely in the merging of the two most common types, “Jerome as scholar” and “Jerome as hermit”. The decision reveals another reason for Jerome’s reverence in Trogir— his Dalmatian origin. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the iconographic variations present, as well as the symbolism contained in zoomorphic representations, reflect the ethnic or national segment of his cult.

Can the zoomorphic representations in this composition be read symbolically like in the *Washington Saint Jerome*, where the depiction of hares is based on Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 104? Should the other representations of Jerome in Wilderness surrounded by the various animals be read in the same psalmist key, as pointed out at several places in the Chapter 4? The already mentioned book by Simona Cohen brings together numerous examples of the animals whose symbolism is embedded in the Psalms and their exegesis. The dog as a symbolism of treachery and persecution derives from glosses of Psalms 21 and 22 of the Old Testament and narrative Passion

⁸⁸³ Andrews and Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 30.

literature.⁸⁸⁴ The eagle as the symbol and a metaphor of spiritual and moral renewal derives from Jerome's interpretation of Ps.103:5 "Thy youth should be renewed like the eagle."⁸⁸⁵

Kurt Barstow, in his chapter on the evolution of the "Penitent Jerome" in the Ferrarese painting, focusing on the representation of Jerome in the Gualenghi d'Este book of hours, richly illuminated by Taddeo Crivelli in 1467, offers a similar interpretation of the motif of the bird in the landscape with Jerome. He suggests the reading of the heron as the symbol of the eremitical life, mentioned as the bird of desert in Ps. 101 *Oratio pauperis*, which Jerome translated as *a pelican*. During the Middle Ages, this term was used for any solitary bird.⁸⁸⁶

The translation of the penitential psalm into the visual language of Jerome's iconography, who stands not only as of the embodiment of the penitential act but as the translator of those psalms, highly relied on the correlation of the text and image in devotional acts. The parts of Jerome's letter to Eustochium, particularly those in which he describes himself alone in the desert,⁸⁸⁷ surrounded only with the wild beasts, could be read as the re-interpretation of Ps.101:6-12:

⁶ Through the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved to my flesh.

⁷ I am become like to a pelican of the wilderness: I am like a night raven in the house.

⁸ I have watched, and am become as a sparrow all alone on the housetop.

⁹ All the day long my enemies reproached me: and they that praised me did swear against me.

¹⁰ For I did eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.

¹¹ Because of thy anger and indignation: for having lifted me up thou hast thrown me down.

¹² My days have declined like a shadow, and I am withered like grass.

Barstow draws another analogy, that of the bird and Christ. The bushes, or the blossoming trees found in the representations of Jerome in the desert, can also be read as symbolic representation of resurrection. In one of the most famous medieval prayers *Te adoro*, Christ is portrayed as a pious pelican (*pie pelicane*).⁸⁸⁸ For that reason, I suggest that the particular representations of the zoomorphic motifs around the grotto in which Jerome reads, in the relief of Trogir, have the same foothold in the psalms and their exegesis.

⁸⁸⁴ Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art*, 138.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸⁸⁶ Barstow, *The Gualenghi-d'Este Hours*, 161. Psalm 101 *Oratio pauperis*, is one of seven penitential psalms grouped during the Middle Ages for its universal theme of repentance, meditative prayer, and the confession of the sin, together with sorrow and the plea for God's forgiveness. Although these seven psalms (Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101,129, and 142) were especially read during Lent, they became the everyday prayer of the laypeople with their inclusion in the book of hours, and as such, they represented a core of the devotional act.

⁸⁸⁷ See p. 175.

⁸⁸⁸ Barstow, 162.

What connects Jerome and the symbolism of scorpions, dragons, and snakes? In addition to translating the Bible, Jerome also wrote extensive comments on Bible books, in which he interprets the Bible for catechetical purposes. It is precisely in his homilies on the Psalms that we find an abundant use of animalistic symbols, with particular emphasis on homilies 20 and 68, which explain Psalm 90 better known as the *Qui habitat*.⁸⁸⁹

Psalm 90(91) *Qui habitat* as the Textual Model

90 The praise of a canticle for David. He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob.

² He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector, and my refuge: my God, in him will I trust.

³ For he hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters: and from the sharp word.

⁴ He will overshadow thee with his shoulders: and under his wings thou shalt trust.

⁵ His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.

⁶ Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil.

⁷ A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.

⁸ But thou shalt consider with thy eyes: and shalt see the reward of the wicked.

⁹ Because thou, O Lord, art my hope: thou hast made the most High thy refuge.

¹⁰ There shall no evil come to thee: nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling.

¹¹ For he hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways.

¹² In their hands they shall bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

¹³ Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon.

¹⁴ Because he hoped in me I will deliver him: I will protect him because he hath known my name.

¹⁵ He shall cry to me, and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.

¹⁶ I will fill him with length of days; and I will shew him my salvation.

⁸⁸⁹ On the reception of the psalm in Jewish and Christian traditions, together with their theological interpretation, and references in art and music, see: Susan Gillingham, "Psalms 90-92: Text, Images and Music," *Revue Des Sciences Religieuses* 89, no. 3 (2015): 255–76.

Unlike most of the Psalms, which are attributed to King David, this one is believed to have been written by Moses during the Exodus in the desert, and it reflects the crisis of faith that overcame the people of Israel during the forty years of suffering. For that reason, it emphasizes the importance of the divine promise of salvation, with the dominating image of God as a refuge.⁸⁹⁰ The second specificity of the psalm is the incompleteness of its meaning, together with the undefined position of the speaker. It begins with the invocation of God in the first person, but then it switches to the second person, where God promises the protection to the invoker, concluding with the promise of the salvation for all those who believe. The protective role of God is not emphasized only by the image of shelter, but also by the image of God as a mother eagle who protects his people from the “fowler’s snare,” pestilence at the night-time and the plague at midday.⁸⁹¹

The polyvalence of meaning and the incompleteness of the subject allowed the use of this Psalm in different contexts. Because of the overall anti-demonic tone, and the emphasis of God’s superiority over Satan with Ps. 90:13: *Super aspidem ed basilicum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem*, the Psalms was used as a textual amulet in popular devotion since Early Christianity, and was used during exorcism.⁸⁹² Mention of pestilence and plagues, together with the terrors of the night, has transformed the psalm into a protective prayer against sickness. In the *Glossa ordinaria*, a marginal note characterized Psalm 90 as a “hymn against demons”.⁸⁹³

Even during the Late Middle Ages, textual amulets were used for various purposes. In 1482, the Dominican monastery of San Jacopo di Ripoli in Florence printed a series of devotional texts, including the text with the title *Qui habitat*, most probably the text of Psalm 90.⁸⁹⁴ Due to the theme of domination over the adversary, God over Satan, and the teachings of God versus those of heretics, Psalm 90 was used as the textual template for the visual representations in Byzantine imperial iconography. In Carolingian iconography, it was adapted

⁸⁹⁰ Brennan Breed, “Reception of the Psalms: The Example of Psalm 91,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 298.

⁸⁹¹ Gillingham, “Psalms 90-92,” 263.

⁸⁹² Ibid., 265; Juan Chapa, “Su demoni e angeli. Il salmo 90 nel suo contesto,” in *I papiri letterari cristiani: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi in memoria di Mario Naldini*, ed. Guido Bastianini and Angelo Casanova (Firenze: Istituto Papirologico “G. Vitelli,” 2011), 59–90.

⁸⁹³ Breed, “Reception of the Psalms”, 300.

⁸⁹⁴ Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages (Magic in History)* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 228–29.

to the iconography of the triumphant Christ, in military dress trampling over a dragon and a lion.⁸⁹⁵

Some early Christian theologians, such as Isaac of Nineveh, stressed the apotropaic features of Psalm 90, underlining the ascetic way of life as the only way to defend oneself against evil.⁸⁹⁶ Accordingly, Psalm 90 can also be read as an extended meditation on the sanctuary of God, which celebrates a hidden place that provides security. The central theme of the refuge is interpreted as an expression of faithfulness to God, as He protects from Satan, who always tries to deceive the soul to go astray by disguising himself. The link between this psalm and the ascetic way of life also lies in the verse that mentions the *daemonio meridiano*. A noon-day demon stands as the personification of the state of *acedia*, a spiritual sluggishness during which the soul is tempted to restlessness, and to which hermits are very susceptible.⁸⁹⁷ It is hard not to see the reflection of refuge in the depiction of the cave in which Jerome calmly translates the Bible unaware of the dangers lurking around him in the desert, hidden in the shadow of the cave from the “mid-day demon”.

The meaning of the psalms is further elaborated in Jerome’s homilies on the psalms, which he preached to his community in Bethlehem. In a few of them, he refers to Psalm 90, especially the homilies 20 and 68, which underline God’s protection from Satan, who, as a hunter, seeks out prey and disguises himself intending to seduce a soul to sin. As a way of avoiding temptations of sin, primarily physical, he suggests fasting and chastity; the only path to salvation is the path of an ascetic lifestyle.⁸⁹⁸ Emphasizing divine protection, he uses anthropomorphic symbolism where he likens God to an eagle. In the same way the eagle, spreads its wings, protecting its young from predators, God protects his people from traps, mid-day demons, and destruction.⁸⁹⁹ For him, the power of God is

⁸⁹⁵ Breed, “Reception of the Psalms”, 306; Gillingham, “Psalms 90-92,” 266–67.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁸⁹⁷ See more: Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967); Andrew Crislip, “The Sin of Sloth or the Illness of the Demons? The Demon of Acedia in Early Christian Monasticism,” *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 2 (2005): 143–69; David Scott-Macnab, “The Many Faces of the Noonday Demon,” *Journal of Early Christian History* 8, no. 1 (2018): 22–42.

⁸⁹⁸ Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome* 2, 86. “At the side of the just man, we may infer bodily weaknesses; on the right side, however, integrity of soul. By the sufferings of the body, by fasts and chastity, a thousand fall; but on the right where, through the freedom of the soul, doctrine is pure and holy, the greatest number of the enemy fall.”

⁸⁹⁹ Saint Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome, Volume 1 (1–59 on the Psalms) (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 48)*, ed. Marie Liguori Ewald (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 156. “As an eagle, the Lord spreads His wings over us, His nestlings. There the Lord is compared to the eagle guarding its young. The simile, therefore, is appropriate that God protects us as a Father, and as a hen guarding her chicks lest

manifested in the shield against serpents, the evil, which can only be obtained by the apostolic way of life:

Even though you are wandering about in the desert of this world, if a scorpion should sting you, if a viper, if an asp, if any other venomous creature, be assured that you will recover; the serpent has been lifted up in the desert. His truth will surround you with a shield.⁹⁰⁰

In *homily 68*, Jerome also draws a typological link between the Old and New Testament, quoting the Gospel of Luke where Psalm 90 is paraphrased in the words of Christ commissioning the apostles: “Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall hurt you.” (Luke 10:19) The overlaying theme of the desert and the devil that lurks in it as a prefiguration of temptation occurs in the New Testament, where Psalm 90 typologically appears in Matthew’s Gospel in the episode of Satan’s temptation of Christ.⁹⁰¹ Ironically, it is quoted by Satan (Matthew 4:6-7):

⁶ And said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.

⁷ Jesus said to him: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

It is difficult not to see the symbolic meaning of the shelter and God’s protection translated into the *grotto* in which Jerome’s sits, surrounded by the devil represented by the serpents, scorpion, and dragons. The other variations present in the iconography in Trogir, reveal that the textual source for this unique representation is to be searched for in the Psalms and Jerome’s homilies on the desert and the exodus. The first one relates to the rod in Jerome’s hand. The possible meaning of this attribute, rare in the iconography of Jerome, could lie in one of Jerome’s homilies on the Exodus from Egypt, *homily 91*, in which he paraphrases Psalm 22 *Dominus reget me*, in which God’s protection is also emphasized:

With sandals on your feet and your staff in hand,’ the command is that, as long as we are treading our way through the desert of this world, we must be shod with the sandals of peace, lest somewhere in the wilderness a scorpion or a snake steal upon us, lest the serpent should lie in wait for our heel. If, perchance, the serpent should rise up against us, we should have a staff in our hands and smite the snake and exclaim: “Your rod and your staff give me courage.” Now, grasp the mystical meaning of Holy Writ. As

they be snatched away by a hawk. Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome 2*, 83. In this same strain, the song in Deuteronomy says that He bore the people of Israel upon His shoulders and like the eagle guarded them. This same versicle may be interpreted also of the Savior because on the cross He gave us the shelter of His wings. “Under his wings you shall take refuge.”

⁹⁰⁰ Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome 1*, 156. Referring to Moses’ lifting of the brass serpent and the prophecy of Christ’s crucifixion and salvation.

⁹⁰¹ Breed, “Reception of the Psalms,” 300. Breed mentions that some scholars have noticed the polemical use of these words by Satan and Christ’s rebuke of them, suggesting the possible condemnation of the use of the psalm as magic.

long as we are walking through the wilderness, it is necessary that we wear sandals to cover and protect our feet, but when we shall have entered the Land of Promise, we shall hear with Jesus, the son of Nave: “Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place upon which you are standing is holy.”⁹⁰²

The *Liverpool Relief* (Fig. 95) is the only one that has a specific variation in the depiction of animals—an eagle confronting a snake. This motif of pre-classical origin has been adopted in Biblical symbolism, and it always stands as a symbol of Christ’s superiority over Satan.⁹⁰³ Zoomorphic symbols in Christian traditions have been used to explain theological concepts since the early days of Christianity, and as such were transported through the Middle Ages via different didactic texts like *Physiologus*, a prototype of medieval bestiaries where the symbolic and moral qualities of each animal were explained by anecdote. This work, traditionally dated to the second century, has been the primary source for the symbolic animalistic representations in Christian visual tradition.

The representation of animals as moralizing allegories in renaissance paintings has been discussed in the works of Simona Cohen. The reliance on Biblical exegesis in the representations of animals has been discussed by Kalina using the example of Bellini’s *Saint Jerome from Washington*. In this case, I suggest the origin of this motif in Ps. 90:4: “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

From where could the artist in Trogir adopt the motif of the eagle confronting the serpent? The more common representation is of the eagle and the serpent fighting. Wittkower has noticed that during the Renaissance, the image of the eagle in this group has been substituted with the image of the pelican. Taking into consideration the already mentioned symbolism of the pelican as the image of Christ, together with the eagle’s interpretation as a protective, but also triumphant Christ, the typological parallelism is evident. The fourteenth-century Florentine engraving of the Crucifixion with the pelican and the serpent placed on the top of the crucifix, supports this interpretation.⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰² Jerome, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome* 2, 241. It is worth noting here that the Louvre drawing (f.19v) of *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* by Jacopo Bellini (Fig. 76) has a pair of discarded shoes, the same motif we find on the painting by Andrea Mantegna. Penny Howell Jolly explains this motif on the painting representing *Saint Jerome* by Antonello da Messina as a reference to Jerome’s letter to Eustochium in which he writes: “In the same way Moses and Joshua were bidden to take off their shoes before they walked on holy ground.” (Letter XXII, 86). See footnote 79 in: Jolly, “Antonello da Messina’s *Saint Jerome in his Study*: An Iconographic Analysis,” 252.

⁹⁰³ For their evolution of these symbols in Christian imagery and symbolism see page: Rudolf Wittkower, “Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols,” *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939): 321. Wittkower mentions that Honorius Augustodunensis in his *Speculum ecclesiae* written in the twelfth century interprets the meaning of the animals: lion as Antichrist, the dragon as Satan, the basilisk as death, and the asp as sin.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

Of importance for our discussion is the presence of this motif in the painting by Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna del Prato* (c.1505), today in the National Gallery in London, where a pelican is confronting a serpent (Fig. 83).⁹⁰⁵ Because of its rarity, I suggest that both of the motifs, in Giovanni Bellini's painting and the small relief from Trogir, have the same origin in Venetian paintings of the fifteenth century, presumably Jacopo Bellini's drawings. Although the depictions of nature could be understood as the adoption of Alberti's instructions on the generalized imitation of nature, the other iconographic inventions of Jacopo, particularly the coherent religious narratives present in his drawings,⁹⁰⁶ necessitate further elaboration of the zoomorphic symbols present in the images of Jerome.



Figure 83 Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna del Prato*, National Gallery, London, 1505 (67.3cm x 86.4cm) (detail) Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Giovanni_bellini._madonna_del_prato_01.jpg (Last accessed 20 July 2020)

The direct citations of the elements of his drawings, particularly animals, in the relief in Trogir, point to two general conclusions. The artist who made the composition in Trogir was intimately familiar with the production of the Venetian and Paduan painterly circle, in particular with the production of Andrea Mantegna, seen in the similarity of the *grotto*, and with the production of Jacopo Bellini, seen in the saint's figure and the depiction of animals. The rare occurrence of the dragons in the saint's iconography, but abundant in Jacopo Bellini's sketches, together with the presence of the rod in Jerome's hand, show that the inspiration was drawn from this particular type which emerged in Venice.⁹⁰⁷

Jerome as a Guardian Angel

Why was this Psalm used as the textual template for the iconography of Jerome? I propose that this unusual merging happened due to the protective nature of Psalm 90, particularly the segments of the divine protection from all the evils and illnesses, together with the dominant theme of the

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid., 52. Wittkower notes that some of the versions of Physiologus speak of the enmity of pelican and snake.

⁹⁰⁶ See: Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, "Jacopo Bellini's Interest in Perspective and Its Iconographical Significance," *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 38, no. 1 (1975): 1–28.

⁹⁰⁷ Markham Schulz, "Nepoznati reljef sv. Jeronima," 115. Anne Markham Schulz already noted that the dragons have their origin in the drawings of Jacopo Bellini.

superiority of God.⁹⁰⁸ During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Psalms had greater importance than today. Due to their inclusion in the Books of Hours, they became part of everyday prayer. Their presence is also seen in the inscriptions of the verses in public buildings or liminal spaces, such as entrances of the houses.⁹⁰⁹

We find several examples in Dalmatia, where the most popular was Psalm 120:8 D(omi)N(u) S CVSTODIAT INTROITV ET EXITVM TVVM.⁹¹⁰ The relief *Allegory of Justice*, made in 1471 in the *loggia* on the main square by Niccolò Fiorentino, once had a lion of Saint Mark sculpted in the center of the composition. The book between his paws, instead of the established inscription PAX TIBI MARCE EVANGELISTA MEUS, had verses from Psalm 36:28 INIUSTI PUNIENTUR, ET SEMEN IMPIORUM PERIBIT, according to the function of *loggia* as courtroom.⁹¹¹

How widespread was the apotropaic use of Psalm 90 in Dalmatia during the period? Due to the scarcity of written sources, especially those which could give us a glimpse of everyday life and devotion, we cannot say with certainty. However, a few examples, do testify to its popular use. Marin Držić (1508–1567), a renaissance writer from Dubrovnik, has quoted the opening words of the psalm in his plays. In *Arkulin*, the protagonist recites: “In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus, amen. *Qui abitat semper mecum...* Credo... Ave Maria. [...] Spiriti, daleko od moje kuće. Amen.”, to repel the evil spirits from his home. In *Skup*, the protagonist uses “Miserere, amen! Munuo sam, *qui abitat* i sve što zle česti izgoni”.⁹¹² Anthropological research has shown that with the time, Psalm 90 (91) has become rooted in folk tradition, where the incipit *Qui habitat* linguistically adapted to the vernacular language in the form of *kijabet*, *kijaveto*, and similar variations, having the meaning of Christ.⁹¹³ The derived

⁹⁰⁸ Breed, “Reception of the Psalms,” 302. It is known that the opening words of Psalm 90:1; *Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi* were inscribed on the door frames of houses belonging to Christians in Syria as early as the 4th century, and similar inscriptions can be found in Cyprus and Ravenna.

⁹⁰⁹ In Venice, the palazzo Ca’ Vendramin Calergi (c. 1500) was called after the nickname *Non nobis* after the inscription on the facade, the beginning of the verse Psalm 115: 9: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis; sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. Palazzo Trevisan-Cappello behind the Doge’s palace once had a very common inscription I Timotheum 1: *Soli Deo, Honor et Gloria (in saecula saeculorum)*, from the Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy.

⁹¹⁰ Antonia Vodanović, “Liminalnost u arhitekturi: Praksa uklesavanja Kristovog monograma na portale ranonovovjekovnih šibenskih kuća” [Liminality in architecture: The practice of carving Christ’s monogram on the portals of Early modern Šibenik houses], in *Preko Granica: Opresija i imperativ solidarnosti* (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2017), 143. This inscription is found on the portal of the seventeenth-century house in Šibenik, on the portal of the Cipci palace in Split, and the portal of the palace in Trogir.

⁹¹¹ Babić, *Trogir*, 204.

⁹¹² Davor Nikolić, “U početku bijaše kletva...: Zapisi usmenoretoričkih žanrova i njihove interferencije s djelima pisane književnosti u dopreporodnom razdoblju hrvatske književnosti” [In the beginning was the curse ... : transcripts of oral rhetorical genres and their interference with written literary works prior to the Croatian national reviva], *Croatica: Časopis Za hrvatski jezik, književnost i kulturu* 41, no. 61 (2017): 371.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*, 371.

prayers to “holy kijabeto” have been used for protection against all evil, usually used during severe weather.⁹¹⁴

Another apotropaic element has its roots in this psalm—the guardian angel. The concept of the personal angelic patron is not defined precisely in the Bible, but the general idea can be found in several places, including Ps. 90:11 “For he hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways.” Can we speak of the translation of divine protection given in the psalm, to Jerome, who becomes the foremost patron saint of Dalmatians, their guardian angel? I believe that we can. Even though the artistic model stems from personal devotion, the change of location, iconography, and medium, together with its spread through small reliefs, points to the change of meaning for which Jerome stands here.

Evident differences point out the clear intention behind the invention present in Trogir—to differentiate Jerome’s role among Dalmatians compared to Jerome’s role in Italy. In the same way that Jerome is protected by the grace of God in the wilderness, Jerome protects his fellow countrymen from all possible hardships. The previous chapter has shown that the veneration of Jerome in Trogir was closely connected with the growing humanist interest in the saint, whose expressions of the cult in Dalmatia rely on the Italian written and visual production. Similar to the relief in Šibenik, the reasons for the execution of this one should be sought in the historical context, because of which Jerome’s communal intercession is asked.

Already at the beginning of the century, the town and its inhabitants were tormented by the Venetian siege, which exhausted the city and its resources. Subsequently, the city had been hit several times by famine and plague. In 1429, plague and famine took two-fifths of the lives in Trogir.⁹¹⁵ The plague raged in Trogir in 1401, 1408, 1419, 1429, 1435–1436, 1451, and 1465–1466, out of which the latter years were particularly devastating, affecting other communes in Dalmatia.⁹¹⁶

Paolo Andreis, in *Storia della città di Traù*, enriches our understanding of the difficult period of the 1460s, when the citizens of Trogir were challenged with three main preoccupations—the possible Ottoman attack, the plague, and the famine which occurred due to the suspension of trade.⁹¹⁷ Although he states that the plague has taken more than 2000 souls, it was an exaggeration of the

⁹¹⁴ Marko Dragić, “Starinske molitve u šibenskom zaleđu” [Old prayers in the Šibenik hinterlands] *Godišnjak Titius: godišnjak za interdisciplinarna istraživanja porječja Krke* 6–7, no. 6–7 (2014): 290.

⁹¹⁵ Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*, 167.

⁹¹⁶ Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas*, 22; Zdravka Jelaska, “Ustrojstvo društva u srednjovjekovnom Trogiru” [The structure of society in medieval Trogir] *Povijesni prilozi* 20 (2001): 49.

⁹¹⁷ Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*, 167.

numbers, but still an indication of the high mortality. The number of wills written quickly, without proper verification and witnesses, what caused the problems after the plague has passed, testify to the fear that the inhabitants of the commune experienced during the period.⁹¹⁸ However, Andreis underlines that the people of Trogir, without any other solution, have turned to saints, who were always the intercessors of peace.⁹¹⁹ In that spirit, the commune has introduced the official veneration of the cult of Saint Sebastian in 1466:

As believers, we believe that the saints, through their merits and intercession, free us from the troubles we fall into because of sin, and day by day, we have witnessed these phenomena and an increasing number of miracles. Therefore, since this Dalmatian region has often been—indeed very often and especially in recent years—overwhelmed by many diseases and plagues so that most citizens and residents died, a loyalty and faith to the Blessed Martyr Sebastian, who delivered many from the rage and attacks of infectious disease, was especially evident.⁹²⁰

The decision to venerate Saint Sebastian confirms that during the late 1460s, there was an awareness in Dalmatia of the common misfortunes that the inhabitants of Dalmatia went through. The text of the decision reveals that the protection and the intercession of the saints have help the Tragurians on many occasions, especially during the years which preceded the solemnization of Saint Sebastian's feast day in 1466. The text itself does not refer only to the sufferings of citizens and inhabitants who lived in Trogir commune and district, but it refers to the whole Dalmatian region, which has been very often struck by diseases.

This reference should also be applied to the veneration of Saint Jerome, whose cult received its public manifestations at the period in Trogir and Šibenik. It shows that their execution cannot be seen merely as the expression of the civic cult in the specific commune, or just as the expression of the honor which saint enjoyed in it. Moreover, they represent the vivid expression of the collective devotion to Saint Jerome, where they stand as the expression of the plea of the people of Dalmatia for the protection and intercession under challenging times over the commune which venerated him, but also over the whole region of Dalmatia. This reinforces the argument that the main reason for the execution of the reliefs should be sought for in the historical context, where the series of

⁹¹⁸ Jelaska, "Ustrojstvo društva u srednjovjekovnom Trogiru," 49.

⁹¹⁹ Andreis, *Storia della città di Traù*, 167.

⁹²⁰ Strohal, *Statut i reformacije grada Trogira*, 261. 67 *Quod dies sancti Sebastiani sit festus. MCOCCCLIVL, die XXII februarij. Tamquam fideles credimus meritis atque intercessionibus sanctorum ab adversitatibus, quas propter peccata incurrimus, liberari et in dies experimenta et miracula quam plurima vidimus. Cum igitur haec regio Dalmatica saepe et saepius sed praesertim proximis elapsis annis, multis valetudinibus et peste vexata fuit, ita ut maior pars civum et incolarum deffecerit, manifeste nota fuit devotio et fides beati Sebastiani martyris, quae multos a furore et invasione epidemiae liberavit. (...)*

misfortunes—from Ottoman attacks to the plague—necessarily asked for the intercession of the saint, which have already helped on numerous occasions.

The cult of Saint Sebastian was further institutionalized with the construction of the church dedicated to him in 1476, on the main square next to the *loggia*. Igor Fisković has contextualized how the construction of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* could also be understood as a public vow for the salvation of the commune in the face of possible Ottoman invasions.⁹²¹ Although the contract was signed by Niccolò Fiorentino and Andrea Alessi in 1468, its construction started during the Venetian military expedition to the Eastern Mediterranean (1470–1474), in which the commune participated with two galleys, under the leadership of Coriolano Cippico and Jacopo Andreis.

The adoption of Jerome as the universal patron of Dalmatians in the period when the whole region feared an Ottoman attack has been supported by another institutionalization of his cult—the one that was happening in Venice in the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*. I have already discussed the formation of the anti-Ottoman pantheon in the Scuola supported by the donations of relics and indulgences, of which the first was by Cardinal Bessarion in 1464. The research by Lovorka Čoralić has shown that Bessarion had contacts with several monasteries in Dalmatia, in which he served as commendatory abbot, like the monastery of Saint Stephen near Split between 1445–1457.⁹²² In 1463, he sent a letter to a bishop of Trogir, Jacopo Turlon, regarding the lands belonging to the monastery of Saint Cosmas and Damian in the Island of Pašman.⁹²³ Due to his contacts, Bessarion should have been familiar with the growing veneration of Jerome in Dalmatia, and the confirmation of Jerome’s feast day in the confraternity should be seen as the confirmation of established practices in Dalmatia.

The execution of both reliefs, in Šibenik and Trogir, during the same period of late 1460s, after the fall of Bosnian Kingdom and the period of the plagues, should not be seen only through its artistic components, which certainly positioned the cultural production of Dalmatian communes along the one in Florence and Venice, although on the smaller scale. Jerome’s adoption in the anti-ottoman narrative, had its roots in the papal bull of Nicholas V, issued during the siege of Constantinople, which granted the rights to *Schiavoni* community to build their national church in Rome in 1453. Its symbolic recognition of the position of Croatian lands, which represented also a division between the catholic and orthodox Christians, continued with the further support of papal bulls issued to the

⁹²¹ Fisković, ““Nebeski Jeruzalem’ u kapeli blaženog Ivana Trogirskog,” 490–92.

⁹²² Čoralić, “Kardinal Bessarion i Hrvati,” 146–47.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, 148.

Schiavoni confraternity in Venice.⁹²⁴ It would be wrong to see these two examples as the only such endeavor.

The research by Meri Kunčić has shown the increasing number of the commissions of votive paintings in the period of the plague outbursts and the Ottoman threat.⁹²⁵ Unlike to number of private *ex-voto*, these two differ by being the expressions of the collective *ex-voto*, and as such represent the important step for our understanding of the formation of his saintly figure of the patron saint of Dalmatians, but also of Croats, Slav and Illyrians, as the saint is presented in the literary production of the humanists. The presence of the narrative on Jerome's origin in such production is not important only for portraying how he was perceived by those who consider him their compatriot and their universal patron, but for understanding of his position in the anti-Ottoman narrative, in which he was adopted in the already mentioned *Preface* of the *Schiavoni booklet* and the epic poem *Topographia sacelli divi Hieronymi* written at the end of the fifteenth century by Gilberto Grine. It describes the pilgrimage of the Rector of Trogir, Antonio Canal (1496–1498) to the church of Saint Jerome to Marjan where he heard a voice of Saint Jerome who predicts that a great battle will be fought against the Ottomans.⁹²⁶ I will return to this example later.

7.3 THE SMALL-SCALE RELIEFS

Before proceeding to the question of the author of the *disegno* of the composition in Trogir and the contribution of the Trogir humanist circle in that process, it is necessary to reflect upon the series of smaller reliefs modeled upon the relief in the baptistery. Today, twelve examples are preserved from Dubrovnik to Venice, and beyond in private collections and museums.

The Attribution and Composition

The scholars have already noticed the differences in execution, attributing them to Andrea Alessi, Niccolò Fiorentino, and their workshops. Here I will rely on the classification brought by Samo Štefanac, who relied on the previous scholarship and the attributions by Kruno Prijatelj, Cvito Fisković, Ivo Petricioli, and Anne Markham Schulz. Still, I find it necessary to underline that this research has presented new elements regarding the model for these reliefs, due to which the question of attribution needs to be re-examined. The reliefs that are attributed to Niccolò Fiorentino and his

⁹²⁴ See pp. 266-267.

⁹²⁵ Consult the book: Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas*.

⁹²⁶ Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni," 54. See footnote 37.

workshop are kept in Paris in the Musée Jacquemart-André (Fig. 92), a private collection in Torino (Fig. 93), in the Venetian church of Santa Maria del Giglio (Fig. 91), and two reliefs in the Dubrovnik Museums (the Rector's palace) (Fig. 90 and 96).

The reliefs, whose production is connected with Andrea Alessi and his circle, are those in the church of Saint Jerome in Marjan near Split (Fig. 84), the relief from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool (Fig. 95), the relief in the Museum of Fine Arts in Split (Fig. 85), the relief from the church of Saint John in Zadar (today in the church of Saint Michael) (Fig. 86), the relief from the church of Saint Domnius in Kraj on the island of Pašman (Fig. 88), the relief in the Fondazione Roberto Longhi (Fig. 87) and the relief once built in the wall of the house in the Fondamenta San Giuseppe in Venice (Fig. 89).⁹²⁷ However, I believe that when discussing the reliefs, they should be observed for their compositional and iconographic similarities, as Ivo Petricioli already suggested,⁹²⁸ and not for its authorship, since on object produced in series like these, the specific artistic signature is difficult to recognize.

The first group (A) is the most numerous one and the closest to the composition of the relief in the baptistery. Likewise, in the relief in the baptistery, the impression of space was achieved by sinking an oval-shaped concave carved into the surface of the relief, contrasted with the rocks, formed by carving shallow indentations to give the impression of bulging. The common points of composition are Jerome in the center with the book in front of him. On the left in the upper part, the books are placed in the niche carved in the rock, with a lion emerging below the improvised desk of the saint. On the right, the snake that crawls through the hole in the rock is accompanied by the lion in the recess. Due to the compositional similarities and the manner of sculpting, they are all attributed to Andrea Alessi and his workshop—the *Zadar Relief* (Fig. 86), the *Fondamenta San Giuseppe Relief* (Fig. 89), the *Nassi Relief* (Fig. 85), the *Longhi Foundation Relief* (Fig. 87), the *Marjan Relief* (Fig. 84), and the *Kraj relief* (Fig. 88).

⁹²⁷ See the article and the bibliography: Štefanac, “Osservazioni sui rilievi.”

⁹²⁸ Petricioli, “Alešijev reljef sv. Jeronima”; Petricioli, “Prilog Alešijevoj i Firentinčevoj radionici”.



Figure 84 Andrea Alessi, *The Marjan Relief*, The church of Saint Jerome in Marjan, Split, c. 1480. Source: Štefanac, "Osservazioni sui rilievi".



Figure 85 Andrea Alessi, *The Nassi Relief*, The Museum of Fine Arts Split, 15th century (39cm x 36.5cm). Source: Author

However, among them, there are slight variations, like in the *Longhi Foundation Relief* where the saint is placed frontally, or in the *Zadar Relief* where the saint is keeping his hand on the book and has his legs crossed. The difference in the execution is explained by artistic evolution, where the *Zadar Relief* would be the latest produced. The only relief that could possibly be dated is the one in the church of Saint Jerome in Marjan, incorporated in the composition of the altar, together with the reliefs of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Anthony on the side, and the Pietà relief in the lunette above.



Figure 86 Andrea Alessi, *The Zadar Relief*, The church of Saint Michael, Zadar, (34cm x 35cm). Source: <http://virtualna.nsk.hr/marulic/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/1507/04/Zadar-Sv. Jerolim u pustinji riznica crkve sv. Mihovila.jpg> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)



Figure 87 Andrea Alessi, *The Fondazione Longhi Relief*, Fondazione Longhi Florence. Source: Štefanac, "Osservazioni sui rilievi".



Figure 88 Andrea Alessi, *The Kraj Relief*, Source: The Registry of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia



Figure 89 Andrea Alessi, *The Fondamenta San Giuseppe Relief* (32.7cm x 36.5 cm). Source: <https://venicewiki.org/wiki/Immagine:CS53.jpg> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

The inscription on the base PBRO IOANNI DIVI HIERONIMI EMULO ANDREAS LAPICIDA DONO MCCCCLXXX, reveals the authorship of Andrea Alessi and dates the relief to 1480.⁹²⁹ It must be noted that the relief was composed into the altar and that it differs from the rest of the sculptural elements by the type of stone out of which it was made, today visible in different colors due to aging. For those reasons, it can be deduced that the relief was made a bit earlier and composed into the altar in 1480. In the manner of modeling and the composition, this group of reliefs differs from others.

The second group (**B**) consists of two reliefs, the *Giglio relief* and the *Dubrovnik relief*. At first glance, the similarity between the reliefs is apparent, primarily their elongated rectangular shape.



Figure 90 Niccolò Fiorentino, *The Dubrovnik Relief*, The Cultural Historical Museum (Rector's Palace), (38cm x 40cm). Source: Author



Figure 91 Niccolò Fiorentino, *The Giglio Relief*, Church of Santa Maria del Giglio, Venice, (31.5cm x 40cm). Source: Author

Although the Venetian relief does not have a base, because it was beaten off, we can reasonably firmly assume that it once had an identical pedestal to the Dubrovnik relief. The saint is in a cave, somewhat tent-shaped, with a simplified composition that mirrors the lion on the left to the dragon on the right, with a depiction of a bare tree in the background on the left. A significant difference is also visible in the modeling, the masses are balanced, the rock is dynamically shaped, and the whole impression of the space is achieved by deep carving and separation of the cave from the background and contrasting the recesses of the cave. Due to the better quality of the carving, the stable composition, as well as the realistically shaped elements such as the tree in the background,

⁹²⁹ Prijatelj, "Andrija Aleši u Splitu," 52.

the researchers attributed these two reliefs to Niccolò Fiorentino, and believe that they were created at the same time.⁹³⁰

In the last group (C), four reliefs differ significantly from the previous ones in composition, iconography, and modeling. Even the base of the reliefs differs with the presence of the decorative Renaissance language – the *putti* carrying the scroll. The formation of caves and rocks is accentuated by flat, almost geometric shapes, additionally creating the impression of depth with light contrasts. However, we also find differences between them, especially iconographic ones. The *Torino Relief*, the *Paris Relief*, and the *Gozze Relief* have the interference of the penitential iconography of Jerome, reflected in the addition of the cross inside the cave, in front of the saint. On the *Paris Relief*, Jerome is still focused on the reading of the book, but in the other two, although Jerome is in the same cave setting, his gaze is directed towards the cross in front of him, an element found in “Penitent Saint Jerome”, and not on one of the mentioned examples of “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”.



Figure 92 Niccolò Fiorentino (workshop), *The Paris Relief*, Musée Jacquemart-André, 15th century (42cm x 40cm).
Source: Musée Jacquemart-André



Figure 93 Niccolò Fiorentino (workshop), *The Torino Relief*, Private collection, Torino, 15th century. Source: Šefanac, „Osservazioni sui rilievi“.

⁹³⁰ Cvito Fisković, “Radovi Nikole Firentinca u Zadru” [Niccolo Fiorentino in Zadar], *Peristil* 4 (1961): 69; Schulz, *Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino*, 66,67,76.



Figure 94 Niccolò Fiorentino (workshop), *The Gozze Relief*, The Cultural Historical Museum (Rector's Palace), 15th century (37cm x 39cm). Source: Author



Figure 95 Andrea Alessi, *The Liverpool Relief*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1470-1472 (44cm x 36cm). Source: Artfund © Walker Art Gallery <https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/3910/relief-of-st-jerome-reading-in-a-cave> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

Another new iconographic element present in the *Torino Relief* is the skull, which stands as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha, a place where Adam's skull lays, and as a *memento mori*. This attribute become mostly fixed in late Renaissance and Baroque representations of Jerome, but it is also found among the elements in earlier Venetian paintings, such as Marco Zoppo's or Cima da Conegliano's paintings. Evidently, the elements of the three most common iconographic types were merged in the technique of the collage, in a further variation of the initial composition from the baptistery. On the reliefs from Santa Maria del Giglio and the other Dubrovnik relief, almost identical in their composition, Niccolò Fiorentino repeats the element of the dead tree, a symbol of sin.⁹³¹ These three reliefs have been all connected with Niccolò Fiorentino and his workshop.

However, in the manner of modeling, the *Liverpool Relief* contains similarities with the mentioned reliefs – in the shape of rocks, its placing of the saint facing right, and in the position of the dragon and the lion, it is closest to the *Torino Relief*. Due to the coat of arms of Alvise Lando, this relief is the only one that can be dated with precision to 1470–1472. Cvito Fisković and Anne

⁹³¹ Susan J. Delaney, "The Iconography of Giovanni Bellini's Sacred Allegory," *The Art Bulletin* 59, no. 3 (1977): 335. The dry and dead tree has its origins in the legend of the Tree of Knowledge which lost all its leaves after the fall of man. Susan J. Delaney explains the presence of the dead tree in Giovanni Bellini's Sacred allegory as the symbol of the sin that Eve committed, and which stands as the counterpart to the blooming tree symbolizing the Virgin Mary, in the painting in the focus of the scene.

Markham Schultz see it as the work of Andrea Alessi. Although Petricioli notes that the Liverpool relief differs significantly from the Marjan relief considered to be Alessi's work, adding cautiously that not all depictions of Jerome should be attributed to him, he does not draw firm conclusions about attribution.⁹³² Even at first sight, the *Liverpool Relief* differs from the reliefs of the first group, in both composition and the iconography. If the baptistery is a lonely island in Alessi's opus as stated by Bužančić, then the *Liverpool Relief* is also the single example among all the reliefs from *group A* attributed to Alessi and his workshop.

Comparing this relief to the *Marjan Relief* dated to 1480, a significant difference in the execution and the modeling is seen. In the *Liverpool Relief*, the rock formation is far more similar to the *Paris Relief* and the *Torino Relief*, where the sculptor forms the cave around Jerome with almost straight geometric cuts, creating a clear impression of space. The modeling of Jerome's figure, especially the hermit robe he wears, which falls across his chest in folds, is different from Alessi's stiff Jerome in the *Marjan Relief*.



Figure 96 Andrea Alessi, *The altar of Saint Jerome*, The church of Saint Jerome in Marjan, Split, 1480 Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 343.

The main difference is the already mentioned iconographic variation of the eagle confronting a snake. The first group, connected with Alessi, does not have any significant variations in the iconography like the reliefs from group C, where the elements of the penitential iconography are present, the cross and the skull. The attribution of *Liverpool relief* to Alessi opens another question.

⁹³² Petricioli, "Alešijev reljef Sv. Jeronima u Zadru", 150.

If he made the relief around 1470, one of the earliest in the whole series, why did he not repeat the same elements and the higher level of execution on the later reliefs, like the one in Marjan? The modeling of the masses and the formation of the cave and rocks differs significantly from the other reliefs attributed to Alessi, and it is the most persuasive argument against the attribution of the *Liverpool relief* to him.

It must be noted here, that in the third quarter of the twentieth century when researchers started to discover these reliefs and give them more scholarly attention, the achievements of the Trogir renaissance was just being discovered, and a clear distinction between the works of Andrija Alessi and Niccolò Fiorentino had not yet been established, as it has been in the last few decades. Given Alessi's signature on the baptistery, the researchers hypothesized his overall authorship of the relief in the baptistery, both conceptual and performative.

For the stated reasons, the *Liverpool Relief* should be observed together with the reliefs from the last group, being the earliest in production, with subsequent variations, and considered the product of the circle around Niccolò Fiorentino. However, we must keep in mind that it is difficult to distinguish which reliefs were carved by Alessi or Fiorentino's hand, and which by their associates. The discussion on the development of the Renaissance in Trogir usually focuses on these two artists since they are those who are documented. Keeping in mind that for almost half of a century the town was a major construction site, there were many other, lesser known or documented artists and sculptors, who could have borrowed the composition from one of the artists.⁹³³ For that reason, we have to be careful in drawing firm conclusions on the authorship of the reliefs.

According to Petricioli, the *Paris Relief* (Fig. 92) is the highest quality of this group, and even of the entire series. By composition, he connects it with the reliefs of the first group, due to Jerome's position on the left. But we believe that the position of the saint is a less important element in determining the compositional similarities, the saint is thus placed on the reliefs from the second group. Petricioli also associates it with the first group due to its simplified iconography. I believe that in this case, the simplification of iconography is due to artistic progress and further elaboration of the composition.

The way the rocks are shaped, practically, using geometric shapes—the recess in which the lion is located has the shape of a cube—as well as the way the lion is placed, and especially the vertically accentuated dragon, speak of a turn from the composition present in the first group. Due to

⁹³³ See: Ana Plosnić Škarić, *Lapicide i marangoni u spisima trogirске kasnosrednjovjekovne komune* [Lapicide and marangoni in the archival records of the late medieval city of Trogir] (Zadar: Državni arhiv u Zadru) 2019.

the coat of arms on the base, the *Paris Relief* could be dated to 1477–1480. The base of the relief in the Musée Jacquemart-André is decorated with two coats of arms in the form of a shield (*testa a cavallo*) with traces of color that draw a spiral shape.⁹³⁴ Judging by its shape, it resembles the coat of arms of the Malipiero family—a crest with a claw—which we find in several places in Trogir as the reminder of Troilo Malipiero, the rector of Trogir (1477-1480), including the base of the western pilaster of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*.

The Provenance and the Function

Previous scholarship mostly focused on the attribution of reliefs, noticing their particular format, assuming that they were used for house altars.⁹³⁵ Due to the large number of them, their production in series, the difference in quality, and the smaller format, we know little about the date of their production. Since they are following the composition of the relief in the baptistery, the *terminus post quem* is the year 1467 and the execution of the *Relief of Saint Jerome*. Some of them we can date closely, like the relief today in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. The base of the relief has an eagle with the shield and the initials A. L. The coat of arms with the eagle and the shield divided into four fields belongs to the Venetian noble family Lando, and the initial letters of Alvise Lando, a rector of Trogir between 1470 and 1472.⁹³⁶ Other reliefs are dated by the quality of the execution, due to which it is possible to place them in the overall production of Alessi and Fiorentino, but without documentary evidence.

The reliefs are of similar dimensions and the form, square-shaped with space for an inscription or commissioner's coat of arms in the lower part. Due to the present stemma on the base, the scholars managed to identify the owners. Besides the already mentioned Alvise Lando as the owner of the relief today in Liverpool (Fig. 96), one of the reliefs in Dubrovnik bears the coat of arms of the Gozze family (Fig. 94).⁹³⁷ I have already proposed the identification of the Nassi family as the owners of the

⁹³⁴ Traces of coloring are seen also on the lion's mane, the cross, halo around saint's head and the books.

⁹³⁵ Prelog, *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika*, 339.

⁹³⁶ Fisković, "Alešijev reljef u Londonu," 49. Alvise (Ludovico) Lando was a rector of Trogir for a short period of two years, but his mandate has been marked with the renovations of the public buildings, including loggia where Niccolò Fiorentino has carved the relief Allegory of Justice, where the coat of arms of Lando family and the inscription witness rector's contribution for it. The coat of arms of the Lando family is found on another relief made by Niccolò Fiorentino, *Pietà with angels*, today in Bode Museum in Berlin. Although Alvise Lando was Rector for a short period, the number of public constructions during his term of office was linked to the preparation of the town's defense in anticipation of the Ottoman attack, which intensified after the fall of Negroponte in 1470; See more: Danko Zelić, "Jakov Florijev, trogirski klesar 15. Stoljeća" [Jakov Florijev (Iacobus quondam Florii), 15th century Trogir stonemason], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 32 (2008): 18–20.

⁹³⁷ Prijatelj, "Novi prilog o Andriji Alešiju," 25.

relief in the Gallery of Fine Arts in Split (Fig. 85), and I proposed that the *Paris Relief* could have once belonged to the rector of Trogir, Troilo Malipiero.⁹³⁸

Most of the reliefs are not preserved *in situ*, which poses a challenge in determining the primary function and position of these reliefs. Some of the reliefs are preserved mounted to the wall, making it difficult for us to identify their purpose only as portable altars, which was undoubtedly one of their purposes. The diffusion of the reliefs from Dubrovnik to Zadar is particularly salient for the present discussion. The ownership of the Gozze family, for example, supports the argument of the popularity of reliefs and the composition in Trogir as the unique representation of Jerome as Dalmatian. It is not known whether Niccolò Fiorentino or Andrea Alessi worked in Dubrovnik during the period, so the relief in Dubrovnik could have ended due to the commercial or personal ties of the Gozze family with Trogir, that are still to be researched. Before it was moved to the museum in 1948, the *Gozze Relief* (Fig. 96) was built in the wall in the church of Saint Mary of Castello (Sveta Marija od Kaštela), where it was moved probably from some other church.⁹³⁹ Today, the relief is damaged, Jerome's figure is missing its head, but the traces of the coloring are visible, suggesting that initially some of the reliefs were painted.⁹⁴⁰

In all, it is difficult to establish the provenance of the reliefs, but the presence of the one in Venice certainly suggests that they were popular outside the homeland at some point: a relief once incorporated in the façade of a private house, on Fondamenta San Giuseppe, Castello 978 in Venice (Fig. 89).⁹⁴¹ The earliest documented position of the relief comes from the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the fact that this part of the Castello district, especially between the streets Secco Marina and Fondamenta San Giuseppe, was inhabited by numerous Schiavoni through the centuries, raises the question of whether this relief was put there by someone from the Slavic community and whether it stood as the symbol of their Dalmatian origin, represented by the image of Saint Jerome. In this case, such a reading is not easily dismissed, since similar practice existed among the Slavic confraternities in Italy. The façade of the Slavic confraternity in Udine, *Confraternità di S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni*, was ornated with the image of Saint Jerome, as the public expression of the confraternity's ethnic identity through the figure of their patron saint.⁹⁴²

⁹³⁸ For the *Nassi Relief*, see pp. 199–200. For the *Paris Relief* see p. 344.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁴¹ Markham Schulz, "Nepoznati reljef sv. Jeronima," 113.

⁹⁴² Manin and Čoralić, "Bratovština svetog Jeronima," 99. The gothic fresco depicted Saint Jerome sitting with the confraternity members in two rows. The fresco was created in 1494, and the author was Francesco Martilutti.

A similar custom is found in Rome a century later, where Nikola Lazanić was contracted in 1528, to make twenty reliefs of Saint Jerome to be placed on the facades of the houses which belonged to the confraternity. None of these reliefs survive, but the description from the eighteenth century reveals that the relief represented the penitent Saint Jerome, kneeling and holding a rock in one hand and a cross in another.⁹⁴³ Outside the homeland, Saint Jerome served as the patron of Dalmatians and people living on the Eastern Coast of the Adriatic Sea under Venetian rule, and his image became the external marker of their houses and properties. However, such function, in the case of these reliefs, seems to be a particularity, rather than the established practice.

On the façade of the Franciscan convent of Saint Dominus (Duje or Dujam in Croatian) in Kraj, on the island of Pašman, until recently, an unfinished relief with the inscription A · P · B · GRME (*Ora pro nobis beato Geronime*) and the year 1554, was placed above the entrance of the church. Ivo Petricioli argued that the year was added later and that it does not indicate the year of the production of the relief. He leaves open the possibility that the composition survived and continued to be used even after his time.⁹⁴⁴ However, I am more prone to the conclusion that it was an unfinished relief from the workshop of Andrea Alessi.



Figure 97 Follower of Niccolò Fiorentino, *The altar of Saint Jerome*, The church of Saint Anthony the Abbot, Pražnice, Island of Brač, 16th century. Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 299.

An example that can be considered in favor of the continuity of the composition is a relief of Saint Jerome from the parish church in Pražnice, on the island of Brač, made by the follower of Niccolò Fiorentino in the sixteenth century. Regardless of the common points in the composition, the iconography differs, so this example should be considered a far echo of the original composition. It must be noted that it seems how representations of Saint Jerome in the cave were among the preferred in Dalmatian cultural *milieu*, even after the production of the relief in the baptistery. Besides the example from Pražnice, another sixteenth century example portrays Jerome in the cave, the one in the fresco cycle in Rome, in the scene *Saint Jerome explains the difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures* where he is depicted sitting in the cave, with the

⁹⁴³ Pelc, *Renesansa*, 374.

⁹⁴⁴ Petricioli, “Alešijev reljef sv. Jeronima,” 272 Until recently, the relief was standing on its original place, when it was removed and transferred to the monastery’s museum.

books in front of him, engaged in the theological dispute (Fig. 51).

Among the genre of reliefs placed in the wall, is one in the Venetian church of Santa Maria del Giglio (Fig. 91), evidently modified over time, without its original frame and the base. Its location certainly is not original, but the mere fact that it is built in the wall together with other examples gives a hint of another possible function. Confirmation of this practice, where stone reliefs depicting saints, inscriptions, or other motifs, mounted on the facades of houses for apotropaic purposes, is best seen in Venice where we find numerous examples.⁹⁴⁵ Despite the physical damage, such as the lack of limbs on Jerome's figures, the reliefs have no trace of atmospheric pollution, except for the *Fondamenta San Giuseppe Relief*. The fine modeling and sculpting of the figures, and the details on some of them, especially those attributed to Niccolò Fiorentino, suggest that their initial purpose was not to be placed in the public in this way.

If we accept the identification of the *Paris Relief* as the one owned by the rector Troilo Malipiero, then we can discuss another possible function of the reliefs: a commemorative one. Although this question deserves more attention in the future, we would suggest that they were given to the rectors as a gift by the commune, to commemorate their office in Trogir, taking into consideration the significant contribution to the public infrastructure done during their offices. The presence of the coats of arms of families indicates their purpose for private devotion, which stood as an example of the deep inclination towards the saint, as it was with the Nassi family, which possessed a manuscript with Jerome's *vita*. Such reliefs could have been placed in homes, in private chapels, or in areas for praying, like it was with the mentioned reliefs by Desiderio da Settignano (Fig. 62) and Antonio Rossellino (Fig. 98), depicting "Penitent Saint Jerome", certainly intended for the private devotion.

We have to keep in mind that Jerome's image is polyvalent, with the layers of meaning read in different contexts, so the function of these reliefs should be understood ambiguously. The parallel could be drawn with the devotional plaquettes, where an accessible and portable format could have been adopted to the various contexts in which the object could have been used, from private devotion

⁹⁴⁵ Alberto Rizzi, *Scultura esterna a Venezia: corpus delle sculture erratiche all'aperto di Venezia e della sua laguna* (Venezia: Stamperia di Venezia, 1987). Igor Fisković, "Reljef sv. Nikole sa crkve benediktinki u Trogiru" [The relief of Saint Nicholas from the Benedictine church in Trogir], in *Spomenica 950-e Obljetnice Benediktinskog Samostana u Trogiru* (Trogir: Samostan Benediktinki Sv. Nikole, 2014), 181–88; Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 146. In this context we should observe the relief on the facade of the Benedictine church of Saint Nicholas attributed to Niccolò Fiorentino. A walled relief of Saint Nicholas on the throne, attributed to Fiorentino by Cvito Fisković and by Anne Markham Schulz to his workshop. Štefanac does not rule out the possibility that the relief is a product of the workshop according to Fiorentino's drawing.

to decorative elements. Regardless of the function, the reliefs also served their purpose of invoking the saint's protective powers, the same as the relief in the baptistery.

Another parallel could be drawn with the Venetian paintings of the period representing "Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness", owned by the humanists and used as the contemplative apparatus during prayer. In the end, the composition and iconography of the *Relief of Saint Jerome* derive from



Figure 98 Antonio Rossellino, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, c. 1470 (42.2 × 38.7), The Metropolitan Museum. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/211335> (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

them. However, in Dalmatia, the translation of this genre from one medium to another could have happened due to the long tradition of stonemasons and sculptors. While we can talk about the regional sculptural and building school in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, led by Giorgio Dalmata, Niccolò Fiorentino, and Andrea Alessi, whose works are found all along the coast, the painting did not have such development. Regardless of the debate about the function of these reliefs, they also confirm another aspect— that the *Relief of Saint Jerome*, at the time of its creation was very popular and well known throughout Dalmatia, considering the geographical distribution of the commissioners we know

with certainty, and that many wanted to own a copy to exhibit in their *studiolo* or other locations in the household.

7.4 WHOSE INVENTION?

From the analysis elaborated in this chapter, we can conclude that the *Relief of Saint Jerome* and all the subsequent reliefs of smaller dimensions, relies on the compositional and iconographic models of Jacopo Bellini, later adopted by his son Giovanni Bellini, his son-in-law Andrea Mantegna, and the other painters of the period like Antonio Vivarini and Bartolomeo da Montagna. However, it is not only compositional references that are present in Trogir but the variation of the iconographic concept. The use of the psalms as the textual reference for the formation of the landscape and the

zoomorphic animals in it, and the adoption of its meaning related to the unstable times in which Trogir and all of Dalmatia found themselves, giving a political undertone to this representation, speaks of the developed renaissance culture in Trogir.



Figure 99 Niccolo Fiorentino, Andrea Alessi, Ioannes Dalmata, *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, Cathedral of Saint Lawrence, 1468-1559. Source: Author Živko Bačić, from: *Svjetska baština u Hrvatskoj*, MK, Zagreb, 2005. https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kapela_Svetog_Ivana_Trogiranina#/media/Datoteka:Trogir-Kapela_Ivana_Ursinija.jpg (Last accessed 04 July 2020)

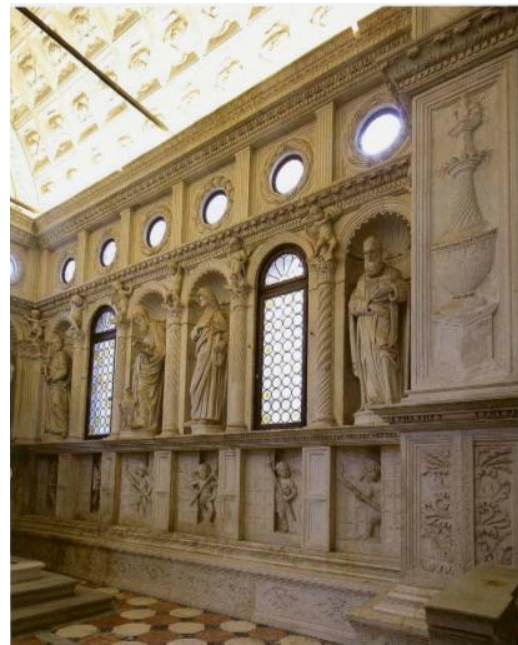


Figure 100 Niccolo Fiorentino, Andrea Alessi, Ioannes Dalmata, *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, Cathedral of Saint Lawrence, 1468-1559. Source: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 210.

Accepting the hypothesis of a unique iconographic program in the baptistery raises the question of whether the Trogir humanist *milieu* could produce such an elaborate account, and if so, who authored it? If we observe the artistic achievement of the baptistery in comparison with the other masterpieces of the Croatian Renaissance, in which the achievement of the Trogir humanist and artistic circle has reached its peak, the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, then we could characterize the iconographic program in it as an “iconographic exercise”. The baptistery could be understood as the preparatory material for the culmination of the Renaissance in the architectural-sculptural assembly of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* (Fig. 99 and 100) and its still debated complex iconography.

Trogir Humanist Circle

The participation of the same group of people, the artists Niccolò Fiorentino and Andrea Alessi, together with Coriolano Cippico as procurator, and the bishop Jacopo Turlon as the ecclesiastical authority, raises the question of the contribution of each of them in the composition of

the relief. Even though all the renaissance works and monuments executed in Trogir during the second half of the fifteenth century should be regarded as the expression of the advanced cultural environment that was nurtured in the town, which readily accepted and approved these interventions, a few individuals stand out. Besides the bishop, without whose approval no intervention could be done in the cathedral, the cathedral canons who would have been familiar with the Scripture and possibly with the devotional texts about Jerome, as they were in Zadar, and educated individuals who venerated Jerome as a personal patron saint, certainly gave their contribution.

In the scholarship, the name of Coriolano Cippico (1425–1493) has been already discussed at large as the leading proponent of Trogir's *renovatio urbis*, a series of public renovations in the Renaissance style, which have put this small Dalmatian commune on the map of Italian Renaissance. Even though the sources and the preserved artworks do not indicate Coriolano's close affiliation with Saint Jerome, the naming of one of his sons after him certainly indicates the high regard he had for Jerome. Coriolano was born into a humanist family, which is seen in his name, given after the ancient hero.⁹⁴⁶ His father, Petar Cippico, passed on to him an interest in ancient epigraphy and classical literature. The education Coriolano received in his hometown, supported by the rich library of his father, enabled him to go to Venice and Padua at a very early age to continue his studies. Between 1445 and 1453, his name is listed among the Dalmatian students in Padua, where he became a Doctor of Law.

Although not much is known about his days in Padua, it is assumed that he became familiar with Jerome's cult there. It was a period when the cult of the saint was in its crucial years of the formation into a popular cult, where the humanists held public speeches in the saint's honor on his feast day. The humanist movement growing among the students and professors of the university, together with the presence of Donatello's workshop and Squarcione's painterly school, have marked Padua as a cultural center. The spiritual atmosphere in the town was still largely marked with the reforms of Ludovico Barbo, and the congregation of Santa Giustina. Such an atmosphere, beyond the academic settings of the university, must have left a strong impression on the young Coriolano.

However, it is essential to emphasize that during the Renaissance, Padua should be observed as part of the greater cultural circle gravitating around Venice. Since the inclusion of Padua in the Republic of Venice in 1405, the university became the center for the education of young Venetian patricians. After earning their degrees, they participated in the executive government or the

⁹⁴⁶ Ivo Babić, "Oporuke Pelegrine, Petra i Koriolana Cipika" [The last wills of Pelegrina, Petar and Koriolan Cipiko], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 30 (2006): 31.

administration of the expanding Venetian republic.⁹⁴⁷ For this reason, when discussing humanism, the Paduan and Venetian humanist circles should be observed as a unique cultural circle. The growing interest in Jerome in the Venetian and Paduan region has already been discussed in this thesis. The saint's popularity was also connected with the University of Padua, where much attention was given to Biblical study and exegesis, and where the saint's contribution to Bible translation and the development of theology were inevitably studied.⁹⁴⁸

Accidentally or not, the introduction of the official celebration of Jerome's feast day in Trogir happened after Coriolano's return from Italy. After settling in his hometown, he gradually started to assume a leading role in communal life, including the office of the *operarius* of the cathedral church. This office was also performed by his sons Petar and Christopher, together with other members of the Cippico family.⁹⁴⁹ His contribution to the arrival of Niccolò Fiorentino in Trogir, whose representative he was on the occasion of signing the contract for the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* in 1467, and to the realization of the chapel's unique iconography has been consistently emphasized in the historiography.

Even far from Venice and Padua, he continued to maintain contact with Venice and his friends from his student days. It is known that on several occasions, he defended the rights of Trogir's aristocracy in front of the Venetian authorities, opposing the efforts of commoners for the greater participation in the executive power in town.⁹⁵⁰ It is challenging to fully reconstruct his connections with the Italian humanists, and his possible inclusion in the narrow network of the Venetian humanist circles. However, it is already known that he maintained a friendship with Bernardo Bembo, to whom he gifted one of his father's codices in 1457.⁹⁵¹ His close friendship with Marco Antonio Sabellico (1436–1506) is seen from the consolatory letter sent to Coriolano in 1492 after his wife Nicolotta Andreis died in a fire.⁹⁵² To Marcantonio Morosini (1434–1509), he dedicated his war memoirs, *The Deeds of Commander Pietro Mocenigo* known also as *De Bello Asiatico*. Although it is known that

⁹⁴⁷ See more about University of Padua as the Venetian education center during the fifteenth century: Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 21–31.

⁹⁴⁸ Denys Hay, *La Chiesa nell'Italia rinascimentale* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1979), 157–59.

⁹⁴⁹ Babić, "Oporuke Pelegrine," 45. Coriolano was *operarius* in years 1456, 1463, 1477, 1483 and 1488. According to the list of *operarii* in the *Operaria* file in the manuscript *Varia dalmatica* (f. 114v–117r) at the Scientific Library in Zadar (sign. 259290, ms. 617), this service was also performed by his sons: Peter in 1473, 1481 and 1480 and 1505 and Christopher 1503. During the second half of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, other members of Cippico family were performing this office, including Jerome Cippico in 1479, 1482, and 1506; Cvito Fisković, *Opis trogirске katedrale iz XVIII stoljeća* [The description of Trogir Cathedral from the eighteenth century] (Split: Bihać - Hrvatsko društvo za istraživanje domaće povijesti u Splitu, 1940), 41.

⁹⁵⁰ Babić, "Oporuke Pelegrine," 33.

⁹⁵¹ Bužančić, Nikola Ivanov Firentinac, 37.

⁹⁵² Ivo Babić, "Južni portal Velike palače Cipiko u Trogiru [Southern portal of the Great Palace of the Cipikos in Trogir]," *Radovi Instituta za Povijest Umjetnosti* 33 (2009): 37.

he wrote poetry, not much of his written production is preserved. The war memoirs reflect his erudition, and sophisticated view on the Venetian and Ottoman war, and knowledge of the ancient past from which he draws parallels in the description of their expedition.

Coriolano's erudition and the understanding of the new renaissance concepts are reflected in the knowledge of Leon Battista Alberti's *De pictura*, which he paraphrases in his memoirs, but also of the treatise *De Re Aedificatoria*. The principles suggested by Alberti are seen in the overall design of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, and in the concept of *renovatio urbis*, done in Trogir during the second half of the fifteenth century.⁹⁵³ Although it would be hasty to claim that Coriolano Cippico is solely responsible for introducing the veneration of Saint Jerome in the proportions this saint deserves, his role as a cultural leader of Trogir, as well as his cosmopolitan and learned spirit, certainly present him as one of the possible front-runners of the saint's veneration in Trogir, and thus Dalmatia.

Despite the scattered sources which allow us to understand the impact of humanism in Trogir fully, the artistic production of the communal interest in Trogir during this period should be understood as the joint venture of the circle around Coriolano which certainly included bishop Jacopo Turlon, without whose permission no work could be done in the cathedral. To those who could have contributed to this complex iconography embedded in Jerome's image, we should also count the already mentioned Ivan Sobota and his son Šimun whose tomb was made by Niccolò Fiorentino in 1468, in the church of Saint Dominic in Trogir, but also all of those who commissioned the artworks with the representations of a saint out of private devotion, as discussed in Chapter 5. The number of private devotion commissions discussed in the chapter 5 shows that Jerome's cult in Trogir was widespread and held in high regard.

Therefore, the veneration of Saint Jerome should be counted among the numerous achievements of the Trogir's renaissance environment, which once again testifies to the degree of intellectual development on which the small Dalmatian commune found itself during the second half of the century. Another aspect that contributed to the adoption of Jerome's cult is the overall change in devotional practices, marked with the crisis of faith which triggered various reform movements

⁹⁵³ Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 45; Bužančić, *Nikola Ivanov Firentinac*, 45; Joško Belamarić, "Albertijevo djelo De pictura i skulptura Nikole Firentinca" [Alberti's treatise De picture and the sculpture of Niccolò Fiorentino] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 42 (2011): 144–145. Belamarić cites several examples of the application of Alberti's principles in sculpture by Nicholas Fiorentino, beginning with the terms used in the contract, together with the use of Arabic and Roman numerals as recommended by Alberti, to the way of shaping the fabric and emphasizing facial expressions, adding that probably no fifteenth-century sculptor has tried to follow Alberti's instructions so literally regarding styling hairstyles and fabrics as Niccolò Fiorentino;

where the aspects of private devotion became the focal point of religious life, as explained in the previous chapters.

Thus, I believe that the citations of the Venetian paintings “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” was not only due to the artistic connections between Trogir and Venice but the influence of the new devotional concepts. Furthermore, narrowing the emergence of such iconographic type to the period of 1450s and its presence among the chosen group of people of Venetian humanists in decades to follow suggests that the reason for the depiction of Jerome in Trogir in this manner was not merely artistic. Due to the scope of this thesis, the question of the influence of the reform movements on everyday piety will have to be examined at another time, but the possibility that this type of representation reached Trogir also through personal humanist connections is highly probable.

The first reason lies in the use of the image of the contemplative Jerome in the desert — Guarino’s description of the image of Jerome image that he owned is brought to mind—among the humanists and its place in the library, as Lionello d’Este explains. Judging by the preserved copies of this iconographic type in Venice, the relief in Trogir should be considered among the earliest examples of this type. At the time, the image of “Penitent Saint Jerome” was already rooted in the Italian renaissance repertoire, while “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” was emerging.

For the reasons given, in the period before 1470, it was not a commonly seen image. The most persuasive argument lies in the embedded symbolic meaning, which in the Trogir case and in the Venetian cases, relies on the biblical symbolism represented by animals. The relief in Trogir is not a direct copy of the existing composition, but an innovation which shows that those who stood behind it understood the initial purpose of the Venetian paintings, adopting it to portray Jerome’s status of patron saint more adequately. So, the Trogir humanist circle, led by Coriolano Cippico and bishop Jacopo Turlon, should be named as the inventor of the symbolic message the relief contains.

The Artist(s)?

The question that deserves our attention relates to whether Andrea Alessi should be named as the one who translated the ideas that emerged in the Trogir humanist circle into visual language? There are several reasons to question this, from his Dalmatian formation and the encounter with the Renaissance through Giorgio Dalmata and Niccolò Fiorentino, together with the already noted particularity of baptistery in his *oeuvre*. Regardless of his craft, he never reached the quality of his associates. At the present level of research, Alessi could hardly be recognized as a person who knew

contemporary Venetian art production well and could thus translate it from painting into such intricate sculptural work.

The correlation could be drawn with the *Baptism Relief* attributed to him, in which he follows the template by Piero della Francesca or Donatello, without significant compositional innovations. Petricioli wonders, in his conclusion on the influence of Venetian painting on the Trogir depiction, who could have conveyed these influences to Alessi, adding that it is permissible to speculate, without fear of a great mistake, that it could have been none other than Niccolò Fiorentino.⁹⁵⁴ Relying on this assumption and on the conclusions by Radovan Ivančević, who sees the two reliefs in the baptistery as two different Renaissance styles, I propose that the person behind the *disegno* of the *Relief of Saint Jerome*, following which Andrea Alessi sculpted the lunette, could have been Niccolò Fiorentino.

The first problem with such an attempt, to attribute the presence of Renaissance elements in the baptistery and the invention of relief *disegno* to Niccolò Fiorentino, lies in the lack of documentary evidence that could prove his stay in Trogir before 1468. As mentioned, the researchers have already attributed some of the *putti* figures to Niccolò Fiorentino, assuming the possible contribution to the composition of the whole frieze to him. Some saw the document from 1468 as documentary evidence of Niccolò's participation in the construction of the baptistery.⁹⁵⁵ Regardless of the lack of documentary evidence, Niccolò's hand and style are recognized in the baptistery, which means that he must have been in Trogir even before the earliest written mention.

Observing other productions of the artist in Trogir, besides the mentioned *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, it is evident that Niccolò Fiorentino was familiar with Alberti's principles, and with the contemporary Paduan and Venetian production, especially Donatello. Because of the strong influence of Donatello in the manner of sculpting, and the variations of his motifs and compositions, some researchers assumed that Niccolò Fiorentino was formed in his workshop in Padua or more probably in Florence during the 1450s and early 1460s within or near the circles of Donatello and Desiderio (or the Sweet style: Rossellino brothers, Desiderio da Settignano, Mino da Fiesole and others).⁹⁵⁶

Here, I do not have the intention to go deeper into the complex debate on the formation of the artist but to point out that even when he adopts the established compositions, as the previous researchers noticed, the elements of innovation are present, like on the two *Pietà* reliefs; one he made

⁹⁵⁴ Petricioli, "Alešijev reljef Sv. Jeronima u Zadru," 151.

⁹⁵⁵ See footnote 579.

⁹⁵⁶ See footnote 583.

together with Alessi for the tomb of Sobota family in the Dominican church, and other some years later for the tomb of the Cippico family in the church of Saint John the Baptist.⁹⁵⁷

However, if we observe the smaller reliefs attributed to Alessi and Fiorentino, the evident difference in the quality of the execution is evident, especially in the formation of the rocks around the saint and the manner by which the artists create a sense of space and depth, where those attributed to Fiorentino and his workshop (Group **B** and **C**) significantly differ from those attributed to Alessi and his workshop (Group **A**). It is not only the quality of the execution that differentiates them but the small variations in the iconography and the composition. Niccolò's knowledge of the iconography of Saint Jerome is also evident in the aforementioned examples of private piety, especially the statue of Saint Jerome from the church of Saint Mary, for which we have already claimed to be an innovative approach to the saint's desert narrative, underlining his spiritual characteristics, emphasized by the gesture of leaning on a tree, similar to gesture present on the *Relief of Saint Jerome*.

Another element that points out to Niccolò Fiorentino is the motif of a dragon, which on most of the reliefs has been modeled similarly, inside the cavity, of a bent posture, with the neck curving on the side. Smaller differences in the posture are found on the *Paris Relief* and the *Gozze Relief*, where the dragon's tail is accentuated vertically. The significant difference is found on the *Roberto Longhi Relief* and the *Zadar Relief*, where the dragon stands upright with the wings spread, and on the *Liverpool Relief* where the dragon is shown from the lateral side. The posture of the dragon on most of the reliefs derives from the dragons on the *Trogir Relief*, with the difference in the modeling of the cave around the dragons.

But where does this particular motif have its origin? The idea of representation of the dragon along the saint could have come from the Jacopo Bellini's sketch, but none of them has the posture as the examples discussed here. Petricioli already noticed that similar modeling of a dragon is found on another renaissance stone relief—an altarpiece of Saint George in Straževnik, near Praznice on the island of Brač.

The lower zone of the altarpiece depicts *Saint George Killing the Dragon*, where the dragon highly resembles the dragon on the *Trogir Relief* and the dragons on the smaller reliefs, where the *Dubrovnik Relief* and the *Giglio relief* are closest by the manner of the modeling and the sculpting

⁹⁵⁷ Belamarić, “Albertijevo djelo de pictura,” 148; Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 114. The composition in Trogir is derived from Donatello's Pietà composition from the pulpit at the church of San Lorenzo in Florence and should be viewed together with the similar relief of his followers Bartolomeo Bellano and the bronze plaque of Bertoldo di Giovanni. The choice of this theme should be viewed in a funerary context and the influence of new devotional practices, especially in Italy, where this representation became popular from the middle of the fifteenth century.

characteristics.⁹⁵⁸ This altar is one of several stone altarpieces made on the island of Brač during the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the visible influence of Niccolò Fiorentino, Andrea Alessi, and Giorgio Dalmata.⁹⁵⁹

The mentioned altar of Saint George has been composed of three parts: in the uppermost section is a representation of *Pietà with angels*, in the middle one is the *Virgin with child*, and the lower part depicts *Saint George Fighting the Dragon*. The scholars already noted that two upper parts had been made together around 1470, due to the similarities with the *Pietà* by Niccolò Fiorentino made for the Sobota tomb in Trogir, attributing it to his workshop, leaving the possibility it could be one of Fiorentino's early works. However, the relief of Saint George, which has many common points with Fiorentino's style, especially the noted motif of a dragon, cannot be dated with certainty.⁹⁶⁰

Notwithstanding the current debate on the formation of Niccolò Fiorentino and the still-discussed Venetian phase of his work, the powerful influences of Donatello in his sculpture, as well as the presence of other popular forms and devotional representations in his *oeuvre*, such as reliefs of the Virgin or *Pietà* depictions, indicate that he clearly understood contemporary works of art, not only in form and style but also in purpose and content. Regardless of the debates on the Paduan and the Venetian phases, his works speak enough on the reliance on the production of this cultural circle. An additional reason for Nikola's possible authorship is found in the iconographic reading of the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* (Fig. 99 and 100), which emerges as a result of a collaboration between artists and humanists led by Coriolanus Cippico, to whom historiography has given the most considerable credit in devising such an account.

Based on the level of innovation present in the relief of Trogir compared to Venetian production, and the subsequent variations on the small-scale reliefs which suggest the clear understanding of the variety of iconographic representations of the saint, we can agree with Petricioli's conclusions that Niccolò Fiorentino was the one who transferred the contemporary artistic compositions from Venice to Trogir. Furthermore, we can name him as the author of the *disegno*, based on which Alessi sculpted the relief. From the variations present in the smaller reliefs, and the unique representation of Saint Jerome from the church of Saint Mary, it is clear that he was familiar with the contemporary iconography of Saint Jerome, maybe even from his affiliation towards the

⁹⁵⁸ Petricioli, "Alešijev reljef Sv. Jeronima u Zadru," 145.

⁹⁵⁹ See: Pelc, *Renesansa*, 297–302.

⁹⁶⁰ Štefanac, *Kiparstvo Nikole Firentinca*, 138–39.

saint. While those connected with Alessi only follow the composition and the manner of sculpting found in the *Trogir Relief*.

Keeping in mind the contribution of the Trogir humanist circle in the production of such a monumental and symbolic representation of the saint, the question on their possible role in the choice of the iconographic type rises. Not so many copies of *Jerome in the Wilderness* were made at that period. As I have argued, following the conclusions of Hans Belting, that they were intended for the specific type of educated Venetian individuals, for whom such paintings had a dual meaning, the possibility that this type of representation was conditioned by the wish of the commissioners sounds quite possible.

The possible connection, which deserves more attention, is through Coriolano Cippico and his acquaintances in Venice, namely Bernardo Bembo, to whom he gifted a codex in 1457. Bembo's fascination with Petrarch and the idea of solitary life certainly could make him one of the protagonists in the development of Jerome's solitary image in Venice. The connection between the Bembo family and the Bellini family is noted through two generations. While Bernardo was an admirer and commissioner of Jacopo's works, his son Pietro has been of Giovanni's. Without further research into the owners of the Venetian copies of Saint Jerome and the closer connections of Coriolano Cippico with the Venetian humanist circles, the dynamics of adoption of this iconographic type in Dalmatia still remain unclear.

8 FROM SAINTHOOD TO NATIONAL SYMBOL

*Jerolim je naš Dalmatin; on je dika, pošten'je
i slava i svitla kruna harvackoga jazika.*⁹⁶¹

(Jerome is our Dalmatian; he is the pride,
honor, and glory and the shining crown of the Croatian nation.)

Among the preserved literary sources of Dalmatian provenance, we can identify the mentioning of Jerome in three main genres: devotional literature, polemical discussion on his origin, and the works of national history. Unlike the number of preserved manuscript copies of Jerome's letters once possessed by Italian humanists and clerics, which serve as the indicator of the popularity of the saint, in Dalmatia, such copies are almost non-existent. Still, regardless of lack of the actual copies of the works, the archival sources and the quotations from Jerome's works reveal that they were known and read. The same goes for the direct and indirect influence of *Transitus*, where besides *The Nassi manuscript*, which contains Pseudo-Eusebius' letter, no other Latin copies are preserved, but the sources reveal that individuals possessed copies and exchanged them with their friends.⁹⁶²

Still, with the more frequent use of the Croatian vernacular language from the fourteenth century, even in literary production, some devotional literature, primarily lives of saints, were translated into the local spoken language to be available to those who do not know how to read Latin.⁹⁶³ Such practice also comes from the long medieval tradition of production of Glagolitic devotional texts.⁹⁶⁴ Given that this was the case, it is not surprising that most of the preserved devotional texts from the period of Dalmatian or Croatian provenance which refer to Jerome, are written in the Croatian vernacular language.

This chapter focuses on the literary production of the period, Croatian and Latin, through three mentioned genres. The first part observes the devotional material—hymns, prayers, and lives of Saint Jerome that were circulating in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The focus is put on the life of Saint Jerome,

⁹⁶¹ Josip Bratulić, "Trogirski (Jagićev) Život svetog Jeronima", 36. Špoljarić, "Venecijanski Skjavoni", 44

⁹⁶² See pp. 196–197.

⁹⁶³ Josip Bratulić, *Svetost i čovječnost: rasprave o hrvatskoj hagiografiji* [Holiness and humanity: Discussions on Croatian hagiography] (Split: Književni Krug, 2018).

⁹⁶⁴ Marija-Ana Dürriegl, ed., *Hrvatska Srednjovjekovna Proza 2: Apokrifi, Vizije, Prenja, Marijini Mirakuli* [Croatian Medieval Prose 2: Apocrypha, Visions, Debates, Mary's Miracles] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2013).

written by Marko Marulić in Latin in 1507, *Vita diui Hieronymi*, and on the several lives written in the Croatian vernacular language, in prose and verses. The second part focuses on the presence of Jerome in the works of national history and those which argue his Dalmatian origin. I will present how Jerome was portrayed in Georgius Sisgoreus' *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici* written in 1487, Marko Marulić's production focusing on the polemical essay *In eos (...)* written in 1507, Vinko Pribojević's *De origine successibusque Slavorum* printed in 1532 and other works which give us insight how Jerome was perceived by those who considered him their patriot, regardless of the ethnic determinant given to him in those works.

Bellow, I am presenting the debates on Jerome's origin in elaborated essays like it was in the case of Marko Marulić's work *In eos (...)* written in 1507, in which he polemizes with Flavio Biondo or the shorter references on the question in other works like in Pribojević's *De origine successibusque Slavorum*, Ioannes Polycarpus Severitanus Sibenicensis (Ivan Polikarp Severitan, Joannes Barbula Pompilius, 1472–c.1526) comments on the location of Stridon in his comments of grammar of Aelius Donatus printed in 1517, or the colophon note by Anonymous Glagolite found in one copy of Italian edition of *Transitus*, today kept in Metropolitana library in Zagreb. Moreover, I argue that without the Italian appropriation and the subsequent fervent answers by Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, we would be deprived of the valuable sources which help us understand the perception of Jerome in Dalmatia during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century.

They reveal how much the saint was appreciated in Dalmatia, that at all costs, educated individuals, using contentious debates, sought to defend and prove that Jerome could be nothing but a Dalmatian. What arguments are used in the debate? What makes Jerome a Dalmatian for those who are defending his origin? Starting from it, I will further examine the position of the saint in the literary production of national history. Which were the constructive elements embedded in Jerome's saintly image? Which elements, present in the sphere of devotion, were adopted in the narrative of Jerome as a national saint?

Additionally, I am observing two other aspects that can be found in the sources used in this section. First, I am examining how did Dalmatian and Croatian humanists identify with the saint on the devotional, intellectual, cultural, and ethnic or national level. What did Jerome represent for those who were so eager to defend him against all appropriations? Moreover, I am interested in how Jerome's position as a national saint is reflected in literary production. When and why is he invoked explicitly as a national saint?

8.1 DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE

The already mentioned trilingualism of the Croatian Middle Ages—Old Church Slavonic, Latin, and Croatian vernacular—during the Late Middle Ages was further enriched with the use of the Italian vernacular language. As well, over time, the Croatian vernacular language started to infiltrate the non-liturgical religious production, and where the Old-Church Slavonic was gradually enriched with the elements of the spoken language. In this adoption of the Croatian vernacular language into the Glagolitic production, the basis for the Renaissance literary production of the late fifteenth and during the sixteenth century has been formed.⁹⁶⁵ The affirmation of the vernacular language in the literary production should also be seen in the broader European currents in which the vernacular languages began to take on greater importance. In Croatia, this also happened thanks to the increase of Glagolitic, primarily printed, production.

Although the use of Glagolitic letters did not become generally accepted among educated circles, except for some individuals, like the aforementioned Nicholas of Modruš, the influences of Croatian Glagolitic medieval literature have already been noticed in the production of local humanists, such as Marko Marulić or Petar Zoranić, both of whom especially glorified Jerome.⁹⁶⁶ Both are known as the forerunners of Croatian literature, but their possible production in the Glagolitic script is not known. The former wrote *Judita*, the first epic poem of Croatian literature in the Croatian vernacular language in 1501, in which he paraphrases the Old Testament story of Judith. Primarily inspired by his study of the Bible, the choice of the heroic Biblical story of Judith, which saved her hometown Bethulia from the Assyrian king, has also been conditioned by the position in which Marulić's hometown Split found itself at the turn of the century, fearing the Ottoman invasion.

⁹⁶⁵ For the overview of the cultural and intellectual production of the Croatian Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, see: Sandra Ivočić and Meri Kunčić, “Intelektualni i kulturni razvoj” [Intellectual and cultural development], in *Vrijeme sazrijevanja, vrijeme razaranja: hrvatske zemlje u kasnom srednjem vijeku*, ed. Marija Karbić and Zoran Ladić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2019), 179–211; Nikica Kolumbić, *Hrvatska književnost od humanizma do manirizma* [Croatian literature from humanism until Mannerism], (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1980); Dunja Fališevac, *Stari pisci hrvatski i njihove poetike* [Old Croatian writers and their poetics] (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1989); On the literary production in the Croatian vernacular language during the fifteenth century, see: Rafo Bogišić, “Petnaesto stoljeće u hrvatskoj književnosti” [The fifteenth century in the Croatian literature], *Dani Hvarškoga kazališta : Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu* 17, no. 1 (1991): 5–16.

⁹⁶⁶ Josip Bratulić, “Pjesnik Marko Marulić i glagoljska tradicija u Hrvatskoj”, [A poet Marko Marulić and the Glagolitic tradition in Croatia], *Colloquia Maruliana* 9 (2000): 227–39; On the influence of the medieval Old-church Slavonic tradition on Marulić, see: Dragica Malić, “Marulić i crkvenoslavenska tradicija”, [Marulić and the Church Slavonic tradition], *Colloquia Maruliana* 18 (2009): 161–206; Dragica Malić, “Odjeci najstarije hrvatske pjesmarice u Marulićevim stihovima” [Echoes of the oldest Croatian poetic miscellany in the verses of Marulić], *Colloquia Maruliana* 20 (2011): 75–102.

For those reasons, some scholars have read *Judita* as an allegoric work, which reflected Marulić's anti-ottoman viewpoint.⁹⁶⁷

The latter one, Petar Zoranić, wrote the first novel in Croatian language, *Planine* (Mountains), in 1536. Although written as an allegory, the general framework of the novel is very patriotic, and although not explicitly, it illustrates also the ungrateful position in which Croatian lands have found themselves at the very beginning of the fifteenth century, between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian ruler.⁹⁶⁸ Among many common points between the two writers, also seen in Zoranić's novel, where he paraphrases Marulić' *Molitva suprotiva Turkom* (A prayer against Turks),⁹⁶⁹ is that both have shared a special admiration for Saint Jerome, which can be read in their literary production.

Their admiration of Jerome and the identification with the saint, besides the already habitual renaissance self-identification with the saint, got another perspective, the one based on the same ethnic appropriation, where one of the elements of the collection belonging to the Dalmatians and the saint becomes a factor of the language, mainly present in Zoranić's novel. I am pointing out these two examples since they illustrate how by the end of the century, devotion to the saint in Dalmatia and Croatia, among the educated elites, became something more than just a wish to imitate Jerome in his pious deeds. It also became a symbolic expression of ethnic belonging to a specific group of people, who shared a language, customs, and a common history, dispersed among different political authorities over the territory which was once an integral part of the Kingdom of Croatia.

Before elaborating in more detail all these aspects, this subchapter opens with the examination of the literary production of the hagiographic genre and the presence of Jerome's legend in the different literary forms, focusing on the hymns and the saint's *officium*, bringing new conclusions on the circulation of devotional material along the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The focus is put on the devotional material produced in the Croatian vernacular language, the saint's legend brought in prose, and verses like it was already mentioned hymn *Angelic virtues* printed in the Senj edition of *Transitus*.

⁹⁶⁷ On the discussion, consult: Ružica Pšihistal, "Treba li Marulićeva Judita alegorijsko tumačenje?" [Does Marulić's Judith need an allegorical interpretation?], *Colloquia Maruliana* 11 (2002): 153–84; István Lőkös, "Još jednom o alegorijskom tumačenju Judite" [Once again about the allegorical interpretation of Judita], *Colloquia Maruliana* 17 (2008): 189–97.

⁹⁶⁸ On possible symbolic representations of Ottomans and Venetians, who are not once named by their ethnic name in the work, see: Dolores Grmača, *Nevolje s tijelom: alegorija putovanja od Bunića do Barakovića* [Body Trouble. Allegorical journeys of Bunić to Baraković] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2014), 307.

⁹⁶⁹ Grmača, 307. See a footnote 25.

Hymns and Prayers

The expressions of devotion to the saint are equally represented in the Latin and the Croatian vernacular literature. An excellent example of this infiltration is already mentioned *Senj Transitus* printed in 1508,⁹⁷⁰ which stands as the example of the translation movement of the devotional production of other languages into the Croatian vernacular— just to remind that this edition was the direct translation of Italian incunabula. Despite being a translation, the edition of *Senj* contains an addition that is not found in the Italian publications, and which is a valuable element for our discussion. At the end of the text, the hymn *Anjelske kriposti* (Angelic virtues) is added, which narrates the legend of the saint and praises his accomplishment in 144 doubly-rhymed dodecasyllabic verses. Since the hymn of similar content is not found in any of Italian editions that could have served as the model out of which it could have been translated, the scholars concluded that it represents an original Croatian addition to the devotional literature to the saint.

Instead of translating the hymn *Oratione devotissima dedicata a Sancto Hieronymo* usually found in the Italian editions, the editors of *Senj Transitus* included the hymn in Croatian language. Despite being printed in the Glagolitic letters, the language of *Transitus* and the hymn is the Chakavian dialect of Croatian, which at the period represented the vernacular language along the Eastern Adriatic Coast. As I will show in the following pages, the hymn circulated also in the manuscript transcriptions, sometimes joined with the transcription of officium of Saint Jerome, based on the text and content of *Transitus*. The reason for its inclusion in the printed edition certainly lies in the popularity of this piece of the popular devotional poetry.

The earliest known copy of the hymn is found in the *Codex Dalmatico-Laurenziano* from the Laurenziana Library in Florence, also known as the *Florentine codex*, from the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁹⁷¹ Unlike *Senj Transitus*, this version was not written in Glagolitic script, but in Latin script and Croatian vernacular language. The second copy is a part of the *Miscellany codex* held at the Franciscan library in Dubrovnik, where the poem is published in a shorter version and under a different title, *Versi od svetoga Hierolima* (Verses of Saint Jerome).

⁹⁷⁰ See pp.75–77.

⁹⁷¹ I will refer to it as *Florentine Codex* (Firentinski zbornik), since in the Croatian historiography, it has become a common name for the this collection of the texts written in the Croatian language, kept in the Florentine library Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, with the shelf-mark *Ashb. 1582*. The transcription of the hymn found in: Carlo Verdiani, *O Marulićevu autorstvu Firentinskoga hrvatskog zbornika iz XV. stoljeća* [Marulić's authorship of Florentine Croatian Codex from the 15th century] (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1973).

Another one is found in the manuscript today kept in the National and University Library in Zagreb (shelf-mark *R 3662*), dated by the inscription in the year 1532.⁹⁷² The content of this manuscript reveals it was intended for personal use and the meditative prayer, since the short manual discusses the theology of seven mortal sins. At its end, the copy of *Angelic virtues* is transcribed (f. 28v–31v), but under a different title *Počinja život svetoga Ieronima* (Here begins the *vita* of Saint Jerome). In its content and length, it follows the earlier version of the hymn from the *Florentine codex*.

A signature under at the end of the text offers a clue to possible ownership and the purpose of such a short manuscript—it was owned by *SOR OREA BEGNA*, a nun from the already discussed Zadar aristocrat family Begna.⁹⁷³ This example opens a question of the late medieval female piety in Dalmatia, for which the present state of scholarship does not offer much research to further engage with here. Similarly, it does not offer more information on who Orea was, on her life and activities, besides that she was a member of the Begna family.⁹⁷⁴

It is not only this example that underlines the need for further exploration of this question. Carlo Verdiani, who was the first to publish an extensive study on the *Florentine codex*, argued for the possibility of Marulić’s authorship over the manuscript and has suggested that it could have been the manuscript mentioned in his last will, listed only as *Libellus*, and which he left to his sister, Bira.

She was also a nun, living in the Benedictine monastery of Saint Arnirus in Split, and according to her brother’s biographer she possessed “numerous literary works and epistles with encouragement to a virtuous and blissful life, which were written in the vernacular language and by Marko (Marulić) himself.”⁹⁷⁵ Another manuscript shows that at the turn of the Late Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period, due to sweeping changes in the devotional practices, together with the more frequent use of the vernacular language in the literary production, the need for the devotional literature grew. Many of vernacular devotional books, manuals, and the prayer books were intended for the nuns, so the presence of the same practice in Dalmatia does not come as a surprise, nor should it be

⁹⁷² All three texts are discussed in the bibliography listed in footnote 100. See also footnote 27 in: Ivan Lupić, “Hektorovićeви snovi” [Hektorović’s dreams], *Colloquia Maruliana* 28 (2019): 5–18.

⁹⁷³ Nazor, “Još jedan latinički tekst,” 394.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 394 Anica Nazor mentions that she could have been the mother of Šimun Kožičić Begna (1460-1536), but this research did not manage to find other confirmation of this assumption.

⁹⁷⁵ Franciscus Natalis, *Život Marka Marulića Splitsanina* [The life of Marko Marulić from Split], ed. Bratislav Lučin (Split: Književni Krug, Marulianum, 2007), 31.

seen as something regionally determined.⁹⁷⁶ Moreover, it seems that it was among the nunneries that the cult of Jerome had a strong foothold. The already mentioned *Trogir life of Saint Jerome* was created as a sermon intended for nuns, probably to those from the monastery of St. Nicholas in Trogir, where the transcript was found. Before I reflect upon the lives written in prose, few other versions of the hymn *Angelic virtues* should be mentioned.

In another manuscript from the National and University Library in Zagreb (shelf-mark *R 6634*) containing devotional texts in prose and poetry, the transcription of the hymn (f. 25r-27v) is brought under the title *Hvale svetoga Hieronima* (The praise of Saint Jerome). The manuscript has been dated around 1530.⁹⁷⁷ The transcription of this hymn is also found in the later works, the Latin transcription of *Transitus* by fra Lovrinac Vejanin from the seventeenth century today in the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in the Baptism records from Novalja, the island of Pag, written in the Glagolitic script, where the poem was transcribed probably in the eighteenth century.⁹⁷⁸

The question of the authorship of the hymn *Angelic virtues* and its other versions have been still argued in the scholarship. Traditionally the authorship was given to Marko Marulić, although not everyone supports such attribution.⁹⁷⁹ I do not have the intention to engage in such a dispute, as the question of authorship is not of much relevance for this discussion, which wants to demonstrate the dispersion of the devotional material to Jerome. However, I would like to point out that precisely because of the insufficient research of the cult of Saint Jerome, and not understanding the widespread presence of different forms of worship, especially among the educated strata, the researchers have focused more on the questions of the authorship than the importance of the literary achievement itself or explored in which way the presence of that type of devotional work has contributed to the dispersion of the cult. The presence of such literary works, which essentially builds on the practices of Italian humanists as shown in Chapter 4, is often associated with expressions of the piety of certain

⁹⁷⁶ On the other examples of vernacular devotional literature see: Jonas Carlquist, “Vernacular Devotional Literature: The Use of Pious Literature at Vadstena Abbey, Sweden,” in *Lärdomber Oc Skämptan: Medieval Swedish Literature Reconsidered*, ed. Massimiliano Bampi and Fulvio Ferrari (Umeå: Swedish Science Press, 2008), 35–54; Henrike Lähnemann, “Bilingual Devotion in Northern Germany: Prayer Books from the Luneburg Convents,” in *A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Elizabeth Andersen, Henrike Lähnemann, and Anne Simon (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 317–41; Marco Faini, “Vernacular Books and Domestic Devotion in Cinquecento Italy,” *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 6, no. 2 (2019): 299–318.

⁹⁷⁷ Amir Kapetanović, “Dva sveščića stihova iz XVI. stoljeća, navodno Mihovila Vrančića Šibenčanina” [Two short volumes from the 16th century, supposedly written by Mihovil Vrančić from Šibenik], *Čakavska rič: Polugodišnjak za proučavanje čakavske riječi* 38, no. 1–2 (2010): 191; See also: Lupić, “Hektorovićeve snovi”.

⁹⁷⁸ Nazor, “Dvanaesteraka legenda,” 221.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 215; Dragica Malić, “Neobjavljeni dijelovi takozvanog Marulićeva molitvenika” [Unpublished segments of so-called Marulić’s prayer book], *Rasprave: Časopis Instituta za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje* 29, no. 1 (2003): 182.

individuals like Marulić, while this research offers an elaborated context within which such literary production can be better positioned in further exploration of the topic.

The inclusion of Jerome's legends and hymns in the manuscript collections of devotional literature written in Croatian not only speaks of the affirmation of vernacular language as one of the languages of literary production but also shows that there was an exceptional need for such literature in spoken language. Therefore, the presence of Jerome's legend in such manuscripts testifies to the adoption of the popular cult of saint and its inclusion among the already existing saints of the Dalmatian *communio sanctorum*. Such a claim is also found in the text that precedes the hymn, the one on the mortal sins, in the manuscript *R 3662*, where, when using the example of Jerome's suffering in the desert, the author does not miss to point out that he was Dalmatian: "Blessed Jerome, our Dalmatian".⁹⁸⁰

The establishment of the popular cult is reflected in another hymn to the saint, preserved in a shorter volume of poems from the sixteenth century, connected to Mihovil Vrančić, a member of a respectable Šibenik family. The recent research by Amir Kapetanović indicates that due to the choice of the devotional poems to the saints such as Saints Domnius, Anastasius, and Arnirus, their origin should be sought for in the diocese and the archbishopric of Split where these saints were especially celebrated.⁹⁸¹ The smaller volume has a transcription of the hymn to Saint Jerome *U pohvalu s(vetoga) Jeronima* (In the praise of Saint Jerome). Although the title is very similar to the title of the hymn in the manuscript *R 6634*, this one is not one more copy or an alternated version of *Anjelske kriposti*, but another original contribution to the popular devotional literature, in verses, that circulated in Dalmatia and Croatia.⁹⁸²

The content of the poem itself, following the saint's already established image, glorifies Jerome as a Church Father. However, Jerome's penitential image dominates as an example through which the devotees identified with the saint, as seen in the verses through which the saint, a learned doctor, is invoked as an advocate with God for the forgiveness of sins, for he himself was once a sinner (v.70–75).⁹⁸³ Evidently, Jerome's position as a penitential model has been put in the front plan, underlining the need for the imitation of Jerome's deeds and following his manner of devoted living, especially in the context of repentance of sin.

⁹⁸⁰ NSK, R 3662, f. 10v. *Blaženi Jeronim naš Dalmatin u pustinji stasat [...]*.

⁹⁸¹ Kapetanović, "Dva sveščića stihova."

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, 191–191. The transcription of the hymn, although in Croatian language is brought in the pages 202–204.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

The path which leads to the ultimate salvation and the enjoying the grace of God is the life of penance (v. 75–80). The hymn ends with an admonition reminding the reader that by following Jerome’s example, one should pray to God and do penance, not sparing oneself physical pain (v. 81–84). Similarly to the mentioned *Trogir life of Saint Jerome*, this hymn also heavily relies on the content of the apocryphal letters included in *Transitus* seen in the description of Jerome’s death (v.35–36), and the ascension of his soul in the multitude of the angels (v. 65–76).

The *Hymn* and *Prayer* to Jerome, included in the *Schiavoni booklet*, differs from the mentioned examples by its content, language, and place of origin.⁹⁸⁴ It was written in Latin language by someone close, or even a member of *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice. By its content, the *Hymn*, whose author has yet not been identified, certain *N.Ia.*,⁹⁸⁵ could be considered as a piece of devotional literature, since it is based on the earlier medieval hymn to the saint, composed in the circles of the Roman church Santa Maria Maggiore–*Ave gemma clericorum*.⁹⁸⁶ It also contains the elements due to which it could be partially considered within the discourse of the national ideas. Continuing on the ideas elaborated in the *Preface*, where the discussion of Jerome’s origin is present, the author of the *Hymn* praises him as an Illyrian saint, reflecting upon the existing particularities of veneration in the Eastern Adriatic Coast.⁹⁸⁷ *Anjelske kriposti* and *U pohvalu s(vetoga) Jeronima* do not emphasize Jerome’s Dalmatian origin or the possible invention of Glagolitic letters.

The Venetian *Hymn* adds this perspective of Croatian-Dalmatian appropriation of the saint by naming him an inventor of the Glagolitic alphabet and an illuminator of the Illyrians. Regardless of the dominant Dalmatian, that is the Illyrian appropriation of Jerome in the *Hymn*, the verses also emphasize the saint’s merits for the Italians, where the translation of the Bible, i.e., the Vulgate, is presented as a gift to the Italians. For Špoljarić, this is an argument that the text was originally written in the multicultural Venice, and somehow ended in a later transcript among the legacy of Jeronim Vidulić in Zadar.⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁴ See pp. 271–274.

⁹⁸⁵ About whom could author be, see the pages and the footnote 32 in: Špoljarić, 52–53.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 53; On hymns to Saint Jerome, see: Joseph Szövérfy, “The Enigma of the St. Jerome Hymns,” *Annuaire Mediaevale* 10 (1969): 28–64.

⁹⁸⁷ Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 53. In the hymn the saint is celebrated as a cardinal who entered the Church out of sincere love for God (quatrain 4), as an inventor of the Glagolitic alphabet and an illuminator of the Illyrians (5), as a doctor of the whole church and especially Italy (6), a connoisseur of various languages and scripts (8), a hermit (9), an illuminator of the Greeks (10) and again as an illuminator of Italy, with the Vulgate being presented as a gift to that country (11). The next five quatrains (12–16) call on Jerome to defend the people from the plague, while the final one (17) prays for eternal life with Jesus Christ.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

Apart from emphasizing Jerome's merits for the Illyrian people, another aspect of the hymn, which is especially emphasized in the prayer that follows, invokes Jerome's intercession in protection from the plague, which allows a more specific dating to 1498 when the plague raged in Venice. The common points between the *Preface*, *Hymn* and a *Prayer* indicate that they were all created as a unit, a unique literary work, which was possibly intended for printing.⁹⁸⁹ I will return later to the question of the promotion of Jerome as a national saint through the texts in this booklet.

The Saint's Vita and Officium

Besides the mentioned Glagolitic offices to the saint which were included in the breviaries and the missals, and the compilations of the devotional literature like it was with the *Petris Miscellany*,⁹⁹⁰ not many Latin copies of the saint's *vita* or of *officium* in prose of Dalmatian provenance, are known to us. Besides the mentioned copies of Maniacoria's *vita* present in *The Nassi manuscript*, and another manuscript copy attached to one incunable kept in the Franciscan monastery in Zadar,⁹⁹¹ we are not aware of the other copies, which some further research into the primarily monastic collection could reveal. From the end of the fifteenth century, according to the rising popularity of the saint, and its full adoption as the model for the humanists in Dalmatia, but also based on his ethnic origin, Jerome's cult in Dalmatia was enriched by the production of a new devotional literature, or the translation of the existing one, mainly of Italian provenance, best seen in the edition of *Senj Transitus*.

In the scholarship, the central figure of the humanist veneration to Jerome is Marko Marulić, one of the most famous names of the Croatian, but also of European Renaissance, who with his significant opus in Latin, Italian and Croatian has laid the foundations of Croatian literature. Very much influenced by the Christian humanism and the reflections of the *devotio moderna* movement, Marulić has also produced the theology works, with the didactic purpose of transmitting the moralistic message of the Bible, as it was with *De institutione bene vivendi per exempla sanctorum* (Instruction on how to lead a virtuous life based on the examples of saints) written in 1496–1499. His interest in Bible study and patristics is seen in the number of the Biblical and the patristic quotations in his works. So, it does not surprise that a man of such erudition has decided to compose a new *vita* of Saint Jerome, which is the first and only extensive literary work about Jerome's life of Dalmatian provenance – *Vita Diui Hieronymi*.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid., 59.

⁹⁹⁰ See pp. 58–59.

⁹⁹¹ See p. 134.

Marulić could also be considered as the central figure of Jerome's cult in another sense, as the figure correlated with many other actors mentioned in this thesis. Already in his younger age, when he was serving as public examiner during the late 1470s, and later that of a judge, he came into contact with many notable people of that period, other humanists or artists, like Andrea Alessi or Juraj Petrović. The humanist circle around him included many illustrious individuals of his time, among them Jerome Cippico, a canon in the cathedral of Split, whose father Coriolano was one of the judges during the Marulić family disputes over their properties in 1478.⁹⁹² It is to remind here that one of the codices of the Cippico family (*Paris. lat. 7989*) ended up in the hands of Marko Marulić, which speaks of their close relations and friendship.⁹⁹³ At a very young age, Marulić wrote a poem in praise of a poet from Šibenik, Georgius Sisgoreus. Although the poem was written in 1465–1466, it was included in the publication of Sisgoreus' poems *Elegiarum et carminum libri tres*, printed in Venice in 1477.

For Petar Zoranić, Marulić was one of the most notable Croatian literary role models, whose works he even paraphrases in his literary production. The rich literary production of Marko Marulić cannot be discussed here in detail. However, it is necessary to point out that the perception of him as the central figure of the Croatian humanism and the Renaissance, does not come only from the abundant and diverse literary production, but from his central role in the wide network of Dalmatian humanists, who have nurtured friendships and exchanged the books between themselves.

On the other hand, regardless of the perception in the Croatian historiography of Marulić being the most fervent devotee to Saint Jerome, his actions come as the culmination of the practices of personal appropriation of the saint by those before him, who have set the foundations for not only Marulić's devotion to Jerome as a personal saint, but also the praise of Jerome as the most illustrious individual among Dalmatians.

Even without the writing new life of the saint, Marulić's affection for the saint is visible in possession of his works, including the printed edition of *epistolae* in four volumes, and the copy of *Transitus*, mentioned in his will.⁹⁹⁴ The discussion on the possible preserved *incunabula* which were

⁹⁹² See more: Cvito Fisković, "Šest Marulićevih prijatelja" [Marulić's Six Friends], *Colloquia Maruliana* 5 (1996): 113–26; Miloš Milošević, "Sedam nepoznatih pisama Marka Marulića" [Seven unpublished letters of Marko Marulić], *Colloquia Maruliana* 1 (1992): 5–31; Darko Novaković, "Dva nepoznata Marulićeva rukopisa u Velikoj Britaniji: MS. ADD. A. 25 u oxfordskoj Bodleiani i Hunter 334 u Sveučilišnoj knjižnici u Glasgowu [Two recently discovered manuscripts of Marko Marulić in Great Britain: MS. ADD. A. 25 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford and Hunter 334 in the University Library, Glasgow]," *Colloquia Maruliana* 6 (1997): 5–31.

⁹⁹³ Lučin, "Petronije na istočnoj obali Jadrana", 135.

⁹⁹⁴ Marko Marulić, "Oporuka Marka Marulića" [The last will of Marko Marulić], ed. Bratislav Lučin, *Colloquia Maruliana* 14 (2005): 25–71.

once in the possession of the great writer and humanist is still present, where some authors assume that the copy of the *Transitus* (Venetiis: Per Peregrinus de Pasqualibus de Bononia) printed in 1495, and today kept in the Metropolitan Library in Zagreb has been the one out of which Marulić drew the material for his *vita*.⁹⁹⁵ I am returning to this question later in the text, but by now, there is no consensus on whether the book was in Marulić's possession or not, with the scholars more inclined to the conclusion that it was not.⁹⁹⁶ Before elaborating further on new *vita* by Marulić, I want to reflect shortly on a few other legends of the saint, written in the form of office or the sermon in Croatian vernacular, still of debatable authorship, by some scholars written possibly by Marulić.

The first one is mentioned office in the *Florentine codex* from the end of the fifteenth or the early sixteenth century, which contains the version of an earlier text similar to the *Trogir life*, which was transcribed in the sixteenth century.⁹⁹⁷ The title of the Florentine text *Počinja život svetoga Hieronima našega pravoga dalmatina* (Here begins the life of Saint Jerome, our true Dalmatian) already points out that for its author there was no doubt on Jerome's origin. The two texts, the one from the *Florentine codex* and the *Trogir life*, differ. Besides the linguistic and stylistic elements, the *Florentine Life of Saint Jerome* has more extensive quotations in Latin than the *Trogir Life of Saint Jerome*. The Florentine text also has a transcript of the poem *Anjelske kriposti* added at the end.⁹⁹⁸ The reason for the omission of the poem in the copy from Trogir could lie in its audience. As mentioned before, the *Florentine codex* was presumably owned by Marulić's sister Bira, which reflects its personal use, the same as the manuscript *R 3662*, which is signed by Orea Soror Begna, while the *Trogir Life*, although following the office from the *Florentine codex*, was written in the form of sermon, presumably intended for a group of the nuns.

Due to the scope of this thesis, here I cannot engage further in the analysis of the texts, but I want to point out to some conclusions which will be a valuable contribution to the further exploration of the topic. By comparing the two texts between themselves, and comparing the text in the *Florentine codex* with the content of *Transitus*, Verdiani concluded that the *Florentine Life of Saint Jerome* is the earliest one, possibly serving as the prototype to all the later versions.⁹⁹⁹ Still, following his conclusions, the text should not be seen as the original literary work, but as the translation and the

⁹⁹⁵ Bratulić, *Svetost i čovječnost*, 232.

⁹⁹⁶ Branimir Glavičić, "Je li latinska bilješka na kraju Transita sv. Jeronima iz godine 1485. Marulićeva? [Was the Latin note at the end of Transit of Saint Jerome from the year 1485 made by Marulić?]," *Colloquia Maruliana* 9 (2000): 287–91.

⁹⁹⁷ Bratulić, "Trogirski (Jagićev) Život svetog Jeronima," 29; On the comparison of two texts see: Verdiani, *O Marulićevom autorstvu*, 60–67.

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 60–63.

adaptation of some Italian text, which relies on the content of *Transitus*, and which is still to be identified precisely.

However, the adaptation to the specific cultural *milieu* where Jerome was more than a regular saint, reflect the practice which I have already elaborated in the visual production. While the main push for Jerome's veneration was a popular cult in the Apennine Peninsula, which has reached the Eastern Adriatic Coast through merchant, ecclesiastical and personal networks, the reason for its blossoming was the belief he was born in Dalmatia and that as such he is the most glorious individual of Dalmatia, or of Illyrian *natio*.

The omnipresence of Jerome's veneration asked for the devotional material in the language comprehensible to those who did not read Latin or Italian, and where Jerome's *vita* or *officium* was translated into the vernacular language. The translation of Jerome's life should be observed as a part of a new practice, where other saintly lives or devotional texts were translated into vernacular languages around Europe and in the Croatian lands. The element of adaptation is not seen only in the translation, but also in adding Dalmatian-Croatian perspective to the text, where Jerome is praised as a Dalmatian.

What was only hinted to in the title of the *office* in the *Florentine codex* where Jerome is named "our true Dalmatian", is further emphasized in the text where Jerome is described: "*Hieronymus Dalmata est. Jeronim je naš Dalmatin. On je dika, poštenje i slava i svitlost hrvatskog jezika.*" (Hieronymus Dalmata est. Jerome is our Dalmatian; he is the pride, honor, and glory and the shining crown of the Croatian nation).¹⁰⁰⁰ The same phrase is found in the *Trogir life of Saint Jerome*.

Due to the importance of these devotional texts written in Croatian vernacular, researchers debated its authorship. Some saw it as Marulić's work, and thus the authorship of the *Trogir life* and the *Florentine life of Saint Jerome*, and even the hymn *Angelic virtues*. This hypothesis promoted earliest by Carlo Verdiani,¹⁰⁰¹ was refuted by the Croatian scholars,¹⁰⁰² to be again discussed recently.¹⁰⁰³ I leave the question of the authorship to the scholars who are dealing closely with Marulić's production. The evident need for the further examination of these texts, together with a few

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁰¹ C Verdiani, *Prose e versi inediti di Marco Marulo nel Codice Dalmatico-Laurenziano* (Roma: Edizione di Ricerche slavistiche, 1958); Verdiani, *O Marulićevom autorstvu*.

¹⁰⁰² Dragica Malić, "O Verdianijevu pristupu Firentinskom zborniku" [About Verdiani's approach to the Florentine Codex], *Forum* 15, no. 9 (1976): 401—424; Milan Moguš, "Je li Marulić autor Firentinskog zbornika?" [Marulić as the author of the Florentine codex?], *Radovi Zavoda za slavensku filologiju* 16 (1976): 45—51.

¹⁰⁰³ Zvonko Pandžić, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Hrvatski prepjev i egzegeza Marka Marulića" [Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Croatian reworking and exegesis by Marko Marulić], *Anafora: Časopis za znanost o književnosti* 7, no. 1 (2019): 7—78.

other later transcriptions of Jerome's *vita* and office exists. To that analysis, other, later offices should be added; the one from the personal collection of Josip Bratulić and another one in the Parish archives in Pučišća.¹⁰⁰⁴

The latter one is the eighteenth-century transcription of some earlier *officium* and does not have that many common points with earlier Trogir and Florentine lives, as much as the two have between them. However, the common point is found in the last *lectio* where the saint is praised as the “honor and pride of Croatian and Illyrian people, and especially of our Dalmatia, his *patria*, whose patron he is”.¹⁰⁰⁵ Besides underlining Jerome's prominent place among Croatians or Illyrians, depending on the authors view how broad they saw the *natio* to which they felt they belonged to, this text also shows how by the eighteenth century, Jerome's role as a patron saint of Dalmatia, and the national saint of Croatians or Illyrians has been completely established.

The reliance on the content of *Transitus* in these texts, particularly in the *Florentine life*, once more shows how the development of the cult of Saint Jerome in Dalmatia was closely correlated to the renaissance cult blooming on the other side of the Adriatic Sea. Still, as I pointed out earlier, the versions of the text based on the *Florentine life*, are the summary of Jerome's life offered in *Transitus*. Similarly to the form of *Transitus*, established in its printed editions, the hymn to the saint was added to the end of the text.

Two arguments serve as a starting point for further examination of the question. The first one is found in the manuscript *R 3662*, where the hymn *Angelic virtues* is titled *Počinja život svetoga Ieronima* (Here begins the *vita* of Saint Jerome), same as the *office* in the *Florentine codex*, where the hymn is also written. The second one is found in the publishing of *Senj Transitus* in 1508, where the poem has been added to the full text of *Transitus*, translated from Italian and printed in Glagolitic script. The presence of hymn in Glagolitic edition suggests that even before this edition, a context of *Transitus* circulated in some form together with the hymn *Angelic virtues*, in vernacular language, as a part of the saint's *officium*. Moreover, for that reason, it was included in the Senj edition. Another argument for it lies in the fact that *Senj Transitus* has been translated into the vernacular Croatian language and not in the Croatian redaction of Old-Church Slavonic dominantly in use in the Glagolitic liturgical books and production.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Josip Bratulić, “Služba svetom Jeronimu” [The office of Saint Jerome], *Colloquia Maruliana* 9 (2000): 293–94; Bratulić, *Svetost i čovječnost*, 239–48.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 240. “Slava i dika svega naroda harvatckoga i ilirskoga, a navlastito naše Dalmacije, njegove otačbine, od koje je prid Bogom obranitelj.”

Still, without the comparative examination of the content and the language, the offices, and the *Senj Transitus*, firmer conclusions on this topic cannot be brought. The adoption of the popular Italian devotional material to Jerome, and its adaptation, not only in the language and style but also to the cultural ambience according to the perceived image of the saint being Dalmatian, has taken the saint out of the circles of the Latin and Italian literacy and brought the saint closer to those who were not engaged in the study of the Latin authors, or knew how to read Italian.

Vita diui Hieronymi by Marko Marulić

The *vita* of Saint Jerome, written by Marko Marulić in 1507, has been brought back to life only with its re-discovery in the British Library (*Ms. Add. 18.029*) a few decades ago by Darko Novaković.¹⁰⁰⁶ A codex, *Vita divi Hieronymi Presbiteri a Marco Marulo edita*, contains several parts: a dedicatory poem to Pope Leo X (*Pro sanctissimo patre Leone decimo*), a life of Saint Jerome (*Vita divi Hieronymi*), a polemical treatise on the saint's origin (*In eos qui beatum Hieronymum Italum fuisse contendunt*) and a poem in the glory of the saint (*De Laudibus divi Hieronymi carmen*). During Marulić's life, for still unknown reasons, a book, which was intended for publishing, never came to light in printed edition. Some parts of the text were published in the *De regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae* by Ivan Lučić (1604-1679),¹⁰⁰⁷ and the references to Marulić's view of the saint are also found in Vinko Pribojević's *De origine successibusque Slavorum*, which suggest that some parts of the text circulated in transcriptions.

The letters exchanged with his Venetian friend Jacopo Grisolari reveal the reasons why he decided to dedicate his work to Saint Jerome.¹⁰⁰⁸ In one of the letters, Marulić writes that his fascination with Jerome was not only based on the fact that the saint was his compatriot, but also on the deep devotion and the religious and spiritual identification with the saint. It is known that Marulić possessed Jerome's works and cited them in several of his works.¹⁰⁰⁹ One of the sources used for *vita* was the apocryphal *Regula monacharum*, which he also used extensively in his work *De institutione*.¹⁰¹⁰ Most of the narrative that he brings is based on the apocryphal letters brought in *Transitus*, especially in the descriptions of Jerome's death and the miracles.¹⁰¹¹ His intention was inspired by the fact that there were no comprehensive works about Jerome's life, and that there are

¹⁰⁰⁶ Novaković, "Novi Marulić"; Darko Novaković, "Svetac sa sretnog dalmatinskog žala", 11–39.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 16–17.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Milošević, "Sedam nepoznatih pisama," 19–20.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Novaković, "Novi Marulić," 7; Vinko Grubišić, "Sveti Jeronim prema Deset govora Petra Pavla Vergerija i Instituciji Marka Marulića" [Saint Jerome in Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder's Work *Sermones Decem Pro Sancto Hieronymo* and Marko Marulić's *De Institutione Bene Vivendi Per Exempla Sanctorum*], *Colloquia Maruliana* 16 (2007): 107–17.

¹⁰¹⁰ Novaković, "Svetac sa sretnog dalmatinskog žala," 26.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28–31.

other things that needed to be clarified adding that “there was no other thing in his life which he wanted so eagerly than that someone writes about the saint with dignity.”¹⁰¹²

The same statement was repeated on the first pages of *Vita Diui Hieronymi*, where Marulić explains how he read the saint’s life by an unknown author in which the chronological order was not respected, and many events from his life were ignored.¹⁰¹³ In order to show the respect which the saint deserves, he decided to put together all the information he could gather about Saint Jerome, which proves that Marulić was familiar with the works of other authors about Jerome.¹⁰¹⁴ The presence of the events described by the pseudo-letters of Cyril, Eusebius, and Augustine in Marulić’s works suggest that maybe he was also familiar with the *Hieronymianus* by Giovanni d’Andrea,¹⁰¹⁵ but it is more probable is that he used *Transitus* as the first source of information for his work. For our discussion, of value is the debate on Jerome’s origin, written for all those who thought that Jerome was Italian, *In eos qui beatum Hieronymum Italum fuisse contendunt*, in which he engages in debate with Flavio Biondo who promoted saint’s Istrian, therefore Italian origin.

The Shining Crown of the Croatian Nation

The *Florentine life of Saint Jerome* and the *Trogir life* stand as evidence of the abundant cultural production of the ambience and the period in which they were made. They also reflect the image of the saint that was nurtured through them and among the audience for which they were intended; for all of those who spoke Croatian vernacular language, regardless of how they were named in the sources: Croats, Dalmatians, Slavs or Illyrians. In them, the saint is singled out as the most famous and meritorious individual of the Dalmatians and Croats. A similar formulation is also found in the *Pučišća office*, where like in the *Trogir life*, the saint is called “the honor and pride of Croatian and Illyrian people, and especially of our Dalmatia, his *patria*, whose patron he is”, where additionally, Jerome’s role as a patron saint, already generally accepted by the eighteenth century, has been emphasized.

The opening quote of this chapter, from the *Trogir life of Saint Jerome*, but could also be from the life included in the *Florentine codex*, praises Jerome as the most glorious among Croats. He is

¹⁰¹² Milošević, “Sedam nepoznatih pisama,” 19. Transcription brought by author in the footnote 43. *Nihil enim. in vita tam cupide cupio, quam ut quis de hoc Sancto, cuius ego studiosissimus sum, aliquid scribat pro dignitate.*

¹⁰¹³ Marko Marulić, “In eos qui Beatum Hieronymum Italum fuisse contendunt,” in *Marko Marulić, Latinska Manja Djela II [Lesser Latin Works II]*, ed. Vedran Gligo et al., Splitski Književni Krug (Split: Književni krug, 2001), 44.

¹⁰¹⁴ It is possible that he also read *Hieronymianus* by Giovanni d’Andrea or the *Jerome’s legend in the Legenda aurea* by Jacopo di Voragine.

¹⁰¹⁵ Grubišić, “Sveti Jeronim prema Deset govora,” 116.

described as the „*svitla kruna harvackoga jazika*” (the shining crown of Croatian “language”) where the word *jazik* today corresponds to the word language. While it is tempting to analyze it through the prism of the before-mentioned Glagolitic tradition, similarly to Zoranić’s understanding of Jerome’s role in the formation of the Croatian language, here the semantic meaning of the word *jazik* corresponds to the Latin word *natio*. This dual interpretation of the word is not limited solely to Slavic languages but is also present in others.¹⁰¹⁶ As Luka Špoljarić has previously noted, this phrase should be regarded as the expression of Jerome’s Dalmatian-Croatian affiliation, where the only suitable translation would be: “Jerome is our Dalmatian; he is the pride, honor, glory, and the shining crown of the Croatian nation.”

The confirmation of such interpretation of word *jazik*, is found in another example, in the allegorical work *Mountains* (*Planine*) by Petar Zoranić, written in Croatian vernacular. During his journey through *arcadia* situated in the real geographical space of Dalmatia, from the surroundings of Zadar, over the mountains Velebit and Dinara, to the surroundings of Šibenik, he meets many historical persons, but also many mythological beings, including the fairy Hrvatica (Croatess), who informs him that many writers are ashamed of writing in their own language.¹⁰¹⁷ Such image stands as the symbolism of Zoranić’s work, being written in vernacular Croatian, but also reflects his words referring to the abundant medieval Glagolitic written production, which has helped him to learn how to express himself correctly in his native Croatian language.¹⁰¹⁸ At the end of the book, and the end of Zoranić’s journey, in the allegorical vision, he saw Saint Jerome along with the *Truth* and the bishop Juraj Divnić (c. 1440–1530), who was a bishop of Nin, a town from where the Zoranić family originated. In the moment of the vision, Zoranić saw an old man “worthy of honor and reverence”, and immediately “recognized that it was Jerome, the famous pillar of the Christian faith, of our nation, so glorified and respected in the world.”¹⁰¹⁹ Zoranić also uses work *jazik*, when praising the saint, saying that Jerome was “famous pillar of our *jazik*”.

While it would be tempting to interpret his words through the prism of the previously given quote on the importance of the Glagolitic heritage for the understanding of his own language, Dolores Grmača discussed the ambiguous meaning of the word *jazik* in the older Croatian production, where

¹⁰¹⁶ On the question of the language and identity, see more, especially the note 15 in: Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni”; Miroslav Kravar, “Riječ jezik u smislu ‘narod’” [The word jezik (language) in the meaning of narod (people)], *Jezik : časopis za kulturu hrvatskoga književnog jezika* 34, no. 1 (1986): 6–10; Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 106–8.

¹⁰¹⁷ Grmača, *Nevolje s tijelom*, 298.

¹⁰¹⁸ See p. 77.

¹⁰¹⁹ Zoranić and Grčić, *Planine*, 244. “poznao da to biše ona našega jezika pačelj krstjanske vjere stanovita klonda Hijeronim toko slovuć i počtovan na sviti.”; Grmača, *Nevolje s tijelom*, 319.

it also meant *language* and *nation*. Taking into the consideration the patriotic tone in which the novel was written—we should keep in mind that it is a period of the immense Ottoman threat to the Dalmatia—and the context of the phrase in which such construction comes, she is more inclined to interpret as the emphasis of Jerome’s belonging to the Croatians, especially keeping in mind the other present debates on his origin at the time.¹⁰²⁰

It is in the broader context that Grmača finds a stronger argument for her interpretation of meaning. As an example, she cites Marko Marulić, who was very important for Zoranić, and who, as already mentioned, and as I elaborate later, wrote a polemical text in which he fiercely defends Jerome’s origin. Marulić, the same as most of the others who argued on Jerome’s origin, does not mention the alleged attribution of the invention of the Glagolitic script to Jerome, but he proudly points out his origin.¹⁰²¹

In the literary production of the period, which mentions Jerome, the Glagolitic appropriation did not become *topos* until the written production of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century historiographers, when he was used as pivotal evidence on the origin of Slavic language and people. Understanding of word *jazik* in the meaning of *natio* or the people in Zoranić’s work is supported with the quote from the *Trogir life*, but also with the written testimony of the Battle of Krbava Field in 1493 by Priest Martinac, a Glagolitic monk who added a note in the *Drugi novljanski brevijar* (The Second Novi Vinodolski Breviary), right after the battle in which he described the defeat of Croatian nobility in the battle with the Ottomans.

The testimony, written in a mixture of Church Slavonic and Croatian vernacular, described the Ottoman atrocities and the destruction, and the difficult situation in Croatian lands which followed, opening his texts by saying „Turci nalegoše na jazik hrvatski“, meaning that „Turks have flocked unto the Croatian people“.¹⁰²² It is this record that gives arguments for interpreting the meaning of the word *jazik* in terms of the *people* or *natio*, because regardless of the importance that the Croatian language, vernacular and the Croatian redaction of Church Slavonic, gained in the period, it is difficult to find an explanation why the Ottoman invasion and conquest would endanger Croatian vernacular language.

¹⁰²⁰ Grmača, *Nevolje s tijelom*, 319.

¹⁰²¹ *Ibid*, 319–20.

¹⁰²² On the testimony by Priest Martinac see: Nikica Kolumbić, “Zapis popa Martinca u kontekstu tadašnje hrvatske književnosti” [A record of pries Martinac in the context of Croatian literature of the period], *Radovi. Razdio filoloških znanosti* 34, no. 24–25 (1996): 143–51.

The only possible reading of this example and all the others in which Jerome is praised is that of people or *natio*, also supported by the context in which the word *jazik* is used. Zoranić calls him “a pillar of the Christian faith”, using the already established formulation for the saint, embedded in the iconography of “Saint Jerome as a Cardinal” - *doctor et ecclesie prima colona fuit*.¹⁰²³ The same pattern is noticeable in the *Florentine* and *Trogir life* of Saint Jerome, where the author praise of Jerome as the most glorious Dalmatian comes after the listing of all his saintly deeds and accomplishments.

8.2 JEROME AS THE MOST GLORIOUS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE *NATIO*

The occurrence of the references to Jerome’s origin in the literary production of Croatian and mostly of Dalmatian humanists reveals how much Jerome was important for them, not only on the level of identification in the devotional or intellectual sense but in the identification in the ethnic or national sense. His symbolic role as the unifier of these people, at the moment living in the different political entities, and him being the most representative individual of their kind, is the reason why the Italian appropriation mainly promoted by Flavio Biondo has triggered such elaborated answers and became one of the most important sources for our understanding of the perception of Jerome among those who considered him a compatriot in the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period.

The emergence of Jerome as the national saint in Dalmatia occurred, during the period of advanced humanist and renaissance culture in the Dalmatian communes. Aside from the import of the artistic ideas from Italian cultural centers, many other ideas were adopted through the education, personal connections, and political activities of the humanists, already extensively discussed in Croatian historiography. These individuals held relevant governing posts in local governments and maintained personal or business relationships with their Italian counterparts. It is here to remind that the renaissance idea of the nation was directed towards tracing the ancestry of a specific ethnic group to Antiquity and even further back, forming myths filled with the heroes from the glorious past. A new genre of national history evolved, intending to glorify the past, its prominent individuals, heroes, and saints, and to contribute to a reinforcement of the national consciousness, positioning their nation above the others.¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰²³ See pp. 113–114.

¹⁰²⁴ Consult subchapter 1.6 *Saint of Whose Nation?* in *Introduction*.

As creator of the genre of national history and proponent of this narrative model of national history, it was the Italian Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) who first introduced it with his work *Italia Illustrata*, written between 1448 and 1458, and printed after his death in 1474. This encyclopedic work on Italian geography and history had its goal to describe the linguistic and cultural unity of Italians, which at the period were not politically united at all. Through geographical and topographical descriptions supported by political and cultural history, Biondo attempted to prove the continuity of the Italians and their language from Antiquity until his time. He further highlighted the privileged position of Italians over other European nations. His work was then taken up as a model for other national histories, which became filled with brave heroes and glorious pasts, often based on mythical anecdotes that praised the nation's ancient origins.

We can find similar writings in Dalmatia, and this section will analyze Jerome's position in some of them. However, it is not the intention of this work to offer an analysis of the complex questions of the evolvement of the proto-national identity, but to see why and how Jerome is chosen as the most glorious representative of the nation, regardless of how the authors of these texts referred to the community they, and with that Saint Jerome, belonged to.

De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici written in 1487 by Georgius Sisgoreus was among the earliest pieces of Dalmatian humanist literature written in this vein. In this work he examines the geographic, historical, and cultural peculiarities of Dalmatia, which the author considers the noblest of the Illyrian provinces, describing the ethnogenesis of his people, whom he calls Illyrians.¹⁰²⁵ For Sisgoreus, *Illyrians* is the umbrella term for all the peoples living on the territory of the ancient province of Illyria, including the Dalmatians, who used various names for their own groups but were united by the same language they spoke.¹⁰²⁶ For him, the Dalmatians of his time, with which he identified, were the descendants of ancient Illyrians, consisting of several groups of people who were inhabiting the territory of the ancient Roman province of Illyria. For him, Jerome was among the most glorious individuals of the ancient Illyria, of whom Dalmatians and other Illyrians should be proud.

Besides serving as the literary model for the other national histories and geographies, including those by Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, Biondo's *Italia Illustrata* had a direct impact

¹⁰²⁵ Juraj Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije*; Milivoj Šrepel, "Jurja Šižgorića Spis De Situ Illyriae et Civitate Sibenici a. 1487" [The text of Juraj Šižgorić 'De Situ Illyriae et Civitate Sibenici a. 1487'], *Grada Za Povijest Književnosti Hrvatske* 2 (1899): 1–12;

¹⁰²⁶ Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije*, 19. See chapter 3: *Illyria as the common name for all the peoples that speak that language*.

on the development of the cult of Saint Jerome, since, in it, he classifies Istria as an Italian province, and when describing it, names Saint Jerome and Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder as the most prominent people from the region. He concludes that Jerome could not be anything else but Italian, since, in his opinion, Istria had been a Roman province even before the time of Emperor Augustus.¹⁰²⁷

Through this work, Biondo popularized the Istrian theory of Jerome's origin, which was then accepted and defended by other Italian intellectuals of the time.¹⁰²⁸ As this subchapter shows, Biondo's appropriation caused fervent answers on the opposite side of the Adriatic Sea, where many of them did not miss a chance to point out how Biondo was wrong. Such statements are often found in the literary production within the national history genre, where Jerome's figure became the evidence by itself—testifying to the uniqueness of the people living along the Eastern Adriatic coast and their language, mostly in the written answers to Flavio Biondo.

One of the reasons why Biondo's words caused such distress among the Dalmatians is found in the fifth chapter of Sisgoreus' work, *De paucis Illyriorum nominibus*. The work shows why Dalmatian humanists were so keen to defend Jerome from any possible appropriation; there was no other person of such honor and glory who could represent them in front of other nations, and who could easily qualify for the role of a national hero in the developing narrative of national history. Although he mentions Roman emperor Diocletian to be known as a Dalmatian, he could not act as one of the heroes due to his persecutions of Christians.¹⁰²⁹ While the Italians had so many glorious people to choose from Dalmatians or Illyrians in Sisgoreus' case, had only Jerome, and that is why also Marulić in *In eos* (...) warns his compatriots of the almost sacred obligation of defending Jerome from appropriations, declaring that they should not allow any Italians to forbid them to glorify the saint who had been born among them.¹⁰³⁰

For this account of value is Vinko Pribojević's *De Origine Successibusque Slavorum* (On the origin and glory of the Slavs) printed in 1535, originally given as a speech in 1525 for the privileged audience in Hvar. Following the form of the genre, Pribojević advocates the invented tradition of the history of the Slavs whom he links with the ancient Illyrians, trying to prove the ancient origin of his

¹⁰²⁷ Biondo, *Roma ristavrata et Italia illustrata*, 196. Most probably Biondo took the idea of Jerome's Istrian origin from Vergerio's works and adapted it in his idea of Istria as Italian province and by that Jerome as Italian saint.

¹⁰²⁸ Frane Bulić, *Stridon*, 25–27. Frane Bulić gives the names of Biondo's supporters, who included Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder, Pio de Rubeis, Irineo della Croce, Filippo Tomasini.

¹⁰²⁹ Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije*, 22.

¹⁰³⁰ Marulić, "Vita diui Hieronymi", 56.

own people. Similarly, Nicholas of Modruš, explains the history of the Illyrian nation in his work *De Bellis Gothorum*, tracing their origin to the Goths.¹⁰³¹

In the development of national ideas, Pribojević's work represents an important contribution to national history and the development of pan-Slavic ideas, where his conclusions on the origin of Dalmatians are in the same line as Sisgoreus'—he sees them as the descendants of the ancient Illyrians.¹⁰³² However, he introduces a new model of identification, the pan-Slavic one, in which he advocates the unity of all Slavs. Although such assumptions are also present in Sisgoreus' work, but not explicitly, Pribojević was the first writer to give constructive outlines to the pan-Slavic idea within the Dalmatian *republic of letters*, and together with Sisgoreus laid the foundations for the Illyrian ideologeme.¹⁰³³

In his discussion on the origin of Dalmatians, or better to say Slavs, Pribojević also reflects upon the constructive elements of the common identity, language, script, and liturgy, where Jerome comes into the discussion. When discussing the script that Slavs use, he names Saint Cyril as the one who invented it, without specifying whether that was Glagolitic or Cyrillic script.¹⁰³⁴ This shows that unlike the Early Middle Ages, when Saint Cyril was considered a heretic, by the Late Middle Ages, his position changed, also supported by the fresco cycle in the church of Saint Jerome in Rome, where he was included among the represented national saints.¹⁰³⁵

Describing the limits of Illyria, he refers to the discussion of Jerome's origin between Italian and Dalmatian humanists, calling upon Jerome's words on the location of Stridon, but also referring directly to conclusions by Marko Marulić in his *In eos* (...), which is an argument that this polemical treaty circulated among the educated elites.¹⁰³⁶ He does not miss to point out that Jerome, whom the whole world praises, comes from Dalmatia: "From this region shone the greatest pride of scholars, Saint Jerome, whose eloquence (as St. Augustine says in *Against Julian*) shines like the sun from East to West."¹⁰³⁷ Pribojević is among the few Dalmatian humanists who accept the Glagolitic belief about the saint's invention of the Glagolitic alphabet and the translation of the Slavic Mass:

¹⁰³¹ Luka Špoljarić, "Nicholas of Modruš and His *De Bellis Gothorum*: Politics and National History in the Fifteenth-Century Adriatic," *Renaissance Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2019): 457–91.

¹⁰³² Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni," 51.

¹⁰³³ Consult pp. 33–34, 379–380.

¹⁰³⁴ Kurelac, "Modaliteti recepcije," 346; Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i slavi Slavena*, 63–65, 80–81.

¹⁰³⁵ See p. 260.

¹⁰³⁶ Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i slavi Slavena*, 63.

¹⁰³⁷ *Ibid.*, 80. *Hinc maximus ille peritorum decor diuus fulsit Hieronymus, cuius (ut Augustinus contra Iulianum dicit) elloquium ab oriente in occidentem instar solis refulget.*

To celebrate his mother tongue, he (as Sabellico testifies) invented new letters that are used in our time by the neighbors of our region in sacred and secular affairs. However, he also translated the mass rite, which is used by Catholics, into this new language (as stated by Biondo and Filippo from Bergamo), which was approved by Pope Eugene IV.¹⁰³⁸

Yet, no matter how they called their nation or how large they imagined it to be, the intellectuals from Dalmatia and Croatia claimed Jerome as the first among their illustrious ancestors. His intellectual work, together with the sometimes present idea that he had invented Glagolitic letters and translation of the Bible into the Slavic language, made him a national hero, greater than the others. When discussing Jerome's position for Dalmatians, Croats, Illyrians, or Slavs, all four determinants should be seen as equal.

In short, it can be said that in the emerging Croatian-Dalmatian *republic of letters*, intellectuals usually boasted of their nation in two ways. They either proudly voiced allegiance to the Dalmatian, that is the Croatian nation, or they presented themselves, and other Dalmatians as representatives of a larger Illyrian, that is South or, indeed, pan-Slavic nation; though at this point they seem to have had little or no contact with elites across the rest of Slavdom. This is even more visible in the discussions on Jerome's origin, where his position as the leading representative of the Slavs is defended and which give us an insight of Jerome's importance for those who identified with him in the ethnic level, and who have used Jerome extensively in the narrative praise of their *natio*, as seen in the examples elaborate above.

8.3 SANCTUS HIERONYMUS DALMATA. NON SECUNDUM OMNES.

Pier Paolo Vergerio and the Istrian Origin of the Saint

Even before Biondo, Jerome's Istrian origins have already been promoted by Pier Paolo Vergerio, a famous orator who was of Istrian origin himself, and who has contributed to the general appreciation of Jerome by delivering public orations in his honor. In one of them, he reflects upon the existing belief in Istria:

(...) it is especially incumbent upon us, as inhabitants of this region, to celebrate the birthday of Saint Jerome with special regard and greater attention. By doing so, those

¹⁰³⁸ Pribojević, 81. *Is enim, ut patrium idioma (Sabellico teste) illustraret, noua literarum elementa commentus est, quibus in sacris et prophanis rebus regionis accole nostra tempestate utuntur. Sed et officium quoque diuinum, quo Catholici utuntur christiani, in id nouum idioma (ut Blondus et Philippus Bergomas refferunt) traduxit, quod Eugenius quartus Romanus Pontifex approbauit.*

of us who live near the location of his earthly residence may be made members of his heavenly lineage through his merits and prayers. People locally identify Sdregna, a small village with few inhabitants, as the place where they believe that this light was born, a light that eventually illumined far and wide the Christian faith. The weight of public opinion has even made this identification credible among the better educated, who base themselves upon an apparent similarity in name that would have undergone slight changes as it passed from generation to generation.¹⁰³⁹

Vergerio's words, written during the first half of the fifteenth century, are a valuable source on the perception of Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, during the period for which we have little of available sources regarding the cult of Jerome. In the first place, he informs us that the belief that Jerome was born in Istria has been present among the people living in the vicinity of the village Sdregna (Zrenj), which "made us the members of his heavenly lineage through his merits and prayers". Additionally, he also informs us that such belief was more widespread and commonly accepted in public opinion, even among the educated individuals.

From his words, it is clear that Vergerio does not refer only to the few inhabitants of the village, but of the common belief among the peoples in Istria that Jerome was born there, which he himself accepts, but with caution. The reason why he is careful with the identification with the saint on that level lies in his awareness that the historical sources do not reveal where exactly Stridon was. Unlike Biondo, or Marulić on the Dalmatian side, Vergerio is not very decisive and affirmative on the location of Jerome's birthplace. Moreover, he is addressing the discussion on the location of Stridon:

Historical sources indicate that Jerome actually came from the town of Stridon, which formerly stood at the border between the Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia and was destroyed by the Goths. Whatever the truth may be, those among us who have warmly embraced this ancient tradition now boast about such a great fellow citizen and, on that basis, we hope to have a more gracious patron before God, seeing that some vague sort of earthly relationship and proximity of location join us together.¹⁰⁴⁰

This example shows no matter if the discussion on Stridon was focused on Istria or Dalmatia, the elements on which the appropriation was based were the same. Regardless of the lack of sources that illustrate the same position in Dalmatia for such an early period of the first half of the fifteenth century, the appropriation can be brought to the same basic element—Jerome was born among them. The popular opinion of such belief circulated among people and, importantly, was adopted by educated ones who, according to Vergerio, should have questioned the veracity of such a claim.

¹⁰³⁹ Vergerio, "Sermones Decem," 197.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 199.

From his words, we can also read that it was not the mere location of Stridon which triggered the devotion, but the belief among people who believed that through it they had established a particular correlation with the saint, seeing themselves as the part of “heavenly lineage” through which saint’s intercession is granted. Additionally, he claims that Jerome’s universality as the patron saint has also been the point of the unification of the people where “some vague sort of earthly relationship and proximity of location join us together.”

The same principle of intimacy with the saint can be read from the official decision on the cult of the saint in Trogir, where Jerome is venerated due to his accomplishments, and primarily for his Dalmatian origin, where he is also asked to be an “enduring advocate” of people of Trogir.¹⁰⁴¹ In his sermon, Vergerio explains:

But indeed, neither proximity of birth, nor blood relationship, nor any earthly bond renders us acceptable and gratifying to the saints of God; only moral integrity, sanctity of life, and spiritual devotion can do that. As a matter of fact, we can only please the saints by doing the same things that made the saints themselves pleasing to God. Those who for any other reason expect or petition the mercy of God or the patronage of the saints do so in vain.¹⁰⁴²

The sermon ends with Vergerio’s overcoming of the debates, in which he does not get involved in essence, stating that Jerome loved his homeland, but that he had to go to the places where he could become a more learned person. He did not bother himself with “the place where he had been born or the place where he was living; he was concerned with the place where he would go after his death.”¹⁰⁴³ He points out that Jerome’s only homeland is heaven:

He also deserves to have his memory extolled here on earth after he accomplished so much. On the basis of these considerations, we should not restrict ourselves simply to boasting about a holy man of our own ethnic group, but we ought to make every effort to imitate that holy doctor and leader of our faith. As a matter of fact, as often as we read the life of Jerome, as often as we hear a panegyric of his accomplishments, we are right to feel roused to imitate him, unless we are nothing but lazy sluggards.¹⁰⁴⁴

I am pointing out the formulation found at the end of the sermon, where Jerome’s universal role for the church is underlined, by claiming that his only *patria* could be heaven since Marko Marulić used the same argument, several decades later in his answer to Flavio Biondo, discussed few paragraphs later. Even though Biondo adopts the idea from the Pier Paolo Vergerio, we do not find direct naming of Vergerio as the culprit for “taking away” Jerome from Dalmatians, nor have we

¹⁰⁴¹ See p. 250.

¹⁰⁴² Vergerio, “Sermones Decem,” 199.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

evidence that Vergerio's work on Jerome was known among the Dalmatian humanist circles, regardless of the similar diplomatic praise found in Marulić's defense of Jerome's Istrian origin. However, a possible vague reference to Vergerio's work could be found in the writings of Georgius Sisgoreus. In his *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici*, Sisgoreus reflected on the general pejorative attitude of the Italian intellectuals to the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin.

Against Biondo

Among the first to dispute Biondo's claims was Benedetto Cotrugli (Benedikt Kotruljević, 1416–1469), a Ragusan humanist. In the last part of his book *De Navigatione* (1464–1465), Cotrugli refuted Biondo's geographical location of Istria stating that the region bordered Dalmatia, which he supported by referring to the famous quote of his time which said that Istria is “the first of the Slavic lands”.¹⁰⁴⁵ Additionally, he cited Saint Jerome's own words on Stridon and used them as arguments to his claims that Istria was not, in fact, Italian. Most probably, Cotrugli got acquainted with the ideas of Flavio Biondo during his stay at Naples (1448–1469), when he was serving Alfonso V (1442–1458), king of Aragon, and his son Ferdinand (1458–1494), who gathered some of the most prominent humanists and orators of that time at the royal court—and among them Biondo. Whether Cotrugli discussed these matters personally with Biondo, or he had read about them in the manuscript versions of his work, or in some copy that circulated, is still unknown. However, the fact that Cotrugli's book was written in 1464, proves that he was familiar with Biondo's statements before the printed edition of *Italia Illustrata* in 1474.¹⁰⁴⁶

Should we consider Cotrugli as the first in the line of defenders of Dalmatian Jerome under the attack by the Italian writer? Considering the fact that his writings are the earliest which discuss Biondo's appropriation, we could consider him as the first among those who opposed Biondo's words. However, reading Cotrugli's text carefully, one may notice that he is not discussing Jerome's origin as much as he is using Jerome's words to prove that Biondo's statements are wrong. He is not using other arguments to support Jerome's words, except the famous saying of his time, which could not be taken as the valid foundation of Jerome's Slavic origin. Cotrugli's reference to Jerome's words should be interpreted as the invocation of higher authority than Biondo: the learned saint who translated the Bible and who certainly knew the location of his own hometown better than Biondo.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Benedikt Kotruljević, *De navigatione=O plovidbi*, ed. Damir Salopek (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2005), 234. “...sequita la Hystria, la qual confina colla Dalmatia secundo lo commune vulgare proverbio lo qual dice: Ni à cavo de Sclavonia.”

¹⁰⁴⁶ Kotruljević's work was considered lost until 1996 when it was discovered and published by Darko Novaković.

Similar observations were made sometime later by Marko Marulić, about whom I would agree with Vinko Grubišić who argued that indeed the argumentative debate on Jerome's origin did start with Marulić, whom we can consider as one of the first proponents of the Dalmatian theory of saint's origin and the location of Stridon.¹⁰⁴⁷ Additionally, Cotrugli's book was never published in his time, and with that, its impact was limited, and none of the subsequent authors who wrote about Jerome's origin cite Cotrugli's work or words. Still, the reasons why he decided to answer to Biondo, are the same as in Marulić's discussion some half-century later, to defend the saint who was considered one of their own.

The existence of locally nurtured ideas of Jerome's origin is also documented in Istria as seen in Vergerio's words, and in the far north, in the village Štrigova, around the middle of the fifteenth century. In 1447, the construction of the chapel consecrated to Saint Jerome in Štrigova was finished. The main donor was Frederick II (c.1377–1454), count of Celje and at the moment Ban of Slavonia, who has built the chapel for the salvation of his soul, and to become a place of the pilgrimage to Saint Jerome.¹⁰⁴⁸ The same year Pope Nicholas V, the same who has granted the privilege to the *Schiavoni* community in Rome to build a national church and the guesthouse, has issued a bull with which he gives indulgence to everyone who visits the chapel.¹⁰⁴⁹

The reasons laid out in the bull, those that the pope was informed about, not those that were somehow known to him, are related to the already existing veneration of the people in that region, who believed Štrigova was once Stridon. It is noticeable that around the middle of the fifteenth century, in Štrigova but also in the Dalmatian examples of Trogir and Dubrovnik, the stronger appropriation of Saint Jerome started to take place in the different locations where some older legend was nurtured. The incentive for it should be searched for in the general appreciation of the saint within the Western church, where those who considered Jerome one of their kind did not miss a chance to emphasize that the saint was born among them.

However, most of these locally nurtured cults at the period did not surpass the limits of the local or regional veneration, nor some elaborated and specific characteristics of the cult, which reflect

¹⁰⁴⁷ Vinko Grubišić, "Trojica humanista o rodnome mjestu svetog Jeronima: Flavio Biondo, Marko Marulić i José de Espinoza de Sigüenza [Three humanists on the birthplace of Saint Jerome: Flavius Blondus, Marko Marulić and José de Espinoza de Sigüenza]," *Colloquia Maruliana* 17 (2008): 292; Bulić, *Stridon*, 27–31. Marulić's ideas will be accepted later by many other humanists and historiographers. Among them were Vinko Pribojević, Tomko Marnavić, Sebastiano Dolci, Ignjat Đorić and Daniele Farlati.

¹⁰⁴⁸ See more: Zoran Turk, "Kapela sv. Jeronima u Štrigovi – hodočastilište za spas duše Fridrika Celjskog" [Chapel of St. Jerome in Štrigova – Soul saving pilgrimage site of Frederick of Cilli], *Radovi Zavoda za znanstveni rad Varaždin*, no. 30 (2019): 667–85.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Turk, 674; The transcription and translation is brought in: Matija Berljak, *Bula Pape Nikole V.*

their appropriation, are known, besides those in Dalmatia. The reason for this can be found in what is elaborated throughout this thesis; there were no such advanced humanist centers that could have adopted such an idea and elaborate it within the devotional, cultural and national framework as it was among the Dalmatian humanists. On the other hand, it is noted that such discussions were only present in the Latin production, written in the *lingua franca* of the Middle Ages, not intended for Dalmatian or Croatian audience, but for the international one which still needed to be reassured in that what was generally accepted among the peoples living in the Eastern Adriatic Coast.

That is why such debates are found in the narratives of national history, which also served for the audience of the local humanist circles but was more intended for their foreign counterparts, through which Dalmatian and Croatian humanists could boast of the ancient origins and the achievements of their nation, and as such participate in the “literary contest” of the time. The previously mentioned *vitae* of Jerome written in Croatian, emphasize that Jerome was Dalmatian, that is of Croatian *natio*, but do not engage in the elaboration why it was like that since something like that did not have to be explained to those who saw themselves as his compatriots.

The first in the line among those who reflected upon the problem of Jerome’s appropriation by Italians was Georgius Sisgoreus in his *De situ Illyriae* (1487) where among few outstanding and distinguished individuals of Illyria, he singles out Jerome, adding that Italians were vigorously trying to steal him, as they considered that the “Dalmatian thorn could never bear such a fertile rose.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Although Sisgoreus does not mention who exactly were the Italians who appropriated the cult, we can assume that this could be related to Biondo or even to Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder, even though he is not explicitly mentioned in any of the texts.

Nevertheless, a few lines before mentioning the existence of Italian appropriation, Sisgoreus brings a distich from the poem written by Raffaele Zovenzoni (1430–c.1480), a humanist from Trieste and his friend: *Caldaeos Graiosque patres patresque Latinos / Ingenio vicit Dalmata Hieronymus*.¹⁰⁵¹ While it may seem that Sisgoreus only wanted to express honor, both to Jerome and his friend, these verses can also be interpreted as an argument against all the Italians who falsely appropriated the saint, by referring to another Italian who names Jerome as Dalmatian. When praising Jerome’s

¹⁰⁵⁰ Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije*, 24. [...] *Dalmatiae spinam non potuisse huiusmodi produxisse rosam pulcherrimam*.

¹⁰⁵¹ Šižgorić, 22; Neven Jovanović, “Okvir za pjesmarice i Varia Dalmatica [A frame for miscellanies and the Varia Dalmatica],” *Colloquia Maruliana* 19 (2010): 11. The verses are to be found in another codex, of later production, *Varia Dalmatica*, written between 1570 and 1670, in slightly changed form: *Hebraeos Graiosque patres patresque Latinos / Ingenio vicit Dalmata Hieronymus*. Here the author of the distich is not mentioned, which also make us assume that it circulated in Dalmatia in transcriptions even before the codex was written.

erudition, he does not mention the alleged invention of the Glagolitic letters or in the context of the language, even though, for him, the most important element which united all of the peoples of the Illyrian nation was language.¹⁰⁵²

In eos qui beatum Hieronymum italum fuisse contendunt

Among those who defended Jerome, the most ardent was Marko Marulić. In his *In eos qui beatum Hieronymum Italum fuisse contendunt* written in 1507, and incorporated together with the new *vita* of the saint that he wrote, Marulić eagerly defends Jerome's Dalmatian origin. It is addressed to Italian humanists who identified Jerome as Italian, particularly to Flavio Biondo and his student Jacopo Filippo Foresti from Bergamo. In the introduction, Marulić explained that while he was working on his version of the *vita*, someone brought him a copy of the work written by Jacopo di Bergamo, where Jerome was named Italian. This surely was a book *Supplementum Chronicarum* published in Venice in 1483. In the text, Marulić reproached the ignorance of Jacopo di Bergamo, blaming his teacher Flavio Biondo for that and mocking at Biondo's naivety:

After I had read Biondo's words, I began to find excuses for the pious and naive monk from Bergamo and I said to myself: "The mistake of the student is the fault of his teacher." Namely, it was his teacher who—as it seems to me—did not pay too much attention when it came to researching antiquity; deceived by the similar names, he thought that ancient Stridon was, in fact, the place now called Sdrigna. But he should have at least asked himself this: "If Sdrigna is, in fact, Stridon, how come Jerome said that this was a city situated between Pannonia and Dalmatia, and not rather between Pannonia and Istria?" What sort of arrogance is this on the part of this quite recent author that made him think people would believe him rather than Jerome himself when he talked about himself?¹⁰⁵³

When opposing Biondo and his student, on the question of Jerome's origin, Marulić used ancient sources such as Pliny the Elder and Strabo to defend his opinion, describing the ancient borders of Italy, Dalmatia, and Pannonia, refuting the location of Stridon being in Istria. Moreover, similarly to Cotrugli, Marulić reaches for Jerome's own words in his *De viris illustribus*, describing the position of Stridon being between Dalmatia and Pannonia, and not in Istria.¹⁰⁵⁴ For him, Stridon, is the same as the ancient *Sidrona*, which "was placed north of town Skradin at the foot of the

¹⁰⁵² See p. 379.

¹⁰⁵³ Marulić, "Vita diui Hieronymi," 55. *Hęc Blondi uerba cum legissem, monachi Bergomensis pium simplicemque affectum mecum excusare coepi, et Discipuli, inquam, error magistri culpa est. Magister autem parum (ut mihi uidetur) scrutandę antiquitatis cudosus, nominis similitudine deceptus, Stridonem olim fuisse putauit quod nunc Sdrigna dicitur. Et tamen hoc saltem secum animaduertere debuerat si Sdrigna Stridon est, quomodo Hieronymus dixit oppidum hoc inter Pannoniam et Delmatiam esse, et non potius inter Pannoniam et Istriam? Quęnam igitur ista nouitij autoris audacia, ut putauerit sibi magis quam Hieronymo de se loquenti homines credituros?*

¹⁰⁵⁴ Marulić, "Vita diui Hieronymi," 55–56.

mountain that separates Illyricum from Pannonia.”¹⁰⁵⁵ He adds how the people who lived in the town near ancient and ruined Stridon, often mentioned how in the ruins of Stridon still stands the church consecrated to Saint Jerome, which was built by its inhabitants as the reminder of Jerome’s birthplace, together with the ruins of the house where once Jerome’s parents lived. Marulić wonders, who is so “shameless and ruthless”, referring to Biondo evidently, that he would dare to claim anything other next to so many and such valuable testimonies?¹⁰⁵⁶ Adding:

After all, why should not an Italian allow us to be proud of how he (Jerome) was born in our country if we do not forbid them to applaud how he learned noble skills from them, even though he acquired his Greek education in Greece and perfected his Hebrew skills in Syria?¹⁰⁵⁷

Marulić argues vigorously with Biondo, citing argument after argument to prove his allegations wrong, not refraining from accusing Biondo of his illogical reasoning and the mistakes he made and passed onto his student Filippo of Bergamo. Regardless of it, Marulić ends the controversy in a diplomatic tone, similarly to Vergerio’s words.¹⁰⁵⁸ At the same time, he emphasizes Jerome’s holiness, which makes him so famous, and because of which, he has only one homeland in where he is an eternal citizen because of his pious way of life. And that homeland is the Heavenly Jerusalem. Stating that he almost seems to hear the saint speak:

He belongs to me, and I to him, who tries to do as diligently as possible what I have taught. He belongs to me and I to him, who does not refuse, as much as possible, to inherit the life of the saints. He, after all, belongs to me, and I to him, who belongs to Christ, my Lord and my God, to whom alone, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, praise and glory forever.¹⁰⁵⁹

Vinko Pribojević (1450s–1532) in his *De origine successibusque Slavorum* published in 1532, cites Marulić.¹⁰⁶⁰ His work reflects the impact Marulić’s dispute *In eos* (...) had among the

¹⁰⁵⁵ Marulić, “Vita diui Hieronymi,” 55. *Sidronam ergo oppidum, postea Stridonem dictum, in Liburnia posuit, non, ut Blondus somniauit, in Istria. Quod autem Sidrona et Stridon idem sit, uide Ptolomei expositorem, qui ait: Sidrona sive Stridon; hinc Sanctus Hieronymus de quattuor Doctoribus ecclesię originem ducit. Hęc ille. Itaque cum Sidrona, siue Stridon, siue (ut nunc appellant) Strigoum, non Istrię, sed Liburnię oppidum fuerit, Hieronymus Italicus dici nullo modo debuit.*

¹⁰⁵⁶ Novaković, “Svetac sa sretnog dalmatinskog žala,” 116.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Marulić, “Vita diui Hieronymi,” 56. *Aut cur tandem aliquis Italarum non permittet nobis hunc apud nos natum esse gloriari, si nos illis non interdiciamus ut sibi plaudant eundem apud ipsos bonarum artium disciplinam percepisse, licet et in Gręcia Gręcis litteris excultus sit, et in Syria Hebraicis eruditus?*

¹⁰⁵⁸ By now, this research did not manage to discover if Marulić was familiar with Vergerio's sermons on Jerome.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Marulić, “Vita diui Hieronymi,” 56. *Ille meus est, et ego suus, qui ea quę docui magis nauiter exequi contendit; ille meus est, et ego suus, qui sanctorum uitam quantum potest imitari non desistit; ille denique meus est et ego suus, qui Christi Domini mei est, et Dei mei, cui soli cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto laus et gloria in sempiternum.*

¹⁰⁶⁰ Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i slavi Slavena*, 143.

intellectuals since Pribojević was astonished by Biondo's attempts to describe Istria as an Italian province and Jerome as an Italian Saint, whom he sees as a Slav:

I cannot stop being amazed at how, competing with us, Flavio Biondo, Filip of Bergamo and some others, so that they could take away from us and count among theirs Saint Jerome, claim that Istria is an Italian land although it is with its location, with its customs and with its language separated from Italy.¹⁰⁶¹

Three other texts should be considered within the polemics on Jerome's origin. Two examples of Jerome's protection of his compatriots can be found in the previously mentioned texts, the *Preface on the origins of Saint Jerome* and the *Hymn and prayer to Saint Jerome*, written in 1498 by certain V.S. and N. Ia. Sa., still unknown identities, but possibly the members of the Slavic community around the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* in Venice.¹⁰⁶² Both texts are of great importance because they reflect both roles Jerome had among his compatriots—national hero and national saint. The prologue, written in a polemical tone, can be grouped with the other texts which oppose Biondo's appropriation of the saint, even though he is not named as a culprit in them.

Respectively, the author is praising Jerome as one of the greatest Illyrians and mentions his invention of Illyrian letters i.e. Glagolitic script, as one of the arguments that support the theory of his Dalmatian origin.¹⁰⁶³ The author also introduces pan-Slavic ideas into the text, mentioning how the Polish king was the ruler of the Illyrian kingdom, which in Jerome's time extended from the Adriatic to the Baltic Sea. The author positions Dalmatia, at the moment of Jerome's birth, as one of the countries ruled by the Vandal, that is Polish king. Such chronology and the historical interpretation were fabricated to prove Jerome's father was Illyrian in the service of the king who also came from the Illyrian nation, what Špoljarić explains with the political situation in the moment of the compilation of the text.

The mentioning of the Polish king relates to the political context of the anti-Ottoman expedition of John I Albrecht (Jan Olbracht, 1459–1501), the Polish king at the period, where Schiavoni in Venice saw Polish king as the one who will stop the Ottoman conquest, and revoke the glorious days of Illyria as it was under the "Polish" king in Jerome's time. In this sense, the author imagined him as the national savior of Illyrians, not knowing that the expedition has already failed.¹⁰⁶⁴ The *Hymn and Prayer to Saint Jerome*, which follow the *Preface* also illustrate Jerome's position as

¹⁰⁶¹ Pribojević, 142–43; Translation taken from: Madunić, "Vinko Pribojević and the glory of the Slavs," 47.

¹⁰⁶² See pp. 271–274.

¹⁰⁶³ Špoljarić, 68. *Cuperem denique ut mihi hi tales insinuarent, quod si Ieronimus iuxta opinionem ipsorum frivolum Italus aut Romanus fuisset, quo ordine characteres seu litteras consonas linguae Illyricorum adinvenire scivisset.*

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid., 50–51.

a national saint. While the hymn celebrates all his accomplishments and saintly deeds, it goes on to name him as the glory of Illyria (*decus Illyricorum*) and stresses his Dalmatian origin (*Dalmata Ieronime*), as explained earlier.

Here we can also count the colophon written by the Anonymus Glagolite on the Latin copy of *Transitus Sancti Hieronymi* printed in 1485; today kept in the Metropolitan Library in Zagreb.¹⁰⁶⁵ At the end of the text, an anonymous author added a longer Latin note of thirty lines, with few words written in Glagolitic script, in which he adds his contribution to the debate on Jerome's origin. For our discussion, this record is of importance because it vividly presents the complexities of understanding ethnic or national affiliation at the period, and clearly shows why in a debate like this, it is not possible to make definitive descriptions of imaginary communities to which Jerome belonged according to Dalmatian and Croatian humanists. On the other hand it shows, that even between the humanists there was no consensus on the location of Stridon, and that everyone tried to give their point of view on a matter.

The author states that Jerome was born in the border area “between ancient Dalmatia, in part called *Curetia* or *Croatia* at his time, and Pannonia, which is called Slavonia” in the town of Stridon, which at his time was called Strigoval.¹⁰⁶⁶ Furthermore, the author of this colophon points out that for him, the location of Stridon is between rivers Una and Kupa, far in the hinterlands of Croatia,¹⁰⁶⁷ and far from Marulić's presumed location near Skradin. Špoljarić concludes that the placement of Stridon in the heart of Illyria, in this example, as well as in the *Preface*, served to achieve an argument that would eliminate any possibility of attachment not only to the Italian but also to the Hungarian nation.¹⁰⁶⁸ Due to the similarities of the content of *Colophone* with the Marulić's *In eos (...)* some

¹⁰⁶⁵ See: Glavičić, “Je li latinska bilješka(...)”; Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 47–48. See the footnote 14. I am adopting the reference to the author as the “anonymous Glagolite” from Špoljarić who decided to name him as such due to practical reasons in his discussion.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Glavičić, “Je li latinska bilješka(...),” 287; Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 47. The transcription was borrowed from Špoljarić. The words that are not in cursive were written in the Glagolitic script. *Strydon, opidum celebre antiquitus, positum in confinibus Dalmatiae, illius partis que nunc vulgatur Curetia sive Croatia, et Pannoniae, que modo appellatur »Slavonia«, non ut imperiti omnimoda hystoriae »Schiavonia« corrupto vocabulo sive tumore odii iniqui dicitare solent. Slavonia vulgo Slovine, a Slavo amne famosissimo quacunq̄ue fertilitatis bonitate ipsam regionem perflunte; »Slavonia« quasi »terra gloriosa« interpretatur ab auctoribus. In confinio huius, hoc est in opido Strydone, vulgo Strigoval, licet nunc dirutum cernatur, positum situ citra Hun et Cupam flumina, super Blagay Maiori, inter Slavum et Syrmium, natalibus beati Demytrii clarum, nascitur gloriosus Hieronymus, parentibus Illyricis et ipse Illyricus, hoc est Dalmata, sin autem malis Curetius: gloriosus vir de gloriosa terra productur.; Šižgorić, *O smještaju Ilirije*, 24. Juraj Šižgorić, when describing Dalmatia, states that north of it is Curetia, after which the Curet people are named and which in his time was called Croatia. *Haec provincia Dalmatia a septentrione habet Curetiam, quae hodie dicitur Croatia, a qua Curetes dicuntur populi.**

¹⁰⁶⁷ Glavičić, “Je li latinska bilješka(...),” 287; Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 47. *In confinio huius, hoc est in opido Strydone, vulgo Strigoval, licet nunc dirutum cernatur, positum situ citra Hun et Cupam flumina, super Blagay Maiori, inter Slavum et Syrmium.*

¹⁰⁶⁸ Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 50.

scholars assumed Marulić himself could have written it, but the analysis of the script and the handwriting with confirmed autographs of Marulić showed that it could not be him.¹⁰⁶⁹

What is more important is that for the Anonymous Glagolite, Saint Jerome was Illyrian, which, according to him, is “a synonym for Dalmatian or Croat”.¹⁰⁷⁰ The equivalence of understanding the terms “Dalmatian” and “Croat” when discussing the ethnic or national appropriation of Jerome, within the broader terms of “Illyrian” or “Slav” is found in another source, the already mentioned *Trogir Life of Saint Jerome*. This example shows what was elaborated in the introduction. The adoption of Jerome as Dalmatian in such discussions on his origin is not limited only to the borders of Venetian Dalmatia, but Dalmatia is seen in the borders of the ancient Dalmatia. On this territory, the medieval Dalmatia and Croatia existed, and where the ethnic origin of the saint and the people living in Dalmatia and Croatia were considered of the same ethnic origin, regardless of the name used for them. The contribution to this argument is found in the *Schiavoni* confraternities, whose members had to have an origin in the territory that is called Illyria and speak the vernacular Slavic language.¹⁰⁷¹

This literary *topos* of Jerome’s origin is also found in the production of Ioannes Polycarpus Severitanus a Dominican friar and humanist from Šibenik, who probably received the early education in his hometown, before leaving for Rome where he studied in the school of Giulio Pomponio Letto, a student of Lorenzo Valla, with Palladio Fosco, Marco Antonio Sabellico and Giovanni Sulpicio da Veroli as his teachers. Later he studied philosophy in Ferrara, and theology in Bologna, which lead him to the office of rector in the University of Perugia.¹⁰⁷²

However, he returned to his hometown at the early beginning of the sixteenth century, where, in 1501, he was appointed as a teacher, an office he held for nine years before returning to Italy. In the already established practice of Dalmatian humanists who praised their origins and peoples, he wrote *Historia Dalmatiae vel de laudibus Dalmatiae*, which have not been preserved until the present day. Still, in his comments on the grammar and the ethics, when discussing Elius Donatus, who was one of Jerome’s teachers, unexpectedly, Severitanus uses as an opportunity the reflection upon the question of the location of Stridon. Like Marulić, Severitanus answers directly to Biondo claims, calling him upon his poor knowledge of Illyria, using the similar arguments as Marulić, saying that

¹⁰⁶⁹ Glavičić, “Je li latinska bilješka(...)” 291.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Glavičić, 287; Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 47. [...] *nascitur gloriosus Hieronymus, parentibus Illyricis et ipse Illyricus, hoc est Dalmata, sin autem malis Curetius: gloriosus vir de gloriosa terra producitur.*

¹⁰⁷¹ See p. 257.

¹⁰⁷² About his life and education see: Ivan Polikarp Severitan, *Monoregija* (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 1998), 38–51. On his abundant production see p. 85.

Stridon is located at the bottom of the mountain which once divided ancient provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia, and where now the people called Croats are living.¹⁰⁷³

For him, being from Šibenik is the same as being from Dalmatia, where Dalmatia is a synonym for Croatia—all of them being part of the vast geographic area called Illyria.¹⁰⁷⁴ This example shows that those who were engaged in the debate on Jerome's origin, used every opportunity to present to the broader international, that is Latin speaking audience, how much they are proud of Jerome, putting all the efforts to change the narrative set up by Biondo.

Humanists and the Glagolitic Tradition

Curiously, in the *Vita Diui Hieronymi* and *In eos (...)* by Marko Marulić, we find no mention of Jerome's connection to Slavic language and Glagolitic letters, same as in Sisgoreus' writings, and all the other sources consulted here, besides Probojević's book and the *Schiavoni booklet*. The presence of such a narrative in the latter one is explained by the introduction of the Slavic liturgy in the confraternity in Venice. The liturgy, language, and script became the element of distinction of this migrant community, among many others in the multicultural ambience in Venice. This omission is astonishing as Marulić, despite his Latin literacy and production, was one of the pioneers of the vernacular literature and was familiar with the Glagolitic written heritage. It is indeed more surprising knowing that this belief was known outside of Dalmatia; moreover, Flavio Biondo mentions in *Italia illustrata* that Dalmatians considered Jerome as their own and falsely presumed that Jerome invented letters different from Greek and Latin for them.¹⁰⁷⁵

Even though we do not find evidence of this long enduring belief in the written sources, such understanding circulated among the educated elites in Dalmatia, and in Italy, it would be wrong to see Jerome's cult only being present among the higher layers of the society. The presence of liturgical celebrations in Glagolitic missals and breviaries and mentions of the Glagolitic myth in the records

¹⁰⁷³ Severitan, *Monoregija*, 44. Johannes Policarpus Severitanus, *Dionisii: Appollonii: Donati: De octo orationis partibus libri octo ad nouam: & optimam limam deducti: & Seneca Iunioris: Catonis: Cordubensis ethycorum: libri quattuor: cum commentariis. M. Jo. Policarpi Seueritani Sibenicensis: Dalmate predicatorum Ordinis: opus aureum nuper ad vnguem excussum.* (Perugia: Apud Leonem: Per Cosmum cognomine Blanchinum Veronensem, 1517), 3, <https://archive.org/details/ita-bnc-mag-00000600-001/page/n6/mode/2up>. *Plures civitates certant de homero cuius fuerat. Nuper et due proprie tantum mentis non ueri compotes se mihi obiciunt de natali solo gloriosissimi doctoris, diui Hieronymi Dalmate quem Blondus scriptis ortum fuisse in oppoido Stridonis, quod ipse, et quidam ex eremo quamuis clara ambrosio redolente centare, cuculatus egrediens calepinus, dixerutn esse in agro Iustinopolitano, ignorant cosmographyam Illyrici soli. Hoc enim oppidum, nec loquantur ex auditu sed ex certa scientia, est iuxta Carauancam montem, a quo populi Croati dicti sunt, et Bauari quos uulgu Baicos appellat supra Istriam extra terminos Iusinopolitanu agri. Et hoc fuit quondam confinium Dalmacie et Pannonie superioris, iuxta Cecium montem qui disternat Pannoniam superiorem a Norico. Unde et diuus Hieronymus oriundus fuit. In agro igitur Norico est hoc oppidum, non in Istria.*

¹⁰⁷⁴ Severitan, *Monoregija*, 44; Severitanus, *Dionisii*, 3,35.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Biondo, *Roma ristavrata et Italia illustrata*, 196.

of the pilgrims that stopped in the Adriatic communes on their way to the Holy Land, confirms the general recognition of the idea even outside the closed circles of humanist intellectuals and their writing of national history.¹⁰⁷⁶

The conclusion that presents itself is that Marulić was informed that such invention should be attributed to Saint Cyril which he could have found out while working on the Latin translation of *Deeds of the Kings of the Croats*, also known as *Croatian Chronicle*, published in 1510 under the title *Regum Delmatiae atque Croatiae gesta*.¹⁰⁷⁷ The question that comes up here is why Marulić did not deconstruct the myth if he learned that its historical base is inexistent? Why was he deliberately avoiding discussing the Glagolitic script in his *Vita Diui Hieronymi* and why did he not use them as an argument in his response to Biondo? Why other similar works, such as the anonymous author of the Glagolitic colophon discussed later in the text or the *Trogir life of Saint Jerome* written in the same period, do not mention Jerome explicitly as the inventor of Glagolitic script?

As Peter Burke suggests in his essay on the question of the Renaissance in national contexts, the myths which are often perceived as the inaccurate history should be looked at from a different perspective when they serve the construction of identity.¹⁰⁷⁸ In our example, the myth of Jerome's local origin, together with his supposed innovation of Glagolitic script, should be perceived as the "stories of the past" whose purpose was to create or maintain the sense of identity of a group of people who had their origin in Dalmatia, having in mind the borders of the ancient province of Dalmatia (or Illyria), not the present ones, who have a shared ancestry and history, spoke the same language (regardless of the way that language is named in the sources – Slavic, Croatian or Illyrian) and used the Slavic liturgy. However, not all determinants need to be present in the expression of identity at the same time. The variety of determinants present only reflects the layers of the identities present within the territory. Therefore, the Marulić and others could safely dispense with the myth that Jerome had invented the Glagolitic script while still adopting him as the patron saint of Dalmatia, and with that of Croatia as well.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Consult pp.56, 62–63.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Mladen Ančić, "Ljetopis kraljeva Hrvatske i Dalmacije:(vrijeme nastanka i autorstvo hrvatske redakcije Ljetopisa Popa Dukljanina)" [The Chronicle of the Kings of Croatia and Dalmatia], *Zgodovinski Časopis* 44 (1990): 521–46; Bratulić, "Pjesnik Marko Marulić," 217; Neven Jovanović, "Marulićev prijevod Hrvatske kronike i ovo izdanje" [Marulić's translation of the Croatian Chronicle and this edition], in *Marko Marulić, Latinska manja djela II*, ed. Vedran Gligo et al. (Split: Književni krug, 1992), 125–68; Špoljarić, "Nicholas of Modruš and His De Bellis Gothorum," 463. *The Deeds of Croatian Kings* is based on *The Chronicle of Doclean Priest*, written in the thirteenth century, bringing many important accounts for the history of the South Slavs. Marulić's translation into the Latin language should be seen in the line with the other works of national history, regardless of not being the original contribution.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Peter Burke, "The Uses of Italy," in *The Renaissance in National Context*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 15.

Furthermore, adjoining all these attributes (local origin, the invention of Glagolitic letters and use of the Croatian language) to Jerome reinforces the idea that the language, and the ancestry of the people who were using it, were of ancient origin. The answer to why Marulić and others avoided mentioning this can also be connected with the strong tradition on Jerome's origin, which did not have institutional support in the ecclesiastical circle of Split regarding the element of the Glagolitic invention because the archbishopric of Split was a firm Latin liturgy stronghold. They were not using the Glagolitic letters and Slavic liturgy. However, it is known that there were Glagolitic monks in Split and that Glagolitic books circulated in the town. Furthermore, Marulić himself was familiar with Glagolitic production. As examined before, Marulić relied on the ancient authors as his main argument against Biondo. In the same way, he would have defended the idea of Jerome's authorship of the Glagolitic script if he had found the arguments for it. His silence can be perceived as tacit agreement with Biondo on this question.

Still, another reason which I argued already in this dissertation lies in the perception of the Glagolitic tradition in the Dalmatian communes. It is evident from the examples I have analyzed and contextualized that the Glagolitic veneration of Jerome did not have such a strong influence on the growing veneration of the saint in the urban centers of Dalmatia. None of the sources regarding the formational period of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia, mainly the second half of the fifteenth century, mention his alleged deeds for the affirmation of Glagolitic literacy and the Slavic liturgy. Even in Zadar, the Glagolitic stronghold, we do not find the direct influence of the Glagolitic veneration to the development of the renaissance cult of Jerome and his appropriation as Dalmatian. Still, that does not mean that Glagolites and their vision of Jerome were an isolated community, without the contact with urban and ecclesiastical elites, especially with the growing influence of the Third Order of the Franciscans who were Glagolites and who were connected with the local aristocratic families.¹⁰⁷⁹

Moreover, by the end of the fifteenth century and during the sixteenth, their influence only grew. So, how should be seen the correlation between the Glagolitic and renaissance cult? By the arguments presented here, the Glagolitic tradition did contribute to the affirmation of Jerome as Dalmatian, nurturing the idea that Stridon was somewhere on the Eastern Adriatic Coast. However, it did not have the formative role as it was with the renaissance cult and the general reappraisal of Jerome's life and saintly deeds. From all of the sources which praise Jerome, discussed in this dissertation, of Dalmatian or Croatian provenance, both written in Latin or Croatian vernacular

¹⁰⁷⁹ See pp. 195–196.

language, that the praise was not conditioned primarily by the deeds he did for his own people. It was because he was a man praised and known to all of the Christians.

His erudition and piety, and his penitential life were imitated by the ordinary people, monks, and educated individuals. These were the elements that everyone recognized as his virtues and could have identified with the saint through them. By showing that Jerome, a man of such virtues, honor, and glory, was from Dalmatia, to all of those engaged in such a debate it was showing that they themselves, and those who belong to their nation, were blessed with the same virtues. It is only from the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the development of the national discourse and the Illyrian ideologeme, that the question of the linguistic identity of Slavs and Illyrians, a dominant discourse in the Dalmatian and Croatian *republic of letters*, started to gain more attention, in the works of the already mentioned Vinko Pribojević, and of the seventeenth-century historiographer from Dubrovnik, Mauro Orbini in his work *Il Regno degli Slavi* for whom the identification of the Slavs is based primarily on the linguistic elements.¹⁰⁸⁰

8.4 THE SELF-IDENTIFICATION WITH JEROME

Ille Meus Est et Ego Suus

There is another tradition that can be found in the written works: the self-identification of the author with Jerome. In humanist circles, Jerome served as a perfect model for a literate, but also a pious man. The list of the humanists who decided to model their life upon Jerome's is long, ranging from Petrarch and Pier Paolo Vergerio to Erasmus. I have already discussed in chapter 4 how the deep devotion to the saint and the identification of the virtues one possessed with those of the saint resulted in the production of the portraits of the humanists disguised in the image of the saint.¹⁰⁸¹

Besides the example of the portrait of Jerome Cippico from the beginning of the seventeenth century, no other examples of such practice are known in Dalmatia. The reasons for that can also be found in the prevalence of the sculptural production compared to the paintings, and the prevalence of the representations of Jerome as a hermit in the commissions of private devotion, rather than "Jerome in the Study" or "Jerome as a Cardinal", where latter one was dominant in the ecclesiastical and monastic commission, seen on the visual production of the Franciscan provenance in Dalmatia.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 184–86.

¹⁰⁸¹ See the examples on pp. 149–150.

However, in Dalmatia, such practice is noted in the literary production of humanists, where identification with the saint is elaborated in the written manner. Though such action was a commonplace during the Renaissance, in Dalmatia, it went beyond the religious and spiritual sense, as it further contained the elements of shared origin and the feeling of belonging to the same cultural and ethnic group, seen in the written production of Georgius Sisgoreus, Marko Marulić, and Petar Zoranić. In the preface to his collection of poetry, for example, Georgius Sisgoreus wrote that he “answered his opponents in the same way as Jerome answered his.”¹⁰⁸² Due to his role in the affirmation of the Illyrian nation, Nicholas of Modruš was called the “new Jerome” by his contemporaries.¹⁰⁸³ On his epitaph in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, it stood, among others: “He is the one who earned indisputable praises after you Jerome, He is the honor and hope to you Illyrian land.”¹⁰⁸⁴

Among them, Marulić goes farthest in the self-identification with Jerome saying *Ille meus est et ego suus*.¹⁰⁸⁵ These words should be understood as the expression of identification with the saint on several levels. They both belonged to the same geographic area and the cultural sphere, and with that, they both belonged to the same ethnic group and the same imagined nation; the fourth century Dalmatian (in the full sense actually Roman) Jerome and the sixteenth-century Marulić have the same origin.¹⁰⁸⁶ Furthermore, Marulić identified himself with Jerome in a spiritual sense, asserting the deep devotion following his example of living a pious life through the sacred scripture, and by owning, studying and extensively quoting saint’s words.

The same elements of the identification with the saint are found in the prologue of Vinko Pribojević’s book *De Origine Successibusque Slavorum*, in praise of the author penned by Thomas Niger, bishop of Skradin and Trogir, in which he equals Pribojević’s efforts for the affirmation of the “ancient deeds” of the Slavs and with that for the affirmation of the nation, with those done by Jerome for the Christianity:

As much as a Dalmatian owes to Saint Jerome, the same he owes to you Vincent, bright star of the Hvar soil. He is the pride, and you are the glory of our people, whom with every right you place above the others. Countless are the languages and customs

¹⁰⁸² Pavao Knezović, “Sv. Jeronim u hrvatskom”, 3.

¹⁰⁸³ Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš and His De Bellis Gothorum,” 458–59.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁸⁵ See p. 390.

¹⁰⁸⁶ See: Andrea Zlatar, “Marulićev polemički spis In eos qui beatum Hieronymum Italum esse contendunt,” *Dani Hvarskoga kazališta. Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu* 15 (1989): 212–20; Mate Suić, “Marko Marulić - In eos qui beatum Hieronymum Italum fuisse contendunt,” *Mogućnosti: časopis za književnost, umjetnost i kulturne probleme* 44 (1997): 228–41; Matej Petrić, “Marko Marulić: Rasprava ‘In eos qui beatum Hieronymum italum fuisse contendunt,’” *Spectrum - ogledi i prinosi studenata teologije*, no. 1–2 (2011): 36–44.

of old he knew, ancient are the deeds of our kind told by you. He teach us about the Christ, you about the Slavs.¹⁰⁸⁷

However, by studying the mentioned works, it is evident that Jerome's position is not only that of a national saint. He is also a national hero.

National Saint or National Hero?

In the development of national identity, heroes had the task of reflecting the virtues of the whole nation which were embodied in them and expressed through their heroic actions, which in times of need could serve as "*exemplum virtutis* that could help build up a sense of dignity to downtrodden peoples and inspire and mobilize them to resist oppression and fight for self-rule."¹⁰⁸⁸ The national heroes were used to reinforce a myth of a previous golden age of the nation, to remind how a particular nation became heroic and important. Often those positions were reserved for great warriors. Through the praise of national heroes, a valuable message could be given to fellow countrymen on how to contribute to the glory of the nation themselves.¹⁰⁸⁹ Renaissance humanists themselves would in time be promoted to national heroes, for their works eulogizing the past, or simply by contributing to great achievements of their nation, as it was with Johannes Gutenberg and Erasmus.¹⁰⁹⁰

Zrinka Blažević explains that in general, the national heroes can be divided into two groups, the first one includes the great warriors and rulers, while the second one includes the intellectuals and artists, where in the national discourses among Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, through the centuries, Jerome is impeccable universal representative of the second group.¹⁰⁹¹ National heroes are the creators of a glorious national past and bearers of culture, and they become and objects of glorification and imitation, where their function is subordinated to the moral and intellectual renewal of a community that only in this way can attain the glory of ancestors. Also, "they can also serve as legitimization models and prototypes of the symbolic transfiguration of political actors in which hope for national liberation and renewal is placed."¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁸⁷ Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i slavi Slavena*, 47. *Quantum Hieronymo, tantum tibi Dalmata debet, Vincenti, Pharii stella sarena soli. Ille decus nostrum, nostrae tu gloria gentis, Quam merito cunctis gentibus anteferas. Hic calet innumeras linguas moresque ustusos, Tu nostri generis gesta uetusta canis. Ille docet Christi, populi tu dogma Slavi.* The English translation is borrowed from: Madunić, "Vinko Pribojević and the glory of the Slavs," 6.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (Routledge, 2009), 69.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 97.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁹¹ Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 110–11.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, 111.

As Sisgoreus explained in his work *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici*, due to the lack of other prominent individuals Jerome, a saint, was given the role of a national hero which due to his sanctity transformed him into a national saint. These two roles were not mutually exclusive but rather complemented each other. In the aforementioned works, his role as a national saint is not highlighted *per se*. Jerome is not being directly asked for protection in times of need, which can be explained with the restrictions of the literary genre. Still, in the domain of devotion, Jerome's cult was immensely popular. Researchers should, therefore, be mindful when interpreting the expressions of devotion to Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, notably altars and votive paintings, because not every commission was done entirely due to his new status.

Jerome was also worshiped as the model of ascetic lifestyle and a church father, and his saintly image served well during the process of reformation of the mendicant orders, together with the popularization of *devotio moderna*, lay movement at its peak during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, seeking the apostolic renewal through genuine devotional practices – asceticism and imitation of Christ. Despite everything, because of the importance of Jerome in Dalmatia and because his worship initially was driven by his perceived local origin, as decisions on the official cult in Dubrovnik and Trogir show, the presence of the national component in such devotional works cannot be excluded, regardless of it not being the main reason behind the execution of the artworks.

How is then Jerome's protective nature over his compatriots reflected? Do we find the case where he is explicitly invoked as a national saint in the time of the harm? I had already argued in Chapter 7 how the expressions of collective devotion to Jerome in Trogir and Šibenik should be analyzed beyond its renaissance features, seeing them as the witness of the period in which they were executed. The period of the 1460s was a key moment in the establishment of Jerome's image of Dalmatian as a patron saint of Dalmatia, which eventually led to the general acceptance of him as a national saint of Dalmatians, Croatians, Slavs or Illyrians.

The “heavenly lineage” between them and the saint based on the belief of the same earthly, ethnic origin, has made the saint the powerful intercessor in their eyes. The basic interpretation of the monumental reliefs in Trogir and Šibenik sees them as the expression of the honor which saint had among his compatriots. The deeper level meaning reveals its function as the collective *ex-voto*, where its execution was connected with the difficult period in which communes have found themselves during the 1460s, the several plague outburst and the fear and the anticipation of the possible Ottoman conquest.

This period became a key period for the confirmation of Jerome's image as a patron saint of Dalmatia, where after the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463, Dalmatia found itself as on the border of the East and the West. With it, Dalmatia and Jerome as its patron, became the leading defenders of Western Christianity, by having the Ottomans right in their hinterlands. In such a situation where Croatian lands were divided between different political entities, and the Venetian government in Dalmatia was still in the period of consolidation, under constant threat by Ottoman expansion, the political context was created in which the local patron saints became viewed as insufficiently potent, and so a higher authority was needed.

The explicit expression of Jerome's universality as a patron saint is found in the *Hymn* and the *Prayer* included in the *Schiavoni booklet*, in which Jerome is directly asked for intervention and protection during the plague outburst. While Jerome had many different protective powers, he was never regarded as one of the anti-plague saints; here, he is appealed to as national saint having enough power to help with any need. In the prayer that follows, Jerome is again invoked as a miracle-worker and protector against harm and evil.¹⁰⁹³ It is here to be reminded of the conclusions of Meri Kunčić on the growing cult of Saint Jerome as a patron saint of Dalmatia in the period of the plague outbursts and the Ottoman threat, to which my conclusions on the production of the *Šibenik Tondo* and the *Trogir Relief* elaborated in the previous chapter, continue.¹⁰⁹⁴

Precisely this example shows that Jerome's role as a national saint is not only determined by appropriating the saint in the national discourse by adding an ethnic or national determinant to his name, such as Dalmatian, Croat, Slavic or Illyrian, but is equally determined by what the saint does for a community which identifies with him at that level: "May we (...) be saved from the deadly plague and from all evils, and may we deserve to attain eternal joy".¹⁰⁹⁵ The intercession asked from the saint, to be protected from any harm or evil, reflects the perception of the saint as the universal protector and the enduring advocate, in the same manner as it was in Trogir few decades before the compilation of the *Schiavoni Booklet*, expressed in the relief of the saint as the collective *ex-voto* for the protection in the times of the possible harm. Confirmation of this argument also lies in the fact that the plague was the direct reason for compiling the texts in the booklet.¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹³ Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni". 70. [...] *qui eius meritis confisi preces ad te effundere decrevimus, a peste epidimiae letifera et a cunctis periculis eruamur et gaudia consequi mereamur aeterna.*

¹⁰⁹⁴ Meri Kunčić, *Od pošasti sačuvaj nas*, 89–90, 163–64.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Špoljarić, "Venecijanski skjavoni," 70.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

Adapting Jerome as a national saint to different contexts in which his protection is needed, or where his authority transcends other authorities, is found in the epic poem written in 1496 by Gilberto Grineo (c.1435–1501) during his stay in Trogir. The epic poem under the title *Topographia divi Hieronymi sacelli* is written in honor of the count of Trogir, Antonio Canal.¹⁰⁹⁷ For our understanding, this source is important for two reasons. First, because it offers a unique description of the pilgrimage of the count of Trogir to the small church of Saint Jerome in the hill Marjan, the same one for which Andrea Alessi has made the altar with the representation of Saint Jerome in the *grotto*.

As mentioned before, the sources on the church which was built in the fifteenth century are scarce, and while we can assume that it was a place of a local pilgrimage, this poem is the only one which confirms such practice. Second, because in it, Jerome's role as a national saint, which helps in the period of harm, is clearly emphasized. The hermitage of Saint Jerome becomes the oracle in the ancient style, like a Delphi, where Saint Jerome in the visionary apparition foretells that a great battle against Ottomans will ensue.

Vlado Rezar states that this unusual poetic vision, which primarily praises the Trogir commune and its Venetian ruler, sets this epic poem apart from other literary productions of that time in the Eastern Adriatic Coast.¹⁰⁹⁸ Furthermore, he adds that it is here where Jerome's role of a national patron saint is clearly visible, where his saintly power and patronage were used in the decisive moments for the communes at the turn of the century, where the existing fear of Ottoman conquest was perpetuated by the inglorious defeat of the Croatian nobility in the Battle of Krbava Field in 1493, and the constant intrusions of the Ottoman troops which were killing and looting in the districts of the communes.

One such encounter was recorded in 1496 when 150 Ottoman soldiers have killed some villagers, took the others in the captivity and looted goods, but were soon intercepted by the soldiers from Trogir who have not only freed the people but managed to capture some Ottoman soldiers as well.¹⁰⁹⁹ This event, which happened at the period when Grineo arrived in the town, was a direct reason for him to write a panegyric to the count of Trogir, in which the commune of Trogir and the Venetian government are praised. The inclusion of Jerome in the prophetic narrative in which saint

¹⁰⁹⁷ The Latin transcription, the Croatian translation and the commentary on the text is published in: Vlado Rezar, "Epilij Topographia Divi Hieronymi Sacelli Gilberta Grinea (Izdanje, Prijevod i Komentar)" [Epyllion Topographia Divi Hieronjmi Saceli by Gilberto Grine (Edition, Translation and Commentary)], *Colloquia Maruliana* 29 (2020): 1–13. I would like to express my gratitude to Vlado Rezar for sharing the preliminary copy of his work, whose publishing was postponed for the Fall of 2020.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

grants a victory over the Ottomans supports my argument that the critical moment in the veneration of the saint in Dalmatia was during the 1460s when his universal protection was needed over the people of Trogir and Dalmatia, expressed in the votive reliefs.

The perpetuating unstable political situation has directly influenced devotion to Jerome, who by the end of the century became the primary heavenly protector of the people who saw him as the compatriot. Luka Špoljarić and Vlado Rezar both conclude that the choice of Jerome as the crucial figure who provides the heavenly alliance against the cruel enemy was because his saintly figure has been elevated to the rank of the national saint “which is invoked in the time of peril”.¹¹⁰⁰ Here, I would draw a parallel with other texts, those in the *Schiavoni booklet*, written only a few years after, where the saint is also mentioned in the anti-Ottoman context in the *Preface*, where Polish king, is invoked as the savior of Christian Europe. Additionally, Jerome is asked to protect the community from the plague that was bursting in Venice at that moment.

All these texts, *Topographia divi Hieronymi sacelli* and those in *Schiavoni booklet* show that Jerome’s invocation as the national saint, based on the belief of his Dalmatian origin, is not only due to the ethnic determinant added to his name—Dalmatian, Croatian, Slav or Illyrian—but also due to what the saint does for the people who collectively ask for his intercession. I have already mentioned in the introduction how the veneration of and devotion to national saints usually intensify in times of need.¹¹⁰¹ The ideas of a votive plea to the saint embedded in the *ex-votos* in Trogir and Šibenik, based on the collective, but also the intimate devotion to the saint, has been further articulated in the literary production. The saint no longer stands as a reflection of a glorious past that encourages individuals to take action to return such glory in a moral and intellectual sense but becomes an active participant in determining the fate of that community, which sees him as their protector.

When discussing the way how the Ottomans actually contributed to the construction of Jerome’s image, we must draw another parallel between Jerome and Dalmatian and Croatian humanists, where they identified with the saint in one more aspect—they compared their own sufferings and destruction of their lands by the Ottomans with those that Jerome had experienced in his time when the barbarians raided the Roman Empire, and eventually destroyed his hometown Stridon. In a letter 60, to Heliodorus (d. c. 410), his old friend at the time he was a bishop of Altnino, near Venice, Jerome reflects on the problems within the Roman Empire and the destructions made by the invading barbarian tribes:

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 6; Špoljarić, “Venecijanski skjavoni,” 54.

¹¹⁰¹ See pp. 33–34.

I am describing not the misfortunes of an unhappy few but the thread upon which human fortunes as a whole depend. I shudder when I think of the catastrophes of our time. For twenty years and more the blood of Romans has been shed daily between Constantinople and the Julian Alps. Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dardania, Dacia, Thessaly, Achaia, Epirus, Dalmatia, the Pannonias — each and all of these have been sacked and pillaged and plundered by Goths and Sarmatians, Quades and Alans, Huns and Vandals and Marchmen. How many of God's matrons and virgins, virtuous and noble ladies, have been made the sport of these brutes! Bishops have been made captive, priests and those in minor orders have been put to death. Churches have been overthrown, horses have been stalled by the altars of Christ, the relics of martyrs have been dug up. Mourning and fear abound on every side and death appears in countless shapes and forms.¹¹⁰²

It is here to recall the content of Sisgoreus' *Elegy on the Devastation of District of Šibenik* in which the close encounter with the Ottoman troops under the city walls of Šibenik is described.¹¹⁰³ Another correlation is found in Marko Marulić's *Molitva suprotiva Turkom* (A prayer against Turks) written between 1493 and 1500. In it, he repeats the same *topoi* about the Ottomans which Sisgoreus introduced, but more importantly, he applies Jerome's descriptions of devastations from the mentioned letter to the sufferings of his own people. That is especially visible in the description of desacralization of the churches for which Marulić says that became the stables for the horses, directly borrowing the description from Jerome.

Further examining the production of Croatian *antiturska* literature, it is evident that such description became a *topos* when referring to the Ottoman destruction also found in the written production of Thomas Niger, Frane Božićević or Severitanus.¹¹⁰⁴ Identification with the saint at this level is even more visible in a series of speeches given by Dalmatian humanists abroad, thus trying to encourage Western rulers to take military action against the Ottomans in which Jerome's letter to Heliodorus is directly quoted. Marulić, in his letter sent to Pope Adrian VI in 1522 is referring to Jerome's words while trying to raise pope's awareness on the difficult situation in Dalmatia and Croatia,¹¹⁰⁵ while Bernardo Zane, a bishop of Split, in his speech given at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1512 he quotes Jerome's words directly.¹¹⁰⁶

These texts precisely are a confirmation of how the complex process of adoption of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, has been gradually transformed in the cult with its own

¹¹⁰² Philip Schaff, *The Principal Works of St. Jerome*, vol. 6, 239, https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1819-1893_Schaff_Philip_3_Vol_06_Jerome_EN.pdf.

¹¹⁰³ See p. 306.

¹¹⁰⁴ See: Vedran Gligo, ed., *Govori protiv Turaka* [Anti-Turkish orations] (Split: Logos, 1983), 26–27.

¹¹⁰⁵ Gligo, 27; Stanislav Marijanović, "Poslanice Marka Marulića i Stjepana Brodarića papi Hadrijanu VI. [The Epistles of Marko Marulić and Stjepan Brodarić to Pope Adrian VI]", *Colloquia Maruliana* 12 (2003): 84–92.

¹¹⁰⁶ Gligo, *Govori protiv Turaka*, 109.

peculiarities. What was started around the middle of the fifteenth century by publicly celebrating Jerome's feast days due to his origin and the belief that because of it, Dalmatians had a special intercessor in heaven, by the end of the century was an undoubted fact. Jerome became a front-runner in Dalmatian and Croatian *communio sanctorum*.

Although the debate among the Dalmatian and Croatian humanists on the question on his origin prevailed among the enlightened elites, the frequency of the occurrence of such discourse and the fervent answers by those who did their best to refute the claims of Flavio Biondo and others like him who did not see Jerome as a Dalmatian, says how established was the belief and devotion to the saint on the East Coast of the Adriatic, and that they wanted to show others what they already know. This is supported by the presence of such discussions in places where we would not expect them, as in Cotrugli's writings on navigation, or Severitanus' comments on grammar.

9 CONCLUSION

General Contributions

Given the many studies that have been written on Saint Jerome, one could ask, is there more to be said? Yet, this dissertation has demonstrated that since the first comprehensive and fundamental studies on Jerome by Bernhard Ridderbos, Eugene Rice, and Daniel Russo were published—now almost three decades ago—scholarship has offered new perspectives on different aspects of the renaissance cult of the saint. The 1600th anniversary of Jerome’s death comes as an incentive to re-assess these questions again. Although not directly concerned with the development of the Italian renaissance cult, this study underlines some of the segments which deserve more attention in the future: the iconography of “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness” and its correlation to textual templates, the manner in which the saint was adopted among the Franciscans, and by what means Jerome became the most popular patron saint among the pious laity in the fifteenth century.

This dissertation has also demonstrated the need to individually observe territorially different variants of the renaissance cult present in Europe, where Jerome’s polysemic figure received other layers of the symbolic meaning. The similar principle should be also applied to the other cults of saint from the period, especially those whose veneration is related to the change of the spiritual atmosphere—the penitential saints—like Saint John the Baptist or Saint Mary Magdalene.

The greatest contribution of this work, is that it has brought to light the rich artistic and literary material of Dalmatian and Croatian provenance, which has been largely under-researched, and presented it within the broader framework made up of various and usually mutually intertwining contexts of veneration—from humanism to the observant reform movement—laying out a fresh perspective for scholars to consider. For the first time, these expressions have been observed in mutual correlation within their regional context, as well as from a comparative perspective with the abundant contemporary Italian production. The Dalmatian cult of Jerome, which within Croatian scholarship has long been viewed as a regional particularity has been placed in its proper context, while international scholars have been introduced to heretofore largely unknown Dalmatian examples.

This thesis has further revealed the dynamics of the process through which Jerome’s cult in Dalmatia evolved its particularities. Up until now, two phases have previously been the subject of scholarly analysis: the emergence of the cult among the Glagolitic communities, and the formation

of Jerome as a national saint, in literary and visual media, where he served as the emblematic symbol of the *natio*. The gap between them—the beginning of the ubiquitous presence of the cult—has been problematized partially or evaluated only in a few studies. These studies have further narrowed the abundant cultural and devotional production often to the most basic of interpretations, as simple expressions of Jerome as the patron saint of Dalmatia or the national saint of Dalmatians, Croats, Slavs or Illyrians. Yet, regardless of how valuable the scholarly contributions of those studies, they have only moderately filled in the vast gap in the scholarship on Jerome in Dalmatia, by focusing on selected segments, rather than presenting a general overview.

This study has pointed out in several individual analytic discussions, that such a straightforward approach does not fully portray the unique features of the cult present in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. For that reason, the framework of this thesis was limited to the period of the emergence of Jerome's veneration during the fifteenth century, with the aim to offer a comprehensive study which can serve as the starting point for the further assessment of Jerome's cult and the consolidation of his image as a national saint during the Early Modern Period. Therefore, the conclusions I draw in this paper differ greatly from the traditionally established notions set forth by previous scholars, which have so far often impeded the portrayal of the full scope of Jerome's cult. The assumptions I have disputed include that the Glagolitic script was the main incentive for Jerome's transformation into a national saint, or that the presence of his figure in artworks always stood as the expression of the particular status the saint had among those who saw him as a compatriot.

Further, the devotional literature dedicated to Jerome—particularly that written in Croatian vernacular—has been observed more for its linguistic characteristics and not for its function, thus ignoring key elements that impacted Jerome's cult. The example of the latter one can be found in the *Florentine* and *Trogir lives*, which were mainly discussed in the context of their authorship, while the question of the audience was neglected. Further examination will certainly open a window into, by far, under-researched questions of female piety in Dalmatia. Finally, I have argued that frequently, the commonly present iconographic types, such as “Saint Jerome as a Cardinal” have been often misinterpreted.

It is precisely such assumptions of the previous historiography that influenced the original setting of the problem. Initially, this thesis was set to explore the different traditions of veneration of Jerome present in the Eastern Adriatic Coast—Glagolitic, Franciscan and humanist—and the way their intertwining contributed to the formation of Jerome as a national saint. However, as I got deeper into the matter, it crystalized that while all of these threads were important segments in that process—

nurturing the idea of Jerome's Dalmatian origin—they did not represent the crucial constructive element of it. The strongest common point to all the differing types of veneration was Jerome's origin. The additional attributes, such as the invention of Glagolitic letters or the choice of Jerome as a patron of Franciscan province of Dalmatia, were adjoined to consolidate the idea of Jerome's origin further—symbolically and politically—in a manner that best suited each context.

Still, regardless of the existence of the idea of Jerome being born in Dalmatia, it was only the general re-appreciation of Jerome's righteous deeds, which triggered the veneration of the saint in Dalmatia. Those who saw him as a compatriot, wanted everyone to know that the saint, to quote Petar Zoranić, “so glorified and respected in the world,” was born among them. This element of self-identification, together with the devotional and intellectual aspect, is found in the literary production of Petar Zoranić, Marko Marulić and Juraj Šižgorić.

Another significant contribution is in recognizing the relevance of this critical period and determining the influence of humanist appropriation and admiration as the most crucial segment for the expansion of the saint's cult in Dalmatia. Without the general appreciation of Jerome's cult within the Latin church, the unstable historical and political context in which the Croatian lands found themselves as the turn of the fifteenth century, and the evolution of humanist thought which became preoccupied with the ancient origins of peoples, the locally nurtured Glagolitic tradition—which, it is important to recall, was dominant on the territory of Croatia and not in the urban centers of Dalmatia—would never alone carry Jerome to the level of a national saint. Although initially driven by the natural progress of adoption which came out from the close cultural and ecclesiastical connections between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea, Jerome's transformation was not straightforward and centralized, but involved and polycentric. Different factors influencing the transformation of the cult and different actors promoted it—from educated individuals, humanist circles, and communal governments to migrant communities, cathedral chapters, local bishops, and even the Roman Curia.

For that reason, I conceived this study around three main research goals. First, to determine the dynamics of the evolution of the veneration of Saint Jerome along the Eastern Adriatic Coast during the Late Middle Ages, concentrating on the emergence of him as a patron saint of Dalmatia. Second, to name the leading promoters of such an idea and to detect the network which nurtured it through their personal or institutional contacts. And last, to examine the peculiarities of the cult,

which differentiate the perception of the saint in Dalmatia from that in the rest of Western Europe, in visual and literary form.

The detailed analysis of the artistic and cultural production laid out in chapters 6,7 and 8, shows that research into the veneration of Jerome in Dalmatia presents a window into the culture in which he was adopted, speaking more of the people and society who venerated him than the cult itself. The meanings adjoined to the saint's image and figure, even those where his ethnic or "national" belonging is emphasized, show that the veneration of Jerome in Dalmatia was part of a broader European phenomenon, not only in the devotional sense but also in the articulation of him as a national saint in the patriotic discourses of national history.

An important conclusion to arise from this discussion is that Jerome's cult should be viewed as a diachronic development, where the addition of local specificities is linked to the historical context in which it occurred, and where Jerome's role as a patron saint was more emphasized during times of need. This occurrence can be seen in examples such as the execution of the reliefs in Trogir and Šibenik as *ex-votos* for protection during the plague outbursts and Ottoman threat, or in the *Schiavoni booklet* where Jerome was explicitly asked for intercession during a plague outburst in Venice.

Adoption–adaptation–confirmation

The development of Jerome's cult in Late Medieval Dalmatia can be divided into three crucial phases: adoption, adaptation, and confirmation. Broadly speaking, this development should be defined from the earliest mentions of Jerome as an inventor of Glagolitic letters to the establishment of the civic cult in the communes around the middle of the fifteenth century. A more accurate definition of the period of adoption, however, would be from the end of the fourteenth century—when the Franciscan province adopted the saint as their patron, the earliest Glagolitic liturgical book referring to the saint is preserved, and the earliest expressions of private devotion are found: the private altars and the artistic representations of the saint.

This sudden rise of admiration for the saint was primarily conditioned by the general rise of Jerome's cult which by the end of the fourteenth century included—devotional works, artistic representations, altars, and chapels. Importantly, it was during this period that the cult started to gain more prominence in Venice, which despite not yet being the administrative center for the Dalmatian communes, was the region's dominant cultural force. The commission of the altars in Zadar at the very end of the fourteenth century shows that the earliest expressions of the cult were made out of

direct personal devotion to the saint, and not for emphasizing his regional origin. This is seen in the frescoes (1390), which were supposed to be made above the tomb of Ivan Germanov, where Jerome was embedded into classic Franciscan iconography. Due to the lack of sources, we cannot argue whether the notion on Jerome's origin was embedded in these early forms of devotion. Even if it was, certainly it was not in such expressive form and symbolic meaning like it was by the late fifteenth century.

Another crucial step in this process was the establishment of direct Venetian control over the Dalmatian coast and the early adoption of humanist ideas when, due to the more frequent and accessible contacts with Venetian cultural production through personal and administrative connections, the cult started to flourish, becoming omnipresent in the communes. It was in this period that, Jerome's works started to circulate among Dalmatian humanist circles, influencing men such as Petar Cippico and Georgius Begna. These connections permitted the saint's cult to establish itself in the sphere of private devotion, as seen in the construction of the *Chapel of Saint Jerome* in Trogir, endowed by Nicolotta Sobota in Trogir (1438).

The second phase, the complex process of adaptation, began around the middle of the fifteenth century when a distinct change in the perception of the saint is noted. Emblematic of this change is the fact that, Jerome's feast day started to be celebrated in the communes like Trogir, Dubrovnik, and Šibenik. While the veneration of Jerome was more influential in some communes than others, we do not have evidence that he was appropriated exclusively as of the representative saint of any individual commune. For example, Trogir leads with the number of preserved artistic representations of Jerome, but sources do not suggest that he was known as a saint especially venerated only there. Non-existence of the communal competition for the saint and his heavenly protection points to his appropriation in Dalmatia being broad—regionally present and collectively accepted—and not limited to the civic cult defined by the borders of a particular commune.

The first step in the process of adaptation was the establishment of an institutionalized framework, supported by the ecclesiastical and the communal governments. As seen in the example of Trogir, on one side, input came from the local urban elites. These elites were educated individuals like Coriolano Cippico, who must have been aware of the re-appreciation of Jerome that was happening in Italy at the same moment, especially in Venice and Padua where he was educated and lived for some time. The same goes for Georgius Sisgoreus, poet and a priest, who received his degree in canon law in Padua in 1471 and served as a vicar in the Bishopric of Šibenik. Sisgoreus, who venerated Jerome, was further connected to the saint through his family's long-standing devotional

habits as his namesake, bishop Juraj Šižgorić was the bishop of Šibenik and the family had a chapel consecrated to Jerome in the cathedral. Thus, it can be seen how, multi-generational interest in the cult developed overtime amongst the commune's elites

We should keep in mind that during the period of adaptation several masterful artists who had learned their craft in Italy or spent some period there, worked along the Adriatic Coast; men like Giorgio Dalmata, Andrea Alessi, Niccolò Fiorentino and Juraj Čulinović. Although the role of these artists in the dissemination of the renaissance style in Dalmatia has been previously acknowledged and discussed at large in the scholarship, I have addressed their particular contribution to the establishment of the visual production emphasizing Saint Jerome, focusing on the innovative aspects present in those works from the circle of Niccolò Fiorentino and Andrea Alessi.

As the biggest contribution in this aspect, I would emphasize the attribution of several iconographic innovations to Niccolò Fiorentino, bringing new elements into the discussion on his *oeuvre*, and once more opening the question of the role of Paduan and Venetian artistic circles in his formation. The analysis of the artworks—the public expressions and those of private endowment in Trogir—show that even though the presence of Jerome's cult in Dalmatia largely depended on “imported” expressions of the cult, the production related to it was not solely copying what was offered. While many iconographic types were initially imported, the renaissance cult of Jerome in Dalmatia, gave birth to unique expressions of the saint, seen primarily in the *Trogir Relief* and the statue *Saint Jerome as a Hermit*.

The *Trogir Relief* shows the strong reliance on the Venetian and Paduan production of the period, that of the forerunners of the Northern Italian Renaissance—Jacopo Bellini, Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna. With the attribution of the iconographic and compositional innovations to Niccolò Fiorentino, this thesis once more opens the discussion on his Venetian formation and influence. The cultural and devotional impetus to the veneration of the saint was largely coming from the city in the lagoon. The institutional one, was coming from Rome.

The veneration of Jerome was further encouraged by initiatives of the Roman Curia and through the incentives of Pope Nicholas V and his close associates, whom he appointed as the bishop in Dalmatia. For example, the feast day in Trogir (1455) was introduced during the office of Bishop Jacopo Turlon (1452–1483), and the monumental relief in Šibenik (1465–1468) was made when Urbano Vignaco (1454–1468) was bishop, both appointments made by Pope Nicholas V. The choice of Jerome as the patron saint of the *Schiavoni* community in Rome (1453), approved by the mentioned pope, further shows that the association of Jerome with a specific ethnic group received a blessing in

ecclesiastical circles. Further evidence that the Curia continued to promote this appropriation can be seen the best in the renovations of the national church in Rome during the sixteenth century, where Jerome was presented as the national saint of Illyrians in a fresco cycle made to glorify the Illyrian saints. I agree with the already given interpretations that such support should be seen within the broader context of the anti-Ottoman efforts promoted by Nicholas V.

The fear of an imminent invasion was acute in the Croatian lands which stood in a liminal position as the first stronghold protecting the Apennine peninsula from the threat in the East. In the sources discussed in this thesis, Jerome was never explicitly invoked as the protector or defender against the Ottomans. But his image oscillated on the margins of such narratives. In the Venetian *Schiavoni* confraternity his cult received more prominence with the indulgences given to the confraternity directly correlated with the participation of its members in the Venetian-Ottoman wars.

In the same confraternity, the *Preface* to the *Hymn* and the *Prayer* (1498), explicitly positions Jerome in the pan-Slavic narrative in which King of Poland is invoked as the savior of Christian Europe. In the epic poem *Topographia sacelli diui Hieronymi* (1496–1498), Jerome was given a prophetic role of upcoming victory over the Ottomans. His cult received its first public expressions in the period of the First Ottoman-Venetian War (1463–1479), right after the fall of Kingdom of Bosnia (1463), when all of the Croatian lands found themselves directly threatened by the Ottomans. The second step in the process of adaptation is seen in the execution of public expressions of the civic cult in Trogir (1467) and Šibenik (1465–1468), two cities where renaissance culture blossomed. Due to their artistic qualities, both reliefs stand as evidence of the advanced cultural *milieu* in which they were made.

An examination of the historical context in which they were made, reveals that several layers of meaning can be read. The first one relates to the general popularity of the saint in the period and his foundational role in the formation of the Church. The second one, relates to the appropriation of the saint as a personal patron, which is reflected in the adoption of the models used in private devotion and its transformation in the public representations. The third layer, and the most important, relates to Jerome's preeminent status. In Šibenik and Trogir, he stands primarily as the patron saint of Dalmatia. The reliefs stand as witness to the collective devotion of the citizens of Trogir and Šibenik, an *ex-voto*, and a plea for protection from all possible harm.

Their execution in the late 1460s shows that the monumental geopolitical changes of the period influenced the religious sentiments of people living in Dalmatia who, united by the same fears, turned

to the same saint for help. The several plague pandemics and the famines during the 1460s affected the experiences of peoples of Dalmatia, which have turned to even more vigorous veneration of the saints, who have helped them so many times before to “free us from the troubles we fall into because of sin”, as stated in the decision on veneration of Saint Sebastian in Trogir (1466). The very different tone, slightly emotional, found in the decision on the official veneration of Saint Sebastian in Trogir, compared to the juridical tone found in the text on Jerome’s veneration,¹¹⁰⁷ reveals the hopeless situation in which citizens of Trogir and of Dalmatia found themselves in that period.

In the moments after the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463, when Croatian lands found themselves directly threatened by the Ottomans, and when the military actions were put on hold after the failure of the crusade organized by the Pope Pius II, the hope in a heavenly intervention only grew. In a situation like that, who could serve as a better advocate for Dalmatians than a saint born among them, a saint who imitates the Christ with his life and actions, and who enjoyed such a high rank among the saints as one of the Doctors of the Church?

The third phase of *confirmation*, and the most important one, was that that the crucial element of the transformation of Jerome’s saintly image into a national patron saint, lay in the well-connected network of individuals and institutions, which promoted the idea through different means of action. These networks were largely polycentric, including both ecclesiastical and civic institutions who promoted Jerome’s cult through personal devotion, official veneration on the communal or confraternal level, and the articulation of the saint in the national discourse. This movement had gained speed by the end of the fifteenth century when references to Jerome’s Dalmatian origin became a standard *topos* in the literary production of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists. As can be witnessed from the elaborated essays and debates such as, Marko Marulić’s *In eos (...)* or the *Colophon* by the Anonymous Glagolite, where Jerome is singled out as the “shining crown of the Croatian nation,” to the inclusion of the saint in the narratives of national history, where he was presented as the most glorious individual of their *natio*—Jerome’s status had grown into that of a national saint.

The discursive role of Jerome as a national saint, especially that within Illyrian ideologeme, was based on several *topoi*, which had their roots in the cult of Saint Jerome. Although they were not formulated within the matrix of the national narrative as it was in literary production discussed in Chapter 8, some elements transpire through the sources. The multifunctionality of Jerome’s figure was once more adopted to a new context, this time to reflect the constructive matrix of the Illyrian

¹¹⁰⁷ Compare the texts. On veneration of Saint Sebastian see p.333 and on Saint Jerome on p. 256.

nation. A basic examination of the *topoi* present in the Illyrian ideologeme brought by Zrinka Blažević shows that Jerome could have been invoked as the evidence for each one of them: common ancient origin, territorial distribution, linguistic unity, national characterology, national geography, national institutions, national heroes, national saints.¹¹⁰⁸

And in Jerome's case, all of them are embedded in the idea of his local origin. The ardent answers and discussions on the Italian appropriation by Flavio Biondo—without which we would be deprived of the sources which help us reconstruct the perception of the saint at the period—reveal the symbolic weight the saint had for them. Why was it necessary to defend Jerome's Dalmatian or Illyrian origin? Because, by proving Jerome was Dalmatian, Croatian, Slav, or Illyrian, the Dalmatian humanists, were confirming the ancient origins of their people and the language, contributing to their distinctiveness among other European peoples.

Furthermore, another contribution for further assessment of the topic of the proto-national narratives and identities present in the Croatian lands must be noted. While the beginnings of the humanist and renaissance cult were marked by a regional determinant—Dalmatian—it is noted that gradually he was included into the broader imagined community, Illyrians in Sisgoreus' case or Slavic in Pribojević's. On the other hand, in some of them, like the *Florentine life* or the *Colophon* by the Anonymous Glagolite, or Petar Zoranić novel *Planine*, Dalmatian affiliation equaled a Croatian one, which shows that regardless of the political situation, even where Croatian lands were not politically united, the sense of common belonging between the regions which had once been integral parts of the Kingdom of Croatia existed.

Another reason why Jerome became a shared saint across the area of the Kingdom of Croatia, was because of the presence of Jerome's cult in multiple regions. Croatia was the core of the Glagolitic cult, while Dalmatia was the origin of humanist veneration of the saint along the Eastern Adriatic Coast. At the same time, in Slavonia, there are no indications of any regional presence of Jerome's cult, besides the veneration in Zagreb and the promotion of Štrigova as one of the possible locations of Stridon. Nevertheless, during the Middle Ages, this did not have an impact on the broader establishment of Jerome's cult in the northern parts of the Croatian kingdom.

Another question that will have to be addressed further, is the precise relation of Dalmatian humanists to the Glagolitic script and heritage. In all of the sources presented here, it is evident that before the end of the fifteenth century and the reference to the alleged invention in the *Schiavoni*

¹¹⁰⁸ See p. 34.

booklet and later in the work of Pribojević, the Glagolitic narrative was not common in either the Latin or Croatian production related to the saint—not in the national discourse, nor the devotional literature besides that one produced for the Glagolitic communities. Jerome as an inventor of the Glagolitic letters is emphasized only in those contexts when the Slavic liturgy was under attack, as it was in Venice at the end of the century, or letters such as that of Nicholas of Modruš, who was a Bishop in a region known to use the Slavonic language and Glagolitic script in the liturgy. The omission of this segment in the early stage of the cult in Dalmatia shows once more that in Dalmatia, the main foundation for the appropriation of Jerome, was his origin and not the Slavic myth around the saint.

Only with the evolution of the national discourse, did the Glagolitic myth transform into one of the most persuasive arguments for the history of the language and people living in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The reason for this can be explained by the fact that initially, at the beginning of his adaptation in Dalmatia, Jerome was perceived as a regional patron saint, where the tasks expected from him were those in the domain of the national saints. In a devotional sense, he could be perceived as a national saint of Dalmatians, even though at this point, his role as such was not formulated in a discursive sense.

Still, Jerome's role as a national saint was not merely the one articulated in patriotic narratives. By the end of the century, his devotional, "practical" function had also crystallized in the written sources. Jerome began to be asked to intercede and protect people in times of need, as was the case in the *Schiavoni booklet* (1498) while in other cases, was given the role of a prophet, as in the epic poem *Topographia sacelli divi Hieronymi* (1496) where he foreshadowed a great victory against Ottomans. This type of evolution of the cult, strongly influenced by the historical events of the period, only reinforced the position of the saint, and was to be also found in confraternities outside of the homeland.

The confraternity in Rome for instance, was strongly supported by the Roman Curia, and from its beginnings was marked with the efforts of Pope Nicholas V to fight the Ottomans. The *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice, meanwhile, was slowly receiving a symbolical place in the anti-Ottoman efforts through a series of indulgences (1464, 1481, and 1502), which promoted—together with other patrons of *Scuola*—Jerome's feast day, all with the goal of supporting an anti-Ottoman crusade. The anti-Ottoman agenda around the confraternity is illustrated with two emblematic examples.

The first one is the sponsorship of the Valaresso family, who were active participants in the overseas expeditions against the Ottomans. This family gifted the confraternity on several occasions,

one of them being at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. The Admiral of the Venetian fleet, Paolo Valaresso, gifted a relic of Saint George to the confraternity and probably financed the cycle of the patron saint, including scenes of Jerome's life, executed by Carpaccio in 1502-1507. Another example, is the *Schiavoni booklet*, written by the members of the confraternity in honor of Saint Jerome. Within the booklet, Jerome's role as a national saint is emphasized several times—he was explicitly asked for help during the plague outburst and he was promoted in the pan-Slavic narrative about the victory over the Ottomans.

Culture and Devotion

For a clear interpretation of the expressions of the cult it is crucial to keep in mind the broader linear contextual stratification, determined by cultural or artistic, devotional and intellectual dimensions which, with the adoption of Jerome, confirm the involvement of Dalmatian and Croatian educated elites in broader European cultural currents and the achievements of local humanist circles. The basic approach identified its importance in three main factors—cultural, devotional, and intellectual. It was the first factor, the cultural aspect that dominated this thesis, and with good reason. Many of the cultural objects discussed here have never been the subjects of a study that questioned its position within Jerome's cult.

The detailed iconographic analysis and the comparative approach where Dalmatian production has been put alongside its Italian counterparts showed that the Dalmatian urban centers had close connections with cultural and humanist circles in the Apennine peninsula, primarily those of Padua and Venice. Although preoccupied with images of Jerome, I have offered a methodological approach which could be applied to other works of the Croatian Renaissance, in order to reveal their initial function and meaning.

The cultural factor was explored by looking at the circles within the communes, consisting of local humanists and artists, who were aware of the main artistic currents of the period, as evidenced by their commissioning artworks abroad, like Martin Mladošić did by placing his commission with Carpaccio, or by adopting the Florentine and Venetian models and applying them in their artistic production. The significant role in the transmission of artistic novelties was placed in the hands of artists, like Giorgio Dalmata who applied a Florentine model for the *Tondo of Šibenik* (1465–1468), or Niccolò Fiorentino who adopted the Venetian model for the *Trogir Relief* (1467) to respect the wishes of the commissioners, the cathedral chapter and the inhabitants of Trogir.

The latter one, stands as the emblematic example of the multilayered approach to artwork. Besides presenting a variation of the iconographic type being established at that period in Venice, known to a narrow group of people, it testifies to the achievements of the artists, Niccolò Fiorentino and Andrea Alessi, who translated the ideas of the Trogir humanist circle into a unique representation reflecting Jerome's privileged position among Dalmatians. Both reliefs, executed at the same period, apart from their religious aspect, stand as witnesses to the progressive humanist culture present in the communes, which were immersed actively in the renaissance movement through which the visual and the written expression of the cult were adopted.

The best example of the popularity of the saint is the series of the small reliefs modeled upon the one in the Trogir Baptistery, today found scattered along the Eastern Adriatic Coast and beyond in museum collections. The possession of these reliefs correlates directly to the possession of Jerome's image among Italian humanists to whom the saint served as an intellectual and pious model. The dissemination of the composition of the *Trogir Relief* along the coast supports the argument of the development of keener appreciation of the saint, especially as a personal patron saint, but also testifies to its popularity.

These examples, ask for a more comprehensive study on the development of the personal, more intimate forms of devotion in the Eastern Adriatic Coast, influenced by the general changes in the religious sentiments at the period. The *Zadar Polyptych* by Carpaccio stands as a perfect example of these new practices being adopted by the pious individuals in Dalmatia, where the portrait of the donor does not stand primarily as the expression of his commission nor a display piece. It also demonstrates deep piety to Jerome, since the commissioner decided to portray himself next to Jerome, and not Saint Martin who was his name-saint, as it would be expected. On the other hand, the artwork also had its functional purpose – it was a tool of a meditative prayer before which the donor might pray himself.

Another reason why the question of personal devotion should be approached with more attention is the extant manuscript copies of life of Saint Jerome, written in Croatian vernacular, which, as current research shows, were possessed by nuns, for their own private prayer. I hope that the methodological approach I have laid out, that of exploring the manifestations of Jerome's cult such as the mentioned manuscripts, as historical evidence of the period in which they were made, will encourage future researchers to re-assess some of the artistic production of the period and bring new conclusions to the abundant renaissance production in Dalmatia.

The Network of Promoters

The third perspective that was tackled in this dissertation was the intellectual one. With the adoption of Jerome by humanist circles in Dalmatia during the fifteenth century, the existing notion of his origin, which prior to this moment had never resulted in the formation of a civic cult, started to appear embedded in the institutionalized framework of the rising civic cult. It is also the one that deserves much more attention than it was given here. However, this thesis once more shows how the question of the pre-modern “national” belonging and the understanding of identity was fluid and affected much, first by the historical and political context, and second by the perception of the author whose written production on a question has been passed to our times. Furthermore, the perception of ethnic or proto-national belonging nurtured among the aristocracy and the educated elites, is a far more complex question than it could be discussed here without diverting from the initial aims set in this study, but some contributions for the further elaboration of the topic can be brought.

Gradually, with the development of intellectual ideas in Europe, and the formulations of the first sentiments of belonging in the narrative discourses, Dalmatian and Croatian humanists engaged also in the sort of literary competition of European humanists who sought to elaborate the narrative history of their people. As a part of this exercise, intellectuals began listing all the achievements and the prominent individuals of their *natio*, with the goal of presenting their ancestral lineage as better than that of others. Within this development, Jerome received the role for which he is known today in the Croatian scholarship – that of national saint. As elaborated in the introduction, the question of the formation of the earliest notions of what could be defined as proto-national sentiments, is a question still discussed in historiography at large.

This is true, especially in the Croatian case, where the complexity of the territorial and political organization on the territory of medieval Croatia has called for an in-depth study on how Jerome became a symbolic representation of those people. This thesis however, I hope, will serve as the starting point for research into a critical segment of Jerome’s cult in Croatia through the centuries—that of a national saint who became dominant from the sixteenth century onwards. Still, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the fluidity of the meaning of the ethnic affiliation—Dalmatian, Croatian, Slav or Illyrian—also reflects upon Jerome and the ethnic affiliation of him expressed in the written production.

The example of the formation of Saint Jerome as the national saint of Dalmatia and Croatia stands as a unique for several reasons. Unlike other national saints, such as Saint-Denis in France or

the Hungarian Holy King Saint Ladislav, were embedded in the narrative of the state's formation from the early days of its existence, Jerome's place was only affirmed in the Late Middle Ages. The other national saints mentioned in this thesis also, usually had strong institutional support in the ruling court which promoted the saint's image in favor of their political propaganda. Jerome, in the moments of his affirmation, was a national saint without a state.

The strong regional appropriation occurred in Dalmatia, which at the period, was being politically annexed by the Venetian government, and fully excluded from the territorial and juridical unity of the Kingdom of Croatia. Regardless of the inclusion in the Venetian commonwealth, however, the sense of Dalmatia being an integral part of the Croatian Kingdom did not cease to exist. The most persuasive argument for this, is found in the patriotic narratives on Jerome, where Dalmatia or Dalmatian affiliation is presented as the part of the larger unit, that of Croatia or Croatian, or that of Illyria or Illyrians. Although we do not have explicit documents of dissatisfaction with the Venetian government, or that those who were dissatisfied with it asked military action to change the situation, the promotion of Jerome's cult indicates that some sort of quiet opposition existed. This resistance can be seen for example, on the polyptych of Saint Jerome with Saint Ladislav in Trogir, where the presence of the Hungarian king and a saint certainly bore a strong political message.

The symbolism of Jerome as the unifier of all those people coming from the different parts of Kingdom of Croatia, is testified to also by the confraternities in Rome and Venice where he was patron, where the elements of inclusion were based on speaking the Slavic vernacular language, being born in the region recognized as *Schiavonia* or *Illyria*, and being Catholic. This example shows how the notion of this type of common belonging was very fluid, and cannot be defined by a narrow territorial space, but rather to a cultural sphere. It was then in that cultural sphere, where Jerome became a national saint, envisioned among the higher educated elites and promoted vigorously as such.

In this dissertation, I have shown that the important difference between Jerome's cult as a national saint and that of other national saints was that Jerome's cult was strongly polycentric and that its establishment as such, was a result of a network of individuals which overcame the political, regional and even ecclesiastical borders which stood before it. The cult was shaped by the individuals who, through their personal devotion or their actions within certain institutions, were the ones who, in certain moments, recognized the potential of Jerome's image for their own self-identification, both personal and collective.

The basis of these networks were provided by the educated humanists and clerics from Dalmatia and Croatia, whose devotion was initially driven by the general influence of the growing humanist cult in general, and the various devotional practices to the saint, emerging primarily in Italy. They read Jerome's works, transcribed the devotional literature and exchanged it with their peers. They named their offspring after a saint, endowed chapels and altars, and praised the saint in their literary production. Many of them, through their work, were active participants in local government, like Coriolano Cippico, who was one of the most noted citizens of Trogir in the period, and who as the *operarius* of the cathedral cooperated closely with the bishop and the artists in the transformation of the city of Trogir, and the expansion of its cathedral.

The close connections and cooperation between the local humanist circles and the cathedral chapters, as was the case in Trogir and Zadar, but also in Šibenik, brought together two sides of interest which could promote Jerome in Dalmatia, one that pushed him as a Church Father and another one as their compatriot. The salient factor for the adoption of Italian manifestations of the cult were the two types of connections; one of the local humanists with their Italian counterparts, and the other of the local bishops, which at the period were all foreigners and all appointed by Pope Nicholas V.

The compound network of these individuals, humanists—Coriolano Cippico, Giorgio Sisgoreus, Marko Marulić, Petar Zoranić and others who commissioned the artworks and possessed the devotional literature but could not yet be identified—and the local bishops whose actions supported the institutionalization of the cult —Jacopo Turlon, Juraj Šižgorić, Urbano Vignaco and Maffeo Valaresso—was strongly supported by the higher instances of the church who granted special concessions to this specific group of people, in papal documents called *Schiavoni* or *Illyrians*.

This is not seen only in the granting the rights to the foundation of a national church in Rome, but also in the support given to the *Schiavoni* confraternity in Venice by the great Cardinal Bessarion together with later papal indulgences, one by Pope Sixtus IV (1481), and another by papal legate Angelo Leonini (1502). However, this support should not be seen primarily as a wish to give legitimization to the Schiavoni or Illyrian nation, but to acknowledge them being the crucial link in the defense of Christianity against the “infidel” Ottomans, and whose troops have participated in the military expeditions, since for an extended period the papacy was the only promoter, often very unsuccessfully, of military actions against the threat from the East.

Within that network, a narrower one can be identified — that of Dalmatian and Croatian humanists—where Jerome's role as a national saint was formulated. The inclusion of Jerome in the narratives of national historiography and the emphasis of his Dalmatian origin and Croatian

affiliation, even in devotional works, shows how by the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, among his compatriots, at least the higher social strata, Jerome's position was undoubted and strong. The confirmation of this is not found only in the elaboration of and discussion on his origin, but also in the appropriation of the saint within the ideas of narrower Dalmatian-Croatian or broader Slavic-Illyrian *natio*, seen in the examples discussed in the chapter 8.

The *Florentine* and *Trogir life*, *Colophon* by Anonymous Glagolite, Zoranić's *Mountains*, and even Jerome's legend in the *Petris Miscellany* correlate Jerome with Croatia or Croatian *natio*. The broader formulation of sense of belonging, that to the Slavic-Illyrian *natio*, was elaborated in the works by Georgius Sığoreus who places Dalmatia within the broader territory of Illyria, or Vinko Pribojević who adopts Jerome, his Dalmatian origin and the alleged invention of Glagolitic letters into pan-Slavic narrative. As Luka Špoljarić has noted already, in the study of the proto-national discourse in the territory of the Croatian lands and within the humanist circles, Jerome becomes the best indicator of its spread and of the formation of the Croatian-Dalmatian branch of the *respublica litteraria*.

Even though this question was presented here in a general view since the detailed analysis of their differences and the constructive elements were out of the scope of this work, one thing can be said with certainty. No matter how those authors defined their nation, how broad or narrow it was, or to which territory extended, or which name they called themselves, Jerome for all of them was their patron saint. He was the person whom the whole Catholic world praised, and everyone should know that a man of such virtue has been of their kind. The latter is especially emphasized in the written production where Jerome's deeds for the Church were always listed first, followed with the elaboration of his Dalmatian origin and/or his Croatian, Illyrian or Slavic affiliation.

Again, I note that in this case, the adjective Croatian does not imply the identity of today's Croatian nation—since such definition meant different things at the different periods— although it represents its distant beginnings, but the perception of humanists of the era expressed in these works. Where some of them, expressed a clear affiliation with the whole of Dalmatia and with the Kingdom of Croatia, to which it was one of the constituent parts. From this discussion, it is noticeable that within this narrower network of the Dalmatian-Croatian republic of letters, communication and literary friendships were kept alive through the exchange of literary production through which the devotional material dedicated to Jerome also circulated. This can be seen in the presence of copies of *Florentine Life* and the hymn *Angelic virtues i*, which seems to have originated somewhere in Dalmatia, possibly in Split, and ended up in Senj, Croatia, by transcription and exchange, where it

was included in the printed edition of *Transitus*. The discussions about Jerome's origins obviously circulated through this network, given the direct quotations, such as Pribojević referring directly to Marulić, and the common *topoi* found in such records. Here, I would remind that through such networks, another expression of devotion to Jerome was exchanged—the reliefs of smaller-dimensions modeled upon the one in Trogir.

What is Left?

To conclude this study, I would draw a parallel with the conclusions by the great Croatian art historian Radovan Ivančević from his book on the early Renaissance in Trogir. In the chapter where he was discussing the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir*, many valuable conclusions were brought on this masterpiece of the Croatian Renaissance. In it, he presents it as one of the greatest achievements of Croatian art history and praises a cultural circle and the artists, which gave birth to such a unique project. Although he was aware of numerous research questions, as well as the importance of the same, limited by the achievements of the scholarship at the time, he set guidelines for further research of the chapel, under the title *What is left?*¹¹⁰⁹

Such an approach could be applied to this study, as well, due to the critical importance of both, the *Chapel of Saint John of Trogir* and Jerome's cult, for understanding the achievements of Croatian Renaissance. A significant difference must be noted. The chapel has been recognized and established in the scholarship, being almost a dominant topic in Croatian Renaissance art history. In contrast, the research on the cult of Saint Jerome—even after this study which covered different segments of veneration, established the pattern of evolution of the cult and brought many valuable conclusions—is still at its infancy. Such a statement, after broad and elaborated study, only portrays the full scope of Jerome's cult in the Croatian history. These conclusions primarily lead to the further need to observe the meaning of ethnic determinants attached to the saint in written production, and how they reflect a broader understanding of complex identities in medieval Croatia, which will undoubtedly need to be researched in a separate study.

However, I would like to point out another approach that this thesis applies, and which can serve as a methodological framework for the approach to Croatian Renaissance production, primarily artistic, but also textual. The one in which this production is not questioned from the point of view of its artistic value, but of their function. The first level of the meaning and the function embedded in the images of the saints is devotional one. And as this thesis showed, Jerome was very much present

¹¹⁰⁹ Ivančević, *Rana Renesansa*, 7, 285.

in the sphere of personal devotion, which at the period only gained in its importance. The adoption of the iconographic type of Saint Jerome, dominant in the personal piety, such as “Saint Jerome Reading in the Wilderness”, for the public representation in Trogir, in the early period of the establishment of this type in Venice, shows that new devotional practices were known and understood in Dalmatia as well. For this reason, the artistic production of the Croatian Renaissance should be observed through the prism of the personal piety and in the broader context of the spiritual changes of the late Middle Ages.

It is precisely the rootedness of Jerome’s character in numerous aspects of Croatian culture and spirituality, not only during the late Middle Ages, but also through all subsequent centuries, that determines his position as a Croatian saint. The very presence of his character in numerous contexts—from artistic to political—reflects the magnitude of the process of transformation of the cult of Jerome that took place during the Renaissance in the Eastern Adriatic Coast. The saint’s cult thus becomes a symbol of artistic and cultural achievements. It is enough to look at the reliefs in Trogir and Šibenik that stand alongside other renaissance achievements of the time—if not in the quality of performance, then certainly in the idea itself. The cult becomes a symbol of intellectual achievements as well, where discussions on saint’s origin mirror the discussion on the origin of the peoples thriving in the Dalmatian and Croatian humanist circles.

Due to the ramifications of the cult, the reach of the cultural environment in which it takes place, and the involvement of the bearers of regional renaissance cultural production, higher social strata—humanist nobles and church dignitaries—the transformation of the renaissance cult of Saint Jerome into regional and national saint can be characterized as the most significant undertaking of the Croatian Renaissance.

Without an interdisciplinary approach and looking at the production of the cult outside of long-established traditional understandings of its character and importance, it is still challenging to create a complete picture of Jerome’s cult and the influence it had. Therefore, I conclude this study with the hope that the numerous announced scholarly conferences on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of Jerome’s death in Croatia will only further complete this rich study. Otherwise, to quote Radovan Ivančević again, “after all research, we are, as always, at the beginning.”¹¹¹⁰

¹¹¹⁰ Ivančević, *Rana Renesansa*, 286.

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