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The Public Defense of the Doctoral Dissertation

of

Trpimir Vedriš

on

Hagiography as Memory: Saints' Cults and the Construction of the Past in Medieval Dalmatia

will be held on

Wednesday, 8 April 2015, at 10:00

in the
**Senate Room – Monument Building
Central European University (CEU)
Nádor u. 9, Budapest**

Examination Committee

Chair	László Kontler (Department of History – CEU)
Members	Neven Budak (Department of History –University of Zagreb)
	Gábor Klaniczay (Department of Medieval Studies – CEU)
	József Laszlovszky (Department of Medieval Studies – CEU)
	Marianne Sághy (Department of Medieval Studies – CEU), supervisor
External Readers	Patrick Geary (Institute for Advanced Study – Princeton), not present
	Ana Munk (Department of Art History – University of Zagreb), present

The doctoral dissertation is available for inspection in the CEU-ELTE Medieval Library, Budapest, 6-8 Múzeum krt.

As the title of this study implies, the aim of my research is to trace the role of hagiography and the cults of saints in constructing and preserving particular aspects of collective memories in medieval Dalmatian cities. Therefore, by studying hagiography and cult of urban patron saints, this study deals with the history and reenactment of diverse memories of persons and events whose historicity is often doubtful, yet whose reception was of great importance for their medieval recipients. This approach is based on the presupposition that both "memory" and "history" – always "the result of retrospective processing" – were important and meaningful for their recipients as a way of recollecting their past, but reflecting equally their contemporary views about themselves as communities. Such a view is not a novelty in general. Yet, its well-defined and focused application to selected case studies from medieval Dalmatian cities promises not only to broaden the accessible corpus of case studies on medieval hagiography and cult of the saints, but, more importantly, I hope, to offer insight into the ways particular "historical" aspects of "social knowledge" – preserved through "networks of memory" of the urban patron saints – was operational in shaping group identities in medieval Dalmatian communes.

Concepts, Terminology and Problems

The geographical term Dalmatia in the title was originally meant to stand for the three prominent coastal cities: Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik. While focusing on these three, my original intention was to keep an eye on other Eastern Adriatic urban centers (like Osor, Rab and Trogir) as well as some other communities in their hinterland (like Nin). In the present form the study covers much less. Expectedly, *brevitas vitae et longitudo artis* made me narrow my focus and adopt an approach of "asymmetrical comparison" with a strong focus on Zadar. In terms of the temporal framework, this study will cover the period roughly defined as the Middle Ages. In the local context, it usually refers to the period between ca. 600 and ca. 1400, a time span marked by two important watersheds: The collapse of the Roman administrative system in Dalmatia and the Venetian final subjection of the Dalmatian communes. While it is clear that neither dividing line should be taken as fixed, their particular symbolic importance justifies the choice.

While the cult of the saints and their hagiographies stand in the focus of this study, the point of departure in the background of the present inquiry are two historical problems: the break of cultural continuity (whether real or imagined) between Late Antiquity and Early Middle ages and high medieval societies' attempts to bridge these gaps by "recovering" their urban memories. How did the particular fragments of the heritage of the Roman Dalmatia – in the form of "cultural memory" – survive (even if only as ideal stories) and continued to live in the radically changed social, cultural and political settings of late medieval urban communes. In other words, the "background aim" of this study is to investigate how urban communities in the early- through-High Middle ages perceived particular aspects of their history and how they used different "fragments of the past" to construct their own symbolic, social and political realities.

Based on the quantity and quality of source material available, two historical periods in the proposed framework will be approached as – to a certain extent – separate. In the first period (ca. 800 – ca. 1150) the most important (if not exclusive) agents were the ecclesiastical institutions and the most important "vehicles of

remembering" were their "memories", thus, the study will focus heavily on the ecclesiastical institutions and communities attached to them. Moving into the later period (ca. 1150 – ca. 1450), attention will increasingly turn towards the new institutions and social groups arising – with special focus on the formation and the development of both the communal organization and urban nobility. This proposed analysis is, therefore, an attempt at reading chosen medieval sources against their historical background *sub specie relationum* between the communities' distant past and their present identities – as reflected in the "preservation" of a particular segment of collective memories connected to the saints. In tracing these, the study comes close to examining and reconstructing what is sometimes termed "discourses of collective identity" or, "different strategies of collective self-representation" of these urban communities.

The study is divided in two parts. In the first, consisting of two chapters, I will discuss: (a) the theoretical and methodological foundations of this inquiry and develop an analytical model for this study; (b) overview sources and assess relevant scholarship; and (c) give an introductory overview of the history of the region – viewed through the lenses of "three discourses of identity" – meant to set the background for particular case studies. The second part of the study consists of a series of case studies where the model is applied to particular micro-histories. The possible disproportion between extant methodological discussion and two case studies from one city derives from the original goal of this project. Namely, this work was originally meant to include three case studies exploring "mnemohistories" of the main urban patron saints of Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik. Yet, in the present form it, is narrowed to rather an "asymmetric comparison" focusing on two case studies from Zadar (dealing with three saints' cults) and comparing the results with the evidence concerning cults from other cities.

Research Methods and Thesis Structure

While possible approaches to these phenomena are to a large extent determined by the nature of the (medieval) source material, the basic theoretical foundation of this study comes from an understanding of the society as a system of communication. In this, I rely – in the most general sense – on the work of the authors nowadays labeled as "social constructivists" (such as N. Luhmann, P. Berger and T. Luckmann) and their interpretative frameworks of society – most notably their notions of a "system of systems" and their insights into the "nature of social knowledge". Another indirect inspiration derives from symbolic/interpretative anthropology, especially authors like M. Douglas, V. Turner and C. Geertz and their insights on the importance of symbols for understanding society. The key methodological question here is how to access these problems in particular historical societies. In other words, the issue at stake is how these largely theoretical hypotheses and models can be applied to analyze and interpret the utterances one encounters in available medieval sources.

As regards a concrete means of analysis, this study draws strong inspiration from the branch of what is nowadays termed memory studies, most notably the work of authors like J. Assmann and their understanding of cultural memory. As memory has, according to many theoreticians, become one of the central analytical concepts of modern historiography – although to a certain extent controversial – it is hard to avoid discussing basic terminology and epistemological foundations of its application in medieval studies. In this sense, the first chapter is meant to address the problem of "how the term 'memory' can be operational in articulating the connections between the

cultural, the social, and the political, between representation and social experience" in a particular historical setting. Therefore, in this chapter I will discuss methodology, the basic concepts and analytical tools to be used here by departing from the definitions of the basic terminology. By summarizing and reviewing the state of the art in memory studies and assessing its applications in medieval studies in the first subchapter I will discuss its applicability for the present study. In the second subchapter I try to clarify particular problems, first by returning to the general problem of the relation between memory and history, and then by focusing on medieval history writing, then finally turn to hagiography. Here I will approach my source base by discussing the meaning of hagiography, defining the term as it will be used in this study and pointing out its role in shaping the cult of the saints into a vehicle of memory. The last subchapter will provide space for developing the analytical model to be applied here. The proposed analytical model ("hagiographical memory network") is meant to help understand the relationships between texts, objects and practices, on the one hand, and the "discourses of identity" on the other. In this basic distinction, the former can be understood as the passive element and the later implies more dynamic aspects of the interaction. While aware of tensions between these concepts deriving from different conceptual backgrounds, I hope the tension will prove to be inspiring rather than a hindrance.

The central hypothesis here is that "memory networks" connected to the saints, only a single aspect of huge and complex networks of different types of "historical knowledge", are, in many ways unique and important. Developing, a workable model should result not only in detecting valuable "historical moments" in mnemohistories of the saints, but also lasting "symbolic structures" that allowed the clustering of memories and the production of enduring narratives. In chronological sequence, the material will be approached by moving from the older towards the more recent evidence. In an analytical sense that means moving from fragments (elements), through the network (reconstruction of), towards the emergence of the "discourses of identity". Finally, while, the scarcity of evidence often makes it difficult to reach any firm conclusions, I am convinced that the proposed approach is especially useful in an attempt at overcoming the traditional distinctions among different types of sources.

In the second chapter I assemble a workable typology of sources, assess the existing scholarship and discuss the problems of interpretation in the framework of this analysis. In undertaking such a complex task, it is unavoidable to draw upon a broad array of sources (from hagiography, historiography and other types of narrative sources, liturgy, objects, and monuments to charter evidence and laws), thus I propose grouping sources and treating them as separate groups, to a certain extent. In addressing the problems connected to the existing scholarship I also refer to the most important advances in the study of medieval Dalmatian cities with special emphasis on recent publications, (unpublished) dissertations and relevant papers in Croatian. By assessing these texts, I try to detect "gaps in the field" that may mark the limitations of the proposed approach on the one hand, and point towards possible breakthroughs on the other.

Historical background

The third chapter presents a brief overview of the history of the region with the focus on three key critical issues looming in the background of this inquiry: (a) The question of the continuity/discontinuity of ecclesiastical and other institutions between late antiquity and the High Middle Ages, (b) The role of the memories of an ambiguous Classical

and early Christian past in bridging the historical gap and constituting communal identities, and (c) The particular (in my view central) role the cult of the saints played in this process as an important point of reference. These issues will be approached through heuristic concepts (analytical categories, "discourses of identity"): *civitas* (implying primarily the idea of "urbanity"), *christianitas* (Christianity/Christendom) and *romanitas* ("Romanity"). As these three concepts stand for sets of much more complex issues, they are taken as the point of departure not because it is certain or self evident that they were indeed the central aspects of urban self identification in late antique and early medieval Dalmatia, but primarily because they have often been "neuralgic points" of recent scholarly debate on issues of continuity and discontinuity in the region. Thus, far from claiming they were (ever) only, or even the prevailing, "discourses", I use them primarily as organizing principles and analytical tools.

Case study/ies: Zadar and its Patron Saints

The fourth and the fifth chapters explore the cults of the two patron saints of Zadar. Both are the result of applying the proposed analytical model to particular cults. In brief, these chapters present case studies of diverse memories that took shape in the context of the hagiography and cult of the patron saints of Zadar. The foundation and the backbone of this study is the analysis of the "histories of memories" of the chosen Iadertine patron saints. Therefore, chapters four and five, both in terms of quantity and the quality of the analyses, surpass the rest of the material by far. The saints in question were local early medieval bishop St. Donatus and the early Christian martyrs St. Anastasia and St. Chrysogonus (with the cults of other early Christian martyrs belonging to the same "hagiographical record" (Agape, Chionia, Irene and Zoilus) taken into consideration). Other important cults (such as, that of Symeon the Just in Angevine Zadar) are treated only *en passant*. The extension of the "asymmetrical comparison" in the sixth chapter is a remnant of the original project to include case studies from Split and Dubrovnik. Observations on the cults of other Dalmatian patron saints are – in the present shape of this project – meant primarily to test the proposed model and sketch directions for future comparative research.

Thus, having outlined the basic chronological framework of the cults' emergence in early medieval Zadar, the bulk of these chapters is a result of an attempt to reconstruct the "memory network" that grew gradually around the relics and the churches during the subsequent centuries. In order to do this, I will, following the model, first treat the "colder" (or the more *passive*) elements of the network – that is, the buildings and the temporal network (local *sanctorale*) – moving through somewhat more "lukewarm" reliquaries towards the "warmest" (the most *active*) elements such as the legends and the images. The reason to address the buildings first derives from the fact that they represent the oldest layer of the network, while the decision to go on with the "shaping of time" is mostly due to the fact that reconstructing the liturgical system helps detecting a series of disturbances in the network important for understanding the dynamics of the adoption/appropriation of the cults.

The starting point of these two chapters is the "lack of local early Christian hagiographic tradition", making, therefore, the translation legends particularly important testimony on the local appropriation of the otherwise "universal" saints. In both cases, the first two subchapters describe the ways the cults "conquered" the town in space and time, how the churches came to dominate the physical space of the Zadar, and how the feasts filled the local calendar with the presence of the two martyrs. In that context, the buildings are seen not only as important evidence

of the power of the institutions which stood behind them, but as a rich source for understanding the history of the cult. While the earlier Episcopal basilica, built on the foundations of an early Christian cult center placed in the very Roman forum, testifies to the continuity of the urban functions in the fragmentation of the spiritual and secular authority in the later period, the monastery of St. Chrysogonus, with its sister monastery of St. Mary, contested the ideal centralized unity of the community. The inquiry into the dates and layers of the feasts will help establish a temporal network as well as trace clues for understanding the relations between the cults and the communities of their venerators.

The next step is an attempt to reconstruct the part of the network consisting of the physical remains of the martyrs focused on reliquaries. The central part of the inquiry into the function of the networks consists of subchapters dedicated to the analyses of local hagiography and visual material (i.e., iconography) related to the saints. Finally, each of the chapters includes a third part dealing with the "discourses", or the local knowledge of the saints and their place in late medieval politics. These subchapters are meant as the closest possible approach to the modern-day understanding of collective memory. The sources from this period (thirteenth through fifteenth) allow for somewhat more concrete inspection of the epistemological and ethical status of the cults in politics and history.

Conclusions

In the final chapter the results of this inquiry are summarized and juxtaposed to the similar phenomena in the regional context (i.e. other medieval towns "typologically" sharing Zadar's hagiographic heritage). Split had a strong local hagiographic tradition of Salonitan martyrs which was appropriated by the Church of Split during the early Middle Ages. The appropriation of Salonitan hagiography is analyzed in the broader context of the transformation and assimilation of the Salonitan early Christian tradition in medieval Split. The development of the relations between the Split ecclesiastical and communal organization gives a picture quite different from that of Zadar. In Split, both the weight of the Apostolic tradition and the seemingly overwhelming burden of evidence contributed to this tradition being church-centered. Unlike Zadar, here the patron of the commune never came into play. Finally, the third point of comparison – Dubrovnik – shows a completely different political and institutional situation. Its more distant location, different political destiny and more succesfull trading activity made Dubrovnik and in many ways different from ither Dalmatian cities. All in all, this comparative perspective will help raise questions of how different development of these cities, vis-à-vis external factors like Venice, on the one hand, and inner urban developments, on the other influenced the ways urban patron saints were "remembered". Finally, while it might be irritating to end up with opening unanswered questions, my view is that the present analysis will offer not only enough material for the fruitful analysis, but also offer inspiring interpretative framework for future comparative research.

Curriculum Vitae

Work experience: *research assistant* at the Institute for Croatian History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (projects "Croatia and Central Europe in the Middle Ages" and project: "Monumenta mediaevalia varia") (2004-2012); *assistant professor* at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (2013-present); teaching experience at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split; Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb and the Protestant Theological faculty "Matija Vlačić Ilirik".

Studies:
– 1995 – 2002   University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
                           (BA in History and Ethnology)
– 2000 – 2002   Faculty of Philosophy of the Jesuit Society, Zagreb (ABG in Philosophy)
– 2003 – 2004   Medieval Studies Department, CEU, Budapest (MA in Medieval Studies)
– 2002 – 2009   University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (PhD in History)
– 2004 –   PhD student at Medieval Studies Department, CEU, Budapest

Research activities (recent & relevant)

Collaborative project "Framing Medieval Mediterranean Art", research seminar at *American Academy in Rome*, in Academic Year 2014-15, funded by *Paul Getty Foundation* (2014-2015).

Symbols that Bind and Break Communities: Saints? Cults as Stimuli and Expressions of Local, Regional, National and Universalist Identities, CEU Department of Medieval Studies – Hungarian Scientific Research Foundation (NN 81446), Dr. Gábor Klaniczay (2010-2013).

Monumenta Medievalia Varia; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, No. 130-1300620-0641; prof. dr. Neven Budak (2007-2013).

Conferences organized

Church Reforms and Cult of Saints. A symposium co-organized by the *Croatian hagiography Society „Hagiotheca" Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (University of Turku), *Hagiographica Septentrionalia* (University of Tampere) and the University of Zadar, (University of Zadar, Zadar, September 18-21, 2014) (cf. www.reformsaints.info)

Cuius patrocinio tota gaudet regio. Saints' cults and the dynamics of regional cohesion. 4th hagiographic conference organized by *Croatian hagiography Society „Hagiotheca"* and the members of international collaborative project *CULTSYMBOLS ESF EuroCORECODE Programa* and *OTKA Saints Project* (IUC, Dubrovnik, October 18-20, 2012)

The Treaty of Aachen, AD 812: The Origins and Impact on the Region between the Adriatic, Central, and Southeastern Europe (Zadar, September 27–29, 2012) (cf. www.aachen812.info)

Saintly Bishops and Bishops' Saints. A symposium co-organized by the *Croatian Hagiography Society "Hagiotheca"* and *International Hagiography Society* (Episcopal palace, Poreč May 27-30, 2010)

Selection of conferences attended related to the topic of the dissertation (2007-present)

Adriatic Connections: The Adriatic as a Threshold to Byzantium (c.600-1453) (British School at Rome, January 14-16, 2015)

Grad hrvatskog srednjovjekovlja: Slika grada u narativnim vrelima - stvarnost i/ili fikcija? (Croatian Institute for History, Zagreb, December 2-3, 2013)

The Treaty of Aachen, AD 812: The Origins and Impact on the Region between the Adriatic, Central, and Southeastern Europe (University of Zadar, Zadar, September 27-29, 2012)

Constructing Memory in Pre-modern East Central and Southeast Europe: Creation, Transformation, and Oblivion (Central European University, Budapest, March 8-10, 2012)

Dani Stjepana Gunjače II (MHAS, Split, October 17-21, 2011)

International Medieval Congress (Institute for Medieval Studies, Leeds, July 11-14, 2011)

Saintly Bishops and Bishops' Saints. A symposium co-organized by the *Croatian Hagiography Society "Hagiotheca"* and *International Hagiography Society* (Episcopal palace, Poreč May 27-30, 2010)

„Sailing to Byzantium" II. Postgraduate Forum in Byzantine Studies (Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, May 15-16, 2008

European Symposium on Saint Martin of Tours: Slovenia and Central European Countries on St. Martin's Trail (Slovenska Bistrica, October 11-13, 2007).

Selection of works published related to the topic of the dissertation (2007-present)

– "*Memoria S. Chrysogoni*: between the legend on the Transfer of Relics and the Ownership over Monastic Land)". In: T*owns and Cities of the Croatian Middle Ages: Authority and Property*. Ed. Irena Benyovsky Latin and Zrinka Pešorda Vardić. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest/ Croatian Institute of History, 2014, 509-534.

– "O podrijetlu i najranijem kultu zadarskog zaštitnika sv. Krševana (The Origin and Early Cult of St Chrysogonus, the Patron Saint of Zadar." *Ars Adriatica* 4 (2014): 29-42.

– "Nekoliko opažanja o začetcima štovanja sv. Krševana u Dalmaciji u ranome srednjem vijeku (Notes on the beginnings of the cult of St Chrysogonus in Dlamatia in the Early Middle Ages)." In: *Spalatumque dedit ortum.* Ed. Ivan Basić – Marko Rimac. Split: Odsjek za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 2014, 145-170.

– "Po čemu je u 9. stoljeću rotonda sv. Trojstva u Zadru mogla sličiti crkvi sv. Anastazije u Carigradu? (In what manner did the ninth-century Zadar rotund of the Holy Trinity resemble the church of St. Anastasia in Constantinople?)." In: Proceedings of the Conference *„Stjepan Gunjača and Croatian medeival historical and archeological heritage"* (Split, October 18-21, 2011). Ed. Tomislav Šeparović. Split: MHAS, 2012, 63-79.

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– "'Frankish' or 'Byzantine' saint? The origins of the cult of St. Martin in Dalmatia." In: *Papers from the First and Second Postgraduate Forums in Byzantine Studies:* Sailing to Byzantium, *Trinity College Dublin, 16-17 April 2007 and 15-16 May 2008.*, 219-248. Ed. Savvas Neocleous. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.

– "*Historia Translationis S. Anastasiae*: kako (ne) čitati hagiografski tekst? (*Historia Translationis S. Anastasiae*: How not to read a hagiographic text)" In: *Hagiologija: kultovi u kontekstu,* 39-58. Eds. Ana Marinković – Trpimir Vedriš. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008.

– "Štovanje sv. Anastazije u Sirmiju, Carigradu i Rimu u kasnoj antici i ranome srednjem vijeku (The Cult of St. Anastasia in Sirmium, Constantinople and Rome in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages)." *Diadora* 22 (2007): 191-216.