

## SOME REMARKS ON MEDIEVAL CROATIAN PILGRIMAGES\*

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*The author gives an overview of the Medieval Croatian pilgrimages from the first mention in the 9th to the beginning of the 16th century.*

*The study takes in consideration general description of the Catholic peregrinating phenomenon on the local church for numerous participants and necessary structure: assistance and services like hospices and protection, confessors, songs, penance services, many vows and different devotions.*

*The historical data of the creativity and exemplarity of Croatian pilgrims greatly inspired Dante Alighieri in his »Divina Comedia«. The minor literats in the Medieval and Renaissance patrimony also knew the Croatian pilgrims as the French writer Michel Eyquem de Montaigne mentions in the middle of the 16th century Croatian pilgrims in Loreto.*

Perhaps the most famous mention of pilgrims in medieval literature is that by Dante in Divine Comedy where he devided pilgrims according to the destination in three groups: *romei, palmieri and pelegrini*.

Less known, but for the researcher of Croatian medieval pilgrimages of equal importance, is Dante's mention of pilgrims from Croatia in Divine Comedy:

*»As when a pilgrim from a distant land,*

*Perhaps from far Croatia, comes to Rome*

*To see the veil of Saint Veronica« (Paradise, XXXI)<sup>1</sup>*

recording on that way centuries long tradition of piety and pilgrimage practice. Four centuries before Dante's verses, in ninth century, first pilgrim from Croatia was mentioned in the sources. The Ragusan chronicle Dinko Ranjina in *Anali di Ragusa* has described the

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<sup>1</sup> Dante ALIGHIERI, *The Divine Comedy*, The Folio Society, London 1979., p. 453.

votive pilgrimage of priest Ivan to Jerusalem in 843.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the same century the names of several Croatian nobles have been marked in the evangeliarium from Cividale in Italy (duke Trpimir, Branimir, Petar, Marija, Dragovid, Presila, son of Trpimir Petar and later duke Branimir). First Croatian pilgrims were the members of the ruling families and their suite, and the members of clergy. Unfortunately, as far as the lower strata of society are concerned early medieval sources do not contain information on pilgrimages. The process of Christianization of *populus* in Croatian hinterland, hardly approachable mountain area, has started just century ago and went slowly being much less successful than Christianization of nobility.

During the following centuries the number of pilgrims from Croatia increased. From the end of the thirteenth century the pilgrims from all strata of Croatian medieval society are mentioned in the sources. Illustrative is, in that respect, the request written to Pope Martin the V<sup>th</sup> in 1419. In the document is written: »*Cum ad Urbem, causa peregrinationis et aliis, quamplures concurrant de partibus Ungariae et Sclavoniae laici et alii utriusque sexus christiani*« and there are not confessors »*qui linguas, videlicet Ungaricam et Sclavonicam, intelligeret.*« Wishing to solve that problem it is proposed Benedictin monk *Thomas filius Andree* to be confessor for Hungarians and Croats pilgrimaging to Rome since *he »linguas et ydiomata predicta intelligit et intelligibiliter ac etiam talicum loquitur ...«.*<sup>3</sup> Process of democratization of pilgrimages (i. e. spreading of the practice of pilgrimaging in all levels of society), characteristic of Western and Central Europe at that time, is especially documented in last wills of the citizens of medieval communities in Dalmatia. Numerous last wills from the end of thirteenth through fourteenth and fifteenth centuries present grateful material especially for statistic research in the field of social and religious history. However, for most of Dalmatian towns, except Zadar and Šibenik, researches of medieval pilgrimages have not yet been done.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, according to information from last wills, 103 persons have pilgrimaged from Zadar to different pilgrimage shrines in Western and Southern Europe and in Asia Minor. Most popular destination of the pilgrims from Zadar was Rome i. e. *limina apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, followed by St Jacob in Compostela (19), and Jerusalem (12), at that time the most famous pilgrimage centers in Europe.<sup>4</sup> From Šibenik in the period of 15 years in the second half of the fifteenth century 68 pilgrims have travelled to the same pilgrimage centers.<sup>5</sup> First preliminary research of documents

<sup>2</sup> PERIČIĆ, E., *Vijesti o najstarijim hrvatskim hodočašćima*, in: Zbornik radova Trećeg hrvatskog mariološkog simpozija »Naša prošteništa i Crkva na putu«, uredio A. Rebić, Zagreb 1985., p. 550.

<sup>3</sup> Povijesni spomenici zagrebačke biskupije, sv. V, 1395.–1420., skupio i priredio A. Lukinović, Zagreb 1992., p. 579. It is worth to mention that this document, once more, proves the theory about bilinguality in the area of the Northern Croatia and Southern Hungary.

<sup>4</sup> LADIĆ, Z., *Prilog proučavanju hodočašćenja iz Zadra u drugoj polovici 14. stoljeća*, in: *Croatica Christiana Periodica*, 32, XVII, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> KOLANOVIĆ, J., *Prilog povijesti šibenskih hodočašća u kasnom srednjem vijeku*, in: *Croatica Christiana Periodica*, VI, Zagreb 1982., p. 27.

from Dubrovnik and Kotor in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries shows that pilgrimaging was customary pious habit of citizens of these cities as well.

Besides the above mentioned *loca sanctissima* pilgrims from Croatia have pilgrimaged to numerous interregional and regional pilgrimage shrines, especially in neighboring Italy: to Assisi in the church of Our Lady de Angelis (sheltering the chapel of the Porciuncula), to Bari in the church of St Nicholas, to Pesaro, in the church of St Michael on the Mount Gargano, in the church of St Mary in Calena, but also much further to the monastery of St Catherine on the Mount Sinai and to church of St Anthony in Vienna and in France.

In the last wills two types of pilgrimage are usually mentioned: legatory and personal one. If pilgrimage was legatory, what was not rarely since testators often redacted their wills on deathbed, usually the amount of money to be given for pilgrimage was precisely marked by notary. E. g. citizen of Kotor Franciscus Marci Basillii bequeathed 20 yperpers *quod dentur uni homini, qui vadat Romam*.<sup>6</sup> Persons pilgrimaging instead of testators were usually members of clergy, seldom friends and acquaintances and in some cases even former slaves or servants. E. g. Goyslaua *uxor quondam Petri Bogdani Negomire* from Dubrovnik giving freedom to her *ancilla ab omni vinculo servitutis* requested then that *ipsa Deua vadat pro anima* (Goyslaue op. a.) *Assisium*.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the fact that most of the medieval pilgrims pilgrimaged once in their life-time the travels were often organized so that pilgrims could visit several centers during the journey. There is one beautiful example from Zadar when Maria *Iadratina* redacted her will after decision to visit *limina beatorum apostolorum Petri, Pauli et Jacobi de Galicia*.<sup>8</sup> Scholars have already pointed out that in the Middle Ages return was not considered as important moment of pilgrimage since it was experienced as »monodrama in three acts: departure, journey, and stay in the holy place«,<sup>9</sup> and to dye on the places situated close to the shrines of the saints, near to *loca sacra*, was considered as helpfull for the redemption of the soul.

What were the routes that pilgrims from Croatia used to reach various pilgrimage centers? The factor which to a great extent eased pilgrimaging from Croatia was the closeness of sea. As far as Italian shrines are concerned they were relatively easily reached since the naval communications between the cities on the East and West coasts of Adriatic sea were considerably developed during the entire Middle Ages. Numerous contracts between Senj, Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, Kotor and the other East Adriatic cities on the one side and Venice, Ancona and Bari on the other side of Adriatic confirm intensive sea-trade relationships, especially in the Late Middle Ages. When pilgrimaging from Croatia to Rome or Assisi pilgrims were using this developed and for a long time existed sea routes. To distant pilgrimage centers such as St Jacob in Compostela, Jerusalem or St Catherine on the

<sup>6</sup> MAYER, A., *Kotorski spomenici (Monumenta Catarsensia)*, vol. I, Zagreb 1951., pp. 257-258.

<sup>7</sup> LUČIĆ, J., *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije (Monumenta historica ragusina)*, knj. IV, zapisi notara Andrije Beneše 1295.-1301, testamenta 1295.-1301., Zagreb 1993., p. 345.

<sup>8</sup> ZJACIĆ, M., *Spisi zadarskih bilježnika Henrika i Creste Tarallo 1279-1308*, Zadar 1959., p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> ŠANJEK, F., *Crkva i kršćanstvo u Hrvata. Srednji vijek*, Zagreb 1993., p. 353.

Mount Sinai, pilgrims from Croatia travelled, after landing in the port of Venice, Barcelona or Jaffa, by using well known network of pilgrimage routes in continental Europe and Asia Minor.

On the basis of travel-books and diaries written by European, pilgrims travelling and describing land, people and customs on the East coast of Adriatic sea it is possible to reconstruct the network of sea and land routes used by Croatian pilgrims travelling to Holy Land and surrounding areas. When pilgrimaging from Dalmatian cities pilgrims have stopped in several important stations in order to restore the supplies of the food and drink. Most important stations on the East coast of Adriatic sea were: Pula, Senj, Šibenik, Zadar, Split, Hvar, Dubrovnik, Kotor and Albanian port Drač. Great importance of East Adriatic communities as a trade and pilgrimage centers frequently visited by the foreigners has resulted in foundation of numerous hospitals starting from the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>10</sup> E. g. first hospital in Dubrovnik was established as a private and civil foundation in the thirteenth century, and in the 1347 the decision to build hospital supported by state was made.<sup>11</sup> The care about the pilgrims and the other travellers, is also reflected in the decrees: of the statute laws of few cities: Zadar (in statute law from 1448) and Split and Senj (in statute laws from 1388). Besides secular there were also church institutions being especially defined to give accommodation for the pilgrims and the other travellers. The pilgrims could find the place for overnight in numerous Benedictine monasteries in coastal as well as in continental Croatia. One of the important charitable function of Benedictine monks was taking care for the travellers and poor. Also, there were numerous Hospitaller's and Templar's monasteries having as a main task »defense of the roads and travellers-pilgrims and crusaders on the roads«.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the hospitals giving accommodation to pilgrims from all European nations there were special institutions – institutes and consulates giving services to the members of only one nation. When travelling to Jerusalem, pilgrims from Croatia could find accommodation in consulate of the Republic of Dubrovnik or by Croatian Franciscans already from the end of the fourteenth century. Similar function in Rome had College of St Jerome whose foundation is, partly, a consequence of the increasing number of pilgrims from Croatia *ad limina apostolorum* towards the end of the Middle Ages. The College has got the name according to widespread conviction in that time about the Slavic origin of St Jerome who has been considered as »protector and incorporator of Croatian literature«.<sup>13</sup> Request for foundation of the college was delivered to Pope Nicholas the V<sup>th</sup> in 1451 and argued: »In the City (i. e. Rome) there are numerous hotels

<sup>10</sup> KARBIĆ, D., *Marginalne grupe u hrvatskim srednjovjekovnim društvima od druge polovine XIII. do početka XVI. stoljeća*, in: *Historijski zbornik*, god. XLIV(1), pp. 63–73.

<sup>11</sup> KREKIĆ, B., *Dubrovnik in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century; A City Between East and West*, University of Oklahoma Press 1972., p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> DOBRONIĆ, L., *Viteški redovi. Templari i Ivanovci u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb 1984., p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> KATIČIĆ, R., *Ustanove sv. Jeronima u Rimu i povijest hrvatske kulture i narodnosti*, in: *Homo imago et amicus Dei (Čovjek slika i prijatelj Božji)*, Zbornik u čast Ivana Goluba, priredio R. Perić, Papinski Hrvatski zavod svetog Jeronima, Rim 1991., p. 379.

belonging to various nations but Slavic and Dalmatian nation does not have its hotel.<sup>14</sup> One of the most popular pilgrimage destination of the pilgrims from Croatia in Middle Ages (and it is up to our days) was Loreto. Religious ties that connect Croatian pilgrims to Loreto have their roots in the medieval legend according to which the Nazareth house so-called *Santa casa* was brought from Trsat in Croatia to Loreto in Italy in 1294. Originally, *Santa casa* was brought to Trsat after the fall of Holy Land to Seldjucs. The legend, telling about transportation of Nazareth house on the wings of angels, seems to have historical background since recent archeological excavations show that some of the stones built in the walls of the church in Loreto have been brought from Holy Land after the fall of the fort Acre 1291. The knights retreating from the Holy Land took the stones and when travelling by the East Adriatic coast stopped near Rijeka. For some reason the stones were brought to Trsat and after being there for three years transported for short to Recanati in Italy and finally to Loreto. Soon Loreto became local and from sixteenth century international pilgrimage center.

Pilgrimage to Loreto frequently and in great number, especially from the period of Renaissance, pilgrims from Croatia became ones more recorded in the literature. French renaissance writer Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-1592) describing the behavior of pilgrims from Croatia in Loreto wrote: »(they) are saying so much of reproach and votive to Mother of God wishing her to return to them; they regret so repentant they gave her opportunity to leave them that it is wonderful«.<sup>15</sup>

#### Sažetak

##### *Zabilješke o hrvatskim srednjovjekovnim hodočašćima*

*U radu autor iznosi sažeti pregled povijesti hrvatskih hodočašća od prvih spomena u 9. stoljeću do početka 16. stoljeća. U radu su korišteni poznati podaci kojima su se služili neki naši povjesničari, npr. spomen hrvatskih hodočasnika u Danteovoj »Božanskoj komediji«, ali i manje poznati podaci o spomenu hrvatskih hodočasnika u srednjovjekovnoj i renesansnoj literaturi, npr. spomen hrvatskih hodočasnika u Loretu sredinom 16. stoljeća zabilježen od francuskog pisca Michela Eyquema de Montaignea.*

*Prvi spomeni Hrvata kao hodočasnika odnose se na društvenu elitu – hrvatske kneževe Trpimira, Branimira, pripadnike njihovih obitelji i njihove pratnje, te svećenstva. No, kao i u ostalim europskim zemljama, i u Hrvatskoj dolazi do tzv. demokratizacije hodočasništva pa se od kraja 13. stoljeća u izvorima nalaze podaci o običnim ljudima, građanima i seljacima, koji odlaze na*

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> TOMASOVIĆ, M., *Montaigne o hrvatskim hodočasniciima u Loretu i trgovcima u Anconi*, in: *Mogućnosti*, god. XLI, br. 4-6, Split 1994., p.120.

*hodočašća u Rim, Jeruzalem, Santiago de Compostelu i niz drugih manjih hodočasničkih središta. Nekada su vrlo rijetki pojedinci imali privilegiju stjecati sve blagodati koje su ova »loca sancta« davala ljudima, a od kraja 13. stoljeća, te osobito od 1300. kada je proglašena prva Jubilarna godina, sve prednosti hodočašća mogli su uživati pripadnici svih slojeva društva. Na temelju objavljenih i neobjavljenih izvora autor je izložio i određene kvantitativne rezultate koji pokazuju pravce hodočašća, broj hodočasnika, udio muških i ženskih hodočasnika itd. Kako se srednji vijek bližio kraju tako je i broj hodočasnika iz dalmatinskih komuna (Zadra, Šibenika, Dubrovnika) te iz hrvatskog zaleđa i Slavonije rastao. Zato i ne začuđuje da se u jednom dokumentu iz 1419. godine moli papu Martina V. da postavi za ispovjednika u Rimu benediktinca Tomu za Hrvate i Mađare koji u velikom broju dolaze u Rim iz hodočasničkih i drugih razloga. U molbi se navodi da Toma »linguas et ydiomata predicta intelligit et intelligibiliter ac eciam talicum loquitur ...«.*

*Autor nadalje napominje da su za spoznaju hodočasništva u Hrvatskoj veliki utjecaj imali samostani Templara i Ivanovaca, redova kojima je jedna od zadaća bila i zaštita hodočasnika na putovima. Pridodamo li tome i činjenicu da je u svakoj dalmatinskoj komuni postojao hospital koji je, osim za prihvata bolesnih i siromašnih, služio i kao prenočište putnicima i hodočascima možemo reći da je kultura odnošenja i spoznaja hodočasnika bila prilično razvijena u srednjovjekovnoj Hrvatskoj. Uostalom, to nam potvrđuju i mnogobrojni dnevници, pisani od više ili manje zadovoljnih putnika i hodočasnika na putu kroz naše krajeve.*