

THE POWER OF WORD: PREACHERS IN MEDIEVAL DUBROVNIK

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ABSTRACT: In the pastoral of the Franciscan and Dominican orders preaching became the principal task of their mission. Preaching manuals represented the basis of the new art. The preachers also used sermon collections, Bible concordances and *exempla* collections. Franciscan and Dominican preachers spread out among the faithful, paying special attention to the communicative dimension of sermon. Thus they opened new ways of piety to the laity and gave them a new place in the Church. The library of the Dominican Friary and partly that of the Franciscans in Dubrovnik house a number of medieval preaching manuals, whose message may also be traced in the Ragusan wills of the day.

Keywords: Middle Ages, preaching, Dominicans, Franciscans, Dubrovnik

The act of sermon in the Middle Ages implied a contact between two cultures: the learned and written clerical culture on the one, and the lay and oral popular tradition on the other side. A sermon translated the word of God and its theological interpretation into the language and cognitive categories of the laity. Hence one of the famous medieval preachers, Jacques de Vitry, referred to the clerics

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as “the book of the laity”.¹ In the pastoral of the Franciscans and Dominicans sermon was the principal purpose of their spiritual mission—sermon and a life of mendicity were in the focus of their wide-reaching religious venture. As the first postulate of their mission, St. Dominic commended continuous learning and in-depth understanding of the Holy Scripture, along with the knowledge of theology not for the sake of one’s own accomplishment but for the purpose of the religious teaching of the people. He, too, “with zeal and thirst” devoted himself fervently to preaching and encouraged his bretheren to spread the word of God in churches and houses, on roads and in the fields, and to always speak of God.² Dominican teachers, such as Humbert de Romans, believed that sermon stemmed from the word of God itself, and extolled their own communication of the Holy Scripture to the thoughts and feelings of the laity.³ That is why preaching was considered a special grace that was not bestowed upon everyone, and not every person could be called upon to spread the word of God. Authorised to preach could be only those chosen by the order’s assembly, after a careful deliberation of their competence, monastic life and preaching capacity.⁴

Ars praedicandi developed as one of the rhetoric genres under the influence of a number of disciplines. The new art partly emerged from the university, particularly with regard to rhetoric and scholastic method, which in the sermons manifested in a systematic theme analysis, definitions, semantic distinctions and the leaning on the authorities.⁵ The basis of the new art of preaching was

¹ Monika Sandor, »Jacques de Vitry—Bibliography«, in: *De l’homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d’études médiévales de l’Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: p. 56.

² Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu, »Des histoires et des images au service de la prédication. La *Scala coeli* de Jan Gobi Junior († 1350)«, in: *De l’homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d’études médiévales de l’Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: p. 280.

³ Beverly Mayne Kienzle, »The typology of the medieval sermon and its development in the Middle Ages«, in: *De l’homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d’études médiévales de l’Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: pp. 84-85; André Vauchez, »The pastoral transformation of the thirteenth century«, in: *The laity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein. London: Notre Dame, 1993: pp. 102-103; Simon Tugwell, O. P., »De huiusmodi sermonibus textitur omnis recta predicatio. Changing attitudes towards the Word of God«, in: *De l’homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d’études médiévales de l’Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: pp. 159-160.

⁴ Guy Bedouelle, *Dominik ili dar riječi*. Zagreb: Dominikanski provincijalat; Globus, 1990: pp. 84-97.

⁵ Bratislav Lučin, »Generičke značajke propovijedi Marka Marulića o Kristovu posljednjem sudu«. *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994): pp. 73-76.

exposed in the *Artes praedicandi*, especially popular among the Dominicans, starting with *De eruditione praedicatorum*, written by Humbert de Romans, the general of the order (c. 1200-1277). Additionally, the preachers had a variety of manuals they could consult. By the beginning of the sixteenth century some three hundred manuals emerged, from theoretical treatises on preaching to the collections of sermons, Bible concordances and *Exempla*. Namely, due to wide use, the examples of moralising anecdotes from the lives of saints, but also from oral tradition and everyday life were written down and circulated as separate collections.⁶

Medieval preachers were aware of the communication problem and tried to make the most of it. The faithful multitude embraced diverse educated and uneducated groups and individuals. With an aim of truly communicating the message to the audience, the preachers tried to make their speech understandable to all, in which the *Exempla* proved of great assistance. The examples were clear, persuasive, easily remembered and related to popular culture, and thus appealed to the public. That is why they became most essential for the so-called *sermones vulgares*, even more important than the Holy Scripture itself. The preachers used them in order to breathe life into their messages and attract the public's attention. Through metaphors they connected them with a desired theological and moral message and could thus better support their argumentation so as to stir and inspire the audience.⁷ The oral medium itself also contributed to the simplification of the Christian message, for it requires single-meaning messages that are easily remembered. That is why the language of preaching is simple and direct, amusing even—*sermo iocosus et graciosus* being preferable. One should bear in mind that the extant materials are but a fragmentary reflection of the live sermons of the Middle Ages, so that on the power of the preacher's spoken word we may judge merely on the basis of the written fruit it has borne. It should be noted that the preachers used the language of the faithful when

⁶ Humbertus de Romans, »De eruditione praedicatorum«, in: *Opera de vita regulari*, vol. II, ed. Joachim Joseph Berthier. Torino: Marietti, 1956: pp. 373-484; Thomas Falmagne, »Les instruments de travail d'un prédicateur cistercien«, in: *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d'études médiévales de l'Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: pp. 187-216; M. A. Polo de Beaulieu, »Des histoires et des images au service de la prédication«: p. 279; Clifford Hugh Lawrence, *The Friars. The impact of the early mendicant movement on Western Society*. London-New York: Longman, 1994: p. 120.

⁷ David L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars. Sermons Diffused from Paris Before 1300*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985: pp. 132-179; C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars*: pp. 120-121; M. A. Polo de Beaulieu, »Des histoires et des images au service de la prédication«: pp. 280-282.

delivering them a sermon. Sermon collections and other manuals were mainly written in Latin, but spoken word was conveyed in the living tongues, too. According to a decision of the Dominican order from 1236, no one could be ordained unless he knew the language of the area where he was to carry out his mission. Croatian also found its place among the languages of evangelisation. It was used by the Dominicans who preached in the Dalmatian Province and defended by them in the Church.⁸ The Franciscans were also known for their fostering of the spoken preacher's word, although they attached less importance to knowledge and study in favour of emotion and piety, in accordance with the teaching of St. Francis. Both orders were deeply immersed in social reality where they wished to act. Their sermons were not only focused on "the first and last things" but also tended to tackle actual problems of the society and individuals. Many famous preachers of the Middle Ages addressed social conflicts, the questions of social peace and order and the like. This kind of engagement may be found among Croatian preachers. During his studies in Bologne, Thomas the Archdeacon listened to St. Francis himself, who, out in the square, in front of the city palace, spoke about angels, people and evil spirits. On this he says: "he preached so well and clearly... that many scholars, who were present there, greatly admired the speech of a simple man. He, namely, did not perform as a preacher but as a speaker in an assembly. The whole content of his words was targeted at the extinction of animosity and reinforcement of peace negotiations. His robe was dirty, his appearance worthy of contempt, and his face ugly. But God had bestowed his words with such effectiveness that many a noble family bitterly feuding and shedding blood for years was brought to truce. People felt such respect towards him and loyalty that men and women swarmed to at least touch the fringe on his robe or take a shred of his rags." Thomas relates about friar Girardo of Modena, whose kind words soothed and brought peace between the people of Split and Trogir.⁹

⁸ Stjepan Krasić, *Dominikanci: povijest Reda u hrvatskim krajevima*. Zagreb: Globus, 1997: p. 43; Idem, »Regesti pisama generala dominikanskog reda poslanih u Hrvatsku (1392-1600)«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 21-22 (1978-1979): p. 276; Franjo Šanjek, *Dominikanci i Hrvati: osam stoljeća zajedništva: (13.-21. stoljeće)*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, Dominikanska naklada Istina, 2008: pp. 105-106, 108.

⁹ Toma Arhidakon, *Historia Salonitana. Povijest salonitanskih i splitskih prvosvećenika*, trans. Olga Perić, com. Mirjana Matijević Sokol. Split: Književni krug, 2003: pp. 152-155, 270-271. Cf. David Herlihy, »Santa Caterina and San Bernardino. Their Teachings on the Family«, in: *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe. Historical Essays, 1978-1991*, ed. David Herlihy, Anthony Molho. Providence-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995: pp. 188-189.

A source pertaining to late fifteenth-century Dubrovnik contributes indirectly to the question of sermon reception. Apparently, Pietro Casola, a Milanese canon, who, en route to the Holy Land, stopped in Dubrovnik in 1494, mentioned the sermon of a Franciscan friar he had heard there, and who impressed him so much that he organised to meet him over lunch at the Franciscan Monastery. Fra Francesco preached about an episode when Jesus appeared in Simon's barque, pleading to be taken ashore. Through this tale he tried to say to the faithful that their life and their faith were like a barque, and that those who wished to be redeemed would have to go on board the barque with Christ. From the standpoint of a learned cleric, Casola concluded that the audience benefitted little from this sermon, since only a few were able to grasp the actual story either because of the language or the content. He particularly underlined that the church was full of women who most certainly understood nothing. This comment aside, the Franciscan had obviously accomplished the desired effect, for it is mentioned that the audience was most satisfied and that he was amply rewarded. The zealous sermon induced the emotions and piety even with those who did not understand Italian.¹⁰

The primary task of medieval sermons was not to analyse the holy texts, but to arouse emotional reactions that would urge the faithful towards deeper belief and life in virtue. The preachers' primary concern was not whether their flock understood the Holy Scripture or other authorities, but to accept Christianity on the emotional level and in pious practice, especially in the sacraments.¹¹ It was believed that true piety stemmed from emotional experience and not intellectual understanding. This view was anchored in a belief in the beneficence of the word of God and sermon, which is not even dependent on understanding. Some preaching manuals objected to those who preferred to select a text that suited the liturgical nature, but was useless in terms of stimulating the audience to a moral life.¹² By going out into the squares and town streets, and by approaching the people through content and theme, the preachers opened new paths of piety to the laity and gave them a new place in the Church. They focused on the people's real life, the result of which were the *sermones ad status*, targeted at particular social groups: women, merchants, servants, knights and others.

¹⁰ Pietro Casola, *Viaggio a Gerusalemme*, ed. Anna Paoletti. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2001: pp. 129-131; *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in the year 1494*, ed. Margaret Newett. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1907: p. 172-179; Pietro Casola, »Ragusa nel 1494« . *L'Epidauritano, lunario raguseo* (1907-1908): pp. 61-62.

¹¹ S. Tugwell, O. P., »De huiusmodi sermonibus textitur omnis recta predicatio«: p. 104.

¹² S. Tugwell, O. P., »De huiusmodi sermonibus textitur omnis recta predicatio«: pp. 161-166.

Through this, new possibilities of deep Christian meaning were attached to a layman's life. Inspired by the activity of the preachers, the laymen accepted new forms of religious life by organising into mendicant fraternities and into the Third Franciscan order. The Franciscans and Dominicans offered a new theology of the laity, because of which they often came into conflict with the monastic orders and secular prelates.¹³

With regard to theme, the sermons mainly followed the friars' *zelus animarum*. The sermons delivered during Lent were to arouse thoughts of the passion of Christ and the cross, to remind the faithful of the "whip of sin", and to urge upon repentance, humbleness, charity, reconciliation with the fellow-men, confession of sins and penitence. The sermons, notably those during Lent, but also others, often resembled a collective examination of consciousness. Then it is no surprise that preaching came to be directly connected to confession as an important part of the Franciscan and Dominican pastoral mission. An obvious similarity may be viewed between the moral of the sermon on the good and evil presented through the good and evil acts, as well as the list of sins and repentances contained in the Penitentials. This accounts for such a large number of Lenten sermon collections that prepared the faithful for Easter and the obligatory Easter confession, in compliance with canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Omnis utriusque sexus*. The founders of the orders of preachers warned the brethren to urge the people to penitence and yearly confession, which their successors exercised with great zeal. In the very approach to confession the friars departed from the old "tariff-based" penitences and tended to focus on the real man and his life conditions, including the sin. In this part of their pastoral care they used the vernacular.¹⁴

The Franciscans and Dominicans have acted in Dubrovnik since the first half of the thirteenth century.¹⁵ Both orders became very popular with the laity. The

¹³ C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars*: pp. 122-123; Roberto Rusconi, *L'ordine dei peccati. La confessione tra Medioevo ed età moderna*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002: pp. 111, 116-120; Alessandro Barbero, Chiara Frugoni, *Medioevo. Storia di voci, racconto di immagini*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999: p. 265; Th. Falmagne, »Les instruments de travail d'un prédicateur cistercien«: p. 187.

¹⁴ Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ, Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France*. New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992: pp. 84-91; R. Rusconi, *L'ordine dei peccati*: pp. 20-21, 41-47, 66-67, 105-115; Zdenka Janeković Römer, »Posrednici spasenja: Senjska Spovid općena iz 1496. godine«, in: *Sacerdotes, iudices, notarii... Posrednici među društvenim skupinama*, ed. Neven Budak. Poreč-Pazin-Pula: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Pučko otvoreno učilište Poreč-Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2007: pp. 132-137.

¹⁵ Konstantin Vojnović, »Crkva i država u dubrovačkoj republici: prvi dio«. *Rad JAZU* 119 (1894): pp. 53-54, 58.

bulk of the medieval bequests to the Church were made in favour of the Franciscans, followed by the Dominicans, and then other monasteries, churches and institutions. The same was true of the burial place: the first choice was the Franciscan and Dominican church in which the faithful listened to the word of God.¹⁶ The legend recounted by the Ragusan chronicles about Saint Francis and his visit to Dubrovnik, preaching gospel en route to Syria, is also a sign of the profound desire of the Ragusan people to correlate with the preachers.¹⁷ Filippo de Diversis in his praise of Dubrovnik mentions several preachers whom he met and listened to. He gives priority to the Ragusan archbishop Antonio da Reate, of the order of Friars Minor, who “was considered the most excellent preacher of Italy, and a very special and dearest announcer of the word of God”.¹⁸ He further mentions the Lenten sermons delivered in *Luža (Loggia)*, a fenced-in gathering place of the nobility and distinguished foreign merchants, located in the immediate vicinity of the Rector’s Palace. Throughout Lent, Dominican preaching friars delivered sermons there on Mondays and Wednesdays, and on Fridays one of the preachers of the order of Friars Minor. From the government each of them received money for the hooded robe, some even more than that, “if his sermons were more heartily accepted or if he had been of a more excellent position”.¹⁹ He also remembers the sermons he listened to at the cathedral on the feast of St. Blaise, which, most likely, were delivered by the archbishop.²⁰ He also quotes the sermons delivered

¹⁶ Zdenka Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta. Prožimanje pojavnog i transcendentnog u dubrovačkim oporukama kasnoga srednjeg vijeka«. *Otium* 2/3-4 (1994): p. 12; *Notae et acta cancellariae Ragusinae. Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije*, vol. I, ed. Gregor Čremošnik. [Monumenta historica Ragusina, vol. I]. Zagreb: Historijski institut JAZU, 1951: pp. 105-106, 144, 156, 203, 327; *Notae et acta cancellariae Ragusinae. Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije*, vol. II, ed. Josip Lučić. [Monumenta historica Ragusina, vol. 2]. Zagreb: JAZU, Centar za povijesne znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu; 1984: pp. 253-254, 307-308, 326-330, 360-361, 326-330, 331-332, 332-334; *Testamenta Notariae*, series 10.1, vol. 11, f. 134v; vol. 12, ff. 48v, 73v-74, 87v, 115v, 127; vol. 13, f. 31v; vol. 14, ff. 8, 68v, 163; vol. 16, f. 166v; vol. 17, f. 24; vol. 18, f. 133; vol. 20, ff. 101v, 156; vol. 35, ff. 88v-89v; vol. 36, ff. 102, 103 (State Archives in Dubrovnik. hereafter: SAD)

¹⁷ Konstantin Vojnović, »Državni rizničari Republike Dubrovačke«. *Rad JAZU* 127 (1896): pp. 15-16; K. Vojnović, »Crkva i država u dubrovačkoj republici: prvi dio«. pp. 53-61; Giacomo di Pietro de Luccari, *Copioso ristretto degli annali di Rausa*. Venetiis: ad instantia di Antonio Leonardi 1605: p. 36.

¹⁸ Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina in qua Ragusini scriptores eorumque gesta et scripta recensentur*, vol. II, ed. Stjepan Krasić. Zagreb: JAZU, 1980: p. 424; vol. III: pp. 3, 72, 131; Filip de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika 1440*, ed. Zdenka Janeković Römer. Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2004: pp. 86, 170-171. Cf. Stjepan Krasić and Serafino Razzi, *Povijest dubrovačke metropolije i dubrovačkih nadbiskupa*. Dubrovnik-Split: Biskupski ordinarijat, Crkva u svijetu, 1999: pp. 125-127.

¹⁹ F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 99, 179.

²⁰ F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 96, 177.

during commemoration service for the Hungarian kings Sigismund and Albert by “magister Blaise [Constantini], Doctor of Holy Scripture from the Order of Preachers”²¹ At the commemoration service held for the Ragusans, the sermons were delivered by the archbishop, “spiritual governor of the city”, or someone from the order of the Friars Minor or the Order of Preachers.²²

The library of the monastery of the Friars Minor, as well as that of the Dominicans, still house a few collections of the medieval sermons and manuals despite heavy devastation caused by fires and earthquakes over the years. The former keeps several collections of Lenten sermons and passion sermons.²³ This library also files the famous collection of the speeches of Jean de la Rochelle, professor of the Paris University and well-known preacher from the thirteenth century. Entitled *Sermones festivi et dominicales et de communi sanctorum fratri Johannis de Rupella ex Ordine Minorum*, this work arrived in Dubrovnik at the end of the fourteenth century. It contains 256 sermons of diverse content, from the veneration of saints to occasional feast sermons and those pertaining to special occasions, such as consecration of the church, consecration of the bishop, the First Holy Mass or the rite for the dead. In a copy of this book, on f. 208v one may find an entry concerning the distribution of some books among the friars: there is mention of fra Elias, fra Angelo of Arezzo, fra Nicholas from France, fra Martin from Bosnia and others. On f. 208 an entry was made describing flying flames in the sky on 8 January 1388, which were observable for a whole hour.²⁴ The Franciscan library also houses the moral and pastoral writings of St. John of Capistrano, adherent of the Observant branch of the order, in addition to other moralistic sermons.²⁵

Dominican library possesses an even larger number of sermon collections and preaching manuals, mostly brought by the friars themselves from their studies in Italy and elsewhere. In the oldest library catalogue, the one redacted by the Dominican Seraphinus Maria Cerva in 1751, under the title *Chirographoteca*,

²¹ F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 113, 188. Cf. S. M. Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina* I: pp. 192-194, 198-201, 292; II, p. 478; Franjo Šanjek, »Constantini, Blaž.« *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* 2 (1989): p. 701; Nella Lonza, »Dubrovački studenti prava u kasnom srednjem vijeku«. *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 48 (2010): p. 15.

²² F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 127, 197.

²³ Mijo Brlek, *Rukopisi knjižnice Male braće u Dubrovniku*, vol. I. Zagreb: JAZU, 1952: pp. 132, 162-163, 179, 180-181; Franciscan Library in Dubrovnik, MS. no. 447 a: ff. 557, 2082, 2083.

²⁴ M. Brlek, *Rukopisi knjižnice Male braće u Dubrovniku*: pp. 180-182.

²⁵ Franciscan Library in Dubrovnik, no. 447.

there is mention of some manuals and sermon collections that were lost in the later period. Among them is a sermon on the repentance of St. John Chrysostom, then a sermon collection for the whole church year, two copies of Sunday sermons of Antonio de Azaro from Parma with exempla, homilies on the theme of the gospel and the life of saints.²⁶ Here, too, is a collection of Lenten sermons brought to the library by Donat, son of Nicola de Georgio from Dubrovnik, a student of the Padua University, later to become the bishop of Trebinje-Mrkan (1481-1492).²⁷ Yet another collection of Lenten sermons was compiled by *Jacobus Petri de Venetiis*, O.P, which in view of content is based on the biblical prophetic texts that urge to repentance, particularly on Isaiah and Joel and the first epistle to the Corinthians of St. Paul. This copy was transcribed for Antonio da Regio, the vicar of the March of Ancona by the Dominican Bartholomeus de Gaieto, who left a note on this in the codex itself.²⁸ The sermons through the year of Hugo de Prato, along with a collection of diverse old sermons, have not been preserved.²⁹

To date, the library has preserved some fifteen medieval preaching manuals. A collection of miscellaneous sermons addressing saints, visitations, synods, consecration of churches and other themes originates from France, from the end of the thirteenth century (*Sermones communes de sanctis, in visitatione, in synodo, in consecratione virginum, in dedicatione ecclesiae, in electione*). It belonged to a Dominican, Peter from Dubrovnik, and contains his record of the prayer for his own soul.³⁰ We know that in 1343 the Minor Council granted

²⁶ Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Chirographoteca Coneobii S. Dominici de Ragusio Ordinis Praedicatorum sive codices MSS qui in bibliotheca ejusdem coenobii asservantur descripti, per materias digesti, variisque animadversionibus illustrati a Fratре Seraphino Maria Cerva Ragusino, Ordinis Praedicatorum*, MS. 1751. Knjižnica Dominikanskog samostana u Dubrovniku, sig. 34-IX-8, pp. 24-26, 46, 47, 48; Konstantin Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«. *Starine JAZU* 28 (1896): p. 17.

²⁷ S. M. Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, vol. I: pp. 194, 199, 292-295; II: p. 128; Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. II. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2012: pp. 247-248.

²⁸ S. M. Cerva, *Chirographoteca*: p. 48; *Codex diplomaticus domini temporalis Sanctae Sedis: recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire du gouvernement temporel des états du Saint-Siège, extraits des archives du Vatican*, vol. III, ed. Augustin Theiner. Rome: Imprimerie du Vatican, 1862: pp. 326-329; Thomas Kaepfeli, O. P, Hugues Vincent Shooner, O.P, *Les manuscrits médiévaux de Saint-Dominique de Dubrovnik. Catalogue sommaire*. [Institutum historicum fratrum praedicatorum Romae ad S. Sabinae, Dissertationes historicae, vol. XVII]. Rome: Sainte-Sabine, 1965: p. 24; Johannes Baptist Schneyer, »Winke für die Sichtung und Zuordnung spätmittelalterlicher lateinischer Predigtreden«. *Scriptorium* 32 (1978), no. 22.

²⁹ S. M. Cerva, *Chirographoteca*: p. 50.

³⁰ Th. Kaepfeli - H. V. Shooner, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: p. 80, no. 54.

him a bursary for his studies abroad.³¹ Later, inscribed as the book's owner was the Dominican Chrysostom.³² Several codexes containing the sermons through the year date from the fourteenth century, e.g. *Sermones super epistulas dominicales* by Dimalducius de Forlivio, *Sermones de tempore* by Jacobus de Voragine, O. P., and *Gilberti Sermonum super Cantica Canticorum*. Also extant are several works from the fifteenth and sixteenth century.³³ Dominican friary in Gruž housed a number of sermon collections. The manuscript *Sermones selecti de sanctis et festis* containing the sermons of Antonio of Parma, O.P. and Jacobus de Voragine, O.P. is worthy of attention. In the manuscript itself it was written that it belonged to the monastery of the Holy Cross in Gruž. The monastery also housed a codex with Sunday sermons through the whole year, sermons for the days and feasts commemorating and celebrating saints and for the rites for the dead, dating from the fourteenth century.³⁴ The majority of codexes includes Lent sermons and meditations on the passion of Christ. In one of these manuscripts, an Italian codex from the fifteenth century, there is record that it belonged to the Dominican Sylvester from Dubrovnik, who left a note in it about his ordination and the loyalty he promised to the order. Also mentioned are the sermons pertaining to the Annunciation and Incarnation, Advent, Ash Wednesday, rites for the dead.³⁵ One collection of Lenten sermons was penned by several famous authors: Alexander of Hales, Aristotle, Bonaventura, Galfredus, Hostiensis, Franciscus de Mayronis, Thomas Aquinas and others. Yet another collection of Lenten sermons from the fifteenth century owes its compilation to Leonardo de Dati, O.P., from Florence.³⁶ The library also houses printed sermon collections, such as *Sermo super Cantica canticorum* by Gilbert from Holland, Savonarola's treatise on prayer, together with the sermons of St. Augustine.³⁷ Of

³¹ *Monumenta Ragusina. Libri reformationum*, ed. Josephus Gelcich. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, vol. IX]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1879: p. 145.

³² S. M. Cerva, *Chirographoteca*: p. 50.

³³ K. Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«: p. 40; Th. Kaeppli - H. V. Shooner, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: p. 75, no. 43; p. 80, no. 53; p. 97, no. 81.

³⁴ K. Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«: p. 6; Th. Kaeppli - H. V. Shooner, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: p. 83, no. 59; p. 91, no. 72; p. 89, no. 70.

³⁵ S. M. Cerva, *Chirographoteca*: p. 48; Th. Kaeppli - H. V. Shooner, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: p. 86, no. 65.

³⁶ Th. Kaeppli - H. V. Shooner, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: p. 89, no. 70; p. 93, no. 76.

³⁷ Gilbertus de Hoilandia, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*. Firenze: Nicolaus Laurentii Alamanus, 1481; Girolamo Savonarola, *Tractato vero sermone della oratione composto da frate Hyeronimo da Ferrara*. Firenze: Bartolommeo di Libri, 1492; *Sermones sancti Augustini de tempore*. Basel: Johannes Amerbach, 1495; K. Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«: pp. 40, 42, 43.

the preaching manuals, the library keeps the *Compendium figurarum Bibliae* by Augustinian Antonio Rampegolus *de Janua*, dated fourteenth to fifteenth century, *Legenda sive de vitis sanctorum* by Jacobus de Voragine, meditations of St. Remigius, the archbishop of Reims, on the epistles of St. Paul, etc.³⁸

The sermons written by the Ragusan authors from the sixteenth century, adorned with humanistic ornamentation, are particularly appealing. The sermons of the Dominican Blaise de Gozze from 1556, written in Latin, “in an elegant and erudite style”, as Cerva comments it, embrace the Lent and Easter period of the liturgical year. At the end, Gozze invoked God’s blessing upon the city of Dubrovnik, its government, merchants, craftsmen and travellers, and said a prayer for his city to be freed from “the slavery of the dishonourable enemies of Christianity”, and for the Ragusan ships to be protected from any harm.³⁹ Clement de Ragnina, also a Dominican, left a collection of sermons printed under the titles *Quodlibet declamatorium* and *Sacri sermones*. The sermons are based on Sunday gospels from Advent to Easter, and speak of sin, virtue, conversion, embodiment, the Assumption of Virgin Mary, second arrival and on moral issues. His work *Expositio super epistolam s. Pauli ad Romanos* is also extant, and is kept at the Dominican library in Dubrovnik.⁴⁰ In addition, the name of Dominic Buchia, originally from Kotor, is linked to the Dominican

³⁸ K. Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«: pp. 3, 5; Th. Kaeppli - H. V. Shoener, *Les manuscrits médiévaux*: pp.76-77.

³⁹ M. Brlek, *Rukopisi knjižnice Male braće u Dubrovniku*: pp. 273-274; S. M. Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, vol. I: pp. 194, 197-199; Sebastijan Slade, *Fasti litterario Ragusini. Dubrovačka književna kronika*, ed. Pavao Knezović. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001: pp. 97, 175.

⁴⁰ Clemens de Ragnina, *Quodlibet declamatorium cum suis figuris et attestationibus ex sacris literis, perutile verbi dei declamatoribus, in tribus libris distinctum, cum tabula ordinata in secundo libro, dierum communiter praedicabilium, additis etiam proprijs tabulis totam substantiam pro quolibet sermone continentibus nec non his adiuncta, quorundam sermonum magis utilium ex sancto Vincentio annotatione tabulari, venerabilis patris fratris Clementis Aranei de Ragusio ordinis praedicatorum congregationis Ragusinae de obseruantia, verbi Dei declamatoris*, Venetiis, 1541; Idem, *Sacri sermones r.p.f. Clementis Aranei Ragusei, Ordinis praedicatorum. Pro diebus festis i prima Dominica Adventus usque cineres et subinde per omnes ferias quadragesimae, usque ad tertiam feriam Paschae. ... Sermo meus et praedicatio mea, non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione Spiritus et virtutis. I ad Cor. c2*, Brescia, 1586; Idem, *Expositio fratris Clementis Aranei Ragusini Ordinis Praedicatorum cum resolutionibus occurrentium dubiorum etiam Lutheranorum errores confutantium secundum subjectam materiam super Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos per modum lectionis*, Venetiis, 1547; S. M. Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina I*: pp. 62-63, 118, 135, 214, 243; II: pp. 73, 347, 356, 358; III: pp. 34-36, 137, 139, 141, 147; S. Slade, *Fasti litterario Ragusini*: pp. 100, 107; K. Vojnović, »Prilozi k arhivalnijem pabircima dubrovačkijem«: p. 31; F. Šanjek, *Dominikanci i Hrvati*: pp. 187-193.

library. He wrote a number of works containing sermons. According to his own words, his sermons were appreciated by Marko Marulić, who dedicated to him his epistle to Hadrian VI, because it was Buchia who prompted Marulić to expose the adversities of the Christians to the pope.⁴¹

In the wills of medieval Ragusans one may trace the echo of the sermons stamped into their minds and hearts. Standardised testamentary formulas of the fifteenth century point to the preaching word as a primary source of the religious instruction. The Christianity that they practice is not abstract—it concerns Christian morality and the observance of the canonical rites and sacraments. The controversy about the good and evil, about redemption and sin is being considered on the level of human deeds and behaviour patterns. Good acts are accentuated far more than the rest of the elements of the Christian message. This is explicitly mirrored in the wills, as they define good by the good deeds and evil by the evil ones. Many a mortal soul tried to shorten his/her passage through Purgatory by doing good and charitable deeds. The wills abound in legacies left to church institutions, for the holy mass, pilgrimages, for the poor, for the almshouse, hospital, the lepers, for the marriage of poor girls and similar pious and charity purposes. On the other hand, the testators wished to repent their ill deeds, but first of all to confess them, and also tried to compensate the damage. With the nobility, these *male ablati* mainly concerned embazzlement and office abuse, and in general, quarrels, thefts, failure to execute legacies and all kinds of injustices and negligence.⁴²

The will introductions in the fourteenth century were very brief. They merely mention that one ought to see to the will, for he knows neither the day nor hour of death. By contrast, in the fifteenth century the introductions abound, expressing new religious attitudes and feelings conveyed mainly by the preachers. Their focus towards the Last Judgement and eternal life placed death in the centre of attention. In this message great role was played by the *Ars moriendi*, especially in visual representation of the hour of death, temptation, the struggle between angels and devils, as well as the suffering of the damned and the joy of the blessed. However, the catechisation of the laity was carried out primarily

⁴¹ Marko Marulić, »Pismo papi Hadrijanu VI.«, in: *Govori protiv Turaka*, ed. Vedran Gligo. Split: Logos, 1983: pp. 165-166; Šime Ljubić, *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri della Dalmazia*. Wien-Zadar: Rod. Lechner, Battara e Abelich: pp. 185, 27; Marin Franičević, *Povijest hrvatske renesansne književnosti*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1983: p. 452.

⁴² Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: pp. 3, 7.

through a spoken word. Almost every sermon of the time addresses the connection between individual deeds and the Last Judgement, insisting on the message that each man will be judged by what he has done. Perpetual invocation of death warned the laity that they had to think of the salvation throughout life, and not only on deathbed.⁴³ The faith of the laity rested on several fundamental beliefs witnessed in the wills. They all believed in the life after life and the existence of another world in which the dead would be rewarded or punished according to their behaviour on the earth. Also, they all believed in the existence of the devil and Hell, as evidenced from the testamentary confessions of the committed misdeeds. The feeling of guilt developed even with those who had not committed any sins let alone mortal, but merely lived their earthly and carnal lives and indulged in the worldly pleasures and values, unable to fulfil the preachers' instructions for a life of ascetism and renunciation of the goods dearest to them. That is why the faithful lived in belief that their soul was in perpetual danger, tempted by the flesh and the forces of evil that waited for to drag it down to Hell. The devil constantly lurks after the human soul, and uses every moment of its weakness to sway it towards eternal damnation. Ragusan wills express the full force of the fear of Evil, but also a belief that they can be saved with the help of God.⁴⁴ In a mercantile society such as that of Dubrovnik, the feeling of guilt tended to be connected with the professional code, notably with the interest loans. With this regard, the Church did not fully adapt to the new needs of city life. The expansion of international trade and the growth of market economy gave way to a novel approach to commercial ethics, so that the preachers, too, resorted to the vocabulary and imagery of trade. However, they retained a critical position towards the moral of trade, and warned about the danger of ruthless urge for profit, greed, fraud, lies, perjury and, above all, usury. Benedict Kotrulj also addressed this topic in his *Libro del arte dela mercatura* (Book on the Art of Trade). Fully aware of mercantile utilitarianism and pragmatism, he understands that a merchant is at the same time a Christian, and that these two poles which make his life should be harmonised. He devoted

⁴³ Thomas L. Amos, »Early Medieval Sermons and their audience«, in: *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand. Louvain-La-Neuve: Institut d'études médiévales de l'Université catholique de Louvain, 1993: p. 11.

⁴⁴ *Monumenta historica Ragusina, Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije*, vol. I: p. 136; vol. II: pp. 233-234; *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 10, f. 95v; vol. 11, f. 197; vol. 12, f. 127; vol. 13, f. 75v; vol. 15. f. 139r-139v; vol. 17, ff. 42, 86; vol. 18, ff. 32, 56v, 121, 137-137v; vol. 19, ff. 63, 165v-166v; vol. 20, ff. 106v, 109v; vol. 21, ff. 75v, 138v.

the whole of Book Two to this topic, while the remaining three books also contain the moral for a good Christian. In Kotrulj's opinion, salvific effect of mass, prayer, charity, good deeds and forgiveness, solves the problem of conscience and leads a merchant towards the road of salvation, regardless of the moral traps of his profession.⁴⁵ The fear of some Ragusans is deeply felt in the wording of their wills, when, conscience-stricken, "since they did not recall their sins earlier and had no fear of God", they prayed for the salvation from Hell.⁴⁶ This determined their life behaviour and attitude to death. Fear of death was not so much fear of the end of life as it was of the soul's fate. The Church offered the faithful consolation through the sacraments and rites which in life and in the deadly hour were to guide them towards redemption. Besides, fear of the other world was alleviated by the idea of Purgatory, which, since the twelfth century, a believer's consciousness has envisaged as a place of passage, where by temporary punishments the souls can be purged from minor sins and then reascend to eternal happiness. The idea of Purgatory resulted in a specific link between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Medieval wills of the Ragusans make no explicit mention of the purgatory, but numerous legacies for the salvation of one's own soul or for the souls of the deceased kin and friends bear witness to a belief in a possibility of this kind of redemption.⁴⁷ With this in mind, some wills echo a feeling of certainty about the salvation of one's soul, by grace of God, but also as result of pious and honest life.⁴⁸

To the content analysis one should also add that in terms of phraseology the wills clearly reflect the sermons as their source. When the testators quote the same words on frailty and human weakness, perishable body and eternal soul, the battle between angels and demons, poverty and vanity of the eternal world, and on death as a merciless slayer that would take her toll whenever she pleased, they actually repeat the sermon formulas that they had heard so often. The image of life as a road, path or river stems from the preacher's warning about the brevity and preciousness of lifetime which ought to be spent for the achievement

⁴⁵ Aaron Gurevič, »Il mercante«, in: *L' uomo medievale*, ed. Jacques Le Goff. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987: pp. 277-289; Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: pp. 5, 7; Benedikt Kotrulj, *Libro del arte dela mercatura. Knjiga o vještini trgovanja*, ed. Zdenka Janeković Römer. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, Hrvatski računovođa, 2009: pp. 199-236.

⁴⁶ Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: p. 14; *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 22, ff. 1-4; vol. 10, f. 136; vol. 11, f. 103; vol. 12, ff. 117, 120-120v; vol. 13, ff. 7v, 45v; vol. 21: ff. 17, 19.

⁴⁷ Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: p. 6.

⁴⁸ *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 9, ff. 77, 142v; vol. 14, f. 136; vol. 18, ff. 64, 84, 104, 137-137v; vol. 20, ff. 101v, 164; vol. 22, f. 19.

of the heavenly values, and not worldly pleasures. The masses commemorating three Divine persons, four Gospels, five wounds of Christ, seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, seven joys of St. Mary, nine choirs of angels, eleven thousand virgins, twelve apostles, thirty-three years of Christ indicate the numerical symbolism the preachers used in order to make their messages easier to remember.⁴⁹

The preachers, Franciscans in particular, have left a most deep trace on female pioussness, best witnessed in the Late Middle Ages when the women were attributed an important place in the Christian spirituality thanks to the Marian cult. The historians hold that the preachers were the first observers and experts in the unique female spirituality, considering that the women in urban environments were under their pastoral care.⁵⁰ The preachers focused their work largely on the Christianisation of marriage, as well as marital relations and family life, which means that they significantly influenced the life of women.⁵¹ Religious practice opened a window into the world to the Ragusan women, too. They were particularly active in the domain of piety, most likely because they were virtually excluded from the other spheres of life. The knowledge of catechism and religious ideas developed in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under the very influence of the orders of preachers. The shifts in understandings, religious views and forms of piety may be clearly traced in their wills.⁵² The concern for the suffering of others in this and other life is the main feature of female piety. The noble and non-noble women alike participated side by side in poor relief, helping especially the orphans, unmarried girls and nuns.⁵³ Filippo de Diversi wrote that nowhere had he seen such charity and zeal in attending holy service and pilgrimages as with Ragusan women. He praised their attendance at mass, sometimes even twice a day.⁵⁴ Philippe

⁴⁹ Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: p. 8; *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 19, p. 63v; vol. 39, pp. 254-256v; vol. 21, pp. 89v-90v.

⁵⁰ John Coakley, »Friars, Sanctity and Gender: Mendicant Encounters with Saints, 1250-1325«, in: *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare Lees, Thelma S. Fenster, Jo Ann McNamara. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994: pp. 91-110.

⁵¹ A. Vauchez, »The pastoral transformation of the thirteenth century«: pp. 96-99.

⁵² *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 9, ff. 89-89v; 109v-110v; 147v-148v, 165; vol. 10, ff. 109v-110, 124-124v; vol. 11, ff. 63, 103-103v; vol. 12, ff. 42-42v, 153v-154, 178-178v; vol. 14, ff. 35-35v, 146-146v; vol. 19, ff. 60-62v, 165v-166v; vol. 20, ff. 155v-156v; vol. 21, ff. 89v-90v.

⁵³ Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Rod i grad. Dubrovačka obitelj od 13. do 15. stoljeća*. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1994: pp. 128-129; eadem, *Okvir slobode. Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999: pp. 207-208.

⁵⁴ F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnoga grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 92, 97, 174-175, 178.

Du Fresne Canay also observed that Ragusan women frequented church most often and took their time in doing so, while Pietro Casola says that during the solemn masses and processions they proudly displayed their clothes and jewellery, enjoying in being looked at by foreigners.⁵⁵ Serafino Razzi also observed extraordinary piety of the Ragusan women, of the noblewomen and commoners alike. He does not speak much of the characteristics of their spirituality, but comments that they find joy in going to church and look forward to the word of God and sermon, which they prefer to listen from the friars-preachers than at the cathedral. The Franciscans and Dominicans preached in Croatian, while at the cathedral the sermons were held in Italian which the common women did not understand, since they had no opportunity for learning it. This is yet another proof that the Franciscan and Dominican preachers took into consideration the persuasiveness of their words among the laity, especially among women. Razzi further commented that Ragusan women were unusually gossipy at church, but one ought to have patience with them because they were truly devoted to God.⁵⁶ The communities of the Third order, mentioned in the mid-fifteenth century, were also an outgrowth of the successful preaching mission in promoting spirituality of the female laity.⁵⁷ The church was a scene of female social life, with piety as its focal point. Religious devotion bonded women with the priests, especially confessioners, but also with nuns and other pious women, irrespective of class or rank.

The funeral oration that Elias Crieva delivered to his uncle Junius Sorgo mirrors the features of the new devotion, *devotio moderna*, which, thanks to the preachers' continuous efforts, permeated the Christian flock in the early sixteenth century. The poet described the last hours of his uncle's life, yet void of the dramatic tones commonly employed in the late-medieval representations of death. Junius Sorgo had no reason to fear death, essentially because he was deeply pious from his early days and renowned for his faith, but also because he had confessed his sins in his last hour. According to the words of his nephew, crying and repenting he purified himself deep inside and thus purged from

⁵⁵ Mihajlo Dinić, »Tri francuska putopisca XVI veka o našim zemljama«. *Godišnjica Nikole Čupića* 49 (1940): pp. 94-95, 110; *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*: pp. 178-179; P. Casola, »Ragusa nel 1494«: p. 61.

⁵⁶ Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa: scritta nuovamente in 3 libri*, ed. Giuseppe Gelcich. Dubrovnik: A. Pasarić, 1903: pp. 193-194.

⁵⁷ Z. Janeković Römer, »Na razmeđu ovog i onog svijeta«: p.10; *Testamenta Notariae*, vol. 15, ff. 30, 43; vol. 17, f. 90; vol. 19, ff. 7v-8v.

sins and blessed with consecrated water he received the Holy Sacrament. Crieva's exact words are that he has been received in Christ and for Him, and that for all the time to come he will partake in the joy of eternal happiness. He called upon the gathered kin and friends to cast aside the mourning and to stop weeping, crying and grieving, and to rejoice to see that one of them has reached immortality and divine grace. Flamboyantly, Crieva provided an outstanding result of the moral on good death not only on the rite level as before, but interiorised in accordance with the new devotion⁵⁸ On the commemoration service held for the poet and nobleman Givo Gozze, Crieva spoke on the dual, carnal and spiritual nature of man, on the resurrection of the body that would overcome this dichotomy, the original sin, the struggle between good and evil, and on Christ the life and redeemer. He also addressed the topic of suffering and earthly trials on the thorny path to heaven, as opposed to the broad and easy path to the dark doors of hell. His words reflect the Christian attitudes of the educated laity, who were able to grasp and interiorise Christianity to an extent greater than common people. However, deliberating on his late friend, he expresses the generally accepted popular model of Christian life which is defined by form. He describes Givo Gozze as a man pious and ever regular in his daily devotions, and who had never begun or ended his day without a prayer. On every feast or vigils he attended the Holy Mass. He never missed a single yearly confession for the absolution of sins, while the Holy Communion, that "salvific nectar of body and soul", he received humbly, even in his grave illness. He awaited death patiently and prepared, having repented his sins, and "no doubt that his honest life and the sanctity of his death, reconciled with the eternal God, will bring him joy in eternal happiness that no man or mortal will stand in his way"⁵⁹ This ideal character epitomises the Christian model which the preachers tried to convey to the faithful in the previous centuries. Despite the fact that the life and manners of Givo Gozze greatly deviated from this ideal, the piety communicated through the words of many friars preachers in the churches of Dubrovnik and in the squares was real and had a real impact on the people's attitudes to life and death, last things, sin and good, body and soul, God and man.

⁵⁸ Aelius Lampridius Cervinus, »In Junium Sorgium, avunculum suum, funebris oratio«, in: Darinka Nevenić-Grabovac, »Ilija Lamprice Crijević, Posmrtni govor svojem ujaku Juniju Sorkočeviću«. *Živa antika* 27/1 (1977): pp. 253-254; Zdenka Janeković Römer, »Pro anima mea et predecessorum meorum. The Death and the Family in 15th Century Dubrovnik«. *Otium* 1-2 (1995): p. 26.

⁵⁹ Aelius Lampridius Cervinus, »Oratio funebris in Joannem Gotium«, in: Darinka Nevenić-Grabovac, »Oratio funebris humaniste Ilije Crijevića dubrovačkom pesniku Ivanu (Dživu) Gučetiću«. *Živa antika* 24/1-2 (1974): pp. 349-351, 356.

