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Miraculous Image as a Relic: The Reliquary of St Filippo Benizi in Dubrovnik’s Cathedral Treasury

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Abstract
Based on archival documents, the paper discusses the Reliquary of St Filippo Benizi preserved in Dubrovnik’s Cathedral Treasury, commissioned by Archbishop of Dubrovnik Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini after the miracle that the saint’s image worked in Lorignano near Todi in 1672, and brought from Rome to Dubrovnik in 1690. The motive behind the execution of the reliquary was the image of St Filippo Benizi placed within the reliquary, which proved miraculous once again upon its arrival to Dubrovnik and encouraged the veneration of the saint from the Servite Order entirely foreign to the city’s tradition. Lucchesini’s commission of the reliquary is contextualized among his other commissions, realized mainly as the Prior General of the Servite Order (1670–1678), strongly connected to his promotion of the veneration of St Filippo Benizi, canonized in 1671.

Keywords: Dubrovnik, reliquary, St Filippo Benizi, Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini, Order of Friar Servants of Mary

The decades that followed the great earthquake that struck Dubrovnik on April 6, 1667 were a period of slow recovery for the citizens of the small Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), both in terms of physical reconstruction of the city and the psychological healing of its people from the traumatic event. Naturally, the reconstruction of the city relied on the abilities and diplomatic skills of the secular government, but its spiritual restoration greatly depended upon the relationship with the ecclesiastical institutions, namely the archbishop, at the time still appointed from the ranks of non-Ragusan (regularly Italian) clergy.

The first archbishop to arrive to Dubrovnik after the great earthquake of 1667 was Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini (Lucca, 1629 – Assisi, 1698), member and former Prior General of the Order of Friar Servants of Mary (Ordine dei Servi di Maria), as well as inquisitor of the Roman Curia and general vicar to Pope Clement X. The cataclysm of 1667 had compelled his predecessor Pietro de Torres (Trani, 1634–1708; Archbishop 1665–1689) to leave Dubrovnik and to attend to his transfer to another diocese in Rome, which finally occurred in 1689 after twenty-two years of his absence from the city. His successor Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini at first renounced at the honour of the title of archbishop of Dubrovnik, which he had been offered by Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi in June 1689, only to accept it in November of the same year. Lucchesini’s concern for the spiritual needs of the Archdiocese of Dubrovnik began immediately after his having accepted the pallium: through his intercession with the papal Curia, the feast of Saint Blaise, the patron saint of Dubrovnik, was raised to the rank of Double First Class. The long absence of their archbishop and the still fresh memory of the cataclysm that struck the city more than twenty years earlier incited the Ragusan government to honour their new spiritual leader with a magnificent ceremony organized on the occasion of his arrival, which would later become a model for all subsequent ceremonial entries of the future archbishops. Significant improvements to the spiritual state of the Archdiocese during Lucchesini’s stay in Dubrovnik between 1690 and 1693 were accompanied by his efforts to restore the ecclesiastical possessions – the archiepiscopal villa on the island of Šipan and his own temporary residence within the city – both through his own investments and by maintaining favourable relations with the secular authorities.

Lucchesini’s most important addition to the artistic heritage of Dubrovnik was his donation of a masterpiece of craftsmanship today preserved in Dubrovnik’s Cathedral
Treasury: the Reliquary of St Filippo Benizi (Fig. 1), a 13th-century Florentine saint and the fifth general of the Servite Order, whose veneration Lucchesini especially promoted and whose biography he wrote in 1671, the year of the saint’s canonization by Pope Clement X. The large reliquary consists of a wooden crucifix with a gilt bronze corpus, mounted on a wooden plinth with gilt bronze decorations, the coat-of-arms of Archbishop Lucchesini, and his motto FORTITVDO MEA DOMINVS surrounded by four sculpted flames (Fig. 2), with glass-covered compartments which house the saint’s relics. Four figures of half-kneeling angels that decorate the upper part of the plinth carry the attributes of St Filippo Benizi – a twig (originally probably a bunch of flowers), a crucifix, the papal tiara, and a lily, in conformance with the saint’s iconography firmly established and diffused from the sixteenth century (Fig. 3). Relics of St Filippo Benizi accompanied by inscriptions are inserted in the upper part of the plinth and on the sides of the central opening: particles of the saint’s mantle (Della Cappa) and shirt (Della Camiscia) are placed on either side of the lower part of the reliquary housing the image of the saint, surmounted by a bone relic with the inscription Del B. Filippo Benizzi. The painting of St Filippo Benizi in the central opening (Fig. 4) is flanked by pairs of fluted columns (paired columns are placed on each corner of the interior of the plinth and in the upper glass compartment with the bone relic). The standing figure of the saint is depicted on a slightly convex copper plate of uneven edges, surrounded by red flames. St Filippo Benizi is portrayed in the black habit of the Servite Order, holding a book in his left and a lily in his right hand, while a papal tiara rests on the saint’s right as a reminder of his refusal to accept the pontifical title.

The veneration of St Filippo Benizi in the Archdiocese of Dubrovnik was encouraged by a miracle that occurred on
A detailed account of the miracle, which involved the day of Lucchesini’s solemn entry to the city on June 29, 1690. A relic of St Filippo Benizi, after 1672, Dubrovnik’s Cathedral Treasury, miraculous image of St Filippo Benizi (photo: T. Trška) Relikvijar sv. Filipa Benizija, nakon 1672, Riznica dubrovačke katedrale, čudotvorna slika sv. Filipa Benizija

The narrative of the miraculous image of St Filippo Benizi begins in August of 1672, eighteen years before Lucchesini’s arrival to Dubrovnik and a year after the saint’s canonization, in Lorignano, a small castle in the vicinity of Todi, the burial place of San Filippo Benizi, where a fierce fire broke out in one of the houses. After futile attempts to extinguish the fire, a man especially devoted to St Filippo Benizi ran to his house and brought a piece of paper from a processional lantern that featured an image of the saint and handed it to the parish priest who assisted to the great fire. A bricklayer was asked to make an opening in the wall big enough for the piece of paper to be thrown inside the house, while the gathered crowd invoked the assistance of the saint, obtaining not one, but five miracles enumerated in the written account. The first miracle happened when the piece of paper with the saint’s image was thrown inside the house: the fire, which was supposed to move towards the opening in the wall, stopped before the image and receded. The second miracle was that the fire immediately descended towards the ground, contrary to its natural behaviour. The third and the most important miracle was that the fire surrounded the entire piece of paper and burned all the parts that were white, leaving the borders of the saint’s vestments intact, along with the rays above his head, the lily held in his hand, and the papal tiara depicted below his feet. The signs of fire burning around the holy image remained visible, which was considered to be a miracle unheard of, because no artistic skill could have produced a similar effect. The fourth miracle was that the saint’s image remained intact in the midst of the great fire, so that even twenty years afterwards the remains of burned paper around the saint’s image were still visible. Finally, the fifth miracle was that the great fire, otherwise inextinguishable, immediately died out. The story continues with Lucchesini’s acknowledgement of the miracle and the transportation of the miraculous image from Todi to Rome, where he obtained official recognition from Pope Clement X, the same pope who had canonized St Filippo Benizi a year earlier. This was followed by Lucchesini’s commission of a reliquary that would contain the miraculous image and other relics of the saint, executed, as stated in the document, with considerable expenses. The image was placed under a glass cover and supported by a clean piece of copper and attached by nails, with the purpose of displaying not only the image, but also the signs of fire. Before Lucchesini’s departure from Rome to Dubrovnik, it was preserved in the Servite convent of San Marcello in Rome, where the holy sheet was seen many times not only by members of the Order, but also by “various illustrious cardinals, prelates, princes, and other individuals of the city.”

On the day of Lucchesini’s solemn entry to the city of Dubrovnik on June 29, 1690 the image of St Filippo Benizi worked another miracle. Having sung his first mass in presence of the Rector and the Senate, the archbishop withdrew for lunch. Suddenly, impatient to open the chest which held the reliquary during his journey to Dubrovnik, Lucchesini ordered a theologian in his service to unpack the reliquary, who while doing it suddenly cried “Miracle!” as he revealed that the holy image was entirely surrounded by the colour of flames. The archbishop and members of his entourage remained stupefied at this great transformation, and after an initial period of astonishment, the archbishop noted five more miracles that had occurred on the holy image. The first miracle was that the piece of paper containing the image had retracted behind the copper plate which supported it, although it was attached by nails; the second that the once clean and unadorned copper plate now had an entire figure of the saint painted on its surface, as a faithful copy of the image on the sheet which had defied fire in Lorignano, including the saint’s attributes; the image of the saint appeared so wonderful that no artist could have painted it more beautiful or graceful, since it was an image sent by angels from heaven and to be considered the true effigy of the saint. The third miracle consisted in the fact that the part of the copper plate around the image of the saint was surrounded by the liveliest colour of fire, showing the figure of the saint in the midst of burning fire that no painter could have executed better. The fourth miracle was that the base supporting the
copper plate had moved forward, in front of the piece of paper, but remained pure and intact, which proved that the copper plate used to be clear before the apparition of the miraculous image on its surface. The fifth miracle was that the copper plate, originally attached to the reliquary by nails, now stood freely without any support.

Just as witnesses were required to testify the virtues and miracles performed by the future saints, as was emphasized already at the end of the 11th century by Pope Urban II and officially regulated by the post-Tridentine Church,14 miracles performed by officially confirmed saints earned credibility only if they were confirmed by trustworthy witnesses. This prerequisite was certainly met in case of the miracles of the reliquary of St Filippo Benizi – the saintly event was officially recorded by a public notary of Dubrovnik19 and attested by a number of ecclesiastical dignitaries: Antonije Primović, Bishop of Trebinje-Mrkan; Matija Brnjaković, Bishop of Belgrade; Karlo Olanti, Bishop of Ston; three abbots of religious orders; members of the Cathedral Chapter; and other qualified ecclesiastics. They all testified that the five seals applied in Rome prior to Lucchesini’s departure for Dubrovnik by a certain Bastiano che lavora Reliquiarj remained intact, while individuals in Lucchesini’s service confirmed that the image appeared different from the one they had had the opportunity to admire many times before in Rome. A month after the miracle, Archbishop Lucchesini began spreading the word of the saint’s special benevolence towards himself and the Republic. On July 31, 1690 he sent letters and descriptions of the miraculous event to Pope Alexander VIII16 and to a member of his order, theologian Giulio Arighetti (Arrighetti) in Florence.17 In another letter (this time accompanied by a description of his ceremonial entry to the city) written on the same date to another Servite theologian in Florence, Cosimo della Bella, Lucchesini announced that the account of the miracle would be sent to be printed18 (perhaps modelled on works such as Breve relazione di novi miracoli operati da Iddio per i Meriti del Glorioso S. Filippo Benizi published in 1671),19 although it seems that the prelate’s desire was never realized. The miracle was immediately interpreted as a sign of the saint’s special benevolence towards the Republic and its citizens, as well as a clear sign to its owner that he should donate it to the Republic, and not to the church of his order in his hometown of Lucca as originally intended. Lucchesini designated the reliquary to the nunnery of St Claire, the largest and most prominent female monastery in the city, and issued special instructions for its safekeeping.20 The miracles incited by invocations of St Filippo Benizi continued: nuns of the Order of St Claire, the largest and most prominent religious order, actively interpreted the image as evidence of the saint’s special favor and protection. The image of St Filippo Benizi was neither an altarpiece nor a fresco or other image preserved in an ecclesiastical
setting, nor a painting adorning a house altar or a public shrine, but a common painted sheet that used to decorate an item carried in processions. Similar narratives of painted or sculpted images left intact by devouring flames – usually of the Madonna and Child – are widely spread in all historical periods and geographical areas, such as those of the sculpture of the Virgin in the church of La Madeleine at Vézelay (1160–1165), Our Lady of the Fire (Madonna del fuoco) from Faenza (1567), or the geographically and chronologically closer example of Our Lady of the Stone Gate in Zagreb (1731), to name only a few. These images, however, usually encouraged special veneration followed by the construction of shrines and sanctuaries that bear their name; that is, they stayed on the site of the miracle. On the contrary, the miracle-working image of St Filippo Benizi remained a movable and even itinerant object, placed inside a reliquary after being subjected to necessary verifications in order to obtain papal authentication, as if the image was indeed a relic. The saint’s relics were duly placed within a reliquary, but the motive behind the commission was the once ordinary object created centuries after the saint’s death, which thus became a sort of a “relic by extension”. The idea of the saint embodied in his visual representation was therefore assigned the same powers as the actual relics of St Filippo Benizi that played central role in other miraculous events involving fire, some of which also occurred in the vicinity of Todi. One of the earliest accounts of salvation from fire by the intercession of St Filippo Benizi through his personal belongings dates to the fourteenth century (1317), when a fire was extinguished by the saint’s mantle; other events included the saint’s slippers, which saved the burning Servite church of St Mark when a saint’s devotee threw them in the fire, or a mattress on which the saint used to sleep and on which he died, which remained intact when a fire burnt down the house it was kept in. The second prerequisite for the image to be qualified as miraculous – “a representation that supposedly itself changes momentarily” – was met upon Lucchesini’s arrival to Dubrovnik, when the image of the saint transferred itself to the copper plate that used to support it. Here, the primacy in the relationship between the miracle-working object and the miracle-working image shifted to the image, whereas in Lorignano the agent of the miracle had been the object; all, naturally, through the intercession of the saint whose true likeness it represented.

Besides providing a detailed account of the miraculous events that incited the commission of the reliquary and its subsequent veneration in Dubrovnik, the narrative of the image of St Filippo Benizi reveals important information related to its date of execution. Studies discussing the reliquary have connected it to Abbot Stjepan Gradić (Dubrovnik, 1613 – Rome, 1683), the most important agent of the Republic in Rome and largely responsible for the reconstruction of the city’s cathedral, while its date of execution has been associated with the saint’s canonization in 1671, considered as the motive for its commission. However, the occurrence of the miracle of the saint’s image in Lorignano in August 1672, a year after his canonization, provides a precise terminus post quem for the execution of the reliquary, commissioned by Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini shortly after the official recognition of the miracle by Pope Clement X. The proposed connection to Abbot Stjepan Gradić has been motivated by purely art-historical reasons: the corpus placed high on the reliquary has been associated with a model by Alessandro Algardi, who worked under the patronage of Pope Innocent X Pamphili. The sole fact of Stjepan Gradić’s acquaintance with Pope Innocent X (who died in 1655) does not seem convincing enough to associate the reliquary’s Roman commission with Gradić’s intercession, especially in the light of the narrative of the reliquary’s origin.

The reliquary of St Filippo Benizi in Dubrovnik’s Cathedral Treasury most certainly belongs to the Roman artistic circle active in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, involved both directly and indirectly in visual and other celebrations of newly canonized saints. Although detailed, the account of the miracles of the saint’s image unfortunately does not mention the name of its maker, but only un certo Bastiano, che lavora Reliquiarj, che abita verso l’ Orto, who inspected the copper plate before Lucchesini’s departure from Rome, closed the opening by applying five seals, and secured it for the transport. The said Bastiano (or Sebastiano) cannot be identified with any of the known goldsmiths or silversmiths active in Rome in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and there is no evidence to suggest that he can be credited with the execution of the reliquary. The choice of architectural elements for the lower part of the reliquary was probably conditioned by the necessity to accommodate the miraculous image of the saint, initially supported by a copper plate and then, as the narrative of the miracle in Dubrovnik suggests, transferred to the same copper plate that supported it. The unknown master of the reliquary of St Filippo Benizi had to resolve a task in which content determined the form: the reason for the commission of the reliquary was not a relic, but a miraculous image, much larger in size than the usual minute particles of saints’ bodies or personal belongings. The architectural form of the reliquary appears rather unusual for its date of execution, and its overall structure seems closer to examples produced in the first half of the seventeenth century, often resembling an aedicule or a tabernacle, or even much earlier reliquaries modelled upon elements of actual architecture. Despite the somewhat archaic form of the lower part of the reliquary, conceived as a shrine for the miraculous image, the overall impression of the reliquary conforms to the artistic ambience of Rome in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, when it was produced, primarily due to the elements of figural decoration applied to the wooden structure. Figures of angels and the crucified Christ (belonging to the type of the “living Christ” or Cristo vivo) may have been executed after models provided by sculptors, which was a common practice in Baroque Rome for objects of craftsmanship such as reliquaries and tabernacles. Timothy Clifford has associated the figure of the crucified Christ with a model by Alessandro Algardi, but one cannot exclude Bernini’s designs for bronze crucifixes, especially the one at Palazzo Pallavicini in Rome (perhaps connected to a documented commission by Cardinal Sforza Pallavicini to Bernini in 1665), which has...
been attributed to both Bernini and Algardi. The free-flying drapery of Christ’s perizonium present on the Dubrovnik reliquary is common in Algardi’s designs for the crucified Christ, but the majority of Algardi’s figures, regardless of the material (e.g., silver crucifix in the Treasury of San Lorenzo, Florence; bronze crucifixes in SS. Vittore e Carlo, Genoa and in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome; clay crucifix in the Chapel of the Palazzo del Governatorato in Rome) feature four, not three nails like the ones designed by Bernini. It must be remembered that Alessandro Algardi died in 1654, twenty-six years before Bernini (d. 1680), but also, more importantly, that the years of Lucchesini’s commission of the reliquary (after 1672) correspond to the late phase of the activity of Gian Lorenzo Bernini and his workshop, who had just finished the series of ten angels for Ponte Sant’Angelo in Rome (1669) and started the long-planned enterprise of the Ciborium of the Holy Sacrament in St Peter’s (1672–1674). The figures of half-kneeling angels carrying the attributes of St Filippo Benizi (Fig. 5) are, in fact, much closer to Bernini’s concepts than to Algardi’s more moderate, toned down expression, especially if compared to the figures of angels for the Ciborium of the Holy Sacrament in St Peter’s, realized by Bernini’s collaborators Giovanni Rinaldi, Lazzaro Morelli, and Giuseppe Mazzuoli after the master’s drawings and clay models (Fig. 6). Despite the obvious differences in size and artistic quality, the slightly reclining bodies, facial expressions with half-opened mouths, and dynamically rendered draperies of the Dubrovnik reliquary angels belong to the Berninesque spirit of the last decade of his life, close to Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini precisely in the same period through Bernini’s pupil and close collaborator Mattia de’ Rossi (Rome, 1637 – Rome, 1695).

Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini’s ties to the visual arts are attested in a portrait engraving (Fig. 7) realized by the Flemish engraver Albert Clouwet (Antwerp, 1636 – Naples, 1679), a pupil of Cornelis Bloemaert resident in Rome between 1664...
and 1677. The inscription below the figure on either side of Lucchesini’s coat-of-arms indicates that the engraving was produced in the 1670s, during the years of Lucchesini’s service as Prior General, and represents a rare example of portraits of generals of the Servite Order. However, his contacts with artists and craftsmen were most closely related to the canonization of St Filippo Benizi celebrated on April 12, 1671 (together with saints Gaetano Thiene, Francis Borgia, Louis Bertrand, and Rose of Lima), and especially to the solemnization of the saint’s canonization celebrated at the Order’s church of San Marcello al Corso in Rome between 23 and 30 August 1671. As Prior General of the Servite Order, Lucchesini had to authorize payments for artworks commissioned by the Order for the celebrations in the saint’s honour. Reports of his merits for the Order between 1670 and 1678 mention his initiatives for the reconstruction of the monastery of San Marcello, as well as commissions of sculptures and paintings placed in the church on the occasion of eight-day solemnization celebrations in 1671, all motivated by his permanent efforts to promote the veneration of the recently canonized saint. His initiatives involving the visual arts did not remain limited to Rome. During his service as Prior General, Lucchesini is reported to have ordered the relocation of a venerated image of the Madonna to the chapel of Madonna delle Grazie in the Servite church of San Fiorenzo in Perugia, which replaced a painting identified with Sinibaldo Ibi’s altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist, Joseph, Fiorenzo and Blessed Filippo Benizi of 1515, now at the Galleria Nazionale dell’ Umbria in Perugia, removed to the refectory of the adjacent convent. More importantly, immediately after St Filippo Benizi’s canonization in 1671, Lucchesini initiated the reconstruction of the high altar in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Todi, to which the body of the then still beato Filippo had been translated from the church of San Marco in Borgo Nuovo in 1599. The design of the altar was entrusted to Roman architect Mattia de’ Rossi, the statue of the saint placed in the centre of the retable was executed by Paolo Naldini and delivered to Todi in 1674, while stucco master Pietro Ghezzi finished the upper part of the altar featuring a relief of the Madonna of the Sorrows. Bernini’s pupil Mattia de’ Rossi seems to have been Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini’s preferred architect: during his service as Prior General, he entrusted De’ Rossi with the design and execution of the pulpit in the Order’s main church of San Marcello al Corso, financed from Lucchesini’s own funds.

In these endeavours related to the visual arts, a prominent place was given to the saint’s relics and reliquaries that housed them, which Lucchesini commissioned either in the function of Prior General of the Order, or from his private funds. As stated in his report to the General Chapter of 1678, he had arranged for the execution of two splendid silver reliquaries for the Servite church in Todi, financed from the funds collected from preaching licences in the first two years of his service; these might correspond to the two large silver reliquaries Lucchesini sent to Todi in 1677 which preserved two pairs of the saint’s sandals. In 1673, also in Todi, he ordered that the “external” relics of St Filippo Benizi (his cap, a small crucifix, a wooden crown, a pair of slippers, and a pair of shoes) be moved to a silver urn which already housed the saint’s mantle, and be placed in the sacristy of the church of the Order, which caused great protests of the faithful concerned that the General’s intention was to deprive them of their precious relics. Lucchesini made special mention of the saint’s miraculous relics in his Life of St Filippo Benizi published in 1671, especially of his mantle preserved in his hometown of Lucca, and relics and reliquaries remained in the centre of his attention even after the termination of his office of Prior General. In 1681, he donated three relics of San Filippo Benizi in a silver reliquary to Lucia Maria Amici, Confessor of the Apostolic Palace, of the same origin as the ones in the Dubrovnik reliquary: a fragment of the bone from the saint’s shin and particles of his shirt and mantle. Lucchesini’s devotion to St Filippo Benizi apparently encouraged him to obtain the saint’s relics for private devotion, perhaps even prior to the saint’s canonization. This is suggested by the inscription identifying the saint attached to the bone fragment inside the Dubrovnik reliquary, which reads “Del B. [Beato] Filippo Benizzi”, indicating that it was obtained before 1671.

Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini was appointed Bishop of Assisi in 1693, where he died on April 14, 1698 and was buried...
in the cathedral chapel dedicated to his saintly protector Filippo Benizi.68 An altar with the inscription DOLOROSÆ VIRGINI, / AC D. PHILIPPO OR. SER. D still exists in the south aisle of the cathedral of Assisi, but today with a dedication to St Francis. It was erected in 1672 by Bishop Ludovico Giustiniani, also a member of the Servite Order,69 so it seems plausible to presume that this was the site of Lucchesini’s final resting place. His portrait (il vero ritratto)70 survives in the Gallery of Bishops (Galleria dei Vescovi, today’s Diocesan library) in the episcopal palace of Assisi, as part of a cycle of wall paintings initiated in the last quarter of the 17th century (Fig. 8).71 After Lucchesini’s departure to Assisi, the Republic of Ragusa and its church gradually returned to their customary saints and their relics, while the reliquary of St Filippo Benizi, later transferred to the Cathedral Treasury (Fig. 10),72 came to be appreciated for its sumptuous decoration and artistic quality only in the more recent times. Before the earthquake of 1979, it was exhibited on the high altar of the cathedral (Fig. 9),73 whereas today it remains preserved in the Treasury as a reminder of the Florentine saint once regarded an advocate of the Republic, as well as of the archbishop who promoted his veneration.

Appendix

ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 13v-16v

Prodigio operato da S. Filippo Benitij nella Città di Ragusa nel giorno de SS.ti Apostoli Pietro, e Paolo dell’Anno 1690

Non puo aversi notitia perfetta di questo gran Miracolo, se prima non si narra l’origine e il principio del medesimo Devesi dunque sapere, come nel Mese d’Agosto dell’anno 1672, s’accese un fuoco crudelissimo in una Casa del Castello detto di Lorgniano poco lungi dalla Città di Todi, dove si custodisce il corpo di detto Santo, e dove non passa giorno, che non compatisca à quei Popoli, Gratie, e Miracoli. Si fece subito le solite diligenze per estinguere il detto fuoco, mà conoscendosi queste senza verun frutto un devoto di
detto Santo corse nella sua Casa, e prendendo una carta da lanternone, ove era dipinta l’effigie di detto Santo, la consegnò al Paroco, che si trovava presente con tutto il Popolo del Castello alla Casa, che furiosamente s’incendiava, e fatta fare da un Muratore tanta apertura nella muraglia, quanta bastava per (f. 14) gettarvi entro la S. Imagine, invocando di cuore tutto il Popolo il Patrocinio di S. Filippo, solito a operar Prodigij sopra il fuoco, seguirono in un’istante cinque miracoli distinti.

Il Primo fù, che nel gettar, che fece il Paroco la Santa Carta entrò il fuoco, questo in vece di venire verso l’apertura della muraglia, come naturalmente doveva, cedette per riverenza il luogo al Santo con essersi allontanato ritirandosi in dietro.

Il 2.o fù, che doppo essersi allontanato questo fuoco, andò di subito à posarsi in terra contro il corso di natura, che tendit sursum.

Il 3.o maggiore di tutti i cinque fù, che il fuoco andò à circircuire tutta la Santa Carta, abbruggiando tutta quella parte, che era bianca, e che non conteneva la pittura del Santo, rimanendo intatte l’estremità delle vestimenta, come pure rimasero intatti i raggi sopra la testa, il giglio, che tiene in mano, e il Triregno, che sta à piedi, come attualmente si vede, conservandosi tutta via doppo tanti anni i segni del fuoco, che stanno d’intorno alla Santa Imagine, con prodigio veramente inaudito, per[c]he con tutta l’arte non potrebbe prodursi un simile effetto.

Il 4.o miracolo fù, che rimase intatta la Santa Imagine in mezzo ad una gran fornace, come al presente si vede, servandosi doppo anni venti d’intorno la Santa Imagine le reliquie della carta, che rimase abrugiata.

Il 5.o Miracolo fù, che il fuoco, che era insestinguibile, posato, che fù in terra in un subito totalmente s’estinse.

 Alla fama di sì gran Miracolo si portò Monsignor Arcivescovo Lucchesini allora Generale del suo Ordine nella Città di Todi, per aver nelle mani, come gli riuscì la Santa Imagine, e fatti autenticare con le solite solennità i suddetti Prodigi, si portò nell’Alma Città di Roma per mostrare alla Gloriosa Maestà di Clemente X., si gran Prodigio del Santo dal medesimo canonizzato l’anno antecedente, che lo venerò prostrato in terra non senza lagrime. Poco doppo, che segui si gran Miracolo ripose Monsignor Arcivescovo questa Santa Carta insieme con altre Reliquie del Santo nel mezzo d’un gran Reliquiario insigne, che à tal effetto fece fare con spesa considerabile, et acciò si potessero ben discernere le vestigie del fuoco, che vi rimangono, come s’è detto d’intorno, la pose dietro un Cristallo, situata in piedi, e sostenuta da un pezzo di Rame, sopra il quale stava incollata della medesima grandezza, e forma della Santa Imagine, di che esso la medesima fù questo Rame inchiodato sopra un poco del medesimo Rame.

Aciò possa ben conoscersi la grandezza del Miracolo, devesi sapere, che il detto Rame era puro naturale, senza verun artificio, e solamente di rustico, che era fu ripulito.

In questa forma è stata questa Santa Carta per tanti anni sino al giorno suddetto del seguente miracolo, come anno (sic) attestato con giuramento Monsignor Arcivescovo, e tre altre
Persone della sua famiglia, e come possono pure attestare non solamente tutti i Religiosi di San Marcello di Roma, ma anche diversi Eminentissimi Cardinali, Prelati, Principi, et altri Personaggi di detta Città, che più volte anno veduta questa Santa Carta, e per ultimo può farne testimonianza un certo Bastiano, che lavora Reliquiarij, che abita verso l’Orto (f. 15) poco lunghi dalla Casa del quondam Signor Abbate Rosa, il quale poco prima, che Monsignor Arcivescovo partisse da Roma, riconobbe il Rame, che sostiene la Santa Imagine, per osservare se stava con sicurezza, che non si muovesse nel lungo viaggio, che doveva fare, e trovandolo sicuro fu dal medesimo Bastiano alla presenza del detto Prelato, e delle tre Persone di sua famiglia serratò il sito dell’apertura, e sigilato con cinque sigilli, come con giuramento anno attestato al Notaro di Ragusa, nell’atto, che ha riconosciuti i suddetti Miracoli, e lo potrebbero pure attestare altri Religiosi di San Marcello, che furono presenti, quando furono posti i suddeti cinque sigilli.


Quantunque apparisca, che per essersi scoperti gl’acennati Prodigii subito, che arrivò il Prelato in Ragusa, volesse il Santo, che quivi si conservasse perpetuamente il suo Reliquiario, e non in altro luogo, non dimeno per far conoscere meglio questa Divina Dispositione, devesi sapere, che quando Monsignore fu destinato Arcivescovo di Ragusa, meditò di collocare in una Chiesa del suo Ordine questo Santo Reliquiario, e poco prima di partire per la sua Residenza, aveva risoluto affiato di mandare questo gran Tesoro nella Chiesa del suo Ordine di Lucca sua Patria, con averne à tal effetto scritto più lettere à quel P. Priore, mà per un certo (f. 16v) impulso sopranaturale, che ebbe un giorno all’improvviso verso si gran Santo, riconosciuto da lui per suo unico, e bennissimo Prottetore, dopo che ebbe la fortuna di vederlo canonizzato ne’ primi mesi del suo Generalato, non ebbe cuore di privarsi di si gran tesoro, in cui ripose in diversi suoi travagli, e accidenti ogni fiducia, e dal quale nell’anno medesimo, che segui la sua Canonizzazione, ricevette la grazia, che essendo precipitato, e rivoltato più volte il suo Calesse da gran balza, frà Levane, e Arezzo, rimase in più pezzi il Calesse, senza veruna lesione di Monsignore, che doppo avere scoperto il precipitio invocò il Patrocinio del Santo.

Avuta dunque l’inspiatione di non privarsi di questo Santo Reliquiario lo fece riporre in una custodia, e mandatolo in Ancona, l’imbarcò con altre sue robbe sopra il Vascello, che si fu destinato dall’Eccelentissima Repubblica di Ragusa, et da osservarsi, che navigò felicemente senza minimo suo patimento contro il suo solito, avendo molte altre volte patito notabilmente nelle navigations, essendo giunto in brevissimo
tempo nel Porto di Ragusa, benché quasi sempre il mare fosse in bonaccia.

Gli accennati Prodigii, seguiti con si mirabili circostanze danno giustamente motivo a Monsignor Arcivescovo di cavare un felicissimo augurio per la Città di Ragusa, e per l’Anime destinate alla sua cura, conoscendosi troppo evidentemente, che questo gran Santo vole (sic) avere speciale Protettione di questa Eccellentissima Republica, e di questi Popoli, che quantunque circondati da tanti nostri nemici, conservano pura, e intatta la Santa Fede, non ritrovandosi in una Diocesi si vasta sopra cento miglia di lunghezza per terra, e altrettanta per Mare, ne meno un Scismatico, conservando il Rito Cat-tolico, quanto qualsiasi (sic) Chiesa d’Italia.

Lau Deo, Beatae Virgini Mariae, et Sancto Philippo Benitio.

Notes

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tian Territories (Zagreb, Institute of Art History, 2–3 June 2016), organized as part of the project Visual Arts and Communication of Power in the Early Modern Period (1450–1800): Historical Croatian Regions at the Crossroads of Central Europe and the Mediterranean financed by the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ – Hrvatska zaklada za znanost). I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Odir J. Dias for his kind assistance and encouragement during my research in the Archivio Generale dell’Ordine dei Servi di Maria in Rome.

1 For the dates of archiepiscopal services, see: REMIGIUS RITZLER – PIRMIN SEFRIN, Hierarchia Catholica medi et recentioris aevi sive summorum pontificum – S. R. E. Cardinalium ecclesiarum antistitum series (hereafter: Hierarchia Catholica, V, Padova, 1952, 327; for Lucchesini’s appointment, see Archives of the Diocese of Dubrovnik (Arhiv Biskupije dubrovačke, hereafter ABD), I. N. B. D., ser. 1 – Diversa 7 (hereafter Diversa 7), ff. 2–3. Lucchesini’s reluctance to accept the title of Archbishop of Dubrovnik is well illustrated in the chronicle of the convent of San Marcello in Rome: “Fino dalla felice, e santa memoria d’Innocenzo XI era stato designato Arcivescovo di Ragusa il nostro R.mo P. Maestro Giovanni Vin-
cenzo Lucchesini, ma perché questi mal volentieri s’adattava a gire in paese rimoto, tempego il diass ad accettare quella Chiesa, tanto che prima di risolvere mori il Papa; ma eletto Alessandro VIII, che nato Arcivescovo di Ragusa il nostro R.mo P. Maestro Giovanni Vin-

cenzo Lucchesini, che in paese rimoto, temporeggiò assai ad accettare quella Chiesa, tanto cenzo Lucchesini, ma perché questi mal volentieri s’adattava a gire in paese rimoto, tempego il diass ad accettare quella Chiesa, tanto che prima di risolvere morì il Papa; ma eletto Alessandro VIII, che nato Arcivescovo di Ragusa il nostro R.mo P. Maestro Giovanni Vin-
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2 See Lucchesini’s letter to the Republic of Ragusa dated January 25, 1690, ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 9–10; see also: SERAFIN MARIJA CERVA, Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju [Prole-


7 GIAN VINCENZO LUCCHESINI, Vita di S. Filippo Benizi Generale, e Propagator dell’Ordine de’ Servi di Maria Vergine, In Roma, Per Ignatio de’ Lazari, 1671.

8 Wood, glass, gilt bronze, tortoiseshell, fabric; 170 × 62 cm; painting (oil? on copper) approx. 25 × 12 cm.

9 The upper part of the object held by the figure of the angel has razjašnjenja nekih pitanja [On the Dubrovnik treasury: Some clarifications], Dubrovnik, 1934, 14, describes it as a lily.

10 See Lucchesini’s letter to the Republic of Ragusa dated January 25, 1690, ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 9–10; see also: SERAFIN MARIJA CERVA, Prolegomena za Svetu dubrovačku metropoliju [Prole-

11 The reception of Archbishop Lucchesini, including its expenses, was accorded by the Senate on 27 July 1690 – Dubrovnik State
Files (Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, hereafter DAD), Acta Consilii Rogatorium (hereafter Cons. Rog.) 131, ff. 11v–12.

12 ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 13v–16v; see the transcription of the document in Appendix.

13 AGOSM, Reg. E, Filza 5, Memorie Miscellane, n. 46.


15 An official record (public instrument) of the miracle (Miraculum insigne S. Philippi Benitii), dated July 24, 1690 and compiled by the secretary of the Archbishop's curia Blasius (Biagio) Squadri, corresponds to the Italian version in ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 21–22v.

16 A copy of Lucchesini’s letter to the pope is in DAD, Diplomata et acta (hereafter DA), 17th ct., 13, n. 1261, but without the account of the miracle.

17 AGOSM, Reg. E, Filza 5, Memorie Miscellane, n. 46, accompanied by the description of the miracle corresponding to the one preserved in ABD. Giulio Arrighetti was also devoted to St Filippo Benizi: in 1672, he delivered a panegyric on the occasion of his canonization. See: GABRIELE M. ROSCHINI, Galleria servitana: oltre mille religiosi dell’Ordine dei Servi di Maria illustri per santità, scienze, lettere ed arti, Rome, 1976, 379.


19 The full title of the work, consisting of only six pages, is Breve relatione di novi miracoli operati da l’Iddio per i Meriti del Glorioso S. Filippo Beniti Propagatore Insigne dell’Ordine di S. Maria de’ Servi doppo la Canonizatione, con occasione della sua Festa fatta in Todi il Mese di Maggio 1671. Descritti, e pubblicati da Monsignor Ragani Archidiaco di Todi, In Roma: Per Ignatio de Lazeri, 1671 (a copy is preserved in AGOSM, Reg. D, Filza 4, Memorie Miscellane, n. 117).

20 ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 27–27v: “Instrumentum pro custodia Reliquiiarium S. Philippi Benitii in Ecclesia Monialium S. Clarae pro modum depositi”, dated August 21, 1690.

21 ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 23–24v.

22 See various documents in ABD, Diversa 7, ff. 60–60v, 70–72, 74 (Edito al Clero per intervenire alla Festa di S. Filippo), 89–90v, 103–103v.

23 SERAFINI MARIJA CERVA (note 2), 463.


26 The text of the Laus (more elaborate than the version read today) is in: STIJEPO SKURLA, Sveti Vlado biskup i mučenik od Sevasta dubrovački obranitelj [Bishop St Blaise, martyr of Sebastea, patron saint of Dubrovnik], Dubrovnik, 1871, 188–189.


28 The altar was adorned by an altarpiece of St Luigi Gonzaga commissioned by Luigi Aligretti around 1698: “Catalogo 4.o di Religieue di questo Altare...” – IV AN MARIJA MATIJAŠEVIĆ (MATTEI), Zibaldone, I, Library of the Franciscan Convent, Dubrovnik, Ms. 433, 235. Cerva also lists the reliquary in the church of St Claire; SERAFINI MARIJA CERVA (note 2), 491.

30 Apart from numerous processions, the veneration of relics in Dubrovnik is exemplified by requests for opening of the Treasury and transporting relics to private houses in cases of illness or laborious childbirth; cf. RELJA SEFEROVIĆ, Crkva iza Dvora: kroz Crkva iza Dvora: kroz povijest dubrovačke Crkve 18. stoljeća uz pratnju Serafina Marije Cerve [Church behind the Palace: History of Dubrovnik’s church 18th century with the support of Serafina Marija Cerve], Rad. Inst. povij. umjet. 41/2017. (67–81)
in the 18th century, in the company of Serafin Marija Cervai, in: SERAFIN MARIJA CERVA (note 2), 155.


34 GJURO SZABO, Stari Zagreb [Historical Zagreb], Zagreb, 1971, 22.


39 TIMOTHY CLIFFORD (note 38), 170.

40 For the commissions related to canonizations and solemnizations in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, see: VITTORIO CASALE, L’arte per le canonizzazioni. L’attività artistica intorno alle canonizzazioni e alle beatificazioni del Seicento, Turin – London – Venice – New York, 2011, 166–195.


42 According to the available data, the only “Bastiano” or Sebastiano active as silversmith in Rome in the second half of the seventeenth century seems to have been Sebastiano Gamburici, who died in 1658, almost fifteen years before the miracle in Todi (see: COS-
con l'aggiunta di scudi quindici di Pingione si che del Portinaro, onde la fece unire alla Bottega, e stanza segnata Generale che si lasciasse per il Convento la stanza in faccia a quella Signore. (...)

Essendosi terminata la Fabrica, stimò superfluo il P. Chirografo delli scudi cinque mila per la facoltà che hebbe da N. Viri illustres Ord. Noci che si trovavano in Convento. “ – AGOSM, contribuire scudi venticinque a tal’ effetto a Padre Maestro Ago- (...)

Accio si desse principio a fare le spalliere in Reffettorio fece libro. Gl’ altri scudi mille gli fece contribuire il P. Generale con il trata del deposito spettante a detta Fabrica, come apparisce al suo

speso il P. Generale per terminare, et accrescere la Fabrica per le “Benefizij fatti dal P. Generale al Convento di S. Marcello (...) Hà

benefici fatti dal P. Generale al Convento di S. Marcello (...) Hâ speso il P. Generale per terminare, et accrescere la Fabrica per le mani de Priori pro tempore Economi, come apparisce nel libro particolare che si teneva da medesimi scudi duemila cento tre, e b[aiocchi] quarantotto. Dalla qual’ somma ne furono somministrati scudi mille cento ventitre e b[aiocchi] quaranta quattro all’entrata del deposito spettante a detta Fabrica, come appare al suo libro. Gl’ altri scudi mille gli fece contribuire il P. Generale con il Chirografo delle scudi cinque mila per la facoltà che hebbe da N. Signore. (...) Essendosi terminata la Fabrica, stimò superfluo il P. Generale che si lasciasse per il Convento la stanza in faccia a quella del Portinaro, onde la fece unire alla Bottega, e stanza segnata (blank space) con l’aggiunta di scudi quindici di Pingione si che resta in benefizio del Convento un fondo di scudi quattrocento. (...) Accio si desse principio a fare le spalliere in Refettorio fece contribuire scudi venticinque a tal’ effetto a Padre Maestro Ago- stino Bianchi che era Priore, essendosi fatte le tavole con alcuni Noci che si trovavano in Convento.” – AGOSM, Viri illustres Ord. Serv. B. M. V., vol. B, n. 47, f. 16. On Mattia de’ Rossi, see: ANNA MENICHELLA, Mat- thia de’ Rossi: discepolo prediletto del Bernini, Rome, 1985 (the study does not mention De Rossi’s works for the Servite Order).


ANNA MENICHELLA, Mat- thia de’ Rossi: discepolo prediletto del Bernini, Rome, 1985 (the study does not mention De Rossi’s works for the Servite Order).


Le sue Reliquie furono sempre hauute in somma veneratione: trasferite più volte, occorrendo sempre in quell’atto molti prodigij. (...)

la sua cappa conservata in Lucca è sopramodo prodigiosa, particolarmente a favor de i bambini, dell’innocenza de’ quali egli è sempre stato particolar protettore.” – GIAN VINCENZO LUCCHESINI (note 7), 126.

“Io infrascritto i[n] virtù di questa fo ampla et indubitata fede a chi s’ aspetta d’ haver donato al M. R. P. Lucio Maria Amici Con-
U radu se obrađuje relikvijar sv. Filipa Benizija, trinaestostoljetnog sveca reda servita (Red slugu Blažene Djevice Marije), koji je u Dubrovnik donio nadbiskup Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini (Lucca, 1629. – Assisi, 1698.), i sam pripadnik reda i nekadašnji generalni prior (1670.–1678.). Na narudžbu relikvijara Lucchesinija je potakla vijest o čudu sveče koje se dogodilo u kolovozu 1672., godinu dana nakon njegove kanonizacije, u mjestu Lorignano kraj Todija, gdje je sveče prikaz izvorno s procesijske svjetiljke ostao netaknut nakon što je bačen u gorući plamen, koji se čudom ugasio. Lucchesini je relikvijar ponio u Dubrovnik nakon što je imenovan nadbiskupom 1689. godine, a na dan njegova svečana ulaska u Grad na blagdan sv. Petra i Pavla 1690. godine dogodilo se ponovljeno čudo slike sv. Filipa Benizija. Tijekom svog boravka u Dubrovniku (1690.–1693.) nadbiskup Lucchesini je posebno promicao čašćenje sveca, a njegov je relikvijar dao pohraniti u samostan sv. Klare. Osim pripovijesti o čudotvornoj svečevoj slici kojoj je njezinim smještanjem u relikvijar gotovo dan status relikvije, u radu se razmatraju mogući uzori za izradu relikvijara, nastalog u rimskim radionicama posljednje četvrtine 17. stoljeća, vjerojatno za vrijeme Lucchesinijeve službe na mjestu generalnog priora reda servita.

Ključne riječi: Dubrovnik, relikvijar, Sv. Filip Benizi, Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini, serviti