

Locating the first church of St. Blaise in Dubrovnik

Disputes regarding the first church of St. Blaise have been going on for decades. They are closely connected to the question of natural land configuration, on which Dubrovnik arose. Going from the assumption that Dubrovnik arose on a small island which was accessed via bridge, wrongfully located on the western part of the city (today's Pile), historiography placed the first church of St. Blaise on the site of today's St. Clara's Monastery, as well as the Rector's Tower. During the late 20th century the coauthor of this text introduced the idea that the city developed on the peninsula accessed by bridge, located west of today's Lučarica Street, west of St. Mary the Great's Cathedral. Some authors accepted, others disputed these ideas. That's why the historic records were revised in this text (archival data, older historians, annalists of Dubrovnik), as well as archeological remains.

An Anonymous first mentions St. Blaise near the bridge that granted access to Dubrovnik (on the stretch of today's Lučarica Street), then by the old Luža, Orland's Pillar and the Rector's Tower. This means that the church of Dubrovnik's patron was indeed below the Cathedral. Ranjina embraces the localization of the Anonymous but points out that another church was built at the same time, dedicated to the same patron, at the site of St. Clara's Monastery. It's difficult to say if this church was built at the same time or a bit later. It was built before the 13th century because at that time the city walls encompassed the above mentioned monastery. The documents presented by Beritić, which mention *monasterio pulcellarium sancti Blasii de Ragusio te S. Biagio delle Pulcelle*, especially the fact that the *sexteria*, which encompassed the area around St. Clara's, was called St. Blaise. This speaks in favor of Ranjina's theory of a second church, dedicated to the same patron, being built in the most western part of the peninsula. Annalists, as well as older historians, omit the data of Anonymous. Restić mentions only St. Clara's Church, which he places along the Rector's Palace. Writing after a negligible time delay about the saint's first Dubrovnik church, in a time when the Cathedral already took the name of the Virgin, they simply discard the information provided by Ranjina and Anonymous. By connecting the data of annalists, older historians and some archival records with the results of archeological research, it was concluded that there could have indeed been two churches dedicated to St. Blaise. One was in the place of today's Cathedral of Mary the Great and the other at St. Clara's Monastery. The one beneath the Cathedral was attested by historic records and archeological remains, the one beneath the Monastery by records alone.

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