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THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOLY SAVIOUR CHURCH IN DUBROVNIK (1520–1534)

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Abstract: Along with an outline of the relevant historiography, the paper provides a historical survey of the construction of the votive church of Holy Saviour and discusses the roles of the main participants – the Senate, construction overseers, and chief builder Petar Markov Andrijić – in the conceptualisation, design, and execution of the edifice. The architectural shape of the church is analysed in the light of the facts regarding administrative and financial controversies, as well as the challenges and delays during the construction process.

Keywords: church architecture, sixteenth century, Gothic, Renaissance, Petar Markov Andrijić

Introduction

The earthquake that hit Dubrovnik on 17 May 1520, on the Feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ, was by far the most devastating in the history of the medieval city.¹ As a sign of gratitude for the salvation from greater destruction and "to divert the wrath of God away from Dubrovnik", only a few days later, while the earth was still trembling,

¹ Vicko Adamović, *O trešnjama grada Dubrovnika*, Dubrovnik: Tiskarnica Joza Flori, 1883, 12-13; Giuseppe Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa considerato ne' suoi monumenti storici ed artistici*, Ragusa: Carlo Pretner Tip. Edit., 1884, 75-77; Mijo Kišpatić, "Potresi u Hrvatskoj", *Rad JAZU* 107 (1891), 97-98; Lukša Beritić, *Utvrdjenja grada Dubrovnika*, Zagreb: JAZU, 1955, 125-126; Lukša Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*, Zagreb: Odjel za likovne umjetnosti JAZU, 1958, 27.

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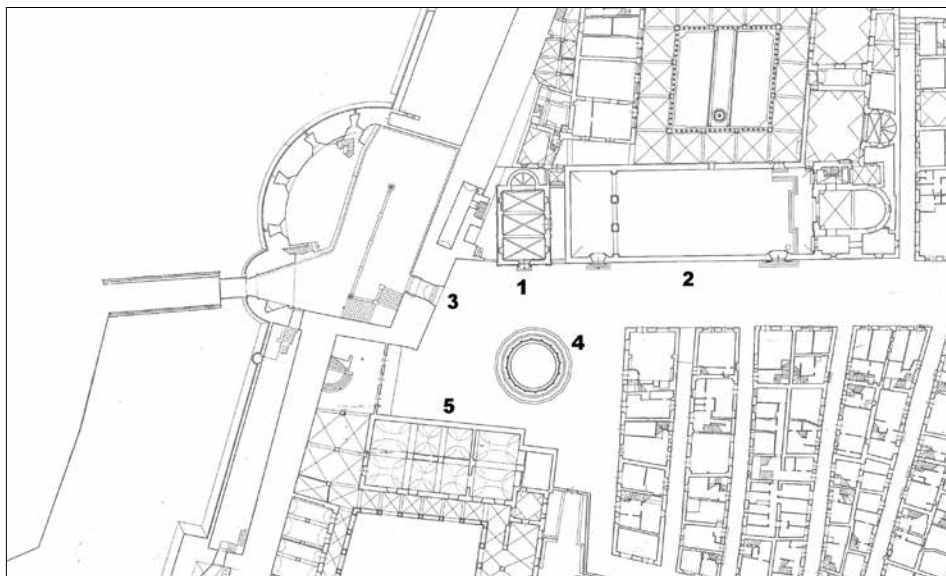


Figure 1. The location of Holy Saviour church within the urban fabric
 (1. Church of Holy Saviour; 2. Church of the Franciscan Monastery of the Friars Minor;
 3. Pile Gate; 4. Onofrio's Fountain; 5. Church of St. Clare's convent, desacralized in 1806).

Ragusan Senate (*Consilium Rogatorum*) vowed to build a church dedicated to the Ascension – Holy Saviour.²

Locally known as *Sveti Spas*,³ the church was built between 1520 and 1534 at an eminently conspicuous position – in the immediate vicinity of the principal city gate, opposite the Great Fountain, at the beginning of the main street, the Placa.⁴

In spite of its fairly modest size, the monumentality of the edifice results from the compactness and proportions of its self-standing body as well as the architectural articulation of the exterior, notably the refined harmony between the smooth wall

² Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti. Ceremonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću*, Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2009, 296-299.

³ The name of the church in Croatian form (*ecclesia Sancti Spassi; ecclesia Ascensionis sive Sancti Spassi*) appears in Latin-written public registers already in 1531 and 1532, see notes: 74, 75, 86.

⁴ Archival data cited in the notes of this article were compiled while preparing a historical survey for the purpose of conservation-restoration research of the Croatian Restoration Institute (programme director Krasanka Majer Jurišić), published in *Dubrovnik, crkva sv. Spasa. Elaborat konzervatorsko-restauratorskih istraživanja*, Zagreb: Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2021. Architectural drawings in this paper have been made according to architectural documentation created by Arhitektura i arheologija d. o. o., architects Pedro Gurriarán Daza, Salvador Garcia Villalobos and Nataša Ivanišević.



Figure 2. Church of Holy Saviour.

surfaces, built with perfectly fashioned ashlars, and masterly carved decoration. The front with a characteristic trefoil silhouette is articulated by means of pilasters and cornices, while its central part is distinguished by a rich figural and floral sculptural decoration,

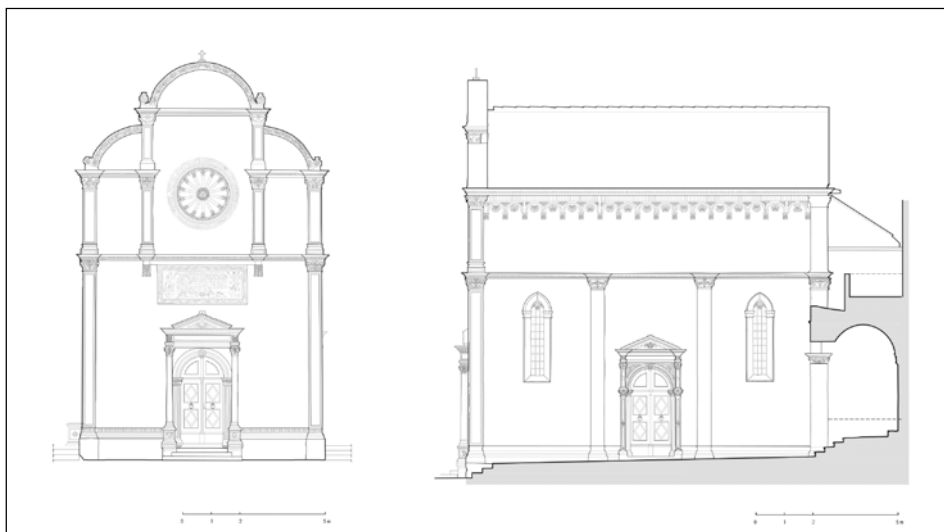
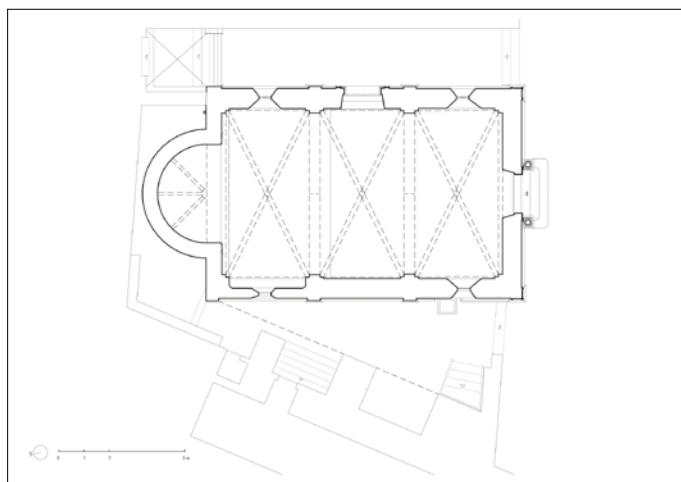


Figure 3. The main and east facade.

above all of the *all'antica* frame of the entrance doors and the rose window. Above the portal, built into the facade is a wide rectangular plaque with a commemorative Latin text; on an open scroll held by the naked winged *putti*, inscribed are the essential facts regarding the construction of the church.

Except for a somewhat lower apse at the back, the building may be perceived from the Placa in its entire volume. In the middle of its east lateral facade, divided by pilasters, is the classical side portal, while in the flanking fields are the narrow Gothic windows. The surface of the west side facade is also articulated with pilasters and the window



openings are identical to those on the east facade. Both side facades have cornices resting on blind Gothic arches filled with relief carved shells.

The interior is divided into three bays and covered by cross-ribbed vaults separated by smooth transverse pointed arches. In the northern wall is a wide apsidal opening, flanked by pilasters supporting a round arch. The apse is semicircular in plan and its hemispherical vault is articulated by ribs.

Holy Saviour in historiography and art history

The multifaceted symbolism which surrounded the reason for the construction of Holy Saviour's – the earthquake of 1520 – met with extensive mentions in the texts of older Ragusan historians; in all local chronicles the reports on the seism are immediately followed by rather detailed accounts concerning the construction of the votive church.⁵ Based partly on the information drawn from these texts, and partly on the living collective memory are the legends of the construction as recorded in the historiography of the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁶ In Dubrovnik it was firmly believed (and still is) that the stone material for the Holy Saviour Ragusan noblewomen carried to the building site with their own hands, according to some versions, barefoot noblemen, too.⁷ A most thorough and reliable account of the events has been provided by Giuseppe Gelcich in 1884.⁸ Observing that there is nothing special in the interior and that the church is of relatively modest dimensions, he stated that, "as regards the exterior, it may be the most perfect architectural monument in Dubrovnik". Describing its architectural style as "Lombard at its peak",⁹ Gelcich was the first to compare the shape

⁵ Ludovici Tuberonis Dalmatae Abbatis etc. *Commentariorum de rebus, quae temporibus eius in illa Europae parte quam Pannonii et Turcae eorumque finitimi incolunt gestae sunt, Libri undecim*, Francofurti: Impensis Claudii Marnii, et haeredum Joannis Aubrii, 1603, 321–322; Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Raugia. Scritta nuovamente in tre libri*, In Lucca: Per Vincentio Busdraghi, 1595, 74–75; *Narrazioni o vero storia degli Arcivescovi di Raugia scritta da F. Serafino Razzi, teologo domenicano, della provincia Romana*, in: Serafino Razzi, *Povijest dubrovačke metropolije i dubrovačkih nadbiskupa (X. – XVI. stoljeća)*, ed. Stjepan Krasić, Dubrovnik: Biskupski ordinarijat, Split: Crkva u svijetu, 1999, 132; *Li Annali della Nobilissima Repubblica di Ragusa*, in: *Annales Ragusini anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina* [MSHSM vol. 14, 1], ed. Speratus Nodilo, Zagrabiae: Academia scientiarum et artium Slavorum meridionalium, 1883, 98–99; Nicolò di Ragnina, "Annali di Ragusa", in: *Annales Ragusini anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina* [MSHSM vol. 14, 1], ed. Speratus Nodilo, Zagrabiae: Academia scientiarum et artium Slavorum meridionalium, 1883, 277.

⁶ Matteo Zamagna, *La storia di Ragusa* [reprint of the edition from 1869], Trieste: Società Editrice Mutilati e Combattenti, 1931, 214; Stefano Skurla, *Ragusa. Cenni storici*, Zagabria: A spese dell'autore, 1876, 105; Giuseppe Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, Ragusa: C. Pretner, 1884, 76–77.

⁷ M. Zamagna, *La storia di Ragusa*, 214; S. Skurla, *Ragusa. Cenni storici*, 105; G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, 76.

⁸ G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, 76–77.

⁹ G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, 77. Indeed, Gelcich had the so-called Venetian-Lombard style in mind, named after fifteenth-century Venetian architect Pietro Lombardo.

of Holy Saviour's facade with those of the cathedrals in Hvar and Šibenik. Moreover, having traced an archival record by which, in 1520, "a certain engineer from Padova" working in Šibenik was summoned to Dubrovnik for the purpose of city restoration after the earthquake, Gelcich inferred that the architect of Holy Saviour was Bartolomeo di Giacomo da Mestre, *protomagister* of St. James' cathedral in Šibenik.¹⁰ Lastly, Gelcich points to some dissonant tones in the local historical narrative regarding both the length and the total cost of the works.

Thanks to Gelcich's writing, Holy Saviour came to occupy a distinguished place in the earliest comprehensive surveys of Dalmatian monuments, written in 1880s by Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg and Thomas Graham Jackson. In Eitelberger von Edelberg's opinion, the church, despite its small size, has beautiful harmonic form that reminds of the Venetian churches of S. Zaccaria and S. Maria dei Miracoli.¹¹ Jackson points to the relation between the Gothic and the Renaissance (i.e., *all'antica*) traits, both in design and in decoration: "Classic pilasters divide it into three bays, but the vaulting is of Gothic construction, and so are the side windows [...]. The cornice is arcaded in Gothic fashion, but like that at Curzola has each arch filled with a renaissance shell." British scholar also briefly discusses the origin of the curious format of the facade and its relation to the architecture of the interior: "The front has a semicircular gable between two quadrants like that of the churches at Lesina [Hvar Cathedral] and Cittavecchia [parish church in Starigrad, island of Hvar], a fashion perhaps borrowed from the cathedral at Sebenico, where however the rounded gables actually close and are generated by the constructive form of the vaulting behind them."¹²

Further comparisons between Holy Saviour and similar churches in Dalmatia have been put forward by Hans Karl Eduard von Berlepsch and Friedrich Weysser in 1894.¹³ Besides the facades of the cathedrals of Šibenik and Hvar, as a solution similar to that of Holy Saviour those two authors were the first to mention the church of St. Mary of the Benedictine nuns in Zadar, claiming that both were modelled after San Zaccaria in Venice.

¹⁰ The name of the *protomagister* of the Šibenik cathedral Gelcich learnt from the correspondence with Federico Antonio Galvani, Šibenik historian, see G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, chapter *Al lettore*, unpaginated).

¹¹ Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Die Mittelalterlichen Kunstdenkmale Dalmatiens in Arbe, Zara, Nona, Sebenico, Traù, Spalato und Ragusa* [R. Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Gesammelte Kunsthistorische Schriften*, Bd. IV], Wien: W. Braumüller, 1884, 348.

¹² Thomas Graham Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria: with Cettigne in Montenegro and the Island of Grado*, vol. II, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887, 380-381.

¹³ Hans Karl Eduard von Berlepsch, Friedrich Weysser, "Bauten in und um Ragusa", *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* 44 (1894), coll. 237-238.

Holy Saviour also found its place in a voluminous study on the fifteenth-century architecture and sculpture in Dalmatia by Hans Folnesics (1914),¹⁴ although the author wrongly dated its construction to 1620. In line with Gelcich's criticism, Folnesics too points to the church's disproportional aedicule (i.e., the main portal), also warning about other deviations from classical architectural principles. He claims that the "trefoil" shape of the facade was borrowed from the cathedral of Šibenik, and blind arcades on the top of the side walls from some Romanesque cathedral.

The likeness between Šibenik cathedral and Holy Saviour has also been emphasised by Ljubo Karaman in his survey of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century art in Dalmatia (1933).¹⁵ Assessing the church of Holy Saviour as "an interesting example of typical provincial art", Karaman stresses the role of local workshops, to which he attributes the presence of "interesting Gothic details" in the "free composition" of the Renaissance church.

The most substantial contribution to the study of the church of Holy Saviour has been made by Cvito Fisković. In his works from the 1940s, based on a thorough archival research, Fisković brings a detailed chronology of the construction as well as the names of the builders and stonemasons involved.¹⁶ Having resolutely discarded the conjectures concerning the role of Bartolomeo da Mestre in Holy Saviour project, he introduced the name of Petar Andrijić into art historical literature, not only as the true author of the church but also as a leading architect in Dubrovnik of the day.¹⁷ Unlike older scholars who claimed that the shape of the Holy Saviour's facade echoed that of the Šibenik cathedral, Fisković draws attention to the fact that the Šibenik facade was completed in 1536, and the possibility of reverse influence.¹⁸ Moreover, the church of Holy Saviour, to his opinion "one of the most beautiful monuments of the Renaissance style in Dubrovnik",¹⁹ whose interior he nevertheless describes as "mainly Gothic", helped Cvito Fisković buttress his thesis on the co-existence of Gothic and Renaissance style in Dubrovnik architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, epitomized in his paradigm of the "Gothic-Renaissance style".²⁰ He would repeat the same in his 1956 study dedicated to the church of St. Mary in Zadar, in which Holy Saviour is mentioned

¹⁴ Hans Folnesics, "Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Architektur und Plastik des XV. Jahrhunderts in Dalmatien", *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Institutes* 8 (1914), 123, 166.

¹⁵ Ljubo Karaman, *Umjetnost u Dalmaciji. XV. i XVI. vijek*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1933, 101-102.

¹⁶ Cvito Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara XV–XVI stoljeća u Dubrovniku", *Izdanje Konzervatorskog zavoda u Splitu* 3 (1947), 8-10; C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari XV. i XVI. stoljeća u Dubrovniku*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1947, 141-144, 158-162.

¹⁷ C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 8-10; C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 158-165.

¹⁸ C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 143.

¹⁹ C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 8.

²⁰ C. Fisković, "O vremenu i jedinstvenosti gradnje dubrovačke Divone", *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 7 (1953), 54-55.

as a comparative example, not only because of the similar shape of the facade, but also because of the resemblances in architectural decoration.²¹

The questions of architectural definition of Holy Saviour in terms of style have been recurrently addressed by Radovan Ivančević in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly with regard to its facade which he defined as "early Renaissance".²² However, discussing the building in its entirety he concluded that "the style in question is still a typical Dubrovnik combination of the Gothic-Renaissance style", where the "Renaissance shaped facade in compositional terms is subjected to the Gothic method of design and proportioning".²³

Renaissance features of the church were also emphasised by Anđelko Badurina.²⁴ Regarding the sculptural decoration of the facade, Nada Grujić argued that their author, Petar Andrijić, follows the design principles that had originated in the fifteenth-century solutions put forward by Leon Battista Alberti and Michelozzo Michelozzi.²⁵ Within broader analysis of the phenomenon of coexistence of Gothic and Renaissance in Dubrovnik architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth century (2009), Nada Grujić also touches on the church of Holy Saviour, emphasising that it "introduced a new, reversed relationship between two styles: Gothic forms withdraw to side facades, giving way to Renaissance forms on the main facade".²⁶ The decorative motifs of Florentine origin were interpreted by Predrag Marković as "an expression of the presence of the masters from Michelozzi's circle".²⁷ The motifs of dolphins and birds on the capitals of the main portal Goran Nikšić (2008) views in the context of motif continuity in Korčula stonemasonry workshops, comparing them with decoration of the Korčula cathedral by Petar's father Marko Andrijić, as well as the church of the Annunciation in Dubrovnik, which Petar Andrijić executed in the 1530s.²⁸

²¹ C. Fisković, "Zadarska renesansna crkva Sv. Marije", *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 10 (1956), 106.

²² As opposed to the "late Renaissance" facade of Hvar cathedral, see: Radovan Ivančević, "Odnos pročelja i prostora hvarske katedrale i problem stilskog određenja", *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 24 (1984), 77 (n. 7), 82-83.

²³ Radovan Ivančević, "Proporcije trolisnih renesansnih pročelja u Hrvatskoj", *Peristil* 41 (1998), 65.

²⁴ Anđelko Badurina, "Crkva Svetog Spasa", in: *Zlatno doba Dubrovnika XV. i XVI. stoljeće: urbanizam, arhitektura, skulptura, slikarstvo, iluminirani rukopisi, zlatarstvo*, ed. Vladimir Marković, Zagreb: MTM, 1987, 327.

²⁵ Nada Grujić, "Antikizirajući kapiteli oko godine 1520. u Dubrovniku", *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 21 (1997), 12-13.

²⁶ Nada Grujić, "Gوتيčko-renesansna arhitektura Dubrovnika u 15. i 16. stoljeću", in: *Sic ars deprenditur arte. Zbornik u čast Vladimira Markovića*, ed. Sanja Cvetnić, Milan Pelc, Daniel Premerl, Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2009, 248.

²⁷ Predrag Marković, "Arhitektura renesanse u Hrvatskoj", in: *Hrvatska renesansa*, ed. Miljenko Jurković, Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2004, 79.

²⁸ Goran Nikšić, "Andrijići u Dubrovniku", in: *Renesansa i renesanse u umjetnosti Hrvatske. Zbornik Dana Cvita Fiskovića 2*, ed. Predrag Marković, Jasenka Gudelj, Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2008, 142-144.

The church of Holy Saviour has been devoted a separate chapter in the survey of Renaissance art in Croatia by Milan Pelc (2007),²⁹ who points to the "local tradition of combining architectural and style elements", that is, an interior space conceived as late Gothic behind a "Renaissance *coulisse*" of the trefoil facade. Although as the author of the church he cites Petar Andrijić (in line with Cvito Fisković), into the debate Pelc reintroduces the name of Bartolomeo di Giacomo da Mestre, hypothesising that the Italian master, after all, may have played a part in the design of Holy Saviour's facade.

The last to tackle the construction of Holy Saviour church is Emanuela Garofalo in her comprehensive study of the building activity in Dubrovnik after the 1520 earthquake (2009).³⁰

The chronology of construction

The Senate of Dubrovnik (*Consilium Rogatorum*) made a solemn vow to build a church on 22 May 1520, only five days after the disastrous earthquake.³¹ Two days later the same body designated the location, appointed construction overseers and accepted the initial budget.³² It was decided that the church be erected at the very beginning of the Placa, "in the courtyard near the monastery of the Friars Minor where there is a cistern".³³ That choice dictated the orientation as well as the size of the building. The length of Holy Saviour (approximately 15 metres) thus equals the width of the church of the Friars Minor; the two buildings are separated by a narrow public passage, which also serves as an access from the Placa to the entrance of the Franciscan convent. As regards the construction overseers (*provisores fabrice*), appointed directly were three

²⁹ Milan Pelc, *Renesansa*, Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2007, 195. Bartolomeo di Giacomo da Mestre as author of the church of St. Saviour is also cited by Giuseppe Maria Pilo, "Per trecentosettantasette anni": la gloria di Venezia nelle testimonianze artistiche della Dalmazia, Monfalcone: Edizioni della Laguna, 2000, 230, claiming that Petar Andrijić merely started the construction.

³⁰ Emanuela Garofalo, "Terremoto e ricostruzione a Ragusa (Dubrovnik) nel 1520", *Città e Storia* 4/2 (2009), 502–504.

³¹ State Archives in Dubrovnik (hereafter as: SAD), HR-DADU-3, *Acta Consilii Rogatorum* (hereafter: *Cons. Rog.*), vol. 35, f. 227v. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 9.

³² (...) *de fabricando in cortino contiguo monasterio fratrum minorum ubi est cisterna cum sabulo (...) quem locum reportaverunt officiales ad hoc deputati esse idoneum, aptum et sufficientem ad dictam fabricam et erectionem dicte capelle.* (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 35, f. 228v). Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*: 158.

³³ *Cisterna fratrum minorum* was among larger public cisterns of medieval Dubrovnik. It was built in 1388/89, on an empty site between the church of the Friars Minor and the city wall, where, next to the Pile Gate, stood the homonymous tower. The access to the monastery that ran in-between, alongside the west facade of the Franciscan church was already in the fourteenth century separated from the cistern with a wall. See: Risto Jeremić, Jorjo Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, I, Beograd: Centralni higijenski zavod, 1938, 37; Risto Jeremić, Jorjo Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, III, Beograd: Centralni higijenski zavod, 1940, 10, as well as *Odluke Veća Dubrovačke Republike*, II, ed. Mihajlo J. Dinić [Zbornik za historiju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, vol. 21]. Beograd: SANU, Naučno delo, 1964, 488, 524, 535, 571, 577.

noblemen who, in the same capacity, had been in charge of the works on the Rector's Palace initiated in 1515. Concerning the initial expenses, the Senate approved the sum of 300 ducats. Intensive activities regarding the supply of material and construction preparations were soon under way; a quantity of dressed stone blocks was immediately commissioned from the quarries on the island of Korčula.³⁴

By a contract registered on 16 June 1520, less than a month after the earthquake, Petar Markov Andrijić, styled as a stonemason from the city of Korčula, promised the overseers that according to the design he submitted he would put together "the entire facade" of the church, as well as deliver all of its carved elements: main portal decorated in relief, rose window, columns, cornices, mouldings, pilasters, and foliage ornaments.³⁵ The facade had to be 16 to 17 ells (8.2 – 8.7 m) wide, and of proportional height.³⁶ The deadline was not explicitly stated, and the price was set at 90 ducats.³⁷

In August the overseers commissioned four narrow and tall stone window frames, apparently for the side facades, at a price of ten ducats from Silvestar Vitičević, another stonemason from Korčula.³⁸ As agreed in November of the same year, steel bars for these windows were to be cast by blacksmith Ivan Miomanović.³⁹ Contracted in September and October were more shipments of dressed stone blocks.⁴⁰

³⁴ Between 1 and 12 June 1520, on three instances, a supply of 250 fathoms (equivalent to 500 metres in length) of stone blocks was contracted with Nikola and Andrija Pavlović, Ivan Kargo (warrantor Josip Andrijić) as well as Ludovik Karlović. SAD, HR-DADU-10-2, *Debita notariae pro comuni* (hereafter: *Deb. not. pro comuni*), vol. 1, f. 178v-179r, 179v. Documents are mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 9; *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 159.

³⁵ *Petrus quondam Marci Andriich de Curzola lapicida (...) promisit (...) dare et consignare (...) totam faciem dicte capelle cum sua porta de intaleo, rota, columnis, cornisiis, listis, pilastris et foliaminibus, designi quod ipse Petrus eis ostendit, de pulcra petra de Curzola et de pulcro laborerio et bonis iuncturis ad laudem cuiuslibet boni lapicide, omnibus expensis dicti Petri exceptis bastasiis solvendis per comune et muratoribus tantum, sed magistri scarpelli sint expensis dicti Petri (...)* Et habeat pro toto dicto laborerio in totum ducatorum auri nonaginta (...) *Declarantes latitudinem dicte faciei brachiis sexdecim in decem et septem cum sua proportionem altitudinis (...)*. *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 180r. Document is published by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 22, n. 52.

³⁶ The facade is 8.63 m wide, and 14 m high (14.41 m including the stone cross at the top).

³⁷ The costs concerning the transport of the material from the city harbour to the construction site were to be covered by the government, while Petar promised to hire stonemasons at his own expense.

³⁸ These windows – each one ell wide, with jambs four ells tall and heads in one piece, i.e., comprising the capitals and an arch – were to be installed on the side facades. *Silvestar Vitičievich dictus Catharinovich de Curzola lapicida (...) promisit (...) dare et consignare (...) quattuor fenestras slanzatas, factas complitas, bene laboratas et de pulcra petra sine aliqua macula, latas in luce brachio uno de Ragusio et altas parestarum brachia quattuor de Ragusio, et pluri capitella et arcum in uno petio pro qualibet fenestra (...)*. *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 180v. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 9-10; *Naši graditelji i kipari*: 160.

³⁹ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 185v. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 160.

⁴⁰ Stonemasons Andrija Pavlović and Ludovik Karlović were obliged to deliver 30 bond stones (*Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 182r). Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 160. In October 1520 more stone material was ordered from Frane Anđelović, another stonemason from Korčula, *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 183v. Documents are mentioned by C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 160.

In late November 1520, the Senate deliberated further financing and decided that 300 ducats were to be spent, "both for the church and the cistern beneath",⁴¹ from which it can be inferred that the ancient water reservoir under the church was not filled in but repaired and continued to serve its purpose.

In the spring of the following year, more stone material for the walls was commissioned,⁴² and – judging from the payment entries – it is clear that all carved elements ordered from Petar Andrijić in June 1520 were delivered by 17 May 1521.⁴³

On 10 September 1521, following the approval of the Senate,⁴⁴ the new, second contract with Petar Andrijić was concluded. His brothers Josip and Andrija acting as warrantors, Petar pledges to "build, complete and finish the church" according to "the design and a model" submitted beforehand in the Senate, yet without the dome, for a sum of 300 ducats.⁴⁵ A special contractual term specified that, should the construction of the dome be subsequently approved, he would build it for another 120 ducats.⁴⁶

Indeed, nine days later the Senate changed its opinion and decided that the dome ought to be built at a price not exceeding 120 ducats, i.e., in conformity with what was promised earlier to Petar Andrijić.⁴⁷ The dynamics of disbursements to the builder testifies to an intensive activity at the site during the last quarter of 1521.⁴⁸

Quite unexpectedly, however, in the spring next year, as the documentary evidence indicates, certain difficulties in the course of the construction project occurred. On 22 March 1522, Josip Andrijić, perhaps as his brother's warrantor, officially declares that he

⁴¹ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 35, f. 296v.

⁴² *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 183v

⁴³ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 180r.

⁴⁴ (...) *de dando libertatem dominis provisoribus fabrice capelle Ascensionis Dominice quod possint convenire et achordium facere cum magistris pro complendo dictam capellam secundum modellum factum et presentatum in presenti consilio, tamen sine copula, pro quanto precio et mercato eis melius videbitur* (...). (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 36, f. 100r).

⁴⁵ *Petrus Marci Andriich lapicida de Curzula (...) promisit fabricare, complere et finire de bona et firma petra Curzolensi et pulcro scarpello cum pulcris iuncturis et ligaturis et fornicibus bene factis incrustatis et laboratis iuxta designum et modelum superinde formatum et fabricatum et ad laudem cuiuslibet boni magistri et lapicide, omnibus expensis ipsius Petri, exceptis bastasiis quos dicti domini provisores tenentur et debent dare a Ponta usque ad dictam ecclesiam, lignamina et ferramenta et plumbum neccesarium ipse fabrice. Et hoc pretio et foro ducatorum tercentorum* (...). *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 190r. Document is published by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 22–23, n. 54.

⁴⁶ (...) *hoc pacto quod ipse Petrus non sit obligatus facere ipsam copulam in modello existentem pro nunc, et casu quo dominium et de mente domini esset quod dicta copula fieret et fabricaretur in dicta ecclesia, tunc et eo casu ipse Petrus promisit facere precio et foro ducatorum centum viginti ipsam copulam* (...). *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 190r.

⁴⁷ (...) *de concedendo provisoribus fabrice dicte capelle Ascensionis Dominice quod possint supra dictam capellam fieri facere dictam copullam, cum hoc quod in ea non possint expendere ultra ducatos centum viginti, secundum modelum* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 36, f. 117v.

⁴⁸ Between 17 October and 22 December Petar received 297 ducats, that is, (in addition to 100 ducats which he received as an advance payment) a total of 397 ducats. *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 190r.

will refund 25 ducats – a part of a larger sum – to the works (*fabrica*) of Holy Saviour.⁴⁹ On the other hand, for his own work at the building site, on 16 April Josip confirms the acceptance of 20 ducats and on 7 May of the same amount.⁵⁰ Regrettably, none of these documents provide any specific details.

Subsequently, also in May 1522, Petar received 20 ducats and another 25 ducats at the beginning of June. Nevertheless, in the ensuing two years the sources afford virtually no information on the developments concerning the site.⁵¹ The project came to a halt in mid-1523 at the latest when Petar had to flee the city because of serious financial difficulties. Notably, in October that year the Minor Council decided to extend his safe conduct, i.e., immunity from debt prosecution, so he could complete the work on the fishmarket quay, agreed upon several months before, by the end of June.⁵²

By the beginning of 1524 the builder again departed from Dubrovnik. Testifying to that is the Senate's decision dated 31 March 1524, by which a safe conduct was given to him in order to complete the works on the church of Holy Saviour and Rector's Palace, for both of which, as stated, he had already been paid.⁵³ Soon afterwards, Petar returned to Dubrovnik,⁵⁴ where, apparently, he remained well after the designated deadline.⁵⁵ Given that his obligations on the Rector's Palace were no longer mentioned, in all likelihood he finished his work on that building in the second half of 1524. There is no information, however, whether the works on Holy Saviour were resumed at the time.

The next information concerning Holy Saviour is from April 1525. By order of the overseers, Josip Andrijić, Petar's brother, was to be disbursed 10 ducats (as part of the total sum, which is not specified) for some "executed and prospective" works at the building site, but the payment was suspended by the Minor Council.⁵⁶

Eight months later, on 2 January 1526, the construction of Holy Saviour was placed on the agenda of the Minor Council. It was first decreed that Josip or Petar Andrijić be

⁴⁹ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 191v.

⁵⁰ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 193r, 194r.

⁵¹ In that respect, attention should be drawn to a gap within the series *Debita notarie pro comuni*. Last entries in the first volume were dated 7 May 1522, while the entries in the second volume (in which the first twenty leaves are missing) start with 26 September 1523.

⁵² SAD, HR-DADU-4, *Acta Consilii Minoris* (hereafter: *Cons. Min.*), vol. 34, f. 262r. By the end of the same month, the same body approved a fifteen-day safe conduct to Marko's brother, Josip (*Cons. Min.*, vol. 34, f. 268v).

⁵³ (...) *de dando fidam et liberum saluum conductum ab omnibus suis debitis Petro lapicide de Corzula pro mensibus tribus proxime futuris a die qua veniret Ragusium, non obstantibus aliquibus suis debitis vel plegiariis per ipsum cuiquam factis, et hoc ut possit finire ecclesiam Glorioso Ascensionis et palatium domini pro quibus iam habuit solutionem* (...). (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 37, f. 168r). Document is mentioned by E. Garofalo, "Terremoto e ricostruzione a Ragusa (Dubrovnik) nel 1520", 506, n. 44.

⁵⁴ His presence in Dubrovnik is documented on 12 April 1524, see note 103.

⁵⁵ On 3 August 1524 Petar confirmed to have received five ducats for the works on the Rector's Palace. *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 13r.

⁵⁶ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 18v.

disbursed 15 ducats. Secondly, the supervisors of public finances, together with the construction overseers, were ordered to audit the accounts of Holy Saviour, having previously called the "stonemasons" (i.e., Andrijić brothers) to submit their own evidence of delivered material and works executed.⁵⁷ From the Senate conclusion voted on the next day it is clear that the chief builder was not in Dubrovnik at the time; accepted was the proposal by which Petar – "indebted due to the construction of Holy Saviour church" – be regranted the safe conduct for a period of four months, that is, to be guaranteed immunity from prosecution notwithstanding "his debts to the state as well as to private persons".⁵⁸ An additional entry in the register reads that Petar arrived in Dubrovnik on 7 May, which means that the deadline was calculated from that day on.

Less than a month later, on 2 June 1526, the Senate deliberated on Holy Saviour's dome; the conclusion from 1521 was revoked, and the idea of dome's construction explicitly rejected.⁵⁹

The report on the state of mutual accounts between the Republic and Petar Andrijić was submitted to the Senate on 2 August 1526.⁶⁰ By that day, for his work on Holy Saviour, Rector's Palace and Divona the builder had received a much larger sum than agreed upon by the respective contracts, as many as 350 ducats; almost half of that amount (168 ducats) concerned Holy Saviour. The calculation included the worth of certain carved architectural elements for the interior which Petar delivered in addition to what he had agreed in the contract. Their value was estimated at 80 ducats, specifying that the mentioned sum referred to the portal on the side facade, apse with the cornice and arch, pilasters of the triumphal arch, four pilasters and four half-pilasters in the church interior, mensa of the high altar with its colonettes, stairs inside and outside of the church, one capital, as well as another two capitals above the high altar.⁶¹

⁵⁷ (...) *de faciendo polliciam de ducatis quindecim provisoribus fabrice ecclesie Sancte Ascensionis in nomine officialium laborerorum comunis pro dando Iosepho Marci Andriich de Curzola obligato cum fratribus suis pro dicta fabrica, aut Petro eius fratri. Et quod interim officiales rationum comunis simul cum dictis provisoribus debeant videre rationem dicte fabrice et debiti dictorum lapicidarum, vocando ipsos lapicidis ut producant et ostendant eorum rationes pro laboreris per eos factis et datis (...).* Cons. Min., vol. 35, f. 142r. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 10; *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 161.

⁵⁸ Cons. Rog., vol. 38, f. 73v.

⁵⁹ Cons. Rog., vol. 38, f. 129v. The document was hitherto unknown; it was believed that the idea of the dome was tacitly abandoned.

⁶⁰ Cons. Rog., vol. 38, f. 149v–150v. Document is published by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 23–24 (n. 57).

⁶¹ (...) *certi lavoreri (...) facti ultra le dicte conventione, zoe per le porte alla faza de Sancto Francesco et per la concha intorno lo altar grande cum la sua lista et arco et per li pilastri intorno lo dicto altare et per pilastri quatro et altri quatro mezo pilastri dentro ne la chiesa et per la pianca de lo altar grande cum le sue colonette de sotto et per certi schalini dentro et de fora de la dicta chiesa et certo capitello et ancora per doi capitelli sopra lo altare grande, stimate le dicte cose per piu homini pratici in questi lavoreri sopra loro conscientia ducati ottanta (...).* Cons. Rog., vol. 38, f. 149v–150v.

Soon after the approval of the financial report, it was proposed in the Senate that the builder should be admonished to complete the church within three months or be forced to pay the remainder of his debt; otherwise the state should be compensated from the private possessions of the construction overseers, and that, finally, the decision on the safe conduct, previously granted to Petar, remained in effect. However, the motion did not win the necessary majority vote and the decision was postponed.⁶² On the other hand, it appears that the construction was resumed after all. By the end of August, the builder's safe conduct was extended until the end of the current year, 1526.⁶³ Moreover, notwithstanding his debt, on 29 November Petar was given another 50 ducats for the works on the church,⁶⁴ and, by the end of December, the Senate approved the extension of Petar's safe conduct for another two months.⁶⁵

In spite of that, the sources lack any information about the construction works on Holy Saviour in 1527. This time the reason for the disruption at the building site should be ascribed to the force majeure – great epidemic of plague that reached Dubrovnik in the late 1526, and peaked in the first half of 1527.⁶⁶

By the end of May 1528, the building was still unfinished and, in the meanwhile, Petar Andrijić ended up in debtors' prison.⁶⁷ The proposal to set him free was rejected at first, only to be accepted a week later on several strict conditions, the foremost being that Petar, immediately upon release from prison, embarked on the completion of Holy Saviour.

At the end of June, the Minor Council appointed three noblemen who would once more determine the exact amount of Andrijić's debt.⁶⁸ The works were soon resumed. On 3 July Petar confirmed a receipt of five ducats,⁶⁹ while the next day the Senate ordered

⁶² (...) *de admonendo* (...) *Petrum Marci Andriich quod debeat complere capellam Ascensionis Domini de omnibus laboreris secundum pactum infra menses tres proxime futurum, attento quia habuit totam solutionem totius fabrice dicte capelle et etiam plus. Et si secus faceret quod debeat cogi ad solutionem resti debiti sui reportati superius. Et casu quo comune nostro non possit se valere super eum et plegios suos, quod tali casu debeat se valere super provisos dicte fabrice, videlicet ser Daniele Ni. de Restis et socios, secundum ordines, sine preiudicio fide seu salvconductus dati dicto Petro* (...). (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 150r). Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 10, C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 161.

⁶³ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 160r.

⁶⁴ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 33v.

⁶⁵ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 193r.

⁶⁶ R. Jeremić, J. Tadić, *Prilozi za istoriju zdravstvene kulture starog Dubrovnika*, I, 92-96; Zlata Blažina Tomić, *Kac-morti i kuga: utemeljenje i razvoj zdravstvene službe u Dubrovniku*, Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2007, 147-161.

⁶⁷ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 39, f. 78r, 82r. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 10, and C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 162.

⁶⁸ *Cons. Min.*, vol. 36, f. 8v.

⁶⁹ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 33v.

the supervisors of the state armoury to provide a rope (for hauling a load), as well as the necessary lead, steel and bronze.⁷⁰ By the end of October 1528 Petar received a payment of yet another five ducats.⁷¹

Between the latter date and the spring of 1530, the archival sources again provide no information on the construction. Yet, appointed in the Minor Council on 17 March 1530 were the officials who would again, for the third time, revise the accounts of Holy Saviour and establish the amount of Andrijić's debt to the state.⁷² Considering that it is the last in the series of such decisions, it may well be assumed that it concerned the closing balance, i.e., that the rough construction work headed by Petar Andrijić had been brought to an end.

The church, however, was still not functional and the obligations of the overseers had not yet been accomplished. At the end of 1530, shortly after the death of one of them, Danijel Nikolin Resti, the Senate elected Nikola Martinov Gozze from the three proposed candidates to fill the vacant post.⁷³

Finishing works and the bestowal of the church to the Friars Minor

On 22 February 1531, the overseers were allowed to spend 60 ducats "for the needs of the church".⁷⁴ Although it was not specified as for what exactly the money was intended, it can be assumed that the cost concerned the roof construction; on 19 December the Senate ordered the officials of the state armoury to deliver three thousand roof tiles for the church.⁷⁵

By the beginning of the next year, in 1532, commissioned for the church from Ragusan stonemasons were 400 square white stone tiles, one foot by one foot, chiselled in the same fashion as "those delivered from Kotor".⁷⁶ Ordered by the same contract

⁷⁰ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 39, f. 96v.

⁷¹ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 33v.

⁷² *Cons. Min.*, vol. 36, f. 135v.

⁷³ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 40, f. 124r.

⁷⁴ (...) *de dando libertatem dominis officialibus ecclesie Sancti Spassi quod pro necessitatibus dictae ecclesiae possint expendere a ducatis sexaginta infra prout eis melius videbitur* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 40, f. 154v.

⁷⁵ (...) *de dando libertatem dominis provisoribus armamenti quod possint dare cuppos tria millia de illis qui fuerunt preparati pro arsenali, pro fabrica ecclesie Sancti Spassi* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 41, f. 16v. In the meanwhile, in April 1531, the Senate again granted the safe conduct to Petar and Josip Andrijić for a term of three months (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 40, f. 170r).

⁷⁶ *Nos Givan Stiepanovich de Bergato, Radoslav Ratchovich et Petar Radoevich, omnes lapicide, confitemur quod* (...) *habuimus et recepimus* (...) *ex ordine dominorum provisorum fabrice Gloriose Ascensionis ad bonum computum ducatos auri quatuor pro quibus promittimus ire Budimiam et ibi facere infrascripta laboreria de petra alba, videlicet quadros quatringsentos latitudinis unius pedis laboratos secundum formam illorum qui afferantur e Catharo, rectos et bonos* (...). *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 103v.

pro sedilibus fiendis circum ecclesiam were also the stone slabs of the same quality, of at least two ells long, one ell wide and half a foot thick.⁷⁷ Although the total amount, i.e., length of the slabs is not specified, it appears that the term *sediles* refers to the elements of the base of the exterior church walls. Subsequent payment entries confirm that all the carved stone material was delivered by the beginning of November the same year.

Moreover, by decision of the Minor Council of 13 June 1532, officials of the lime kilns were ordered to deliver 30 *modia* (nearly 1,200 kg) of lime to the overseers, apparently for the plastering of interior walls and vaults.⁷⁸ In the autumn of that year, the Senate confirmed a disbursement of 100 ducats to the overseers to purchase "in Venice or elsewhere" gold and "other necessary things for the church".⁷⁹

The last archival entry pertaining to the works on Holy Saviour is dated 16 April 1534: the Senate approved that the officials of the state armoury hand over to the overseers lead for the windows, which was obviously used to hold the glass panes.⁸⁰ Therefore, fourteen years after the earthquake and the solemn vow to build a votive church, the works on Holy Saviour came to an end.⁸¹

Two years later, on 27 April 1536, the Senate decreed that the church be operated by the friars of the nearby Franciscan convent. They were obliged to celebrate a daily holy mass and, in return, promised an annual allowance of 20 perpers, as well as additional five perpers from the rector, when he and the Minor Council would visit the church on the Feast of the Ascension.⁸²

⁷⁷ (...) *et de pluri pro sedilibus fiendis circum ecclesiam promittimus laborare petras illius sortis ut supra longitudinis ad minus brachiorum duorum, latitudinis vero unius brachii, grossitudinis vero medii pedis, bene laboratas et spontatas* (...). *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 103v.

⁷⁸ *Cons. Min.*, vol. 36, f. 292r.

⁷⁹ (...) *de dando libertatem officialibus templi Ascensionis quod possint mittere Venetias aut alio emptum aurum et alias res necessarias pro dicta ecclesia a ducatis centum infra prout eis melius videbitur* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 41, f. 125r.

⁸⁰ (...) *de dando libertatem dominis provisoribus armamenti quod ipsi possint consignare officialibus ecclesie Ascensionis unam petiam plumbi pro usu fenestrarum dicte ecclesie* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 42, f. 22v.

⁸¹ Most frequently cited as the year of completion is 1528. See: A. Badurina, "Crkva Svetog Spasa", 327; G. M. Pilo, "Per trecentosettantasette anni": *la gloria di Venezia nelle testimonianze artistiche della Dalmazia*, 230; M. Pelc, *Renesansa*, 195. The information that the church construction lasted 16 years, unquestionably sourced from the Annals of Nikša Ragnina (Nicolò di Ragnina, "Annali di Ragusa", 277), has been quoted by T. G. Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria: With Cettigne in Montenegro and the Island of Grado*, vol. II, 380.

⁸² (...) *de conferendo venerabilibus fratribus Sancti Francisci ecclesiam a dominio nostro fabricatam sub nomine Ascensionis Domini nostri Ihesu Christi* (...) *de dando in elemosinam predictis fratribus Sancti Francisci iperperos viginti pro missis quas quotidie celebrabunt in dicta ecclesia Ascensionis et dominus rector cum suo consilio annuatim in festo dicte ecclesie debeant sibi offerre iperperos quinque ultra dictos iperperos viginti et dicti fratres habeant curam gubernandi dictam ecclesiam* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 42, f. 281v. For a more extensive account of the procession that marked the mentioned feast, see: N. Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 298, 413.

On church interior furnishing in the sixteenth century

Apart from the altarpiece of the Ascension of Jesus Christ, commissioned in 1527 from the painter Pierantonio Palmerini from Urbino,⁸³ the evidence concerning the original, sixteenth-century liturgical furnishings of Holy Saviour is very scarce. Only in the revision of the accounts from 1526, among the carved stone elements delivered by Petar Andrijić, also cited is the mensa of the high altar resting on its colonettes (*pianca de lo altar grande cum le sue colonette de sotto*),⁸⁴ of which nothing survives.

In other words, today's main (and only) church altar is certainly not the original one. Built on a solid stone base, it has the shape of an aedicula, the column pedestals of which are decorated with relief coats of arms of the Benessa noble lineage. Ambiguity arising from that fact – given that the rights of patronage over the votive church belonged to the Republic – has been resolved with the discovery of two documents which reveal that the altar in question originally stood against the side church wall. In February 1532, by decision of the Senate a distinguished Ragusan nobleman, Frano Pankracijev Benessa, was allowed to erect at his own expense "a chapel and altar" in the church of Holy Saviour.⁸⁵ In conformity with that, in early March the rector and the Minor Council, in Benessa's presence, designated the exact position of the altar: against the wall of the middle bay, opposite the side door of the church.⁸⁶ Benessa's supplication is not recorded and his motives – setting aside, of course, the reasons of the faith – as yet remain unknown, along with the possible services expected in return. In any manner, the Senate, almost unanimously, permitted Benessa to erect his own, private altar in a state-owned church. Indeed, this was a precedent case; to our knowledge, nothing similar has been recorded anywhere else in Dubrovnik. The questions of the dating and

⁸³ For a comprehensive account, see: Tanja Trška, "Pierantonio Palmerini's Altarpiece for the Church of St Saviour in Dubrovnik", *Dubrovnik Annals* 27 (2023), 7–26.

⁸⁴ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 150r. Based on sparse information in the document, it may be assumed that Andrijić's altar for the church of Holy Saviour belonged to the generic group (of Gothic) altars of the *Tischaltar* type, with a massive stone mensa supported by colonettes connected by arches, like the altar in the Lower Church of St. Francis in Assisi, see: Joseph Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* I, München: Alte Meister Guenther Koch & Co., 1924, 177, T. 24.

⁸⁵ (...) *de concedendo ser Francisco Pancratii de Benessa quod ad suas expensas possit facere in ecclesia Ascensionis in muro qui vergit ad partem ponentis unam cappellam cum altari prout ei melius videbitur et placebit et quod dominus rector et Consilium possint dicto ser Francisco assignare locum dicte cappelle et altaris prout eis melius videbitur* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 41, f. 35r.

⁸⁶ *Magnificus dominus rector Antonius lu. de Gondula et eius consilarii in executionem partis Consilii Rogatorum capte die 26 Februarii 1532 (...) fuerunt personaliter in ecclesia Ascensionis sive Sancti Spassi et ibi omni adtributa diligentia viderunt in qua parte essent aptius et commodius erigere altare et cappellam concessam ser Francisco Pancratio de Benessa et sic, dicto ser Francisco ibi presente et acceptante, consignaverunt et consignant arcum et partem qui sive que est in medio in muro qui est a parte ponentis, qui arcus sive pars est e regione sive contra portae existenti in muro a parte levantis dicte ecclesie, in qua parte sive arcu dictus ser Franciscus possit facere ad omnem suam voluntatem altare et cappellam secundum tenorem dicte partis Consilii rogatorum* (...). *Cons. Min.*, vol. 36, f. 275r.

attribution of Benessa's altar remain open for further archival research. Nevertheless, it is certain that this fine *all'antica* structure was not completed prior to Benessa's death in 1536. In his last will he bequeathed, among other, 100 ducats to erect an altar in the church of Holy Saviour "with the image of the Annunciation".⁸⁷ It was eventually commissioned and installed by the executors of his will – procurators of the church of St. Blaise.

Unlike Benessa's altar, above the mensa of the original high altar carved by Petar Andrijić there was no stone construction. In fact, its retable, a sumptuous altarpiece commissioned by the overseers in 1527 from Pierantonio Palmerini, a painter from Urbino, had a wooden frame, crafted in 1528 by woodcarver Zannetto di Francesco del Coro from Ancona.⁸⁸ Sadly, the frame has not survived, but the very dimensions of the altarpiece (307 × 255 cm) testify to the fact that the original high altar was comparatively larger than the present-day one.

From several hitherto unknown documents from the later sixteenth century one also learns that Holy Saviour's interior housed a chancel screen; in 1565 by order of the Senate the *chorus* of the church was to be repaired.⁸⁹ Regrettably, neither in the records concerned, nor in the decision of the Minor Council to hire a stonemason Ivan Klisac (Ivan Stjepanov),⁹⁰ and the payment entries that followed,⁹¹ can one find any details regarding its appearance. No material remnants of the screen have survived. Undoubtedly it was made of stone, and bearing witness to its position in the interior and approximate height are the traces on pilasters of the central bay, whose edges,

⁸⁷ (...) *Item lasso ducati cento che si faccia uno altare con la figura di la Annunciatione in la chiesa di la Ascensione in Raugi, in quello loco quale mi fu concesso per el Magnifico Consiglio de pregai del 1532 (...)*. SAD, HR-DADU-12, *Testamenta notariae*, vol. 37, f. 59v-60r.

⁸⁸ *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 39v. Document is published in T. Trška, "Pierantonio Palmerini's Altarpiece for the Church of St Saviour in Dubrovnik", 16, n. 35.

⁸⁹ (...) *de dando libertatem magnifico domino rectori et consilio uz possint ordinem dare ut chorus ecclesiae Ascensionis adaptetur modo et forma prout sibi melius et commodius videbitur (...)*. *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 57, f. 194v.

⁹⁰ (...) *de dando libertatem officialibus laborerorum ut possint dare Ioanni Klisaz lapicidae iperperos viginti pro parte et ad bonum computum pretii et solutionis pro adaptatione chori in ecclesia Ascensionis facienda (...)*. *Cons. Min.*, vol. 47, 245v.

⁹¹ *Ioannes Stephani lapicida sponte confessus est habuisse et accepisse a ser Nicolino Fr. de Gondula et sociis officialibus scriptae laborerorum scutos auri septem ad bonum computum suae mercedis pro fabricando choro ecclesiae Ascensionis Christi (...)*. *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 4, f. 191r. From two documents it is clear that Ivan Klisaz is identical to Ivan Stjepanov, recorded in 1561 as one of the two partners of the naturalised Ragusan stonemason and architect of French origin, Jakov de Spinis, in a contract involving the renovation of communal houses in 1561. A few years later, in 1564, Spinis (alone) was commissioned for the chancel screen (*chorus*) of the church of St. Roch, see: C. Fisković, "Les artistes français en Dalmatie du XIVe au XVIIe siècle", *Annales de l'Institut français de Zagreb* 14-17 (1964-1965), 37; Danko Zelić, "Short-lived *Opera bella e buona*: the 1564 Chancel Screen of the Church of St Roch in Dubrovnik", in: *Scripta in Honorem Igor Fisković*, ed. Miljenko Jurković, Predrag Marković. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Motovun: International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages, 2016, 271-281.

to enable the installation of the screen, were cut to the height of approximately 1.3 m, as evidenced by the inlaid pieces of stone that were used as substitutes for the missing parts after the removal of the screen. Therefore, spanning the entire width of the interior, the screen was installed immediately next to the side door, dividing the north bay of the church, i.e., the chancel, elevated by the height of one stair, from the south part of the length of two bays.



Figure 6. Apse with the altar of Frano Pankracijev Benessa (originally side altar).



Figure 7. Mark left by the chancel screen on the pilaster next to the east side portal.

Considering that the chancel screen is not mentioned in the documents from the period of construction, it was most probably a later addition. This must have taken place after 1536, when the building was entrusted to the friars of the Franciscan monastery, perhaps in relation to the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based in the church since an early, yet undetermined date.⁹²

Controversies and the main actors in the construction

Contrary to the edifice itself – the architecture of which shows no indication of adversities and interruptions – archival evidence clearly testifies to the fact that the construction project of Holy Saviour had encountered difficulties already in 1522/23, which, with varying intensity, lasted until the end of the works in 1534. Moreover, from an administrative viewpoint, practically from the very first day the whole undertaking exhibited surprising deviations from the local practice regarding the governance of public works. Setting aside unforeseen conditions and events – above all the great

⁹² See: N. Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti*, 278-279.

plague epidemic that raged in Dubrovnik in 1526/27 – it is clear that the dynamics of construction, and arguably the final appearance of the building, was impacted by a number of circumstances which are merely indicated by the documentary material. Bookkeeping irregularities, already evident in the first year of the construction, were soon coupled by serious financial problems related to builder Petar Andrijić, or rather the liquidity of his firm.

Considering the rigorous standards of public finance management developed and honed over the centuries by the Ragusan mercantile aristocracy, financial and administrative controversies surrounding the construction of Holy Saviour are fairly hard to explain. That the developments at and around construction site triggered negative reactions of the contemporaries and that a series of "affairs" consequentially escalated into a scandal, is indicated, ultimately, by indirect, though not less important, depictions in the local historical narratives as late as two and a half centuries after the church was completed. The anonymous local historiographer quoted by G. Gelcich emphasises, in the first place, the responsibility of the construction overseers: instead of the allocated 1,500 ducats, the total sum for the building and furnishing of the church finally reached as many as 2,500 ducats, while the church was still unfinished ten years after the beginning of the works because the overseers kept commissioning the "masters" for their own private construction sites.⁹³

Therefore, we ought to ascertain with fair precision the contributions as well as the accountability ("blame") that may be ascribed to each of the main participants in this project respectively – initiators/investors (Ragusan authorities, primarily the Senate), followed by construction overseers as principals and, lastly, the main contractor, builder and stonemason Petar Andrijić.

The Senate

The decision to build the votive church of Holy Saviour after the earthquake of 1520 was made by the Senate, the highest political authority and the most powerful institution of the Republic. It was again the Senate which, within a few days, decided upon the location and approved the initial budget. Already at that stage, however, while passing the decision on the construction overseers, the senators deviated from the usual procedure in similar cases. The members of the three-member collegial bodies which oversaw public works were, as a rule, elected by ballot from among ten or more

⁹³ (...) *chiesa in onore del Salvatore, per la cui fabbrica da esso governo fu terminato di spendere ducati mille e cinquecento (...) Per la fabbrica di questa chiesa furono fatti Provveditori (...) Questi nobili portarono nel conto la spesa che ascendeva a più di duemila e cinquecento ducati; e così lentamente fu fabbricata, che non fu terminata in dieci anni (...) Adoperarono li maestri nelle loro fabbriche (...).* (G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, 76).

nominated candidates.⁹⁴ By contrast, on that occasion submitted on the Senate was a direct proposal, subsequently unanimously accepted, by which the office should be conferred to three noble officials who, from 1515, had been entrusted with the works on the Rector's Palace.⁹⁵ This decision was essentially pragmatic and reflects the senators' determination to start and complete the construction of the votive church within the shortest possible term. A sum of 300 ducats was allocated for initial costs and, by the end of 1520, the Senate assigned another 300 ducats.

Although the overseers were given full authority, unlike the first contract, i.e., the 1520 contract for the facade, concluded directly between the overseers and Petar Andrijić, the contents of second contract with the builder (for the completion of the church) had to be verified by the Senate and was debated over at the session of 10 September 1521. In fact, at that moment the agreement between Andrijić and the overseers has already been drafted, because it was officially registered in the public notary on the very same day.

In any event, it was decided that the church be completed in accordance with the "design and a model" (*iuxta designum et modelum superinde formatum et fabricatum*; apparently the drawing and a maquette) submitted to the senators, yet without the dome. Added to the contract, however, was a clause by which the builder agreed, should the Senate change its position on it, to build a dome as well. Indeed, some ten days later the senators decided in favour of the dome.

That the construction of the votive church was among the major public priorities is testified by the fact that Holy Saviour, on several occasions, in 1521 and 1522, was explicitly (along with Divona and Rector's Palace) exempt from the senatorial decisions on temporary suspension of all public works,⁹⁶ caused primarily by shortage of liquid money due to the high costs of post-earthquake restoration of the city.

Unfortunately, the proceedings of the Senate do not describe the causes of the difficulties encountered at the construction site, but contain only the conclusions made to mitigate their consequences. Moreover, throughout the construction process there are long intervals without any mention of Holy Saviour. The senatorial approval may have been needed only in relation to substantial changes of the project, either concerning the design or the expenses. For instance, in June 1526 the Senate abandoned the idea of building a dome on the church and, shortly afterwards, the same body accepted the official report which confirmed that Petar owed nearly 350 ducats to the state; almost a half of that amount, 168 ducats, concerned the overpaid works on Holy Saviour.

⁹⁴ When it comes to churches, thus elected in 1533 were the overseers of the construction of St. Roch as well as the church of the Annunciation at Ploče, in both cases from among ten nominees, see: *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 41, f. 195v, 208v.

⁹⁵ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 33, f. 184v-185r. It should be noted that in 1515, too, the same three nobles were nominated directly for the office of construction overseers, with wide authorities.

⁹⁶ *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 36, f. 74r, f. 195r, f. 208v.

Notwithstanding his debts, the builder was recurrently granted safe conducts for longer periods of time.⁹⁷

After the protracted period of inactivity at the building site caused by the plague epidemic in 1527, it is from the Senate's decisions dated 19 and 26 May 1528 that one learns that in the meanwhile Petar Andrijić ended up in debtors' prison. The proposal to set him free was rejected at first, only to be accepted a week later on several strict conditions. Firstly, it was ordered that the house of Petar's mother in Dubrovnik be confiscated and sold in order to satisfy his debts, secondly, that a new revision of all accounts between Petar and the state be carried out, and, thirdly, that Petar, immediately upon release from prison, embarked on the completion of Holy Saviour.

From then on, the construction of the church would find its way to the Senate agenda only when deciding on the safe conducts for Petar Andrijić, i.e., guaranteeing him immunity from debt prosecution, or approving materials and/or necessary expenditures for the project to be finalized.

Given the numerous unforeseen disruptions that the project experienced, the role of the Senate in overcoming all sorts of obstacles encountered was instrumental. Obviously, only the Senate as the supreme authority could approve that ever larger quantities of public money be spent on building, grant safe conducts to the builder for longer periods and eventually liberate him from debtor's prison.

Regarding the role of other governing bodies, it must be recalled that at the beginning of 1526 the official revision of the accounts between the state and the builder was demanded by the Minor Council. Although it might seem indicative that it was not decided by the Senate, that fact appears to be of little relevance because of the essentially shared composition of two bodies.⁹⁸

Construction Overseers – Danijel Nikolin Resti, Petar Junijev Sorgo and Damjan Ivanov Menze

Construction overseers of Holy Saviour (*provisores fabrice capelle Sancte Ascensionis domini nostri Iesu Christi*) were noblemen who belonged to the innermost circle of Dubrovnik's ruling elite. At the time, they were in their mature years; the oldest, Danijel Nikolin Resti, was in his seventies, while Petar Junijev Sorgo and Damjan Ivanov Menze were in their fifties.⁹⁹ During the third decade of the sixteenth century all three were

⁹⁷ Safe conduct passes to debtors in Dubrovnik were usually issued to a period of 15 days and by the Minor Council.

⁹⁸ For a concise account on the rotation of Ragusan patricians through the highest public offices and council membership, see: Nella Lonza, "Dubrovački patriciji pred izazovom prava (druga polovica 14. i 15. stoljeće)", *Acta Histriae* 16/1-2 (2008), 125.

⁹⁹ For Danijel Nikolin Resti (c. 1452–1529) see Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 6, *Odabrane biografije (Pi–Z)*, Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015, 137; for Petar Junijev Sorgo (c. 1472–1535) see Nenad Vekarić, *Vlastela grada Dubrovnika*, vol. 3, *Vlasteoski rodovi (M–Z)*, Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2012, 273; for Damjan Ivanov Menze (c. 1474–1540) *ibid.*, 58.

elected to the highest public offices: they were, more or less, permanent members of the Senate and the Minor Council, judges of the criminal and civil court, *provisores civitatis*, and ultimately, rectors of the Republic. Apart from that, their competence and expertise in construction issues and site management should not be doubted; works on the restoration of the Rector's Palace, which they oversaw from 1515 onwards, were certainly by far more challenging than the construction of the votive church. In addition to their proven experience, the fact that the overseers had been already attuned as a team was arguably just as relevant.

The duties of construction officials were rather complex. They had to ensure continuous support of the public bodies (essentially the Senate), stable financial inflow, supply and due delivery and installation of building materials and parts. Most important of all was the finding and hiring of adequate, qualified labour – builders and stonemasons. Once the project was launched, the art of construction management implied the maintenance of construction dynamics; the possibility of encountering unexpected difficulties in the course of the process tended to increase with time. Typically, the final outcome, a completed edifice, has always been – as shown in the case of Holy Saviour – the result of various compromises.

The main priority of the overseers, with respect to either the Rector's Palace or Holy Saviour, was to keep up the pace of the project at all costs, even at the cost of administrative irregularities, and to retain the chief builder and stonemason, Petar Andrijić, on the site. Only this can account for the payments to the architect which, from a fairly early date, well exceeded the sums agreed upon in the contracts. Disbursements ordered by the overseers were evidently executed obediently on lower administrative levels.

At any rate, it can be argued that the overseers of Holy Saviour did not act merely as representatives and trustees of the investor – Dubrovnik Republic; on the contrary, they were also in the position to propose and advocate for their own ideas, persuade their fellow councilmen and influence all Senate's decisions related to the matter, which they unquestionably did. In this particular case, the evidence from the primary sources as well as the building itself suggest that it was precisely the role of construction overseers that must have been pivotal. It would otherwise be impossible to explain the untypical, unprecedented appearance and unique traits of the votive church. That building clearly conveys the will to create a structure that is extraordinary, conspicuous and unrivalled in all of its aspects and, if not one of a kind, manifestly different with respect to other Ragusan church buildings of the time. Moreover, it should be emphasised that in this particular case the documentary material clearly witnesses to the overseers' strong social authority and, consequentially, their "untouchable status".

In actual fact, following the energetic start of construction activities in 1520/1521 nothing suggested that the campaign would last another ten years. However, it is

not reasonable to assume – contrary to local historical tradition – that the entire responsibility for the total expenses and long overdue in the construction should be laid on the overseers.

As for the "engineering" competencies of the overseers of Holy Saviour, art historical literature mentions only Petar Junijev Sorgo in that respect. Apart from being engaged at the Rector's Palace and Holy Saviour, at the same time, in 1521, Sorgo acted as one of the three overseers of the works in the Arsenal,¹⁰⁰ and a few years earlier he embarked on the construction of his own prestigious villa at the Lapad seafront, on the southern side of the Gruž bay (today known as *Ljetnikovac Sorkočević*).¹⁰¹ By comparing the features of these buildings, Cvito Fisković sought to reconstruct Sorgo's "commissioner's" profile and came to a conclusion that his predilections in terms of architectural design varied depending on who the investor was.¹⁰²

Apparently, the tradition which attributes the disruptions in the construction of Holy Saviour to the overseers, in particular to "the engagement of the stonemasons on their private construction sites" does hold a shred of truth, albeit a single one. In April 1524 Petar Andrijić confirmed the receipt of 57 ducats as a down payment for the stonemasonry works on the house of one of the overseers, Damjan Ivanov Menze.¹⁰³ It was also stipulated that the quality of the execution be ultimately assessed both by Menze and Petar Junijev Sorgo, his fellow overseer. Although Petar Andrijić and/or his brothers were engaged on all public works supervised by Petar Sorgo, there are no data to confirm that he had hired any of them on the construction of his own suburban villa.

Unknown eighteenth-century historiographer cited by G. Gelcich also wrote that the overseers had their names inscribed in a stone plaque installed on the church front with an intent to make themselves immortal, but that they (in a historiographically didactic twist) were subsequently "punished" by apparently having their names erased from the plaque.¹⁰⁴ This, however, was never the case; the names of Danijel Resti, Damjan Menze and Petar Sorgo still remain clearly visible in the inscription.

¹⁰⁰ C. Fisković, *Kultura dubrovačkog ladanja (Sorkočevićev Ljetnikovac na Lapadu)*, Split: Historijski institut JAZU u Dubrovniku, 1966, 8.

¹⁰¹ C. Fisković, *Kultura dubrovačkog ladanja*, 8. The villa is today the seat of Institute for Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Dubrovnik.

¹⁰² "He, therefore, at the same time, probably according to government instructions, respected medieval building tradition and accepted Renaissance as on his summer residence where the Gothic windows blend with Renaissance arcades." (C. Fisković, *Kultura dubrovačkog ladanja*, 8).

¹⁰³ SAD, HR-DADU-9, *Diversa Notariae*, vol. 98, f. 35v. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 154.

¹⁰⁴ *Per rendere questi signori i loro nomi immortali fecero scolpirli in una lastra di marmo et incastrarli nella facciata; ma subito per decreto pubblico furono cancellati.* (G. Gelcich, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa*, 76).



Fig. 8. Inscription on the facade.

AD AVERTENDAM COELESTEM
 IRAM IN MAXIMO TERRAE TREMORE
 HANC SACRAM AEDEM · SE(natvs) · RHA(cusinv) VOVIT
 ANNO A CHRISTI · NATALI · DIE · D · XX
 SVPRA · M · XVI · CAL(endis) · IVN(ii) · DAN(iel)
 RHES(tivs) · ET DAM(ianvs) · MIN(tivs) · FACIENDAM
 CVRARVNT · ET PE(trvs) · SEOR(givs) ·

In the centuries-old history of the Republic such testimonies, when it comes to public buildings, are exceptionally rare.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the inscription containing the names of the overseers of Holy Saviour is the only extant of its kind in the city, while all the rest may be found in the remote parts of the Republic territory.¹⁰⁶ Documents from the time of the construction of Holy Saviour, however, make no mention of either the plaque or inscription.

¹⁰⁵ C. Fisković, *Prvi poznati dubrovački graditelji*, Dubrovnik: Historijski institut JAZU, 1955, 69; C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 86; C. Fisković, *Kultura dubrovačkog ladanja*, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Two inscriptions that have survived to date are installed on the Count's Palace on Šipan (in 1450) and the fountain in Ston (in 1581). C. Fisković, "Likovna baština Stona", *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 22-23 (1985), 84, also mentions the inscription containing the names of the officials at the Podzvizd Fort from 1459.

Testifying to the high social prominence of the three overseers, lastly, is the fact that the Senate did not sanction them for the irregularities in managing the construction of Holy Saviour. Their accountability was arguably debated in the Senate on one occasion only, i.e., shortly upon the acceptance of the audit report regarding the church construction in 1526. However, the proposed motion that – if builder's debts could not be paid by him or his warrantors – the state should be compensated from the property of the overseers, did not win the necessary majority vote.¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, the whole burden fell on the back of the builder, Petar Andrijić.

The builder-stonemason

The creative and entrepreneurial profile of Petar Markov Andrijić (Korčula, c. 1480 – Dubrovnik?, c. 1553) has been meticulously delineated by Cvito Fisković.¹⁰⁸ As a master builder-stonemason and head of an unrivalled stonemasonry workshop Petar Andrijić represented the most important link between the Dubrovnik building market and the renowned quarries of his native island. Having earned his reputation on major public building sites in Dubrovnik (reconstructions of the Rector's Palace and Divona), Petar Andrijić and his workshop were equally indispensable in 1520, during the restoration of the city after the earthquake. Given the fact that his career in Dubrovnik was at its peak, the choice of him as the principal contractor for the construction project of Holy Saviour church seemed as the most logical, if not the only possible solution.

As has already been pointed out, the payments that Petar received for the works on Holy Saviour in the first years of the project, 1520 and 1521, had considerably exceeded the sums agreed upon in the respective contracts. Nevertheless, Petar continued to receive payments for his work on the church until May 1522 when, apparently, the whole project came to the first serious halt. From then to the end of 1523 all data on him in the official books pertain to other, either private or state commissions.¹⁰⁹ That he had to leave Dubrovnik in 1523 on account of debt one learns from the conclusion of the Minor Council of 5 October, by which it was determined that his safe conduct, i.e., immunity from prosecution due to debt, be extended until the completion of the works on the fishmarket quay.¹¹⁰ In conformity with that, Petar arrived in Dubrovnik,¹¹¹ only to leave again shortly. Namely, on 31 March 1524 the Senate granted him a new safe conduct "to come to Dubrovnik to complete the construction of Holy Saviour and

¹⁰⁷ See note 62.

¹⁰⁸ C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 8-10; C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 152-165.

¹⁰⁹ In June it was decided to commission him for the delivery of stone for the restoration of the fishmarket quay. *Cons. Min.*, vol. 34, f. 242r, 244v.

¹¹⁰ *Cons. Min.*, vol. 34, f. 262r.

¹¹¹ In early December he received a payment for the work on Divona, *Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 10v.

Rector's Palace for which he had already been paid".¹¹² Documentary evidence at the State Archives in Dubrovnik fails to indicate whether his insolvency was rooted in the dealings of his firm, his own losses, or, perhaps, debts caused by the warranties he gave to others.

According to the audit findings, in 1526 he owed 168 ducats to the state treasury for the works on Holy Saviour; the value of the remaining construction works on the church at that point was estimated at 80 ducats.¹¹³ For the works to be resumed, Petar was recurrently granted safe conducts by the Senate. By the beginning of 1528 he eventually ended up in debtors' prison, but was soon released, on condition that his debts be paid from the sale of his mother's house in Dubrovnik.¹¹⁴ Purportedly, there was no other builder in Dubrovnik at the time who could replace him, that is, finish the construction of Holy Saviour instead of him.

The last disbursements to Petar Andrijić for his work on the church in 1528, i.e., twice the amount of five ducats, likely intended to cover his daily costs, perhaps even his life necessities, testify to his seriously impoverished state.¹¹⁵ After finishing works on Holy Saviour, Petar spent the remaining twenty years of his life in Dubrovnik, where he continued to be engaged on private as well as public building sites. Yet, the church of Holy Saviour will remain by far his most important work, his *magnum opus*.

Architectural programme, architectural design(s) and execution

Among the churches of Dubrovnik which either closely preceded or succeeded it, Holy Saviour distinguishes itself by an incomparably higher level of architectural ambition as well as the abundance of masterly executed carved decoration. In other words, Holy Saviour largely departs from the simple single-nave church buildings of the same type previously built in Dubrovnik and its territory; its most distinctive architectural features are the trefoil facade, hitherto unseen in Dubrovnik, instead of the traditional, bell-gable front, as well as the semicircular apse (notwithstanding the fact that the rear end of the building is hidden, i.e., not visible from the outside).¹¹⁶

¹¹² *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 37, f. 168r.

¹¹³ (...) *et die dar quello si spendera a compire la capella quello non e compita, stimato andarano, ducati 80* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 150v.

¹¹⁴ (...) *de relaxando ex carcere Petrum Andriich lapicidam cum securitate domus eius pro qua se despotestaverunt mater et uxor eius* (...). *Cons. Rog.*, vol. 39, f. 82r. Document is mentioned by C. Fisković, "Dokumenti o radu naših graditelja i klesara", 10.

¹¹⁵ On two occasions, on 3 July and 30 October 1528, Petar Andrijić received five ducats respectively (*Deb. not. pro comuni*, vol. 2, f. 33v).

¹¹⁶ It should be noted that in the recapitulation of Petar's commissions and disbursements in 1526 (*Cons. Rog.*, vol. 38, f. 150r) the apse (*la concha intorno lo altar grande cum la sua lista et arco*) is cited among the executed works not included by the contract. In other words, the execution of the apse as such departed from the design submitted in 1521.

There is no doubt that the innovativeness of the architectural concept was intentional. In search of the answer to the question as to whom this innovativeness should be attributed, the whole undertaking ought to be considered as a sequence of three consecutive stages: conceptualisation, design development, and execution. First of all, the fact that contracts with Petar Andrijić mention a drawing and a model made by him does not necessarily imply that he was the author of Holy Saviour in the modern sense of the word. In all likelihood – as for the aforementioned drawing and model – it is merely the execution that should be attributed to the builder-stonemason himself, while the architectural programme must have been previously conceived and even modified in the course of construction by no other but the overseers. Only in this way can one explain the fact that the initial programme, at least of the interior decoration, was subsequently considerably expanded.

Be that as it may, the architectural programme of Holy Saviour (if not initially, in 1520, then surely in the following year) had envisioned the building noticeably more complex and ambitious than the one that was finally executed.

Aporia over the trefoil facade of Holy Saviour

As with many other monuments of Dubrovnik and Dalmatia, after being extensively studied by Cvito Fisković in 1950s, the church of Holy Saviour was (and still is) considered to be more or less a closed topic. In the meanwhile, art historians have thematised only certain issues, such as the correlation between its Gothic and Renaissance stylistic traits, the sources of the motifs on the carved elements of architectural decoration, and above all, the edifice's most distinctive architectural feature – its characteristic, in Dubrovnik unique, trefoil facade.

The list of buildings with which the church of Holy Saviour resembles in this aspect began to be compiled fairly early, starting with G. Gelcich, and eventually encompassed all trefoil facade churches between Venice and Dubrovnik built from the 1460s (San Michele in Isola and San Zaccaria in Venice) until the seventeenth century (cathedral in Hvar). As one of the buildings in this group attention has also been given to St. Mary, church of the Zadar Benedictine nuns, the facade of which was long believed to date from the 1530s.¹¹⁷ Exact date of its construction has been eventually elucidated by Ivo Petricioli: the stone material had been commissioned in 1507 by Nikola Španić, a stonemason from Korčula, and the facade was assembled in 1509, a decade or so prior to that of Holy Saviour.¹¹⁸ The scholar also pointed to the connection between Španić and the Andrijić family "whose one member, Petar, built the Dubrovnik church of Holy

¹¹⁷ C. Fisković, "Zadarska renesansna crkva sv. Marije", *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 10 (1956), 100-128.

¹¹⁸ Ivo Petricioli, "Umjetnička baština samostana sv. Marije u Zadru", *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 12-13 (1967), 76-77 (n. 27a); Ivo Petricioli, "Renesansna pregradnja crkve sv. Marije u Zadru", *Zadarska revija* 16/2-3 (1967), 181.

Saviour with the round trefoil gable."¹¹⁹ Regardless, though, in his works published in the 1990s R. Ivančević persisted on his claim that the model for the entire group of buildings, Holy Saviour included, was the facade of the Šibenik cathedral, designed as early as in the 1470s by its then *protomagister* Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino.¹²⁰ In so doing, he disregarded the fact to which C. Fisković had pointed long ago – that the Šibenik facade was actually built between 1532 and 1536, that is, after that of Holy Saviour.¹²¹ Taking everything into account, the thesis on the facade of the Zadar church of St. Mary as the most direct precursor of the facade of Holy Saviour, despite the differences in scale and specific purposes of the two buildings, is the most plausible to date.

The dome controversy

With regard to the disruptions that occurred during the construction of Holy Saviour, a pivotal moment, and very likely the main source of challenges that accompanied the works, were the controversies over its ultimately unrealised dome.

Given that the dome is first mentioned in September 1521, in the second contract with Petar Andrijić, it is not possible to say whether it had been planned from the beginning, that is, envisioned in the design according to which in mid-1520 commissioned were the carved components and the assembly of the church front. It is even questionable as to whether this first design went "behind the facade" or it only concerned the front of the building. In fact, regarding the conceptual correspondence between the design drawing and a model mentioned respectively in two contracts with Andrijić in 1520 and 1521, one can merely speculate. (This also applies for the shape of the facade; unlike the facade of St. Mary in Zadar, that was undoubtedly supposed to have a trefoil ending from the outset,¹²² for the facade of Holy Saviour it cannot be accurately ascertained.)

In reality, the idea of building a dome on top of the church may as well have emerged after the signing of the facade contract. Such a scenario does not exclude the possibility of involvement on the part of Bartolomeo da Mestre, *protomagister* of the Šibenik

¹¹⁹ "If the name of master Nikola of Korčula refers to Nikola Španić or to Nikola Alegretov, both of whom were associates of the stonemasons from the Andrijić family, the church of St. Mary would be indirectly connected to the activity of that famous family, whose one member, Petar, built the Ragusan church of Salvation with the round trefoil gable." (I. Petricoli, "Renesansna pregradnja crkve sv. Marije u Zadru", 181). For more details on Španić, see Emil Hilje, "Djelatnost korčulanskih majstora u zadarskoj regiji", *Godišnjak grada Korčule* 3 (1998), 115-120.

¹²⁰ R. Ivančević, "Trolisna pročelja renesansnih crkava u Hrvatskoj", 94. In his work "Proporcije trolisnih renesansnih pročelja u Hrvatskoj", *Peristil* 41 (1998), 59-67, Radovan Ivančević fails to make any reference to the church of St. Mary in Zadar.

¹²¹ C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 143.

¹²² The contract with Nikola Španić from 1507 (Giuseppe Praga, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte a Zara dal Medioevo al Settecento*, ed. Maria Walcher, Trieste: Istituto Regionale per la Cultura Istriano-Fiumano-Dalmata, 2005, 305) explicitly specifies *arcus superior* and *medii arcus collaterales*.

cathedral, who for a long time – until Cvito Fisković's discovery of contracts with Petar Andrijić – had been held to be the *architect* of Holy Saviour. In addition to the evident resemblance between the two facades, the attribution to Bartolomeo was essentially based on archival evidence on his brief sojourn in Dubrovnik. Having arrived from Šibenik on 12 September 1520 upon the invitation of Ragusan government, apparently as an expert needed for the post-earthquake restoration of the city,¹²³ the Italian architect stayed in Dubrovnik less than four months, which curiously overlapped with the time gap between the first and second contract with Petar Andrijić. Hence, if not for the trefoil facade ending, it is therefore possible that Bartolomeo da Mestre was somehow "responsible" for the idea of the dome of Holy Saviour. On the other hand, the dome above the nave has been a traditional feature in the ecclesiastical architecture of the region, from Early Medieval to Gothic period. It might have been monumental, like the dome of the old Dubrovnik cathedral, or a small, rudimentary structure. Indubitably, the dome of Holy Saviour was to be erected above the middle bay of the nave and it must have been conceived not as a merely symbolic, small cupola, but – as much as the given scale allowed – a monumental accent of the edifice, which is evident in its significant price with respect to the cost of the whole building. Apparently, for the dome the builder was promised 120 ducats in 1521 – exceeding by one third the sum he had agreed the previous year for the assembly of the main facade and execution of all of its carved decoration.

Whether the Senate decided to abandon this idea in 1526 on account of structural concerns or technical challenges, or, however, in order to bring the construction of the church to a speedy end, albeit in a reduced form, remains a matter of speculation for the time being.¹²⁴

Conclusion

The church of Holy Saviour is a remarkable outcome of the combined effort between a high-ambition investor (Ragusan government) and the contractor – the masonry workshop of Petar Andrijić. A proper acknowledgement should nevertheless be given to the construction overseers, whose role in the definition of the initial architectural programme as well as in the process of execution seems just as important, if not decisive. What leads to such a conclusion is the comparison of Holy Saviour with two corresponding, slightly later, yet far more conventional, i.e., traditionally conceived,

¹²³ In the contract between him and the procurators of the cathedral dated 12 September 1520 (*Debita notarie pro comuni*, vol. 1, f. 182v), Bartolomeo is styled *ingeniarius et magister de scarpello*.

¹²⁴ To the fact that the construction of the dome would require a vaulting fundamentally different from the conventional, cross-ribbed construction which was ultimately executed, points E. Garofalo, "Terremoto e ricostruzione a Ragusa (Dubrovnik) nel 1520", 504.

projects in Dubrovnik – that of Annunciation at Ploče (built in 1534)¹²⁵ and of the unrealised church of St. Roch (from 1532/33).¹²⁶

Generally recognised as the most notable monument of Renaissance style in the ecclesiastical architecture of Dubrovnik, votive church of Holy Saviour occupies just as important place in the "Renaissance chapter" of Croatian art history. On the other hand, it has been singled out as the most significant church building of the so-called Gothic-Renaissance style, as it was traditionally defined in Croatian art historical literature from the works of Cvito Fisković in the mid-twentieth century onwards. Nineteenth-century architectural scholars, had, however, rightly warned that the church of Holy Saviour should not be assessed by classical standards because in doing so one departs from appreciating its intrinsic architectural values. R. Eitelberger von Edelberg emphasised its "beautiful, harmonious form that deserves to be appreciated in all its details",¹²⁷ while T. G. Jackson stated that: "this little building is an example of the tenacity with which in that country architecture clung to the older forms when the art elsewhere was travelling away from them into newer developments."¹²⁸ In this light, equally noteworthy is the remark of Hans Folnesics; despite inconsistency in terms of architectural style, that scholar in the church of Holy Saviour – symbol, as he put it, "of state politics" – sees specific qualities and compares it, indisputably due to its stylistic ambiguity, with the (coeval) paintings of Nikola Božidarević, emphasising that they possess the same appeal.¹²⁹

Thanks to its extraordinary design and prominent location in the cityscape, Holy Saviour is – at least when church architecture is concerned – at the same time a unique achievement and key monument of the eclecticism-imbued local architectural culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth century – a period also known as the "Golden Age of Dubrovnik", witnessing to the particular significance of Dubrovnik in the architectural landscape of the Adriatic of that time.

¹²⁵ C. Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari*, 154-155.

¹²⁶ Danko Zelić, "Crtež s prijedlogom lokacije crkve sv. Roka u Dubrovniku iz 1532/33. godine", *Analiz Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 58 (2020), 73-92.

¹²⁷ (...) ein Steinbau, der zwar klein in seinen Dimensionen ist, aber von so schöner harmonischer Form, dass er es verdient, in allen seinen Details aufgenommen zu werden. (Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Die Mittelalterlichen Kunstdenkmale Dalmatiens in Arbe, Zara, Nona, Sebenico, Traù, Spalato und Ragusa*, 348).

¹²⁸ Thomas Graham Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria, with Cettigne in Montenegro and the Island of Grado*, vol. II, 381.

¹²⁹ (...) wenn wir wie Burckhardt mit dem Maßstabe folgerichtiger Klassizität messen wollten, so würden wir nur ein Kompendium von Fehlern vor uns sehen (...) Wenn wir aber die Tabulatur aus der Hand legen und Burckhardts Merkerstuhl verlassen, so finden wir, daß dem kleinen Erlöserkirchlein derselbe Liebreiz innewohnt, wie den Bildern des Nikolaus Ragusinus, ein unwirkliches Hinträumen – ein Symbol der Politik des Stadtstaates (H. Folnesics, "Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Architektur und Plastik des XV. Jahrhunderts in Dalmatien", 123-124).