

THE DOMINICAN CONVENT IN TROGIR FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE END OF THE 13TH CENTURY

Based on historical sources, the article examines the history of the Dominican convent in Trogir from its founding until the end of the 13th century. It first describes how the Dominicans of Split acquired property in Trogir, dating this event between 1261 and 1263. It discusses the dispute between them and Columbanus, the Bishop of Trogir, regarding these possessions and concludes that the Dominicans only began building the convent and church after the dispute was resolved in 1266. Drawing on Trogir wills from that period, it concludes that the construction took about ten years, and that the convent was probably canonically founded in 1272. The article also provides an overview of the progress of the construction of the convent and the church, as well as of the inhabitants of the Trogir convent in the 13th century who are known by name.

Keywords: Dominicans, convent, Trogir, 13th century.

Introduction

Very few sources concerning the beginnings of the convent in Trogir, one of the three oldest surviving Dominican convents in the Croatian lands, have survived. As a result, it is impossible to glean any details regarding its beginnings and the life and work of its members in the 13th century. Aware of this, the historian and Dominican Stjepan Krasić rightly concluded:

The historical sources regarding its history were, unfortunately, written in a monumental, rather than documentary, language. Changes of government, which were almost always foreign, and the destruction and plundering of the convent's possessions are the main reasons why there is no surviving chronicle, parchment, or document that could provide a detailed insight into its construction, development, and the life and work of its inhabitants, etc. All that we know about it is based on indirect conclusions or documents that have been preserved elsewhere, often by chance. For this reason, writing its history is a complex task even for an experienced historian.¹

¹ Stjepan KRASIĆ, *Crkva i samostan sv. Dominika u Trogiru, Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 1, Split 2008., 75.

Taking up this task, Krasić based his research on the preserved sources, published in the collections of Tadija Smičiklas and Miho Barada, along with the inevitable references to Johannes Lucius (Ivan Lucić) and Daniele Farlati.² These works also form the foundations of this article. In addition, the article draws upon the works of contemporary authors, foremost among them the aforementioned article by Stjepan Krasić on the history of the Dominican convent in Trogir, and the overview of the history of medieval Trogir by Irena Benyovsky Latin. Furthermore, the references include other works either focused on, or merely mentioning, the Dominicans linked to the Trogir convent, as well as the 13th century historical figures whose actions shaped its history.

The Property of the Split Dominicans in Trogir

The beginnings of the Dominican convent in Trogir are inextricably linked to the history of the Order's convent in Split. Members of the latter occasionally travelled to Trogir to preach, staying in a house near the church of St Francis of Assisi in Prigrade. Nicholas Albertini, town judge and the last male member of his family, who died around 1270, had the right of patronage over this church. He donated it to the Dominicans, together with the land around it. The exact year of this donation is unknown; it is only known that it took place during the pontificate of Pope Urban IV (1261–1264), who granted the Dominicans permission to build a house and outbuildings on this land.³

The donation of Nicholas Albertini and the permission of Pope Urban IV laid the groundwork for a permanent Dominican presence in Trogir and the founding of a convent, though this did not happen immediately. Furthermore, the Dominicans did not immediately settle in Trogir, as can be concluded from the will of Gausius, son of Jancius (Zancij) Strie, who on 9 November 1263 left 13 libras to the Dominicans "who would reside in Trogir" near the church of St Francis.⁴ It follows that the money was not left to the Dominicans who were already resident in Trogir, but to those who were to reside there in the future. This means that the Do-

² Miho BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1-2, Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1948, 1950; Daniele FARLATI, *Trogirski biskupi. S dodacima i ispravcima Jacopa Coletija* (Kažimir Lučin, transl., Jadranka Neralić, ed.), Split: Književni krug, 2010; Ivan LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru I-II*, Split: Čakavski sabor, 1979; Tadija SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus*, 5–6, Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1907/1908.

³ Mladen ANDREIS, Trogirski patricijat u srednjem vijeku, *Rasprave iz hrvatske kulturne prošlosti*, 2, Zagreb 2002., 122; Irena BENYOVSKY LATIN, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir. Prostor i društvo*, Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2009., 135, 229, 235; FARLATI, *Trogirski biskupi*, 180-181; KRASIĆ, *Crkva i samostan*, 74–76; Ivan LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru I-II*, Split: Čakavski sabor, 1979., 234–235.

⁴ BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 3.

minicans did not yet have a monastic community in Trogir at the time, although the testator was aware of their intention to settle in the town as soon as possible. This will is also the oldest known written source on the history for the Dominican convent in Trogir and, based on its content, the donation of Nicholas Albertini to the Dominicans can be dated to before 9 November 1263.

The wills of several citizens of Trogir written before the spring of 1272 indicate that the Dominicans did not immediately establish a convent in Trogir. Until that time, the testators emphasised that they were leaving their funds to the Dominicans in Split.⁵ It was not until May of that year, in the will of Lucas Petrov, that a distinction was made between the funds left to the Dominicans of Split and those of Trogir.⁶ In the summer of that year, it was first explicitly stated that Dominicans were living in Trogir. Namely, on 29 June 1272, when Brother Leonardo, son of the late Dobra Domenca, and Brother Michael arrived to collect the five libras left to them by Lucas Petrov, they were stated to be living next to the church of St Francis in Trogir.⁷ Therefore, it can be inferred that the Dominican convent in Trogir was in fact established in 1272, although friars from the Split convent had been staying and occasionally residing on their Trogir property after arriving in the town as preachers.

The Dispute With Brother Columbanus of Rab, the Bishop of Trogir

The Dominicans of Split would perhaps have established a convent in Trogir earlier had it not been for the attempt of Columbanus of Rab, the Bishop of Trogir and a member of the Franciscan Order,⁸ to thwart them shortly after the grant of Nicholas Albertini. He wanted to hand the Dominican church and land in Trogir over to his Franciscan brethren, something he certainly would not have attempted had the Dominicans already established a convent in Trogir. How did this situation arise?

In January 1263, Pope Urban IV ordered Bishop Columbanus to arrange the

⁵ For example, in March 1264 Dujam Domić left ten libras to the Dominicans in Split; another will from 1271 left them 50 libras. In February 1272, Cannica Kažotić left them 40 solidi, while Dra-gešina, the daughter of the late Teverdemo, left them five libras. BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 48, 216, 318.

⁶ In May 1272, Lucas Petrov left five libras to the Dominicans in Trogir and ten to the ones in Split. BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 158.

⁷ BARADA: *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 373.

⁸ For more on this bishop, see: Ivan ARMANDA, Kolumban iz Raba – prvi trogirski biskup iz Franjevačkoga reda, u: *Zbornik radova znanstvenog skupa "Osam stoljeća šovanja Gospe od Anđela i prvoga franjevačkog samostana u Trogiru"* (Ivan Bodrožić and Lujana Paraman eds), Trogir – Split: Župa Gospe od Anđela, Muzej grada Trogira, Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu, 2022., 153–172.

purchase of land for the construction of a new Franciscan convent and church in Trogir.⁹ Consequently, in March 1265, the bishop bought two plots of land with a barracks in Prigrade. Since the church of St Francis of Assisi was nearby, Columbanus thought it would be convenient to give it to the Franciscans as their convent church and to dedicate it to the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, the prior of the Split Dominicans complained to Pope Clement IV and asked for his protection. In July 1265, the pope ordered Columbanus not to interfere with the Dominicans, i.e. to desist from his attempts to prevent them from owning the church of St Francis and building a convent next to it, threatening him with the harshest ecclesiastical penalties should he refuse to obey. In order to be certain that Columbanus would obey his order, the pope entrusted the protection of the Dominicans and their property to John of the Buzad family, the Bishop of Skradin (a member of the Dominican Order) and its archpriest.¹⁰

On 10 August 1265, before he received the pope's ruling, Columbanus celebrated Mass on the Dominican property, solemnly blessing and laying the foundation stone for the construction of a new Franciscan convent and church.¹¹ Soon after this, he learned of the pope's decision and abandoned his intentions, informing the pope on 24 February 1266 that he would no longer interfere with the Dominicans and their property in Trogir.¹²

Construction of the Convent and Church

It was only after Bishop Columbanus abandoned his plans to build a Franciscan convent on the Trogir property of the Split Dominicans in February 1266 that the friars were able to begin the construction of their convent. As is evident from several Trogir wills, the process took approximately ten years. For example, in October 1275, Desa the widow of Plausius, left 50 libras for the construc-

⁹ SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus* 5, 284-285.

¹⁰ FARLATI, Trogirski biskupi, 180-181; LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru I*, 234-235; SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus* 5, 341-342. For more on Bishop John from the Buzad family, see: Ivan ARMANDA, Ugarski dominikanac Ivan de Buzad – biskup skradinski (1250. – 1266.) i nadbiskup splitski (1266. – 1293./94.), *Kulturna baština*, 45, Split 2019., 7–35.

¹¹ SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus* 5, 344.

¹² BENYOVSKY LATIN, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 229; Milan IVANIŠEVIĆ, Pax franciscana, *Hrvatska obzorja*, 2, Split 2001., 338; LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru I*, 234-236. In light of the presented information, one should reject I. Benyovsky Latin's claim that, in the 13th century, the Dominicans "grabbed land in Prigrade at the Franciscans' expense". (BENYOVSKY LATIN, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 235). It is clear that the Dominicans did not "grab" the land, but that it was granted to them, and that they did nothing at the expense of the Franciscans, as it was Bishop Columbanus (of the Franciscan Order) who tried to hand the land over to the Franciscans at the expense of the Dominicans.

tion of a Dominican convent in Trogir,¹³ while in June 1276, Buda, daughter of Saladin Vučina and wife of Paul, left three libras for the same purpose.¹⁴

The original convent was probably completed by 1280, and it and its community soon became a recognisable and indispensable feature of daily life in Trogir. This is, to some extent, illustrated by the fact that a legally binding purchase and sale contract was drawn up in the convent on 23 February 1292,¹⁵ as was another legal instrument on 25 March 1294.¹⁶ It is likely that other legally binding documents were drawn up in the convent, but they have not been preserved.

However, the construction of the church was still underway. Initially, the Dominicans used the church of St Francis of Assisi for religious services, but over time, it became too small, undoubtedly due to the increasing number of believers who were coming to hear the Dominican preachers. Consequently, they decided to expand it. It is not known when the works began or how long they lasted, but they were still in progress in 1293. This is evident from the will of Desa Petrov, who that March bequeathed five libras for the construction of a Dominican church in Trogir.¹⁷ The construction work lasted into the first decade of the following century.¹⁸ In the meantime, the Dominicans, led by the prior Father Michael of Durrës, expanded their property in Trogir by purchasing a nearby plot of land with three barracks from the brothers Matthew, Gregory, and Desa, as well as their sisters Frana and Stana, children of the late Lucas of the Lucić family, on 16 July 1304.¹⁹ The construction of the new church was accompanied by its rededication from the founder of the Franciscan Order to the founder of the Dominican Order.

Members of the Trogir Convent in the 13th Century

According to medieval sources, only four Dominicans named can be confirmed to have lived in the Trogir convent, and there one further friar for whom this is implied, though not explicitly stated. As stated above, Brother Leonardo,

¹³ BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 2, 122–123.

¹⁴ ANDREIS, *Trogirski patricijat u srednjem vijeku*, 185; BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensis* 2, 155.

¹⁵ BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 2, 277–278.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 327.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁸ BENYOVSKY LATIN, *Srednjovjekovni Trogir*, 235–236; KRASIĆ, *Crkva i samostan*, 77–78; Ivan LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru II, Split: Čakavski sabor*, 1979., 1043–1044.

¹⁹ FARLATI, *Trogirski biskupi*, 181; LUCIĆ, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru II*, 1043. Brothers Matthew, Gregory, and Desa and their sisters Frana and Stana were the children of the late Lucas Lucić, after whom the family took its surname, and the great-grandchildren of the progenitor Lucas. ANDREIS, *Trogirski patricijat*, 84, 85, 91.

son of the late Dobra Domenca, and Brother Michael were mentioned on 29 June 1272 as the first members of this convent known by name.²⁰ The other two friars who were also undoubtedly members of the Trogir convent were Brothers Maurus and Thomas, mentioned in a document dated 15 April 1285.²¹

Father Simon of Trogir, who was elected Bishop of Knin in the summer of 1272, was also a member of the Trogir convent. On 15 August 1272, he authorised Martin, a canon of Trogir, to request confirmation of his election on his behalf from John of the Buzad family, the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Split.²² However, the metropolitan annulled the election because it had not been properly conducted, and thus Father Simon was not consecrated as bishop.²³ It is reasonable to assume that Father Simon was living in the Trogir convent at the time of his election as bishop, because otherwise he would not have sent a member of the Trogir Chapter to the metropolitan to seek confirmation of the election. This would-be Bishop of Skradin can be considered identical to the Father Simon who, together with Father Jese (Jesse), attended the reconciliation of Father Columbanus of Rab, the Bishop of Trogir, and his Chapter with the Trogir commune on 21 June 1266. Although the document that mentions this was drawn up in Trogir, the two Dominican friars mentioned were undoubtedly not living in the town at the time, but rather in Split, from where they came for this occasion together with Thomas, the famous Archdeacon of Split.²⁴

In addition to the above, one should mention two more Dominicans connected to Trogir, whose names were written in the will of Stana Saladini, a Trogir citizen, on 28 October 1286. In addition to leaving some money for the Dominican church, she left 5 libras to Brother John Scollecus, and 50 libras to her grandson, Brother Augustine, to buy books.²⁵ It is not possible to determine the two mentioned Dominicans' place of residence from the will, but it is known from other sources that Brother Augustine was not in his native Trogir at the time. Namely, this man was the future bishop and first Croatian Blessed, Augustine Kažotić (c. 1260 – 1323), who in the summer of that year, shortly before his grandmother's will was made, had gone to Paris to continue his studies. Moreover, according to his biographers, the future Blessed did not begin his monastic life

²⁰ BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 373.

²¹ Tadija SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus*, 6, Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1908., 524.

²² BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 1, 402–403.

²³ SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus* 6, 1.

²⁴ SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus* 5, 382–383.

²⁵ BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 2, 251.

in his hometown, but in nearby Split, from where he went to study in Italy and then in Paris in 1286.²⁶ This assumption is all the more reasonable considering that the construction of the Dominican convent in Trogir, as we have concluded earlier, could have begun in 1266 at the earliest, and lasted at least ten years. This means that Augustine Kažotić, who is believed to have been born around 1260 and entered the Dominicans around 1277–78, could not have joined the convent in his hometown, as it was still under construction or had just been completed and likely lacked the capacity to house novices and students. In addition, the novitiate and monastic studies were available in nearby town of Split, so there was no need for them to simultaneously exist in Trogir.

Conclusion

Having arrived on the eastern Adriatic coast around 1225, the Dominicans established their first convents in Dubrovnik and Split, from where they carried out preaching missions to neighbouring towns. They were invited to settle in these towns as well, and received real estate through grants and bequests, which was necessary for the establishment of convents and the development of their activities. This is precisely what happened in Trogir, where the town judge Nicholas Albertini granted property to the Dominicans of Split. Although the exact year of his grant is unknown, the sources indicate that it occurred during the pontificate of Pope Urban IV. Accordingly, the Dominicans' arrival in Trogir is generally dated in the literature to the period between 1261 and 1264. Source analysis has shown that 1264 can be ruled out because the Dominicans' property in Trogir is first mentioned in a will dated 9 November 1263. Based on the above, Albertini's grant can be dated between the beginning of Pope Urban IV's pontificate (29 August 1261) and the making of the mentioned will (9 November 1263). However, it is important to emphasise that the year the property was obtained is not identical to the year the convent was established. The Dominicans did not immediately establish their convent in Trogir, but occasionally resided in the town after arriving there from Split to preach. It was only after they resolved their dispute with Bishop Columbanus in 1266 that they were able to begin building the convent, which was probably canonically founded in 1272, as can be concluded from several Trogir wills. The convent, which would be

²⁶ Marijan BIŠKUP, *Blaženi Augustin Kažotić (o. 1260. – 1323.). Biskup, prosvjetitelj i zaštitnik siromaha*, Zagreb: Dominikanska naklada Istina, 2002., 35–37; Massimiliano MONACO, *Agostino da Traù. Un domenicano croato vescovo di Lucera*, Lucera: Edizioni Terzo Millennio, 2001., 138. The will of Stana Saladin reveals that she had two grandsons who were friars, the Dominican Augustine Kažotić and the Franciscan Dujam, which means that the first Croatian Blessed had a Franciscan cousin. BARADA, *Monumenta Traguriensia* 2, 251.

named after the founder of the Order of St Dominic, certainly did not have a very large capacity in the beginning and was largely dependent on the convent in Split. However, it became independent relatively quickly – by the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century at the latest – when its first prior was named in the sources.

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Sažetak

Dominikanski samostan u Trogiru od utemeljenja do kraja 13. stoljeća

U radu se temeljem povijesnih vrela i relevantne sekundarne literature opisuje povijest dominikanskoga samostana u Trogiru od njegova utemeljenja do kraja 13. stoljeća. Istraživanjem se propituje kada su i pod kojim uvjetima splitski dominikanci dobili posjed u Trogiru, te taj događaj smješta u razdoblje između 1261. i 1263. godine. Nadalje, autor propituje spor koji je zbog tog posjeda dominikanski red vodio s trogirskim biskupom, franjevcem Kolumbanom. Istraživanjem je zaključeno da su dominikanci tek nakon rješavanja tog spora 1266. godine počeli graditi samostan i crkvu. Temeljem trogirskih oporuka iz tog doba autor procjenjuje da je gradnja potrajala desetak godina te pretpostavlja da je samostan kanonski utemeljen 1272. godine. U radu su izneseni podaci o tijeku gradnje samostana i crkve, kao i podaci o dominikancima imenovanim u izvorima, a koji su bili članovi trogirskega samostana u 13. stoljeću.

Ključne riječi: dominikanci, samostan, Trogir, 13. stoljeće.

