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TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF THE RAGUSAN COMMUNE/REPUBLIC AND THE CHURCHES OF ITS PATRON SAINTS

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ABSTRACT: The churches of St Blaise and the earlier Ragusan patron saints (primarily St Pancras) on the territory of the Ragusan commune/Republic are analysed hagiotopographically from the oldest sources available up to the fifteenth century. Geographical distribution of the church buildings points to two major patterns of topographic expansion and the use of the patron cults in the course of Dubrovnik's transformation from commune to republic—from a defensive act of marking the borders with temples to a developed system of implanting the state cult into the administrative seats. Such a strategy of spreading the cults of the city patron saints from the implicit *demarcation* (defence) towards a more symbolic sign of *governing* (control) reflects a tendency towards a more finely structured Ragusan government.

Key words: Dubrovnik, cult of saints, hagiotopography, civic patron, relics, communal piety, Late Middle Ages

Territorial expansion of the Ragusan commune, later Republic, was accompanied by a highly elaborated system of symbolic government representation, one of the most important and most direct among them being the

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spreading of the cult of its principal patron saint, St Blaise.¹ Apart from the regulations related to the Saint's feast, such as the liberty (*franchisia*) of St Blaise, duties of the local counts or the votive offerings, the spreading of the cult is clearly visible in the erection of the churches dedicated to the Saint on the territories which the Dubrovnik commune/Republic acquired during the Middle Ages.

Geographical distribution and historical context of the building of six churches dedicated to St Blaise in the areas outside Astarea are indicative of the role this cult played in the Ragusan territorial policy. The analysis of the spatial distribution of the cultic *loci* dedicated to the main Ragusan patron and his predecessors attempts to reach beyond the mere facts and figures, and to correlate the hagiotopographical data with their historical ordinates. My aim is to demonstrate that the geographical distribution of the churches dedicated to Ragusan patrons is conditioned by the historical development of the Dubrovnik state, using the method which could be referred to as 'contextualised hagiotopography'.²

Data for the historical context of the geographical distribution is provided by the records of land division of the newly acquired territories in the catastic books (primarily *Matica* or *Libro Rosso*)³, and the respective decisions of the Councils, originally included in the series *Reformationes*, and copied in the legal collections and catastics. These records often mention existing churches as the demarcation points between the parcelled lots of the new territories (the so-called *deceni*, 'tens'), as do the documents on the boundary determination issued by or for the neighbouring rulers. Other decisions of the councils regarding the financial support or location for the construction of the new churches concern primarily the period from the mid-fourteenth to the

¹ On the cult of St Blaise and the earlier patrons of Dubrovnik, see: Anđelko Badurina, »Motivi izbora sv. Vlaha za patrona grada Dubrovnika«. *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 21 (1980): pp. 142-148; Ivica Prlender, »Dubrovačko posvajanje svetoga Vlaha«. *Dubrovnik* N. S. 5 (1994): pp. 9-21; Joško Belamarić, »Sveti Vlaho i dubrovačka obitelj svetaca zaštitnika«, in: idem, *Studije iz srednjovjekovne i renesansne umjetnosti na Jadranu*. Split: Književni krug, 2001: pp. 165-190.

² Two hagiotopographic studies of Ragusan territory by Anđelko Badurina are focused on statistical survey and creation of a database: Anđelko Badurina and Marko Tadić, »Hagiotopografija Istre i dubrovačkog područja«. *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 12-13 (1988-1989): pp. 58-63; Anđelko Badurina, »Hagiotopografija Konavala«, in: *Konavle u prošlosti, sadašnjosti i budućnosti*, vol. I. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1998: pp. 253-261.

³ The newly-acquired land was divided among the Ragusan patrician families.

mid-fifteenth century. Equally useful sources for this aspect of the spreading of the cult are the notarial records such as wills and various contracts. Finally, the architectural remains of the churches may also help resolve some of the problems related to the topic.

When Dubrovnik acquired the island of Lastovo (*Lagusta*) in 1252, the cult of SS Cosmas and Damian, patrons of the local parochial church, had already taken deep roots in the Lastovo community.⁴ This is testified by the survival of their images on the seal of the *universitas* of Lastovo, which had become important element of the local identity. Dubrovnik's determination to recognise Lastovo's autonomy was symbolically witnessed by a 1486 regulation of the Statute of Lastovo, by which the Dubrovnik government forbids the Ragusan *comes* of Lastovo to interfere in the usage of the old seal.⁵

St Blaise's church on the island of Lastovo is situated on a slope on the outskirts of the town of Lastovo, overlooking (symbolically and literally) the whole area.⁶ Basing his analysis on the architectural features (the only distinct stylistic elements being the pointed arch and the rustic Romanesque profile of the cornices) and the historical developments following the Treaty of Zadar (1358), C. Fisković dated the church to the mid-fourteenth century.⁷ On the contrary, A. Badurina has dated it to the very beginning of the thirteenth century, possibly motivated by its affinity with the predominantly pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architectural type of the three-bayed church

⁴ On subjection of Lastovo to the Ragusan rule, see: Josip Lučić, »Iz srednjovjekovne prošlosti otoka Lastova«. *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 6 (1974): pp. 6-10, 32-35.

⁵ *Libro delli ordinamenti e delle usanze della universitate et dello comun della isola de Lagusta*, ed. Frano Radić. [Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum Meridionalium /hereafter cited as: MHJSM/, vol. 8]. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti /hereafter cited as: JAZU/, 1901: cc. 90, pp. 51-52; *Lastovski statut*, ed. Antun Cvitanić. Split: Književni krug, 1994: pp. 253-254. Reproduction of the seal in: *Lastovski Statut*: fig. 2.

⁶ The residence of the local *comes* was similarly positioned on the opposite slope of the hill. Its earliest mention as *domus domini comitis* dates from 1347 (*Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. VIII, ed. Tadija Smičiklas. Zagreb: JAZU, 1910: p. 370; Cvito Fisković, »Lastovski spomenici.« *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 16 (1966): p. 91).

⁷ C. Fisković, »Lastovski spomenici«: p. 42. In 1358 Lastovo turned disloyal to Ragusan rule and temporarily subjected to King Ludovic, hence the need of reconfirmation of the Ragusan sovereignty over Lastovo.

building.⁸ In consideration of its architectural form, the foundation of the church of St Blaise could also be related to the island's first subjection to Dubrovnik, though further archival research as well as the examination of the wall structure are needed before drawing any final conclusion.⁹

However, the involvement of civic religion in marking the reconfirmation of Ragusan sovereignty after 1358 reflected in the spreading of the cult of the Ragusan patron to the secular sphere. In the year 1363, an amendment was introduced to the Statute of Lastovo (codified in 1310) concerning the immunity of the debtors three days before and three days after the feast of St Blaise, with a remark "as done in Dubrovnik" (*come se fa a Raguxi*).¹⁰ This regulation, known as 'the liberty of St Blaise' (*franchisia sancti Blasii*), was in identical form added to the Statute of the island of Mljet (*Meleda*).¹¹

After a longer period of maintaining the official borders almost intact, the following Ragusan acquisition was the Pelješac Peninsula (in the contemporary documents referred to as *Puncta Stagni*). In 1333 Dubrovnik bought the Peninsula from the Bosnian *ban* Stephen II Kotromanić and the Serbian King (later Tsar) Stephen Dušan, and at its isthmus founded two towns, Ston and Mali Ston.¹² Ston (*Stagnum*) became the seat of the local *comes* (count of Ston), and the building of his temporary wooden residence was discussed on the Ragusan Minor Council in 1335.¹³ In the mid-1340s the church of St Blaise

⁸ Anđelko Badurina, »Crkve svetoga Vlaha na dubrovačkom području«. *Dubrovnik* N.S. 5/5 (1994): p. 41.

⁹ In the beginning of the eighteenth century the church (as many other medieval small-sized churches) was added a larger nave at the western end, the old church thus becoming an apse of the new one.

¹⁰ *Libro delli ordinamenti*, cc. 46, p. 20-1; *Lastovski statut*: p. 224; cf. Antun Cvitanić, »Lastovsko statutarno pravo«, in: *Lastovski statut*: pp. 166-167.

¹¹ *Mljetski statut*, ed. Ante Marinović and Ivo Veselić. Split and Dubrovnik: Književni krug and Zavičajni klub Mljet, 2002: pp. 80-81.

¹² On the acquisition of Pelješac, see: Vinko Foretić, »Kroz prošlost poluotoka Pelješca«, in: *Spomenica Gospe Anđela u Orebićima 1470-1970*. Omiš: Franjevački samostan Orebići, 1970: pp. 259-263; idem, »Kada je i kako Stonski Rat došao pod vlast Dubrovnika«. *Pelješki zbornik* 1 (1976): pp. 81-92.

¹³ *Libri reformationum*, vol. II, ed. Ivan Kr. Tkalčić. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium /hereafter cited as: MSHSM/, vol. 13]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1882: p. 359; Lukša Beritić, »Stonske utvrde«. *Anali Historijskog instituta u Dubrovniku* 3 (1954): p. 313; Marija Planić Lončarić, *Planirana izgradnja na području Dubrovačke Republike*. Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 1980: pp. 34, 53.

was built next to the Count's residence.¹⁴ Ragusan government paid special attention to the construction of this church, as witnessed by the two Council decisions brought to accelerate its completion. In 1344, the Senate decided to invest all the revenues coming from corn and other profits from Pelješac into construction of St Blaise's church,¹⁵ whereas the following year the Major Council allocated 22 perpers for the completion of the church.¹⁶

The erection of the church in Ston is closely connected to a critical moment in the relationship between Dubrovnik and the local Venetian authorities on the island of Korčula (*Curzola*). From the very beginning of his episcopate in 1342, Marin, the Bishop of Ston and Korčula, had strained relations with the Ragusan government. Dubrovnik was reluctant to recognise the Bishop's jurisdiction over Ston on account of his pro-Venetian orientation.¹⁷ The conflict was resolved in 1347 by Dubrovnik's approval of the Bishop. This controversy, however, did not interfere with the government's project of building the church of St Blaise in Ston. Upon its completion in 1346, the priest of St Blaise's church was also appointed to the office of the town's chancellor.¹⁸ Thus Dubrovnik set up a clear sign of its administrative as well as ecclesiastical control over Pelješac, and following the separation of the church of Ston from the bishopric of Korčula in 1541, the church of St Blaise became the cathedral of Ston.¹⁹

In 1399, the Bosnian King Stephen Ostoja granted to Dubrovnik the lands of Primorje (in the contemporary documents referred to as *Terre Nove*).²⁰ The

¹⁴ The construction work had begun in the year 1342; Vladimir Taljeran, *Zrnca za povijest Stona*. Dubrovnik: Štamparija Jadran, 1935: pp. 52-53; M. Planić Lončarić, *Planirana izgradnja na području Dubrovačke Republike*: p. 53.

¹⁵ ... *de dando libertatem domino comiti et suo minori consilio posse expendere illos denarios, quos commune debet recipere pro vendito frumenti et blavii et aliorum fructuum de parte communis de Stagno et convertere in aptando ecclesiam sancti Blaxii de Stagno (Libri reformationum, vol. I, ed. Ivan Kr. Tkalčić. [MSHSM, vol. 10]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1879: pp. 156-157).*

¹⁶ ... *ut compleatur ecclesia sancti Blaxii, que fit in Stagno, ad honorem dei et beati Blaxii donetur et detur de avere communis pro complemento ipsius ecclesie pperperos xxii (Libri reformationum, vol. I, p.173).*

¹⁷ V. Foretić, »Kroz prošlost poluotoka Pelješca«: pp. 264-265, n. 28.

¹⁸ V. Foretić, »Kroz prošlost poluotoka Pelješca«: p. 267.

¹⁹ The church was enlarged by 1392, and, following the earthquake of 1850, it was replaced by a larger historicist church at the end of the nineteenth century.

²⁰ On the acquisition of Primorje, see: Gregor Čremošnik, »Prodaja bosanskog Primorja Dubrovniku god. 1399. i kralj Ostoja«. *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini* 40/2 (1928): pp. 109-126; Josip Lučić, »Stjecanje, dioba i borba za očuvanje dubrovačkog Primorja 1399-1405«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 11-12 (1968-1969): pp. 99-201.

town of Slano (*Slanum*) became the seat of the newly established local unit, and in the land division that same year, a lot was assigned for the building of the Count's Palace.²¹ In 1403 and 1404, Ostoja and the Bosnian lords occupied a part of Primorje (the villages of Imotica, Trnovica and Lisac), but in 1405 the territory in question was restituted to Dubrovnik by Ostoja's brother, King Tvrtko II. This finally resolved the question of the border in Primorje, and in 1407 the Ragusan government decided to build a new church in Slano, a parochial church dedicated to St Blaise.²²

Although nominally subject to Dubrovnik since 1345, it was not until 1410 that the island of Mljet passed under the absolute jurisdiction of the local *comes* of Šipan (*Juppana*) from the previous administrator, the abbot of the local Benedictine monastery of St Mary.²³ Thus Mljet was finally subject to the direct rule of the Ragusan Republic.

The new parochial church of St Blaise in Babino Polje (*Babino pole*) was constructed shortly after 1410, as witnessed by the bequests in the wills written during the 1420s.²⁴ Most likely guided by a less painful 'authority shift' through the upholding of the traditional *locus* of parochial devotion, the new

²¹ *Libro Rosso – nunc „Matica“*, ser. 12 (*Cathasticum*), vol. 4, f. 286, State Archives of Dubrovnik, hereafter cited as: SAD; J. Lučić, »Stjecanje, dioba i borba za očuvanje dubrovačkog Primorja 1399-1405.«: p. 180.

²² *Item in dicto minori consilio captum fuit de portando ad maius consilium pro fieri faciendo unam ecclesiam in Slano in qua possint spendere yperperos centum aut centum viginti* (*Reformationes*, ser. 2, vol. 33, f. 13, SAD). The Great Council approved the building of the church two days later (*Reformationes*, vol. 33, f. 201v). The fact that one of the suggestions was to build the church in dry stone (*de maceris*), explains the absence of the church's dedication in the documents at this provisional stage. See also: Nikola Zvonimir Bjelovučić, *Povijest poluotoka Rata (Pelješca)*. Split: Leonova tiskara, 1921: p. 129; A. Badurina, »Crkve svetoga Vlaha na dubrovačkom području«: p. 41. The original church was replaced by the new one completed in 1758.

²³ *Reformationes*, vol. 33, f. 262v; *Liber viridis*, ed. Branislav M. Nedeljković. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, vol. III.23]. Beograd: SANU, 1984: c. 131, pp. 95-96; Dragan Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi na području dubrovačke republike od XIII. do XV. stoljeća*. [Građa za gospodarsku povijest Hrvatske, vol. 5]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1955: pp. 167-168. The office of the *comes* of Mljet was established as late as 1499 (*Mljetski statut*: pp. 38-39); decision on his residence was passed in 1543 (*Acta Maioris Consilii*, ser. 8, vol. 22, f. 13v; *Mljetski statut*: pp. 120-121).

²⁴ Starting with the year 1420; *a sancto Blasio candela una*, in the will of 4 March 1420 (*Diversa di Meleda*, ser. 74.1, vol.1, f. 24, SAD).

church adjoins the former parochial church dedicated to St Pancras.²⁵ Similar to Lastovo, from the mid-fourteenth century the parish priest of St Pancras, later of St Blaise, acted as the Melitan chancellor.²⁶

The two acquisitions from Bosnian lords, in 1419 from Duke Sandalj Hranić and in 1426 from Radoslav Pavlović, brought the region of Konavle (*Canalis*) into Ragusan possession.²⁷ The newly acquired territories were distributed on three occasions – in 1423, 1427, and 1442. By the first division the seat of the local count remained in Ljuta (*Gliuta*), the old governing centre of Konavle,²⁸ but in 1427 the Major Council decided to transfer the seat of the count of Konavle to a hill above the village of St Martin (*locus sancti Martini*), present-day Pridvorje.²⁹ In the year 1429, Dubrovnik government discussed the building of a Franciscan friary, the second most important institution in Konavle, next to the church of St George in the current-day village of Popovići, but three months later the original idea was rejected in favour of the village of St Martin, with an explanation that the place was “more convenient and befitting”, undoubtedly because of the vicinity of the count’s residence.³⁰ For that purpose the Franciscans were endowed with the church of St Martin which, after the completion of the friary in 1438, changed its dedication to that of St Blaise.³¹ Thus, following a most transparent procedure, Pridvorje was established as the local administrative and ecclesiastical centre of the Ragusan government.

²⁵ After the completion of the church of St Blaise, the church of St Pancras remained in use as witnessed by the wills up to the year 1457, leaving legacies to both churches (I. Dabelić, *Arhivska građa za povijest otoka Mljeta*: pp. 64-104).

²⁶ Ivo Dabelić, *Povijest otoka Mljeta od najstarijeg vremena do 15. stoljeća*. Dubrovnik: Ivo Dabelić, 1987: p. 81.

²⁷ On the acquisition of Konavle, see: Pavo Živković, »Ustupanje Konavala Dubrovčanima«, in: *Konavle u prošlosti, sadašnjosti i budućnosti*, vol. I. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1998: pp. 77-100; Niko Kapetanić and Nenad Vekarić, *Stanovništvo Konavala*, vol. 1. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 1998: pp. 25-33.

²⁸ *Per Casa del conte In decen de Gliuta primo (Libro Rosso*, f. 320v).

²⁹ *Liber Viridis*: c. 212, p. 163; see also Kate Bagoje, »Knežev dvor u Pridvorju«, in: *Konavle u prošlosti, sadašnjosti i budućnosti*, vol. 1. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1998: p. 280).

³⁰ *Liber Viridis*: cc. 241-242, pp. 191-192; Anđelko Badurina, »Franjevački samostan u Pridvorju«. *Konavoski zbornik* 1 (1982): p. 174.

³¹ In 1438 the church of the friary is vaguely recorded as *ghiesia di frari minori (Liber Viridis*: c. 313, p. 257), yet in the document of the allotment of land in Planine in 1442 it is referred to as *chiesia de misser san Biasio in Canal (Liber Viridis*, c. 337, p. 283).

The church of St Blaise in Janjina (*Ianina*) on the Pelješac Peninsula was an exception: it was not founded following the acquisition of the new territory but after the reform of the local administration. The parochial church of Janjina was built together with the count's residence after the foundation of the captaincy of Janjina in 1465.³²

The above evidence attests that the group consisting of six churches is directly linked to the territorial expansion policy which transformed Dubrovnik from a commune controlling rather restricted surrounding area (*Astarea*) to a Republic in possession of significant territories acquired from the neighbouring rulers. Each acquisition was followed by an installation of the local count and the foundation of the church dedicated to the Ragusan patron St Blaise in the settlement chosen as the centre of the newly-established district. Besides their function (predominantly parochial), these churches also have in common the connection to the seat of the district *comes*. In Lastovo, Slano, and Pridvorje the dedication of the church to St Blaise generally coincides with the seat of the secular government, whereas in Ston, Janjina, and Babino Polje the connection is physical—that is, the church and the palace face each other.³³

A group of the older churches distributed throughout the originary Dubrovnik territory, or *Astarea*, dedicated to the saints venerated before the domination of St Blaise's cult, is of special interest in the context of the changing frontiers of the Ragusan territory.³⁴

³² A. Badurina, »Crkve svetoga Vlaha na dubrovačkom području«: p. 42. The church was replaced by a new one consecrated in 1877. According to Bjelovučić, the first parochial church was originally dedicated to St John, and later on to St Blaise (Nikola Zvonimir Bjelovučić, *Povijesne crtice o Janjini*. Split: Leonova tiskara, s.a.: p. 2).

³³ The parochial church of the newly-founded parish of Pridvorje (1584) was dedicated to SS Sergius and Bacchus, given that St Blaise was already patron of the Franciscan friary in the same village, and that the Ragusan patrician Marin Gradi had built the church of St Sergius and bequeathed it for that purpose (Niko Kapetanić and Nenad Vekarić, »Granice konavoskih crkvenih župa«. *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 33 (1995): p. 26).

³⁴ On the boundaries of *Astarea*, see: Vinko Foretić, »Ugovor Dubrovnika sa srpskim velikim županom Stefanom Nemanjom i stara dubrovačka djedina«. *Rad JAZU* 283 (1951): pp. 51-118; Josip Lučić, »Historijska topografija dubrovačke Astareje (do 1366)«. *Anali Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 8-9 (1962): pp. 257-299; Josip Lučić, *Prošlost dubrovačke Astareje*. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, 1970: pp. 30-44.

The only church of St Blaise attested in the thirteenth century outside the walls of Dubrovnik is the one on the nearby Petka hill, mentioned in the sources as early as 1255.³⁵ The churches dedicated to the Ragusan patron on the territory of Astarea, mentioned in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, were often built as private chapels, whose dedication arises from individual piety.³⁶ Contrarily, the thirteenth century abounds in sources on the churches dedicated to the older Ragusan civic cults such as those of SS Pancras, Nereus and Achilleus, St Sergius or St Tryphon, the latter being associated with that of St Blaise.

The cult of St Pancras is the earliest ascertained cult of relics in Dubrovnik. As early as the mid-tenth century, Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus writes that the body of St Pancras lies in the church of St Stephen, while the Ragusan poet Miletius, though considerably later (probably in the fourteenth century), mentions the bodies of the SS Nereus, Achilleus, Domitilla, and Petronilla, a group of Roman martyrs which normally includes St Pancras, lying in the same church.³⁷ By comparing these two sources with the anonymous's *Scavorum regnum* and *Historia Salonitana* by Thomas the Archdeacon, R. Katičić succeeded in reconstructing the oldest text, probably an early medieval catalogue of the Dubrovnik bishops, featuring the line: *In eadem civitate iacet beatus Pancratius*.³⁸

³⁵ In the sources it is referred to as *ecclesia sancti Blasii de Gravoso* (*Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. IV, ed. Tadija Smičiklas. Zagreb: JAZU, 1906: pp. 610-611).

³⁶ Such is a chapel on the Gruž estate of Benedictus Gondola, mentioned in the testament of 1348 (*Testamenta Notariae*, ser. 10.1, vol. 3, f. 77v, SAD); or the chapel on the estate of the Ragusan canon Marinus Ragnina on Koločep, the building of which is attested in several contracts of 1467 (*Diversa Notariae*, ser. 26, vol. 51, ff. 30v, 33r, 39v, 113v; Vicko Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*. Dubrovnik: J. Birimiša, 1932: pp. 91-92). It is interesting to note that in 1360 Ragusan Minor Council issued a licence for importing tiles and timber from Dubrovnik to a patrician from Korčula named Blaise with the purpose of constructing the church dedicated to St Blaise (*Libri reformationum*, vol. III, ed. Ivan Kr. Tkalčić. [MSHSM, vol. 27]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1895: p. 25).

³⁷ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, vol. I, ed. Gyula Moravcsik and Romilly Jenkins. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967: pp. 235-236; Miletius' fragmentary verse in Ragnina's Annals: *Annales Ragusini anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. Natko Nodilo. [MSHSM, vol. 14]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1883: p. 174. On the origins of the cult of St Pancras in Dubrovnik, see: Tibor Živković, »The earliest cults of saints in Ragusa«. *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 44 (2007): pp. 119-127.

³⁸ Radoslav Katičić, »Aedificaverunt Ragusium et habitaverunt in eo«, in: *Uz početke hrvatskih početaka*. Split: Književni krug, 1993: p. 157 and *passim*. The treasury of the Ragusan cathedral keeps numerous relics of those five Roman saints, and the images of SS Nereus and Achilleus decorate the medallion on St Blaise's arm reliquary dating from the twelfth century; J. Belamarić, »Sveti Vlaho i dubrovačka obitelj svetaca zaštitnika«: p. 185.

Even after accepting St Blaise for the main patron saint of Dubrovnik, the cults of SS Pancras, Nereus, and Achilleus were among the most prominent civic cults, as witnessed by a provision from 1378 which includes *festum sanctorum Nerei, Archilei et Pangracii* among the officially observed public feasts.³⁹ First mentioned in 1329, the parochial church of Gruž (*Gravosa*) retained its dedication to St Pancras until the great earthquake in 1667.⁴⁰ However, the locating of the churches dedicated to St Pancras at the three extreme bordering points of the territory of Dubrovnik's Astarea is more than indicative. The first two were located on the sites regularly mentioned in the descriptions of the borders of the oldest core of the Ragusan territory, namely the churches at Obod (*Obod*), north of Cavtat, and Kurilo (*Curilla*), north of the river Ombla. The church of St Pancras (referred to as 'Pokrat') at Obod was located at the eastern border of Dubrovnik's 'patrimony', as described in the text of the treaty of alliance concluded in 1253 between Dubrovnik and the Bulgarian Emperor Michael Asen I against the Serbian King Stephen Uroš I.⁴¹ The agreement mentions explicitly the church of St Pancras, which should be linked to the toponym *suth Pocrath* appearing in the land division of Obod in 1427.⁴² The church dedicated to SS Nereus, Achilleus and Pancras in Kurilo, on the north-west land border of Astarea, is mentioned in the division of Primorje in 1399, among the churches which received a plot for the cemetery.⁴³ The borderline 'above Kurilo', though not the church itself, was mentioned in the agreement with Michael Asen, and thus by analogy with the eastern border of Astarea, the existence of the church in Kurilo should be presumed as early as the thirteenth century.⁴⁴ The

³⁹ »Liber omnium reformationum«, ed. Aleksandar Solovjev, in: *Istorisko-pravni spomenici, I. Dubrovački zakoni i uredbе*. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, vol. III.6]. Beograd: SANU, 1936: XVIII.7, pp. 105-106. On the value of the copies of *Liber omnium reformationum* for the study of the saints' cults, see: Nella Lonza, »Građa državnih institucija kao hagiografsko vrelo: dubrovački primjer«, in: *Hagiologija: Kultovi u kontekstu*, ed. Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008: pp. 107-109.

⁴⁰ J. Lučić, *Prošlost dubrovačke Astoreje*: p. 20.

⁴¹ *Codex diplomaticus* IV: p. 531. Cavtat was part of Astarea until its conquest by Serbian King Stephen Milutin in 1302. It was restituted to Dubrovnik in 1426 together with the western part of Konavle.

⁴² *Libro Rosso*, ff. 361v-362r.

⁴³ *In Curilla sanctorum Nerei Archilei et Panchratii (Libro Rosso)*, f. 286; J. Lučić, »Stjecanje, dioba i borba za očuvanje dubrovačkog Primorja 1399-1405.«: p. 180).

⁴⁴ Kurilo is also mentioned as the demarcation point in the agreement with Stephen Nemanja of 1186 (in the second copy), in the charter of Stephen Uroš V of 1357, in the Treaty of Visegrád of 1358, in the documents related to the drawing of the new boundaries in 1362, as well as in a document issued by Ostoja in 1399 and the decrees passed directly after the acquisition of Primorje.



Map 1: Churches dedicated to St Blaise on the territory of the Dubrovnik Republic (outside Astarea), map by Luko Piplica.

foundation of the church could even be back-dated to the very end of the twelfth century, after Dubrovnik's possession of Rožat and Kurilo was confirmed by Stephen Nemanja in 1186, and possibly even earlier, to the period preceding the attacks of the Rascians, or maybe even before the expansion of Dioclea.⁴⁵ The third location where the hagionym of St Pancras appears is the westernmost point of Astarea – present-day Luka Šipanska on the island of Šipan. By the agreement of 1252, the church of St Michael on Lokrum (*Lacroma*) leased out the land *que est in inferiori capite insule Jupane ad sanctum Pancratium*.⁴⁶ The architectural remains of the church have been located in the area to the west of Luka Šipanska, close to the westernmost spot on the island, at the toponym Supokrač.⁴⁷

Concerning the monastery of Lokrum, the question of provenance and role of St Pancras as the patron saint of Mljet should be addressed. The church of St Pancras in Babino Polje was a parochial church during the Middle Ages, and together with Žara (*Zara*, in the vicinity of today's Korita) were the oldest two parishes responsible for the whole island.⁴⁸ The rootedness of St Pancras' cult on the island is witnessed by the fact that the church in Žara was dedicated to SS Nereus and Achilleus, the saints regularly coupled with St Pancras and celebrated on the same day.⁴⁹ Architectural remains of the two-bayed church in Babino Polje feature the stylistic elements of transition from pre-Romanesque to Romanesque, and thus its construction should be dated to the end of eleventh or the twelfth century.⁵⁰ Architectural features (primarily the three apses and

⁴⁵ Foretić's analysis of the agreement has altered some of the previous assumptions, according to which it did not include Rožat and Kurilo (V. Foretić, »Ugovor Dubrovnika sa srpskim velikim županom Stefanom Nemanjom«: pp. 68-72).

⁴⁶ *Codex diplomaticus IV*: p. 514. J. Lučić related the agreement to the monastery of Lokrum (dedicated to St Benedict), although the document reads *abbatis ecclesiae sancti Michaelis que est in insula Lacromonensi*; cf. Josip Lučić, »Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana (do 1300. godine)«. *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 10 (1968): pp. 119-120.

⁴⁷ Samuilo Puhiera, »Srednjovjekovne crkvice na otoku Šipanu«. *Starinar* 5-6 (1954-1955): p. 237. The agreement of 1283 reads *in Juppana ad punctam sancti Pancracii* (*Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije*, vol. II, ed. Josip Lučić. [Monumenta historica Ragusina, vol. 2]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1984: p. 255).

⁴⁸ I. Dabelić, *Arhivska građa za povijest otoka Mljeta*: p. 155.

⁴⁹ Although the figures flanking the image of St Pancras on the old seal of the *universitas* of Mljet were identified as St Blaise and St Michael (see: *Mljetski statut*: p. 51, n. 87), they plausibly represent SS Nereus and Achilleus; cf. the examples in *Diplomata et acta saec. XVI*, ser. 76, no. 450-3/3 of the year 1571 (SAD), and further.

⁵⁰ *Zaštitni radovi na spomenicima kulture izvedeni u 1998., Uprava za zaštitu kulturne baštine - Konzervatorski odjel u Dubrovniku*, Dubrovnik, 1999; Ivica Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo otoka Koločepa*. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska Dubrovnik, 2003: pp. 38-39.

two bays) of the church in Žara may lead to an assumption that it dates from the same period as the church in Babino Polje.⁵¹ The question of the foundation of these churches in the context of the territorial aspirations of the monasteries of Mljet and Lokrum towards Babino Polje touches upon a very complex issue of the so-called forgeries of Lokrum, that is, their subgroup related to the possessions of the church of St Pancras. Given that the forgery of the deed of donation of St Pancras' lands to the monastery of Lokrum by Ljutovit, the *strategos* of Serbia and Zahumlje (*Zachulmia*), in 1039 has in the more recent historiography been dated to the twelfth century (or beginning of the thirteenth century according to the earlier historians),⁵² and that the date of the foundation of the monastery of Lokrum remains unknown, as well as its possible ownership of the lands of St Pancras', one can only speculate about the circumstances of the establishment of the cult of St Pancras on the island of Mljet. It undoubtedly spread from Dubrovnik, possibly with the arrival of the Benedictines. However, since neither the architecture nor the written sources (mainly forgeries) provide elements for a more precise dating, one can only observe a programmatic dedication of both the parochial churches to the same group of the saints.

Additionally, in the narrower Ragusan area there were two churches dedicated to St Tryphon, which should not surprise given the Ragusan preference for cults of pairs or groups of saints celebrating the feast on the same day (such as Blaise and Tryphon; Pancras, Nereus, and Achilleus with Domitilla and Petronilla; Sergius and Bacchus; Zenobius and Zenobia and finally the so-called Petilovrijenci or the martyrs Peter, Lawrence, and Andrew from Kotor). The churches of St Tryphon were also located at the northernmost and westernmost points of the nucleus of the Ragusan territory. One of them is mentioned in the Ragusan Statute from 1272 at the locality Arena, close to

⁵¹ I. Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo otoka Koločepa*: pp. 39-40; idem, »Starohrvatska crkva Sv. Petra i Pavla na lokalitetu Crkvine – otok Mljet«. *Obavijesti Hrvatskog arheološkog društva* 2 (1996): pp. 31-34. Cf. the early Romanesque triapsidal two-bayed churches in the broader Ragusan area, in: Igor Fisković, »Tri srednjovjekovne crkvice na Pelješcu«. *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 19 (1972): pp. 24-40.

⁵² *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. I, ed. Jakov Stipišić and Miljen Šamšalović. Zagreb: JAZU, 1967: pp. 71-73. Šišić dated the forgery of the deed of donation to the second decade of the thirteenth century (*Letopis popa Dukljanina*, ed. Ferdo Šišić. [Posebna izdanja Srpske kraljevske akademije, vol. 67]. Beograd - Zagreb: SKA and Narodne novine, 1928: pp. 207-209, 215-227); Stipišić to the beginning of the twelfth century (Jakov Stipišić, *Pomoćne povijesne znanosti u teoriji i praksi*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1972: p. 72); and Brown to the twelfth century (Virginia Brown, »A second new list of Beneventan manuscripts (IV)«. *Medieval Studies* 61 (1999): pp. 341-342. See also: Nada Klaić, »Mljetski falsifikati«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 10 (1967): pp. 229-231.

today's Čajkovići in Rijeka Dubrovačka (in the westernmost part of Šumet - *Jonchetum*),⁵³ and the other, mentioned in 1297, in the area of Višnjica.⁵⁴ Apart from the church of St Sergius in Kaštio (*Castellum*), the oldest nucleus of the city, attested at the very beginning of the fourteenth century,⁵⁵ the churches dedicated to this saint on Mount Srđ (*Vergatum*),⁵⁶ and the island of Koločep (*Calamota*) are mentioned in 1283.⁵⁷

The geographical distribution of these churches seems to draw another, internal borderline or ring encompassing the Ragusan territory, with a 'defensive' role comparable to that later played by the statues of St Blaise installed on the outer side of the city walls. The question of how much this ring actually testifies to the shrinkage of the Ragusan territory in the thirteenth century is open to speculation, yet the mentioned provision regulating the procedures related to the institution of the *stanak* (a mediation aimed at resolving property rights) held between the Ragusans and the Rascians by the church of St Tryphon in Šumet (Čajkovići) is most indicative. The regulation clearly shows that the Ragusans' first choice was the location by the church of St Michael on

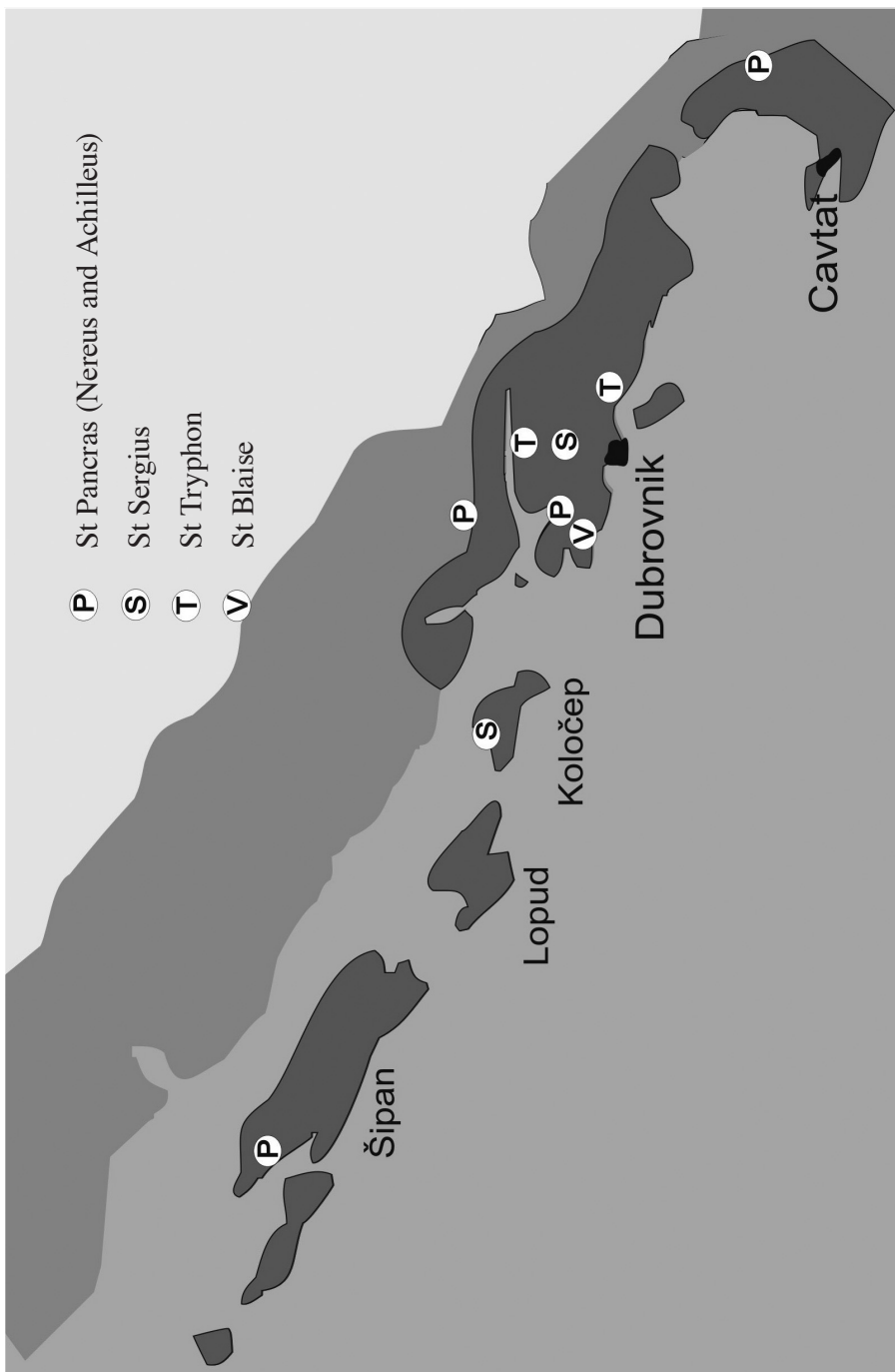
⁵³ ... in *Ioncheto*, in *loco qui dicitur Arena prope ecclesiam S. Triphoni (Liber statutorum civitatis Ragusii*, ed. Baltazar Bogišić and Konstantin Jireček. [MHJSM, vol. 9]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1904: pp. 78-79). The original church was replaced by a chapel with the same dedication, after the area had become part of the Gondola estate.

⁵⁴ In a sale contract of land bordering in the east *cum patago et maceria que est ultra ecclesiam sancti Triphonis et per longum vadunt de via que vadit Brenum (Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije*, vol. III, ed. Josip Lučić. [Monumenta Ragusina, vol. 3]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1988: 276-277; see also: Lukša Beritić, »Ubikacija nestalih građevinskih spomenika u Dubrovniku II«. *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 12 (1960): p. 73). The church of St Tryphon in Cavtat (*Zeptat*) appears in the letter of Pope Clement VI to King Dušan in 1345, but it should rather be related to the influence of the bishopric of Kotor. Indeed, the Pope warns the King not to attack the territories under the jurisdiction of the Catinine bishop, mentioning several other churches of St Tryphon (*Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, ed. Tadija Smičiklas. Zagreb: JAZU, 1913: pp. 179-180).

⁵⁵ It is generally considered that the decision of the Minor Council in 1302 to allot five perpers for the work on the church of St Sergius (*ad ajutorium ad levandum ecclesiam sancti Sergii*) refers to the church in *Castellum (Libri reformationum V*, ed. J. Gelcich. [MSHSM, vol. 29]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1897: p. 33). I am grateful to Nella Lonza for her observation that, given the modest amount, instead of the construction of the church, its repairing is most likely to be the case here.

⁵⁶ *Ecclesia sancti Sergii de Vergato* (L. Beritić, »Ubikacija nestalih građevinskih spomenika u Dubrovniku II«: p. 72).

⁵⁷ *Ecclesia sancti Sergii de Calamota (Diversa Canellariae*, vol. 1, f. 136; *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije II*: 282, 308). I. Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo otoka Koločepa*: pp. 96-104, is dating the church to the ninth or tenth century, in spite of its resemblance to a nearby church of St Michael in Donje Čelo dated to the end of the eleventh century (both feature the corner pilasters indicating the Lombard Band, i.e. decorative blind arcade wall articulation).



Map 2: Churches dedicated to the early Ragusan patron saints on the territory of Astarea (up to the 14th century), map by Luko Piplica.

Brgat, whereas the Rascians preferred Rijeka Dubrovačka.⁵⁸ In view of the regulations governing the *stanak*, with the representatives of Hum (*Chelmum*, i.e. Zahumlje) customarily held by the church of St Stephen in Zaton (*Malfum*), while with those of Zeta (*Genta*) by the church of St Hilarion in Mlini (*Molina*), it is possible that in the thirteenth century these churches were actually situated on the fringes of the territory under Ragusan control.⁵⁹ The fact that throughout the thirteenth century Dubrovnik was constantly attacked by the Serbian rulers may lead to an assumption that the churches of the Ragusan patron saints (or those particularly venerated) were built on the borderline of the temporarily safe area—that is, from the southern bank of the Ombla and along the Bay of Gruž to the west, across the top of the Mount Srđ towards Višnjica to the east.⁶⁰

Maps showing the geographical distribution of the churches dedicated to the saints with a deeply-rooted local cult help discern two hagiotopographical patterns. They attest that the location of the churches of the early Ragusan patron saints (up to the fourteenth century) essentially differs from the sites of the later ones, exclusively dedicated to St Blaise, the principal Ragusan patron saint in the period of the Republic (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). The very shift in hagiographic taste bears witness to the change in the state's self-fashioning strategy: instead of the military cults of juvenile martyrs SS Nereus and Achilleus or SS Sergius and Bacchus (incidentally, neither Pancras nor Tryphon reached maturity), a cult of a grey-bearded saintly bishop becomes the central cult of the Republic.

The churches of SS Pancras, Nereus, and Achilleus, St Tryphon and St Sergius are situated towards or at the very borderline of the territory under Ragusan control, whether as observation posts overlooking the wider surrounds,

⁵⁸ ... *in loco qui dicitur Arena prope ecclesiam S. Triphoni vel ad Crestam prope ecclesiam S. Michaelis, si Sclavi de sua voluntate voluerint locum de Cresta; et si Sclavi noluerint locum de Cresta, stanicum debet fieri in Ioncheto in predicto loco (Liber statutorum civitatis Ragusii: pp. 78-79).*

⁵⁹ *Liber statutorum civitatis Ragusii: pp. 76, 79.*

⁶⁰ An indicative evidence of the thirteenth-century Serbian siege of Dubrovnik is a 1252 description by Ragusan cleric Blancus: *dictus rex, ut in obsidione civitatis Ragusii veniret, generalem exercitum congregavit et animalia Ragusinorum rapi mandavit, possessiones et vineas nititur quotidie devastare (Codex diplomaticus IV: p. 507).*

or as symbolic boundary stones between the Ragusan 'patrimony' and the territory belonging to the neighbouring Slavic states. Regardless of the strategic setting of the churches of St Blaise in Ston, Janjina, Slano or in Pridvorje so as to control the main communication routes, they are primarily determined by their location in the administrative centres—that is, the seats of the districts the Dubrovnik Republic had established after expanding to the new territories. Thus the church of St Blaise in Lastovo could be regarded as a transitional example, being placed high on the slope overlooking the entire settlement, and at the same time competing with the parochial church of SS Cosmas and Damian in the administrative centre of the island.

The more refined the Ragusan state administration was, the more sophisticated were the mechanisms of the symbolic government representation. Among them the strategy of spreading the civic cults stands out, developing from a defensive act of literally marking the borders with temples to a thoughtfully worked-out system of implanting the state cult in the local administrative centres, frequently in a symbiotic form of a parochial church adjoining the residence of the local *comes*. Such a shift in the strategy of spreading the civic cults from a more implicit sign of demarcation (defence) towards a more symbolic sign of government (control) conforms to the development of the power balance in the region, as well as to an increasingly elaborated system of the Ragusan government. Thus in the territorial expansion of Dubrovnik the churches of the civic patron saints assumed a twofold role: in the early days of the commune, they were conceived as 'external' signs, demarcating the proper and controlling the neighbouring territory. With the strengthening of the Republic they developed into 'internal' signs, those of sovereignty which governs and controls every stretch of its growing territory.