



COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT: THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE CULTS OF STS. ANASTASIA AND CHRYSOGONUS IN MEDIEVAL ZADAR¹

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Introduction

The period between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries was highly turbulent for the Dalmatian city of Zadar. After the final collapse of Byzantine rule in the Adriatic this former capital of the Byzantine *theme* not only fought to preserve its leading position among the cities of Dalmatia, but also played power politics against Venice and against the rulers of the hinterland: the Hungarian kings and the local Croatian magnates. This strategic and political position reflected as well as defined the divisions and conflicts between the city's "sub-communities:" the cathedral chapter of St. Anastasia, the monastery of St. Chrysogonus, and the commune of Zadar. The aim of this article is to trace the relations between these conflicts and the cults of the two principal patron saints: St. Anastasia and St. Chrysogonus.

¹ This article presents an abbreviated version of two chapters of my MA thesis "Martyr and Knight: the Cult of St. Anastasia and St. Chrysogonus in Medieval Zadar" (Budapest: Central European University, 2004). The central issue of the paper is an elaboration of the problem already touched on by Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricioli, *Prošlost Zadru* (History of Zadar), vol. 2: *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409* (Zadar in the Middle Ages up to 1409) (Zadar: Filozofski fakultet u Zadru, 1976), 66, 67, 107–108 (hereafter: Klaić – Petricioli, *Prošlost*); Maren Freidenberg, "Samostan Sv. Krševana i Zadar u X–XIV stoljeću" (The monastery of St. Chrysogonus and Zadar from the tenth through the fourteenth centuries), *Radovi Instituta Jugoslovenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti u Zadru* (hereafter: *Radovi Instituta JAZU*) 27–28 (1981), 62–63 (hereafter: Freidenberg, "Samostan"); Miroslav Granić, "O kultu Sv. Krševana zadarskog zaštitnika" (On the cult of St. Chrysogonus in Zadar), in: *1000 godina samostana svetog Krševana u Zadru* (1000 Years of the monastery of St. Chrysogonus in Zadar), (Zadar: Narodni list, 1990), 43–44 (hereafter: Granić, "O kultu"); Damir Karbić, "Vitez, djeva, pustinjač i biskup" (The knight, the lady, the hermit and the bishop), *Hrvatska Revija* 1 (2002): 67–68.



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Early Christian Martyrs in Medieval Zadar

The cult of the martyrs Anastasia and Chrysogonus was established in the fourth century; the cult of St. Anastasia flourished in Sirmium and spread to Constantinople and Rome, while St. Chrysogonus was venerated mostly in Aquileia and north Italy. The emergence of the cult of both martyrs in Rome around the turn of the fifth century resulted in the compilation of their legend, in which they were Romanised and presented as teacher and disciple. The *Passio S. Chrysogoni et S. Anastasiae* became an important vehicle of the spread of the cult in the Middle Ages and provided the basic legend for their cult in Zadar.²

The cult of St. Anastasia was, according to the local legend *Translatio S. Anastasiae*, introduced in Zadar in the early ninth century,³ when relics were brought from Constantinople by Bishop Donatus and deposited in the cathedral formerly dedicated to St. Peter. The origins of the cult of St. Chrysogonus in Zadar are obscure. According to one local tradition his relics were translated to Zadar from Aquileia by Patriarch Maximus in 649. Although the cult of St. Chrysogonus seems to have been older than that of St. Anastasia, there is no evidence that it played a major role in the early Middle Ages.

The present inquiry into two types of hagiographic sources—legends and visual representations—focuses on the communication aspect of hagiography. The starting point of the research is the continuity of the inherited tradition present in the “basic” legend (the *Passio*) and the earliest depictions of the martyrs. The emergence of new local legends (the *Translationes*), as well as subsequent changes in iconography, provide clues for tracing the creation of the new local identities of the saints, their causes and context.

² For the history of the legend see: Hippolyte Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain. Les saints de Novembre et de Décembre*, Subsidia Hagiographica 23 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1936) and François Halkin, *Légendes grecques de “martyres Romaines,”* Subsidia hagiographica 55 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1973).

³ The text, preserved only in a seventeenth-century manuscript, was published by Daniele Farlati, *Illyricum sacrum* V (Venice, 1775): 34–35; Franjo Rački, *Documenta historiae Chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Sclavorum Meridionalium 7 (Zagreb, 1877): 306–310, and it was analysed and translated into Italian by Vitaliano Brunelli, *Storia della città de Zara*. Vol. 1 (Venice: Istituto veneto di arti grafiche, 1913): 185–188 (hereafter: Brunelli, *Storia*).



The Evidence

Loci sacri

The Episcopal basilica of St. Anastasia, built in the very Roman forum, testifies to the continuity of the urban functions and the central position of the bishop in early medieval Zadar. While the church of St. Anastasia and the episcopal complex dominated the central space of the city as early as the beginning of the tenth century, St. Chrysogonus was still a small and mousy church (*Fig. 1*).⁴ Yet, with the fragmentation of the spiritual and secular authority in the High Middle Ages, and especially with the rise of the power of the monastery of St. Chrysogonus, the image of unity “under the mantle of the bishop” was to be seriously contested.

The turning point for the cult of St. Chrysogonus was the foundation of the monastery in 986,⁵ accompanied by the act of donating the church to the monastery, which was reconstructed for the occasion. It is significant that this *traditio* meant realigning the existing street pattern, which attests a broader communal enterprise. Soon after its foundation the monastery started to enjoy not only numerous donations by the citizens but also from the Croatian kings

⁴ The writer of chapter 29 of *De administrando imperio*, who, admiring its beauty, compares the basilica dedicated to St. Anastasia with the Chalcostratean church in Constantinople, only mentions the church of St. Chrysogonus: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Greek text ed. Gyula Moravcsik, English tr. Romily J. H. Jenkins, rev. ed. Dumbarton Oaks Texts 1 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), 136 (hereafter: *DAI*). For the monastery see: Ćiril M. Iveković, *Crkva i samostan sv. Krševana u Zadru* (The church and monastery of St. Chrysogonus in Zadar), *Djela* 30 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1931) (hereafter: Iveković, *Crkva*).

⁵ The restoration of the monastery documented in the *Cartula traditionis* was traditionally read as the founding of a new monastery where the old one once stood. This view was contested by I. Mustačić who believed that there had been a Benedictine monastery before 986 and that the charter testifies only to the delivery of the church to the Benedictines. Ivan Mustačić, “*Cartula traditionis ecclesie beati Chrysogoni martiris iz 986. godine*,” in *1000 godina samostana svetog Krševana u Zadru* (1000 years of the monastery of St. Chrysogonus in Zadar), ed. Ivo Petricioli (Zadar: Narodni list, 1990), 21–35 (hereafter: Mustačić, “*Cartula*”). According to his reading, the church once belonged to the Madii, the respectable priors of Zadar. See Mustačić, “*Cartula*,” 26. For the Madii see: Zrinka Nikolić, “The Madii: An Example of the Dalmatian Urban Elite in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” *Early Medieval Europe* 13 (2004) (forthcoming) and also her *Rođaci i bližnji: dalmatinsko gradsko plemstvo u ranom srednjem vijeku* (Relatives and neighbours: Dalmatian town nobility in the early Middle Ages) (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2003).

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and their Hungarian successors. It was due to these relations that the monastery became a stronghold of anti-Venetian and royal interest in Zadar.

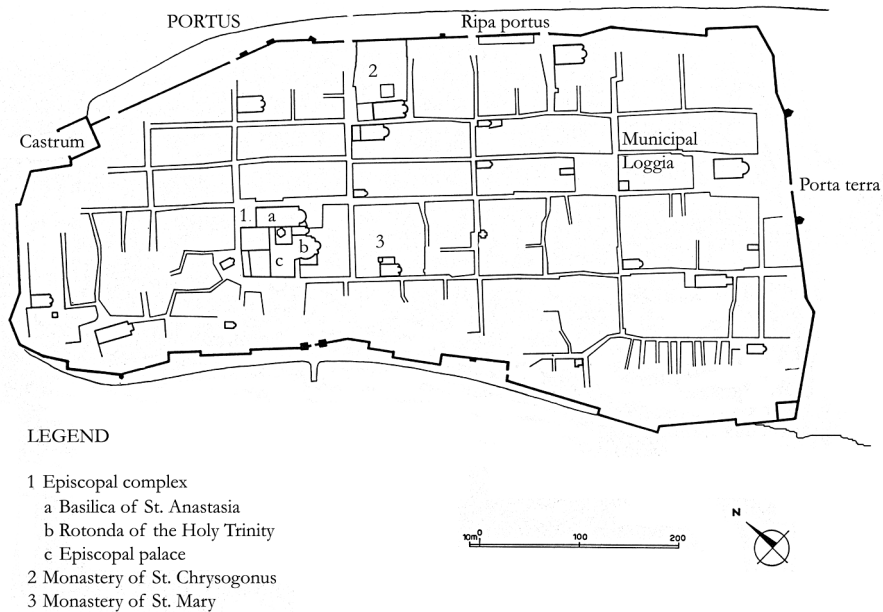


Fig. 1. Zadar in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Legendae: *The Local Hagiographic Accounts*

The *Translatio beati Grisogoni martyris*⁶ consists of three narrative parts. The first describes the discovery of the body of St. Chrysogonus in a graveyard near

⁶ The text of the *Translatio* is known from a fifteenth-century manuscript that was destroyed in the 1943 bombing of Zadar. Brunelli's analysis shows that the text was only recovered in the year mentioned, not written then. For the Italian translation see: Brunelli, *Storia*, 207–210; for the Latin original see Iveković, *Crkva*, 49–52. Although it was marked as “full of fantastic miracles and nebulous dialogues,” by Miroslav Granić, “O kultu,” it has received much attention lately. See also Radoslav Katičić, “Zadrani i Mirmidonci oko moći Sv. Krševana” (Citizens of Zadar and Myrmidons around the relics of St. Chrysogonus) in *Uz početke hrvatskih početaka* (From the beginning of Croatian beginnings) (Split: Književni krug, 1993), 191–201 (hereafter: Katičić, “Zadrani”); Mate Suić, “Zadarski i ninski Mirmidonci” (Myrmidons of Zadar and Nin), *Radovi Instituta JAZU* 38 (1996): 13–33 (hereafter: Suić, “Zadarski i ninski Mirmidonci”), and Mladen Ančić, “*Translatio beati Grisogoni martyris* kao povijesno vrelo”

Zadar and its transport to the city.⁷ The second part narrates how three monks stole the hand of the martyr and traveled to the land of Marab, and how the relics were returned by the nation of Myrmidones.⁸ The third part describes how a merchant from Aquileia was delivered from the peril of a storm and his rich donation to St. Chrysogonus. According to a philological analysis, the story can be dated to the ninth century.⁹ The central issue of the second story seems to be the contact with people from the hinterland. Rather than giving an authentic account of ninth-century history, the legend stresses two points: St. Chrysogonus was translated to Zadar by God's will to protect it and it is through his intervention that the rulers of the hinterland were brought into the orbit of city politics and established friendly terms with the citizens.

The *Translatio S. Anastasiae* is presented as a contemporary account of the translation of the relics of St. Anastasia from Constantinople to Zadar in 804. It tells the story of how Bishop Donatus and Beatus, a duke of Venice, went to Constantinople as envoys and met the citizens of Sirmium, who were hiding the relics of St. Anastasia. They urged the envoys to take the relics to their homeland. Upon approaching Zadar, the Venetians wanted to transfer the relics to Venice but were stopped by a storm and the relics were taken to Zadar.

Today's *opinio communis* is that the core of the document is an account contemporary with the translation. The legend itself must have been composed after the second half of the twelfth century, with additions in subsequent centuries. This dating would fit well with the complex socio-political situation in Zadar in the late twelfth century; written as an account of the translation, the aim of the compiler was to enhance the role of Bishop Donatus. Although the power of the bishop was at its peak at that time, it was already contested by the authority of the Patriarch of Grado on one side¹⁰ and the emerging commune

(The *Translatio beati Grisogoni martyris* as a historical source), *Starobrvatska prosvjeta* 25 (1998): 127–138 (hereafter: Ančić, “*Translatio*”).

⁷ After overcoming the obstacles (the body would not enter the city before it was given a possession, and so on) the relics were introduced into the city and a church was dedicated to the honor of the martyr.

⁸ After their land was devastated by the plague, the inhabitants, who wanted to find its cause, brought the hand back to Zadar. Marab was interpreted by M. Suić as derived from “mrav” (Croatian “ant”), which led him to conclude that the Myrmidons were the Croats inhabiting the hinterland of Zadar: Suić “Zadarski i ninski Mirmidonci,” 29–30; Ančić, “*Translatio*” understands Marab as Moravia and the whole story as a reflection of the possible role of Zadar in the missionary activities in Pannonia.

⁹ Katičić, “Zadrani,” 193.

¹⁰ Namely, after the upgrading the bishopric of Zadar to the rank of archbishopric in 1154 the archbishop was subjected to the Patriarch of Grado.



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on the other. The account seems to show concern for both problems. The divine patronage over the bishop is manifested in the event in front of Zadar when the duke of Venice decided to take the body to his city. Although men could not stop him, it was done by God, who forced the ship to sail to Zadar. The insistence on the bishop's independence from Venice as the central feature of the story points at the attempt to stress the traditional power of the early medieval bishops. Such a constellation of powers was hardly possible after 1205; the bishops were appointed by the patriarch, who sometimes insisted that they should be of Venetian origin. Along with this "external" problem, the legend touches upon the "internal" problem of the unity of the community. Out of all the holy protectors of the city the legend mentions only St. Anastasia. This is interesting knowing that soon after the probable compilation of the legend it was St. Chrysogonus who was named the principal patron of the commune of Zadar.

It is probable that the repair of the church in the mid-twelfth century was followed by the revision of the older hagiography. The *Translatio* is therefore an attempt to validate the authority of the bishop and when it mentions Bishop Donatus it means bishop as such. Donatus was perceived as the holy founder of the bishopric's power and the first bishop known for his particular deeds. This inference is further attested by the parallel promotion of his cult.¹¹ The twelfth century was the period when many Dalmatian cities promoted the cult of their local bishops, replacing the older late-Classical "imported" saints.

It is important to understand how the legends were perceived by the communities under the saintly patronage of the two martyrs. The oldest phase of the cult, based on the common, "basic" legend (the *Passio*), presented a "universal" layer of the cult. Only with the later "allodisation" (allodium is a term used for the land given by the lord to his subject; it is basically the essence of the so-called feudal system) of the calendar did a new hagiography emerge, reflecting contemporary realities rather than relying on tradition. It is significant that in the early medieval period, which I would call "pre-conflict" period, the offices of the bishop and the abbot of the monastery were exercised by the members of the same families. The two communities, connected by close family relations, had no problems with such familiarity among their patrons. However, local medieval legends of the translations give a much less unified picture. The *Passio*'s "ancient tradition" indeed connected the present with the authoritative past, but the cults were not petrified; saints, as living members of their communities, lived in the present. As the possession of the relics implied a close

¹¹ See Pavuša Vežić, "Su San Donato, vescovo di Zara," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 8 (2002): 235–240.

relation with the saint, it enabled a possessor to interpret the saint's will. Local hagiography gives an excellent example of this process and allows one to shift the attention from hagiography and inquire about the communities which controlled the cult of the saints.

Imagines: *The Visual Representation of the Saints*

What fits the “written” hagiography fits equally the “depicted” one; the iconography of both martyrs derived from a common origin but was changed during their sojourn in Zadar. The inquiry into the changes that took place during the localisation of the cults in medieval Zadar shows that the representation of Anastasia did not undergo drastic changes, but seems to have followed contemporary changes in Italy, especially those in Aquileia. The radical change in the iconography of St. Chrysogonus seems to have been connected with the specific role and position of “his monastery” in Zadar.



Fig. 2. *St. Anastasia, ambo of the cathedral, late twelfth century*

The earliest known image of St. Anastasia in Zadar is a miniature in the book of hours of the abbess Cicha, dated to c. 1060.¹² Anastasia is shown dressed in luxurious Byzantine clothes, raising her left arm and holding a small cross. This iconographic model was accepted as the most common way of representing the patron saint of the Zadar cathedral during the next two centuries; the twelfth-century relief of St. Anastasia on the cathedral's ambo shows the same features as the eleventh-century miniature (Fig. 2). Later depictions follow the oldest ones, showing minor alterations due to social changes that took place in the subsequent centuries or simply following contemporary fashion. These depictions do not show significant iconographic changes during the four centuries observed. Anastasia, the patron of the city

¹² *Liber horarum Cichae, abbatissae Monasterii Sanctae Mariae monialium de Iadra*. Oxford Bodleian Library: MS. Canonici Liturgical 277, ed. Marijan Grgić and Josip Kolanović (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv–Kršćanska sadašnjost; Zadar: Matica hrvatska, 2003): fol. 128r. See also the MA thesis by Rozana Vojvoda, “Većenega’s ‘Book of hours’: A Manuscript Study with a Special Stress on Decorated Initials: K.394, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences” (Budapest: Central European University, 2001).

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cathedral, preserved the Classical iconography throughout the Middle Ages. Her representation, balanced between Byzantine¹³ and Latin iconography, does not show distinctive local characteristics.

For the earliest representation of St. Chrysogonus one has to rely on a description rather than an image; the writer of chapter 29 of *DAI* mentions that the “monk Chrysogonus” is venerated in Zadar. Although the terminology does not explicitly say anything about the representation of the saint, it is surely a clue to it. Moreover, when the church was restored in the twelfth century, the walls were painted with the standing figures of St. Benedict, St. Scholastica, and St. Chrysogonus in the middle. The oldest known depiction, however, is the image on the eleventh-century reliquary of SS. James and Arontius. The subsequent



Fig. 3. *St. Chrysogonus, Romanesque Stone relief, twelfth–thirteenth century*

representations from the reliquaries and the portal of the cathedral show similarities: Chrysogonus is depicted as a standing figure, dressed as a martyr or monk. Although showing minor iconographic innovations, these representations still depend on the Classical image.¹⁴ However, sometime in the twelfth century a new iconography of St. Chrysogonus emerged; a depiction on a Romanesque column presents him as a bearded and long-haired mounted warrior charging with spear and shield (Fig. 3).

It seems that the depiction of Chrysogonus as a mounted knight only emerged in Zadar during the twelfth or thirteenth century,¹⁵ because this iconography does not appear in any Italian pre-quattrocento depictions. Neither does such an image exist in Byzantine iconography; Chrysogonus is not one of

¹³ The image of Anastasia tied to poles, dated to the thirteenth century, is reminiscent of Greek iconography. This literal depiction appears in the *Metaphrastian Menologion* from the eleventh century: Nancy Ševčenko-Patterson, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 98.

¹⁴ The early iconography of Chrysogonus depended on the earliest Italian depictions representing him as a martyr, nobleman or Roman knight. He is usually shown as a standing figure dressed either in the Roman *pallium* or Byzantine patrician costume.

¹⁵ This proposition is based on the fact that there is no such representation outside Zadar before the fourteenth century. If this notion were not valid the whole hypothesis would be put in question.

the Byzantine warrior saints.¹⁶ The source of such a perception is not to be found in the *Passio*, where Chrysogonus is referred to as *vir christianissimus* or as “one of the confessors.” The notion that he “suffered a great deal in vicariate” and the high offices offered to him by the emperor created an image of a nobleman that was later interpreted as a knight.¹⁷ Compared to other mounted warrior saints of the period, one observes that the iconography of St. Chrysogonus fits well into contemporary ideologies, the cult of chivalry as well as crusading. But what is suggested here is the dependence of the “new iconography” of St. Chrysogonus on the particular social and political context of Zadar in the thirteenth century.



Fig. 4. *St. Anastasia*,
Seal used in 1190

The new representation of St. Chrysogonus not only shows the changed iconography of one of the city’s patron saints, but at the same time it came to be used as Zadar’s coat of arms. During the period before the late twelfth century there is neither a description nor an image of the city’s coat of arms. The oldest known city seal is, in fact, that of the cathedral chapter from the twelfth century. This important piece of evidence shows how the city was perceived as the “city of St. Anastasia.”¹⁸ The seal is preserved on a charter from 1190 confirming a treaty between Zadar and Rab¹⁹ (Fig. 4). Not without a hint of irony, it was used only a month after the document confirming the return of the island of Maun to the monastery for the great victory won

¹⁶ L. Réau mentions him amongst the holy knights of the Eastern Church, but he does not give any example of Byzantine iconography: Louis Réau, *L’iconographie de l’art chrétien*, vol. 3/1 (Paris: 1958), 314; see also Sofija Petricioli, “Kameni grbovi grada Zadra” (Stone coats of arms of Zadar), *Radovi Instituta JAZU* 9 (1962): 362 (hereafter: Petricioli “Kameni grbovi”). Chrysogonus is not included among the Byzantine warrior saints by Christopher Walter in *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

¹⁷ Delehay, *Étude*, 222–223 and 227.

¹⁸ The inscription on the seal showing St. Anastasia raising her hands over the city says: SIGILLVM IADER[E VR]BIS SANCTA ANASTASIA. See also: Ivo Petricioli, “Prilog zadarskoj sfragistici” (Contribution to the heraldry of Zadar), *Radovi Filozofskog Fakulteta u Zadru* 10 (1972): 117–120.

¹⁹ *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 3, ed. Tadija Smičiklas (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1904–1990), vol 2, 247–258 (hereafter: *CD*).

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with the help of St. Chrysogonus,²⁰ who “led and protected the citizens against the enemy.” At that time the clear political features of the influence of the monastery were reflected in the new symbolic representation of Zadar. When the cathedral was renovated after the crusaders’ conquest of 1204, the portal was decorated with a new sculpture of St. Anastasia, but this time accompanied by St. Chrysogonus. As early as around 1300 Zadar was represented as the “city of St. Chrysogonus”²¹ (Fig. 5) and the change was confirmed when the city seal was defined as “representing the figure of St. Chrysogonus” in 1385.²²



Fig. 5. *St. Chrysogonus, carved wood choir seats, Monastery of St. Francis, 1394*

Interpretation: Communities in Conflict

Tempus episcoporum: 800–1205

When sealing a document in June, 1190, Blasius, the deacon and *notarius* of Zadar, used a seal with the inscription *sigillum Iadere urbis Sancta Anastasia* (Fig. 4). This seal, with the image of St. Anastasia raising her hands over the city, shows the influence of her cult in twelfth-century Zadar. Yet the seal was not simply the seal of the city; it was the seal of the cathedral chapter in the first place. It

²⁰ *CD*, vol. 2, 243–245.

²¹ See the maps: Rome Bibl. Vat. Cod. Vat. Lat. 2972 (c. 1310) and Bibl. Vat., Cod. Palatino lat. 1362.

²² Petricioli, “Kameni grbovi,” 360.



was the role of the bishop that integrated the identity of the city and presented a firm connection with antiquity in the period of the “early medieval transition.” Although the power of the bishops in the Dalmatian cities did not equal that of their Italian colleagues, evidence from the tenth and eleventh centuries shows their important position and great influence. They were not only professional international ambassadors but primarily the ones whose continuous presence in the city substituted for the short-term functions of imperial bureaucrats. The memory of particular bishops tended to blend with the office of a bishop as such. The *laudes* sung in their honour put them directly after emperors, kings, and dukes. The bishop was never alone, however; he lived in the episcopal chapter, a community to some extent resembling monastic communities. There are four issues that I see as highly important for the position of the bishop and his chapter: tradition, a monopoly on literacy, connection with the community, and control over the cults.

The cathedral of Zadar boasted the tradition of being the longest living institution within the community. It is not strange that many offices that were later to become a public or communal duty were born in the cathedral milieu. The emergence of a notarial office in Zadar is also connected with the chapter of St. Anastasia.²³ In the period when sources show the high level of illiteracy among secular officers, one can contemplate the power held by the institution which controlled local literary production. The reform of the notary after the beginning of the thirteenth century shows how the commune wanted to control this important office. Although not much is known about the details of the internal life of the chapter in the early and high Middle Ages, the buildings alone which constitute the episcopal complex signal the existence of a large and organised group of people who served the complex. Also, the relationship of the bishops with the community is well attested in the high Middle Ages; up to the late eleventh century, the bishop had his *familia* living with him. Some of the bishops were connected with the most powerful families in the city and had significant influence on the emergence of new monastic communities.

Concerning the position of the bishop in the community, in the case of Zadar it is not appropriate to speak of the emergence of a municipality in the Middle Ages, but rather about the transformation of institutions of the Roman city into a new medieval form. Three major institutions constituted the government of a late antique-early medieval city: the bishop, the civil and the military commanders. The importance of the bishop in the early medieval period was partially a result of the founding of bishopric seats in the Roman period. With regards to the Dalmatian cities, Croatian historians have

²³ Klaić–Petricoli, *Prošlost Zadra*, 197.



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emphasized two important aspects for the preservation of the cities in the early Middle Ages. Older authors stressed the importance of the bishops and episcopal sees, while more recent writers have rather enhanced the “fusion of Roman municipal elements and the community of the faithful with the community of citizens.”²⁴ However, the militarization of Byzantine society after the founding of the Dalmatian *theme* around 870 led to the formation of the elite recently referred to as “urban proto-patricians.”²⁵ These closely-knit families tended to keep the most important positions in the cities even after their military role lost its importance.²⁶ Whatever the formal relations between the three segments of government, it is important to stress that in the early Middle Ages the positions of priors, judges, and bishops were often held by members of the same families.²⁷

The cult of St. Anastasia in the city cathedral was one of the most significant features of Zadar. How much space Constantine Porphyrogenitus gave to the description of the cathedral has already been mentioned. Similarly significant is the description of Cardinal Boson two hundred years later; on the occasion of Pope Alexander III’s visit to Zadar, he mentions how the pope was taken on a white horse to the “martyr Anastasia resting in the major church of the city.”²⁸ Not only visitors from the outside, however, observed the central position of the cathedral and its patron saint. This is well shown in the legend of translation, how the citizens of all “classes, ranks and gender” gathered around their patron celebrating her *adventus* as the most solemn occasion. In the description one clearly “reads” the image of the unified commune: the image of the *communio sanctorum* gathered around Christ’s martyr and her chosen follower,

²⁴ Cf. Ivan Strohal, *Pravna povijest dalmatinskih gradova* (Judicial history of Dalmatian cities) (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1913), 1; Marko Kostrenčić, “Postanak dalmatinskih sredovječnih gradova” (The emergence of the Dalmatian medieval cities) *Šišićev Zbornik* (Zagreb: Tiskara C. Albrecht, 1929), 114. Both positions were criticised and the stress was put on the continuity of the Roman civic institutions by Klaić, *Zadar*, 52–54. The preservation of the civil government is attested in Zadar in the Ostrogothic period, when the city’s prior was chosen from a college of judges and authors emphasizing the preservation of Roman law point to the fact that even the Byzantine tribunes were subject to municipal judges.

²⁵ See Neven Budak, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* (The First Centuries of Croatia) (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994), 153–154.

²⁶ A good example of this continuity is the titles of *dux* and *strategos* given to the city prior in the period when he did not have any military role. On the problems of the Dalmatian proto-patricians, see Nikolić, *Rodaci*.

²⁷ Nikolić, *Rodaci*, 200.

²⁸ Strgačić, “Papa Aleksandar,” 165.



the bishop. However, this image, if it ever existed in such a simple and perfect form, was doomed to disappear.

When Zadar became an archbishopric in 1154 by order of Pope Anastasius IV, it shook off the supremacy of the archbishop of Spalato, with which it had been fighting for centuries. The victory, however, was short lived; already in the next year Pope Hadrianus IV subjected the archbishop of Zadar to the patriarch of Grado. This decision, seen as a political move toward the subjection of Zadar to Venice, caused a rebellion in 1159 and the Venetian duke imposed on Zadar was driven out. The first archbishops of Zadar participated in the communal resistance and this period is attested by dynamic building activity and prosperity. Zadar entered its glorious yet troubled era; at the end of the next fifty years, marked by constant rebellions, warfare, and changing alliances, the city was destroyed by Crusaders and the Venetians in 1202. The peace treaty of 1205 imposed a rule that the archbishop of Zadar should be, from then on, chosen from among the citizens of Venice.²⁹ On the level of public ritual the people of Zadar promised to sing *laudes* in the cathedral to the Venetian doge, the patriarch, the Venetian duke of Zadar, and their archbishop.

Despite the fact that King Andrew II gave Zadar to Venice as an “eternal possession” in exchange for passage to the Holy Land, the citizens apparently did not accept the situation. Scarce evidence reflects the situation in the city; Archbishop John had to promise his patriarch that “he will not prepare any plot with the citizens of Zadar.” The clear outcome of this project is that the archbishops were to become the representatives of Venetian authority in the city. After a hundred years of struggle Venice finally managed to impose her grip on the former Dalmatian capital, and through the imposed dukes and controlled archbishops, it started to influence inner city politics. This definitely changed the position of the bishop in the community.³⁰

Some weeks before the document mentioned above was sealed with the seal of St. Anastasia in 1190, the citizens of Zadar had won a battle against the Venetians on the peak of Treni. The victory was an occasion for the citizens to

²⁹ More precisely, from the region between Grado and Capo d’Argina. Grga Novak, “Presjek kroz povijest grada Zadra” (Survey of the history of Zadar) *Radovi Instituta JAZU* 11–12 (1965), 19 (hereafter: Novak, “Presjek”).

³⁰ Another aspect that should not be underestimated is the fact that the Church reform movement went in the direction of firmer control, distancing the bishop from close dependence on his flock. The interference of the papal reform and the centralisation of ecclesiastical institutions often had to oppose the “public good” of the emerging communes. Imposing the bishop from outside collided with traditional customs and in some cases must have been an irritating slap to the pride of growing “communal consciousness.”



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return some property to the monastery of St. Chrysogonus, naming the monastery patron *noster patronus, tutor* and *protector civitatis* on this occasion.³¹ This event seems to have been a crystallizing point where a new balance of the powers in the city became evident. It is highly significant that the victory over the Venetian fleet was attributed not to Saint Anastasia (whose figure was still used on the seal), but to the patron saint of the influential monastery. It seems that by that time the monastery had grown to such power that it could oppose the archbishop, and the growing self-consciousness of the commune wanted to represent itself symbolically by choosing to put its trust in a patron saint other than the cathedral and city patron Anastasia. The following examples illustrate the contested authority:

In 1224, the abbot of St. Chrysogonus rejected the order of Duke Marin Dandolo, denying him the honour of being welcomed at the entrance to the monastery with holy water, incense, and the cross. The rebellious monastery was brought to order by the intervention of the archbishop who “closed” the monastery church, forbade burials and attendance at mass by the citizens of Zadar, even forbidding a procession on the feast day of St. Chrysogonus. Soon a number of citizens were involved in the scandal, since they tried to bury their dead in the monastery.³² This case is interesting not only for the opposition the monastery showed to the bishop and the duke, but also because of its outcome. In the end the citizens managed to force the archbishop to withdraw his order.³³

A similar symbolic demonstration of resistance took place in the summer of 1308, when the legate Cardinal Gentilis came to Zadar. His excommunication of some priests who rebelled against his orders was contested by the disobedience of the local clergy; the bells were rung and the churches were open as usual. The peak of the manifestation of independence took place on 3 October, when a funerary rite was led by the abbots of the three local Benedictine monasteries: “dressed in solemn clothes, with mitres and holding bishops’ staffs, the abbots, led by the abbot of St. Chrysogonus and followed by the mass of citizens opposed the legate.”³⁴ On the symbolic level it is highly significant how the abbots, having the right to wear the mitre and carry the bishop’s staff, gave the impression that there was more than one bishop in the

³¹ *CD*, vol. 2, 244.

³² *CD*, vol. 3, 280–281. Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 58.

³³ The case was further discussed before the bishop of Trogir, who judged that the duke should leave the monastery alone and called the archbishop’s orders “forced.” *CD* vol. 3, 283, 287–289; Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 58.

³⁴ “Cum pluvialibus et mitris ac baculis pastoralibus,” *CD* vol. 8, 196; Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 62.



city. Indeed, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it is the monastery that came to play a central role in communal politics against Venice and occasionally against the dukes and archbishops.

Tempus communitatis: 1205–1409

The monastery of St. Chrysogonus, the earliest city monastery in Dalmatia, was founded in the late tenth century by the bishop and Byzantine functionaries, and also by elected members of the newly formed organisation of the citizens.³⁵ The monastery, founded with the participation of the citizens of Zadar at the time when the same Madi family held posts in the city's secular government, the bishopric seat, and high monastic offices, could not, and had no reason to, present any threat to the authority of the bishop. However, during the eleventh, and especially the twelfth, centuries, the political situation became more complicated, leading to a polarisation within the city. Two features seem to have been extremely important for the development of the monastery and its role in communal life: firstly, the “organic connection” between the monastery and the communal organisation,³⁶ and secondly, the monastery's relation with the Hungarian-Croatian kings.

Although the monastery of St. Chrysogonus, through the possible personal relations of Abbot Madius and Abbot Aligerna of Montecassino, might have been connected to the Cluny reform, it never entered the Cluniac network nor was it included in papal exemptions. In fact, it did not need to enter international filiations; its close relations with the commune and the rulers of the hinterland granted various and extensive privileges to its monks.³⁷ It is significant that the existence of the most influential monasteries in Dalmatia coincides with the emergence of communes which needed these monasteries.³⁸ The participation of the citizens in the internal affairs of the monastery was often connected with the decline of monastic discipline in the thirteenth century. Many examples showing the active participation of lay persons in the life of the monastery also attest the communal character of the community of St. Chrysogonus. It is not surprising then that Patriarch Egidius was scandalised and angry when he discovered that some citizens would be present during his inquiry into monastic finances in 1306.³⁹ The earliest known lawsuits between the monastery and the commune took place in the 1221 and 1222. At first sight

³⁵ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 35.

³⁶ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 56.

³⁷ Mustać, “*Cartula*,” 30.

³⁸ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 48.

³⁹ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 54–55.



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they show the commune in conflict with the monastery, but if observed more cautiously, one notes that it is only one segment of the communal government that quarrels—namely the duke. When Venice imposed her dukes on Zadar after 1205 they must have found unacceptable the specific status that the monastery enjoyed in the city.⁴⁰ It seems that “in the city recently conquered by the Republic of St. Mark... it was the monastery which remained the symbol of the communal autonomy.”⁴¹

The monastery is known to have supported Croatian and Hungarian kings, with whom it kept family relations. The close relations of Cicha, the abbess of the sister monastery of St. Mary, with the Croatian King Krešimir IV and the friendly relations of her daughter Večenega with King Coloman have been interpreted differently in Croatian historiography. What is clear is that some kind of relation existed, whether it was really a family relation or shared goals.

Growing connections with the rulers of the hinterland, attested already in the *Translatio beati Chrysogoni*, can be read in donation charters. The earliest period of the monastery was characterised by the lack of landed possessions; its income seems to have come exclusively from fishing.⁴² However, sometime around the mid-eleventh century the monastery started to receive houses and gardens, slowly concentrating its own space as a separate entity within the city. The first land gifts, attested between 1020 and 1040,⁴³ were given mostly by Croatian nobles and kings.⁴⁴ In one charter the monastery was given a significant title: *Sacratissima membra Iadere*.⁴⁵ Towards the end of the century, more and more lands came into the possession of the monastery, and the trend continued through the following centuries.

In 1242, Bela IV confirmed the rights of the monastery for its fidelity,⁴⁶ and although the period under the rule of the Hungarian kings did not last long,

⁴⁰ For instance, unlike other city monasteries in Dalmatia, the monastery of St. Chrysogonus was not subject to the clerics of Zadar. This is testified to by the statement of one of the abbots that he “never gave any taxes to the parish priest nor other priests of Zadar.” Also in the process of 1221, the monastery, through its lawyer, announced that whoever stole property from the monastery was automatically excommunicated. Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 61.

⁴¹ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 59.

⁴² Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 36–37.

⁴³ Freidenberg, “Samostan,” 42.

⁴⁴ Like the donation of Ban Godemir and his wife in 1028 or King Krešimir IV in 1069.

⁴⁵ CD 1, 76

⁴⁶ Eduard Peričić, “Samostan sv. Krševana kroz lik i djelovanje njegovih opata” (Monastery of St. Chrysogonus through the Activity of Its Abbots), in *1000 godina*



as early as 1311 the citizens of Zadar chose Mladen, the son of Paul of Bribir and ban of Bosnia, as their duke.⁴⁷ The highpoint of the tendency of Zadar to subject itself to the Hungarian-Croatian kings was the arrival of Louis I Anjou in Croatia in 1345.⁴⁸ On that occasion Zadar rebelled against Venice and invited Louis to the city. When the Venetians laid siege to Zadar for almost a year, the monastery of St. Chrysogonus was used as the headquarters of the defence.⁴⁹ The symbolic importance of its patron can be read between the lines of *Obsidio Iadrensis*, a contemporary account of the siege of 1345–1346.⁵⁰ What strikes the reader is that the description, probably written by the archbishop, never mentions St. Anastasia, while St. Chrysogonus is addressed many times. It is the bell of St. Chrysogonus that rings the alarm when the enemy is approaching,⁵¹ and citizens gather under the banner of their patron to attack the Venetians.⁵² High tensions and the importance of the symbolic convergence of the dates, places, and persons were well illustrated during the siege. On 25 November, the feast day of St. Chrysogonus, the whole the commune gathered in his church and the archbishop preached to encourage them. After the gospel was read, the archbishop blessed the king's banner. After the mass, the people went to the central square where they celebrated the feast by singing "pious hymns and secular songs."⁵³ Celebrating and cursing the enemy, they took their weapons and started a battle the same evening. The miraculous presence of St. Chrysogonus is also attested by a witness who saw how:

the fire, which, turning many buildings into ashes, burned the house in which there was a shield with a colourful depiction of St. Chrysogonus, everything was turned into ashes except the figure of the soldier of Christ. It was not ruined, but, illuminated by the Divine light, started to shine with even more brilliant radiance.⁵⁴

samostana svetog Krševana u Zadru, ed. Ivo Petricoli (Zadar: Narodni list, 1990), 95 (hereafter: Peričić, "Samostan").

⁴⁷ Novak, "Presjek," 27.

⁴⁸ Novak, "Presjek," 31.

⁴⁹ Peričić, "Samostan," 98.

⁵⁰ *Obsidionis iadrensis libri duo* were probably written by Nikola Matafar, Archbishop of Zadar (1333–1367). Born ca. 1290 he studied in Padua, was a friend of influential people of the age, and the ally of the Angevins.

⁵¹ *Obsidio*, 1, 10.

⁵² *Obsidio*, 2,9.

⁵³ *Obsidio*, 1,8.

⁵⁴ *Obsidio*, 2, 15.



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Although the rebellion did not succeed and the city was again taken by Venice, it was only twelve years later that the king came to re-conquer Zadar.

After the expiration of the cease fire, Louis I came to take Zadar in 1357. He was welcomed by the citizens. The monks of St. Chrysogonus helped Croatian soldiers and German mercenaries to cross the city wall and enter the city through the cloister. The Venetians were defeated and soon after, the “peace of Zadar” was signed on 18 February 1358. Venice had to resign all her possessions from Drač to the northern Adriatic and Louis I Anjou came to possess the city of Zadar.⁵⁵ The king generously expressed his gratitude to the monastery; besides confirming all the historical possessions of the monastery, he ordered that his coins minted in Zadar should bear the name of St. Chrysogonus.⁵⁶ That was the high point of success of the politics of both the monastery of St. Chrysogonus and the commune of Zadar. On the symbolic level, it is the “knight” who saved the city from the Venetians once again. Not forgetting the role of their protector, the city council decided that, to mark the victory over the Venetians, each citizen should bring a gift, a half-pound candle, to St. Chrysogonus.⁵⁷ Is it possible to make any connection between the success of the Angevin king and the expectations of the citizens of Zadar from their patron saint? This is the moment when the previous politics of the monastery succeeded: the city had coins with the inscription of their king and their heavenly protector, both represented as young knights. Some thirty years after the treaty, in a document from 1385, the new situation was officially confirmed: the seals of the commune represented St. Chrysogonus, signed with the inscription: *Urbs Dalmatina Jadra pollet hoc duce*.⁵⁸

Conclusions

The enhancement of St. Chrysogonus and his saintly protection in the period between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries was related to a turbulent period in the history of Zadar. In the period when Zadar found itself the focus of political struggle, it was the role of its Benedictines, through their piety and political engagement, who managed to integrate the growing self-consciousness

⁵⁵ Novak, “Presjek,” 36

⁵⁶ To my knowledge, no coin of this type has been preserved. V. Brunelli describes it as having the inscription: “M[ineta] IADRE Ludovicus REX UNGARIE on one side and “IADERA civitas – s. Grisogonus IADRAE” on the other: Brunelli, *Storia*, 513.

⁵⁷ Ivan Ostojić, *Benediktinci u Hrvatskoj i ostalim našim krajevima* (Benedictines in Croatia and our other regions). vol. 2. (Split: Benediktinski priorat –Tkon, 1964), 46.

⁵⁸ Petricioli, “Kameni grbovi,” 360.



and pride of the commune. Becoming influential as a political force and keeping their relations with the Hungarian-Croatian kings, the monks preserved their own interests; in spite of having most of their possessions in the hinterland, they started to symbolise the growing self-consciousness of the commune. Supported by the donations of Hungarian kings, Croatian noblemen, and citizens of Zadar, the monastery of St. Chrysogonus became a crucial force in these political events. It opposed Venice and helped the rulers of the hinterland to gain control over Zadar. On the level of ecclesiastical politics, the abbots of St. Chrysogonus contested the power of the archbishops, who were subject to the “Venetian” Patriarch of Grado.

These tensions were expressed in the devotion to the patron saints of the communities in conflict. St. Anastasia’s cult was much more popular in the early Middle Ages and had a more glorious history, with important cult centres in both Rome and Constantinople. Chrysogonus came to play an active role in city politics only with the growing power of the monastery in the High Middle Ages. Venerated in the early period as a monk, Chrysogonus came to be represented as a charging horseman, who symbolised the pride and self-confidence of the citizens of Zadar. On the iconographic level, the new representation seems not to have derived from the Byzantine warrior-saint tradition and is not known anywhere in the West before the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Leaving many questions still to be answered, an analysis of the iconographic presentation of St. Chrysogonus shows that after the second half of the twelfth century he became venerated as the principal patron saint of the city. He replaced the former protector St. Anastasia and some time in the thirteenth century the figure of St. Chrysogonus came to represent the city. In the “century of rebellions,” Chrysogonus underwent a metamorphosis from a martyr into a knight. When, after the Venetian conquest of Zadar in 1409, the commune finally lost its independence, the figure of the mounted rider still reminded them of the times when the monastery and its abbots opposed the Venetian doges and their own archbishops.

As this inquiry has shown, the very idea of a principal patron saint might be a bit misleading and should be used with caution, especially in the earlier periods when evidence is far from abundant; in some periods it is not possible to state precisely who was “the principal” patron saint of a city. Therefore I suggest observing this position in the light of the relations between the urban sub-communities as “contested territory.” In such a situation, it is the role of the institution which promoted the cult to interpret the events in a way to fit its aims. However, the emergence of urban consciousness displayed through public rituals and symbolic representations seems to have demanded a more precise self-definition and self-representation of communal identity. Although the



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scarce evidence does not allow one to make firm conclusions, the victory over the Venetians in 1190 and the interpretation of it as the action of St. Chrysogonus seems to have been one of these crystallizing points. For this, I have used the term “replacement” of the patron saint. However, the emergence of the cult of St. Chrysogonus as the principal protector of Zadar is not the result of a single act, but rather the result of a process in which the commune, by bridging the gap between the sacred and the secular, found ways to express its independent identity crystallised in the figure of its protector.