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Insular Power:

Reconstructing the Social, Economic and Artistic Networks of the Elaphiti Islands, Croatia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

by

Franka Horvat

2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**Insular Power:
Reconstructing the Social, Economic and Artistic Networks of the Elaphiti Islands, Croatia**

by

Franka Horvat

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

University of California,

Los Angeles

2022

Professor Sharon Elizabeth Gerstel, Chair

This dissertation examines the Elaphiti Islands, an archipelago closely connected to medieval Ragusa, within the scholarly framework of island-mainland relations and Mediterranean networks. The islands are well attested in archival documents and are rich in medieval material remains. They preserve fifteen churches dated from the 9th to the 13th century, as well as architectural traces of settlements. By examining art-historical, archaeological, archival and literary sources, I reconstruct the islands' living conditions in the 13th century, their relationship with Ragusa, and their role in the social, economic and artistic networks of the wider Mediterranean. Like many small islands in the Mediterranean, the Elaphiti Islands have been always examined through the lens of destitution and exploitation. Yet, the 13th-century sources from the rich Archive of Dubrovnik indicate that the islanders had a great deal of agency, and the number of churches condensed in this small area suggests that the islands were inhabited by industrious communities.

The forms of these churches are an amalgamation of local styles and broader Mediterranean trends. Their architecture and decoration find parallels on the proximate mainland, but also in monuments in southern Italy and the Ionian and Aegean Seas. The close examination of the Elaphiti monuments, coupled with the uncovering of the islanders' agency has made it possible to place the islands in a new strategic context. Situated at the gateway into the Mediterranean basin, with Byzantine territories to the east and Italian cities to the west, these islands, I argue, were actors in commercial and artistic exchanges in the Mediterranean, benefitting from their location on a permeable border between cultures and a watery boundary between political hegemonies.

The dissertation of Franka Horvat is approved.

Bronwen Wilson

Charlene Villaseñor Black

Christopher John Wickham

Sharon Elizabeth Gerstel, Committee Chair

University of California,

Los Angeles

2022

Contents

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	ii
List of Abbreviations:	vii
List of Figures:	viii
Acknowledgements.....	xiv
VITA.....	xvii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: ISLANDLANDNESS: QUESTIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHOD	11
Islands: Chameleons of Identity.....	11
The Elaphiti Landscapes.....	16
Ragusa.....	21
Material Remains on the Islands.....	28
Written Sources	37
Chapter 2: LIVING ON THE ISLANDS.....	44
The Barren Property of Marinus: On Poverty, Wealth and Land Management.....	44
Dwellings and Settlements	71
A Theft in Vladimirus’s Place: On Houses and Households	71
Settlements.....	79
Chapter 3: PIETY, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING MATERIAL REMAINS ON THE ELAPHITI ISLANDS	88
Symon’s Debt to Saint Michael: on Religious Feasts and Debt Settlement.....	89
“The Southern Dalmatian Dome Type:” Architecture and Administrative Matters.....	99
Helena’s Altar Screen: A Humble Devotion of a Medieval Queen or a Case of Mistaken Identity?.....	109
The Wall Paintings of Saint John on Šipan and Saint Nicholas on Koločep: Program and Problems of Identification	122
Clues of Use: Towards a Reconstruction of the Iconographic Program	135
Chapter 4: THE ELAPHITI SEASCAPES: RECONSIDERING THE ISLAND-MAINLAND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ELAPHITI AND RAGUSA.....	142
Nuns’ Missing Cargo on its Way to Koločep: On Harboring on the Islands	142
Junius’s Journey with Salt: On the Islanders’ Trade Endeavors.....	152
The Southern Dalmatian Dome Type Churches of the City: Returning to the Question of Function...	161
The Frescoes Beneath the Cathedral of Assumption.....	173
Chapter 5: BETWEEN CULTURES: RESTORING THE FORGOTTEN LINKS OF THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN NETWORKS	185

Stanche the Painter’s Travel to Apulia.....	191
Byzantine Traits of the Elaphiti Cycles	194
Painted Scrolls and the Elaphiti Inscriptions.....	199
Parallels in the Neighboring Regions	206
Hidden in Plain Sight: The Path of an Ornament	218
CONCLUSION.....	231
Figures.....	235
Table 1.....	295
WRITTEN SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY:	296
PRIMARY SOURCES:	296
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	297

List of Abbreviations:

AIA — Annales Instituti Archaeologici: Godišnjak Instituta za arheologiju

ANURUS — Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Republike Srpske

DO — Dumbarton Oaks

DOP — Dumbarton Oaks Papers

IPU — Institut za Povijest Umjetnosti

ΔΧΑΕ — Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

JAZU — Jugoslavenka Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti

HAD — Hrvatsko Arheološko Društvo

HAZU — Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti

HIP — Hrvatski Institut za Povijest

HRZ — Hrvatski Resturatorski Zavod

HZ — Historijski Zbornik

OAW — Verlag der Österreichischen Academie der Wissenschaften

SANU — Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umjetnosti

XAE — Christian Archaeological Society

List of Figures:

- Fig. 1. Position of Dubrovnik in the Adriatic basin.
- Fig. 2. Position of the Elaphiti Islands in relation to Dubrovnik.
- Fig. 3. Visitors' board on Lokrum. Photograph courtesy of Ivana Zedniček.
- Fig. 4. The Postira docks in the cove of Donje Čelo, Koločep.
- Fig. 5. Lopud, view of the island shortly before entering the cove of Lopud.
- Fig. 6. The cove of Luka Šipanska.
- Fig. 7. Communal road on Koločep with the church of Saint Nicholas on the cemetery.
- Fig. 8. View of the church of Saint Nicholas on Lopud from the communal road.
- Fig. 9. Šipan, natural spring (the so-called Šipun) in the central plain of the island.
- Fig. 10. The *Comes's* Palace, Šipan.
- Fig. 11. Ruin of the *Comes's* Palace, Lopud.
- Fig. 12. Salome's dance, church of Saint John the Baptist in Deliana, Crete.
- Fig. 13. Ruin of an early medieval house in Bige, Koločep.
- Fig. 14. The Becadelli summerhouse, Šipan.
- Fig. 15. The remains of Saint Michael, Koločep (to the right of the road).
- Fig. 16. Communal road on Lopud.
- Fig. 17. Mountain of Velji Vrh, Šipan.
- Fig. 18. Šipan, agricultural plain.
- Fig. 19. Church of Saint Michael above the Sea, Šipan. Photo courtesy of Marija Goravica.
- Fig. 20. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan.
- Fig. 21. Church of Saint Barbara, Šipan.
- Fig. 22. Church of Saint Peter, Šipan.
- Fig. 23. Church of Saint Michael on Pakljena, Šipan.
- Fig. 24. Church of Saint Elijah, Lopud.
- Fig. 25. Church of Saint Peter, Lopud.
- Fig. 26. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Lopud.
- Fig. 27. Church of Saint Nicholas, Lopud.
- Fig. 28. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep.
- Fig. 29. Church of Saint Sergius, Koločep.
- Fig. 30. Church of Saint Barbara, Koločep.

Fig. 31. Church of Saint Francis, Koločep.

Fig. 32. Church of Saint Elijah, Lopud. Fragment of wall painting in apse. Unknown saint. Kept in the Parish collection of Lopud. Photograph courtesy of Ivana Tomas.

Fig. 33. Church of Saint Michael on Pakljena. View of the vault with frescoes dated to the 15th century.

Fig. 34. Architrave fragment, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century.

Fig. 35. Architrave fragments, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century.

Fig. 36. Chancel screen fragment, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century.

Fig. 37. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. View of the dome.

Fig. 38. Reconstructed altar screen from the church of Saint Michael (?), in the Parish Museum of Koločep, 11th century.

Fig. 39. Church of Saint Michael, Koločep, 11th century. Condition after the reconstruction.

Fig. 40. Saint Nicholas, Koločep, 11th century. View to the interior and the holes in pavement that mark the place of the altar screen.

Fig. 41. Chancel slabs of the reconstructed altar screen.

Fig. 42. Fragment of a chancel slab. The Parish Museum of Koločep.

Fig. 43. North wall of the church of the Holy Trinity, Koločep. Chancel slab.

Fig. 44. Church of Saint Peter the Great, fragment of an ambo stair rail, 10th century. Photograph retrieved from Romana Menalo, *Ranosrednjovjekovna skulptura iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku/Early Medieval Sculpture from the Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Dubrovnik* (Dubrovnik: Dubrovački Muzeji, 2018), 100.

Fig. 45. Church of Saint Peter the Great, fragment of a chancel screen, 10th century. Image retrieved from Menalo, *Ranosrednjovjekovna skulptura iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku*, 39.Fig.

46. Chancel slab from the church of Koljani close to Vrlika, 9th century. Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments, Split. Image retrieved from Carl D. Sheppard, "Pre-Romanesque Sculpture: Evidence for the Cultural Evolution of the People of the Dalmatian Coast," *Gesta* 23/1 (1984): 15.

Fig. 47. Chancel slab from Sveta Nedjeljica close to Zadar, 11th century. Masacre of the Innocents and Flight into Egypt. Image retrieved from Magdalena Skoblar, *Figural Sculpture in Eleventh-Century Dalmatia and Croatia: Patronage, Architectural Context, History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 15.

Fig. 48. The relief with the representation of a Croatian King Petar Krešimir IV, 11th century. Part of a baptismal font in the Baptistery of the Cathedral Saint Domnius (Sveti Dujce) in Split. Image retrieved from Tomislav Galović, "Croatia Benedictina: Hrvatsko Kraljevstvo, Petar Krešimir IV. i Ordo sancti Benedicti" [Croatia Benedictina: The Croatian Kingdom, Petar Krešimir IV and the Order of Saint Benedict], in *Abbatissa Ingenuitate Precipua: The Proceedings of the Scientific Colloquium "The 950th anniversary of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary in Zadar (1066-2016)*, ed. Pavuša Vežić and Ivan Josipović (Zadar: University of Zadar and the Monastery of Saint Mary in Zadar, 2020), 67.

Fig. 49. Rear side of the gable of the altar screen of Koločep. Re-carved sarcophagus, 3rd century.

Fig. 50. Drawing of the inscription from the altar screen on Koločep, by Nina Šimundić Bendić. Image retrieved from Vedrana Delonga, “Pisana uspomena na jednu “sestru i kraljicu” s Koločepa” [A Written Memory of a “Sister and Queen” from Koločep], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 34 (2007): 200.

Fig. 51. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse.

Figs. 52-53. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Medallions depicting bishops below the Deesis, apse.

Fig. 54. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. General view of the remaining wall painting.

Fig. 55. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Saint Stephen.

Fig. 56. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Saint Paul (?).

Fig. 57. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Cosmatesque arches.

Fig. 58. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Archangel Michael, north wall beneath the dome.

Fig. 59. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Unidentified saint.

Fig. 60. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Christ flanked by Archangels, apse.

Fig. 61. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Michael, apse, detail.

Fig. 62. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Michael, north wall beneath the dome.

Fig. 63. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Gabriel, south wall beneath the dome.

Fig. 64. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. View to the apse with deacon saints on the triumphal arch.

Fig. 65. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint George (?).

Fig. 66. Church of George Diasoritis, Naxos, 11th century. Saint George in the lower register of the apse, depicted receiving prayer.

Fig. 67. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplos (?), previously identified as Mauros.

Fig. 68. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Stephen.

Fig. 69. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplus (?), detail of the inscription which contains the saint's name.

Fig. 70. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplus (?), detail of the inscription which contains the word SA[N]CTUS.

Fig. 71. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Inscription next to a saint on the north wall.

Fig. 72. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Nicholas.

Fig. 73. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint on the south wall, perhaps Saint Peter or Saint Andrew.

Fig. 74. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Eastern blind arch on the north wall with the ornament next to it.

Fig. 75. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Eastern blind arch on the south wall with the ornament next to it.

Fig. 76. View from the path leading to Saint Michael above the Sea, Šipan.

Fig. 77. Saint Michael above the Sea, Šipan. View of the interior.

Fig. 78. Remains of the monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, vicinity of Shkodër, Albania. Photograph courtesy of Marija M. Shipley.

Fig. 79. Church of the Transfiguration (Sigurata), Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of existing condition. Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sigurata na Prijekom," [The Sigurata church on Prijeko], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 35/1 (1995): 256.

Fig. 80. Church of Saint Nicholas at Prijeko, Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of existing condition. Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sv. Nikole na Prijekom" [The Saint Nicholas Church at Prijeko], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III-21 (1991): 162.

Fig. 81. Church of Saint Nicholas at Prijeko, Ragusa. Ideal reconstruction of the original state (after Željko Peković). Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sv. Nikole na Prijekom," 167.

Fig. 82. Church of Saint Luke and the Annunciation, Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of the existing condition. Image retrieved from Ivana Tomas, "Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve s kupolom južne Dalmacije i Boke kotorske" [Medieval single-aisle domed churches of southern Dalmatia and Boka Kotorska], PhD. diss. (University of Zagreb, 2014), t. 34.

Fig. 83. Map of Ragusa with limits of the old city quarters (sexterii). Churches of the Sigurata, Saint Nicholas on Prijeko and Saint Luke are marked with numbers 22, 23 and 24, respectively. Image retrieved from Ines Krajcar Bronić, "Radiocarbon dating of St. Stephen's in Pustijerna church in Dubrovnik, Croatia," Conference paper presented at the Balkan Symposium on Archaeometry in Bukurest, October 29, 2012, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Dubrovnik-with-the-limits-of-urban-areas-sexterii-thick-lines-The-numbers_fig1_265641082. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

Fig. 84. Church of the Transfiguration (Sigurata), Ragusa. View of the dome. Image retrieved from Željko Peković and Ivica Žile, *Ranosrednjovjekovna crkva Sigurata na Prijekom u Dubrovniku/The Early Medieval Church of Sigurata at Prijeko in Dubrovnik* (Split: Muzej Hrvatskih Arheoloških Spomenika, 1999), 19.

Fig. 85. Ground plan of the finds on the archaeological site beneath the present Cathedral of Ragusa and Bunićeva Poljana. Dark purple: first church, light purple: later interpolations, dark blue: Romanesque church, red: Early Christian memory, pink: a pre-Romanesque building. Photo retrieved from Danko Zelić, "Arhitektura starih katedrala" [The Architecture of the Old Cathedrals (of Ragusa)], in *Katedrala Gospe Velike u Dubrovniku* [The Cathedral of Our Great Lady in Dubrovnik], ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj (Dubrovnik - Zagreb: Gradska župa Gospe Velike and IPU, 2014), 30-31.

Fig. 86. Romanesque Cathedral in urban setting of Ragusa of mid-17th century, detail of the city panorama. Copy of the original made before the earthquake of 1667. Oil on canvas, Convent of the Friars Minor, Dubrovnik. Retrieved from Danko Zelić, "Arhitektura starih katedrala," 43.

Fig. 87. The first building beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. View to the central apse.

Fig. 88. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Bishops in the apse.

Fig. 89. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Figure on the southern wall.

Fig. 90. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Figure on the pillar.

Fig. 91. In-situ finds on Bunićeva Poljana, Ragusa. Early Christian tetraconch structure and the foundations of the bell tower belonging to the Romanesque church. Photo retrieved from Danko Zelić, "Arhitektura starih katedrala," 34.

Fig. 92. Fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Bishop in the apse, detail.

Fig. 93. Fresco from beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa, face of a saint. Assembled from the debris found during the excavation. Photo retrieved from Igor Fisković, “O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici” [On the 11th and 12th-Century Frescoes in Dubrovnik and its Area], *Radovi IPU* 33 (2009): 20.

Fig. 94. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse, detail with Saint John the Baptist.

Fig. 95. Church of Santi Stefani at Vaste, Apulia. Representation in the north apse. Christ among the Archangels. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 75.

Fig. 96. Church of Saint John, Šipan. Detail of the apse with the scroll held by the Virgin.

Fig. 97. Church of Saint John, Šipan. Detail of the apse with the scroll held by Saint John the Baptist.

Fig. 98. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Nicholas carrying a scroll, detail.

Fig. 99. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse, detail with the *nominum sacrum* of the Virgin.

Fig. 100. Church of Santi Stefani, Vaste, Apulia. Saint Andrew, detail. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 59.

Fig. 101. Church of Santi Stefani, Vaste, Apulia. Representation in the south apse. Saint Nicholas flanked by Saints Basil and John Chrysostom. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia* (Milan: Electa, 1991), 77.

Fig. 102. Church of San Donato al Pantano at San Donato di Ninea, Calabria. Christ enthroned. Photograph courtesy of Lorenzo Riccardi.

Fig. 103. Church of Santa Maria di Cerrate, Apulia. Ascension of Christ in the apse, detail. Image retrieved from Valentino Pace, “La chiesa di Santa Maria delle Cerrate e i suoi affreschi,” in *Obraz Vizantii. Sbornik statei v cest' O.S. Popovoi* [The Image of Byzantium: A Collection of Papers Honoring O. S. Popova], ed. Anna V. Zakharova (Moscow: Severny Palomnik, 2008), 384.

Fig. 104. Rock-cut church of Santa Marina, Muro Leccese, Apulia. Saint John Chrysostom (?), detail. Image retrieved from Valentino Pace, “Santa Marina a Muro Leccese. Una questione di metodo e una riflessione sulla pittura «bizantina» in Puglia,” in *Mélanges Catherine Jolivet-Lévy*, eds. Sulamith Brodbeck, Andréas Nicolaïdès; Paule Pagès et. al. (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2016), 412.

Fig. 105. Church of unknown denomination, Llama del' Antico near Fasano, Apulia. Bishops in blind arches. Photograph courtesy of Roberto Rotondo.

Fig. 106. Rock-cut church of Madonna delle tre porte, Matera, Basilicata. Virgin enthroned, detail. Image retrieved from Ruggieri, Raffaello de Ruggieri, *Le chiese Rupestri di Matera* (Rome: De Luca Editore, 1966), 21.

Fig. 107. Church of Saints Jason and Sosipater, Corfu, bishops in the apse of the prothesis. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egreterio Bizantion tichografikon tes Ellados: Ionia Nisia* (Athens, Akademia Athenon, 2018), 66.

Fig. 108. Church of Saints Jason and Sosipater, Corfu. Apse of the prothesis. Saint Pancratius, detail. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egreterio Bizantion tichografikon tes Ellados*, 67.

Fig. 109. Church of the Pantokrator, Hlomos, Corfu. Monk carrying a scroll on the north wall of the nave. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egreterio Bizantion tichografikon tes Ellados*, 135.

Fig. 110. Church of Agios Markos, Agios Merkurios, Corfu. Conch of the sanctuary, Prophet Elijah carrying a scroll. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egreterio Bizantion tichografikon tes Ellados*, 76.

Fig. 111. Church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep. Space beneath the dome. Ornament.

Fig. 112. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Eastern blind arch on the south wall. Detail of the ornament.

Fig. 113. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. The labrys ornament covering the eastern vault.

Fig. 114. Saint Nicholas on Koločep. Vault with the labrys ornament. Detail.

Fig. 115. Church of the monastery of Visoki Dečani, Kosovo, painted in 1347 or 1348. Detail of the labrys ornament.

Fig. 116. Hagioi Anargyroi, Kastoria, Greece. View to the vault with the labrys ornament decorating the arch. Painted in ca. 1180. Photograph courtesy of Sharon Gerstel.

Fig. 117. Saint Panteleimon in Nerezi, the Republic of North Macedonia, 1164. Detail of the labrys ornament framing the window on the north wall.

Fig. 118. Panagia Kera, Kritsa, Crete. Detail of the labrys ornament in the central nave beneath the dome, 13th century.

Fig. 119. Church of the Metamorphosis tou Sotirou, Kefali. The labrys ornament, 14th century. Photograph courtesy of Nicolyna Enriquez.

Fig. 120. Church of Saint Peter, Kastania, Mani, Greece. Saints Peter and Paul, framed by a stucco arch and the frescoed labrys motif.

Fig. 121. Church of Hagios Strategos, Kastania, Mani, Greece. Detail of the vault with the labrys ornament.

Fig. 122. Church of the Panagia Hodegetria, Spelies, Euboea, detail with the labrys ornament, 1311. Photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni.

Fig. 123. Mark the Evangelist framed by the labrys ornament. Four Gospels, Iviron Cod. 5, fol. 136v, Mount Athos. Image retrieved from Athanasios A. Karakatsanis, *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki: Ministry of Culture, 1997), 214.

Fig. 124. Fragment of stucco with the labrys ornament, Depositi Museo Archeologico, Bari, Italy. Dated before the 10th century. Image retrieved from Gioia Bertelli, *Le Diocesi della Pulia Centro-Settentrionale: Aecae, Bari, Bovino, Egnathia, Herdonia, Lucera, Siponto, Trani, Vieste: Corpus della scultura altomedievale 15* (Bari: Fondazione CISAM, 2002), 162-163.

Fig. 125. Church of Saint Panteleimon, Ano Boulari, Mani. Agia Kyriaki. Detail with the labrys ornament.

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VITA

Education:

- 08/2012 – 06/2014 Central European University (CEU), Budapest, Hungary
MA in Comparative Historical Studies: Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies
Thesis title: “Artistic Transfers from across the Adriatic Sea: The Frescoes in the Church of Saint Chrysogonus in Zadar”
- 07/2003 - 03/2010 University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia
MA in Art History and Russian Language and Literature
Thesis title: “The Novgorod Icons of the pre-Mongolian Period”

Seminars and shorter educational training:

- 03/2021-05/2021 Getty/SOAS University of London
“Medieval Eastern Mediterranean Cities as Places of Artistic Interchange” seminar
- 09/2019-12/2019 UCLA, EPIC (Excellence in Pedagogy and Innovative Classrooms)
Junior Fellow for the seminar “Inclusive Classrooms”
- 06/2014 Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey
Summer School “Cappadocia in Context”
- 08/2010 Euro-Balkan Institute, Skopje, Macedonia
Summer School “Reconstructing the Real and Imaginary Byzantium – Historical and Cultural Legacy that Divide and Integrate Europe”
- 02/2009 - 06/2009 Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of History, Moscow, Russia
Semester as a foreign exchange student
Training: Byzantine art, art of Kievan Russia, premodern Russian art
- 10/2008 IRCLAMA - International Research Center for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Zagreb, Croatia
Educational workshop “Monument Conservation”

Publications:

“The Church of St. Nicholas, Island of Koločep,” *Mapping Eastern Europe*, 2020 online.
(<https://mappingeasterneurope.princeton.edu/item/the-church-of-st-nicholas-island-of-kolocep.html>)

“Review of Anastassios Ch Antonaras, *Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki: Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence*. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2016,” in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, May 3, 2018.

“Byzantine Art Beyond the Borders of the Empire: A Case Study of the Church of Saint Chrysogonus in Zara,” in *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, eds. Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampaniaki and Lorenzo M. Bondioli, 385-424, (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

“Hortus Spoliorum” (Review of the journal *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 17), in *Kvartal 2* (2012): 47-49.

Conference talks:

“Interpreting the Apocryphal Representation of Melchizedek from the Church of Saint John the Baptist, Chrysapha,” Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Edinburgh (Scotland), April 13-15, 2018.

“Merging the Elite and Mass Production,” *Emerging Scholars* conference, UCLA, October 27, 2017.

“The Story of the Ascetic Priest: Framing the Image of Melchizedek in the Church of Saint John the Baptist in Chrysapha, Laconia,” *Byzantine Studies Conference*, Minneapolis, October 5-8, 2017.

“Artistic Transfers from across the Adriatic Sea,” *2nd Medieval Workshop of Rijeka* (Croatia), October 10, 2014.

“Byzantine Art Beyond the borders of the Empire,” Oxford University Byzantine Society’s XVI International Graduate Conference *City and the Cities: From Constantinople to the Frontier*, February 28 – March 1, 2014.

Relevant work experience:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 11/2011 –
12/2011 | Hrvatski restauratorski zavod (Croatian Conservation Institute), Zagreb, Croatia
Project associate on the restoration of the frescoes of Saint Chrysogonus in Zadar: in charge of stylistic and iconographic analysis |
| 11/2010 –
11/2011 | Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (Museum of Arts and Crafts), Zagreb, Croatia
Curatorial intern: worked on ivory collection, collection of coins and medals, collection of musical instruments and collection of photography |

Language skills:

- Modern languages: Croatian (native), English (fluent w/s), Russian (fluent w/s), German (advance speaking and reading skills), Spanish (advance reading skills), Modern Greek (intermediate speaking and advance reading skills) Italian (intermediate reading skills), Ukrainian (basic reading skills), Hungarian (elementary reading skills)
- Ancient languages: Latin (working knowledge)
Ancient Greek (working knowledge)
Old Church Slavonic (basic knowledge)

Certificates:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2012 | State Curatorial Exam of Croatia (title: curator) |
| 2009 | TRKI: Exam of Russian language for foreigners – C1 degree |
| 2002 | Sprachdiplom: Exam of German language for foreigners: C1 degree |

INTRODUCTION

In 1611, French diplomat Nicolas de Harlay de Sancy stopped in Ragusa on his way to Constantinople and sent a letter to Paris that included a brief observation about the Elaphiti Islands. He noted that they contained nothing but small villages, that they had no fortifications, and that they were full of good ports that could be well-used in the hands of some powerful ruler.¹ De Sancy provided no details about the villages or how the islands' ports could be harnessed by those in power. His remark on the absence of fortifications is inaccurate. It is unclear whether de Sancy really stopped on any of the islands, or whether he simply viewed them from a distance and reported what he heard about them. His letter might not be the most fruitful (or reliable) eyewitness account, but it is telling in a different sense. Namely, the commentary, dismissive both in its shortness and overall tone, could describe a number of small islands. It is symptomatic of a perception held by both travelers and scholars that small Mediterranean islands are marginal places.

It has been more than half a century since Fernand Braudel published his foundational study, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, in which he argued for geographic, cultural and historical unity of the Mediterranean across the *longue durée*.² Not only does Braudel's work remain one of the most important points of reference for any scholar

¹ Jorjo Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku* [Movement of Passengers in Old Dubrovnik] (Dubrovnik: Jadran, 1939), 241-242. Three of de Sancy's letters which refer to this journey are kept in Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. See mss. français no. 17.257, fol. 93-94 and mss. français no. 16.145, fol. 90-91.

² Ferdinand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, translated as *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vols I-III. (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). Vol. I.

focusing on the Mediterranean, but it has also paved way for the emergence of a variety of other supra regional studies.³ The use of the Mediterranean as a model, however, is not without its shortcomings.⁴ Yet, the model has brought about a more nuanced outlook of a history that includes a variety of factors disregarded by previous scholarship. Recently, studies have begun to move away from Braudel's broad framework and methods, turning instead to smaller spatial units and re-imagining the Mediterranean as a multitude of micro-regions that differ from one another in local specificities, but are intertwined through a complex series of networking systems.⁵ This framework marks a shift from traditional perceptions of center and periphery since it does not adhere to a hierarchy of historical spaces based on prestige, but rather focuses on causality and interdependence. This approach allows for the reconsideration of micro-regions situated away from political, cultural and artistic centers that have heretofore been viewed as marginal. Viewed through a different lens, these micro-regions become a connective link between centers, and present a crucial nexus in the study of patterns of transmission and exchange between major forces and powers. My dissertation focuses on the study of one such micro-region in the Middle Ages: the islands off the coast of Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik), the most important port on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea (Fig. 1).

The islands in question do not constitute a single unit, but rather belong to two micro-archipelagos separated by the city of Ragusa. The small islands spread parallel to the mainland

³ The "original" Great Sea, named for written accounts since ancient times and popularized by Braudel, became a model for the study of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans as coherent pan-regions. See also Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, "The Mediterranean and 'the New Thalassology,'" *The American Historical Review* 111/3 (2006): 722-725.

⁴ Michael Herzfeld, "Practical Mediterraneanism: Excuses for Everything, from Epistemology to Eating," in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. William Vernon Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45-63.

⁵ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

along the indented and steep Ragusan coastline. In a manner of speaking, they flank the city in two directions (Fig. 2). To its south-east lies the unnamed archipelago comprised of Lokrum, Mrkan, Bobara and Supetar, which forms a natural protective wall for the harbor. To its north-west is a group of a dozen small islands and islets by the curious common name of the Elaphiti, a label first mentioned in recorded history by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historiae*.⁶ The three inhabited islands in the chain — Koločep, Lopud and Šipán — are small in size, measuring 2.4, 3.2 and 15 km² respectively. Despite their size, however, they are remarkably rich in medieval material remains. Churches scattered around the islands still stand, some in ruins, while others are still in use. The architecture of these churches, as well as their interior decoration, synthesize Byzantine, Western, and indigenous elements, and are clear markers of cultural exchange and absorption. The traces of settlements, paved paths, secular buildings, cisterns and agricultural facilities show the continuity of habitation and signal a vital and a stratified population on the islands. Primary sources from the Archive of Dubrovnik paint a lively picture of life on the islands, supplementing the architectural and archaeological record.

Scholars have disagreed on the boundaries of the Elaphiti archipelago. Some exclude islets like Sveti Andija (Saint Andrew) and Grebeni (lit. Rocks) on account of their remoteness, while others include Lokrum in the group.⁷ I will not make distinctions between the confirmed Elaphiti Islands and the non-confirmed ones. Rather than looking at them as a closed and isolated unit, I will examine the inter-relations of the islands with the city and with one another. Their relative

⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History in Thirty-Seven Books*, ed. and trans. Philemon Holland (Leicester: George Barkeley Club, 1847-8), vol. III, 198. The name comes from a Greek word *ἔλαφος*, meaning deer. There are no deer on any of the islands, nor are there any written or archaeological indications that the islands were ever deer habitats. Scholars have pondered whether the name came from the geographical configuration of the islands' coves, which produce impressions of horn-like formations from particular angles.

⁷ Vicko Lisičar, *Tri dubrovačka otočića (Daksa, Sveti Andija i Ruda)* [Three Islets of Dubrovnik (Daksa, Sveti Andrija and Ruda)] (Dubrovnik: Biblioteka "Dubu," 1933), 75.

sizes, proximity to the mainland and landscape features determined their specific roles and identities. I am primarily interested in Koločep, Lopud and Šipan. Since these islands have been continuously inhabited, they display a different character than the other islets, which were mostly used as monastic. These monasteries, however, owned land on the inhabited Elaphiti, which indicates various types of island to island connectivity.

At the core of this project is the problem of categorizing and understanding artistic and material remains on medieval islands, which are frequently sites of encounter within broader cultural networks. The approach that I am taking, starting from a local, and gradually moving towards a global framework, corresponds to the three focal points that come together in this dissertation. My first point of convergence is the micro history of the islands' rural landscape; i.e. their inhabitants, economy, artistic endeavors, and religious confessions. My second focus of attention is the specific nature of islandness as manifested through tight bonds with the mainland urban center of Ragusa. Finally, my third concern is to discuss broader patterns of connectivity and place southern Dalmatia, a region on the border of the two major medieval area studies, back within the context of the broader Mediterranean.

Medieval scholarship has overwhelmingly focused on urban centers and history of the elites, tracing the influence of metropolitan centers on the art of the provinces. Only recently has a shift in perspective started to happen, and Sharon Gerstel's seminal book *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium* broke ground in that respect.⁸ Gerstel captured the *longue durée* of village life in remote and forgotten regions of Greece by engaging in analysis of archaeological, ethnographic, pictorial and epigraphic sources. Not only did she convey the immensely rich and

⁸ Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

largely unknown artistic production of the rural communities on which she focused, but she uncovered the patterns of daily life with remarkable comprehensiveness. Among the many merits of the book is its emphasis on the phenomenology of the village, and the multi-sensory manner in which medieval villagers (and medieval people in general) would have experienced the world around them. However, perhaps the most important aspect is that Gerstel was able to elaborate on is that villagers were not passive observers and obedient recipients of whatever was imposed upon them by authorities, but, rather, that they possessed a great deal of agency and defiance, as well as boldness that enabled them to immortalize their concerns. My outlook towards rural communities and the approach to their material sources has greatly been shaped by this book and its premises. At the same time, my analysis of the abundant written evidence related to the Elaphiti Islands is modeled by the more traditional, yet still relevant approach of Angeliki Laiou, who was a pioneer in the study of the Late Byzantine peasantry.⁹

Although rurality and islandness go hand in hand, their academic histories have been divergent. Islands, which are by nature almost always rural, have received much more attention in scholarship than their mainland counterparts. The field has rapidly been expanding since the emergence of the *Island Studies Journal*,¹⁰ a globally oriented platform concerned with contemporary issues. On a historical and Mediterranean-based spectrum, island archaeology has yielded excellent work on islands in Greece.¹¹ Yet these studies have focused largely on periods that lack written sources, for which scholarship has advanced archaeological methods and

⁹ Angeliki Laiou, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Social and Demographic Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁰ The *Island Studies Journal* is an online publication which was launched in 2006 and has been coming out twice a year. The journal is free and available for reading and downloading here: <http://www.islandstudies.ca/journal>.

¹¹ For a comprehensive overview of the extensive literature on island archaeology, see Cyprian Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

chronologies. Few if any scholars focusing on the late medieval period have tackled the nature of connectedness of island areas to the mainland in a comprehensive way.¹²

How does one measure connectedness and more specifically, how does one do that within a topic that has for so long been systematically overlooked? The short and perhaps insufficient answer, but one I expand on in the following chapters, lies not only in the relations of causes and outcomes, but also in the potential to frame those relations from an appropriate vantage point. Namely, the notion of islandness has heavily rested on the perception of islands by mainlanders, and it is those perspectives that have informed and to a large degree shaped scholarship. I do not find conversations about isolation versus connectivity to be instructive, not because they are wrong, but because their position of departure is misguided. Small islands have often been observed through the prism of spatial isolation which in the *longue durée* leads to judgements about backwardness and temporal seclusion.¹³ In this dissertation I aim to demonstrate otherwise.

¹² The only scholar to comprehensively discuss the issue of islands in Byzantium is Elisabeth Malamut in the book *Les Îles de l'empire byzantin, 8e - 12e siècles* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988). Her analysis, however, ends with the 12th century. For studies on specific islands, see Fotini Kondyli, *Rural Communities in Late Byzantium: Resilience and Vulnerability in the Northern Aegean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); eadem, "Meeting the Locals: Peasant Families in 13th-Century Lemnos," in *Liquid and Multiple: Individuals and Identities in the Thirteenth-Century Aegean*, eds. Guillaume Saint-Guillain and Dionysios Stathakopoulos (Paris: ACHCByz, 2012), 75-90; eadem, "Tracing Monastic Economic Interests and their Impact on the Rural Landscape of Late Byzantine Lemnos" *DOP* 64 (2010): 129-150; Jim Crow, Sam Turner and Athanasios Vionis, "Characterizing the Historic Landscape of Naxos," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 24 (2011): 111-137; James Crow and Sam Turner, "The Aniconic Churches of Naxos," in *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean: Insular Responses to Regional Change*, ed. James Crow and David Hill (Athens: The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2018), 223-238; Athanasios Vionis, "Imperial Impacts, Regional Diversities and Local Responses: Island Identities as Reflected on Byzantine Naxos," in *Byzantine Lineages and Legacies in the Eastern Mediterranean: Recording the Imprint of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Rule*, ed. Rhoads Murphey (London: Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies, 2017), 165-196; idem, "Considering a Rural and Household Archaeology of the Byzantine Aegean: The Ceramic Spectrum." In *Pottery and Social Dynamics in Mediterranean and Beyond in Medieval and Post-Medieval Times*, ed. John Bintliff and Marta Caroscio (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 25-40; idem, *A Crusader, Ottoman, and Early Modern Aegean Archaeology: Built Environment and Domestic Material Culture in the Medieval and Post-Medieval Cyclades*, (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2013); idem, "Sacred Landscapes as Economic Central Places in Late Antique Naxos and Cyprus," *Antiquité tardive* 25 (2017): 27-48; Konstantinos Roussos, *Reconstructing the Settled Landscape of the Cyclades* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2018); John F. Cherry, Jack L. Davis and Eleni Mantzourani, *Landscape Archaeology as Long-Term History: Northern Keos in the Cycladic Islands from Earliest Settlement to Modern Times* (Los Angeles: UCLA Institute of Archaeology, 1991).

¹³ Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 224-230.

I understand that there are reasons to maintain that islands indeed exist in a different timescale than does the mainland, and the Elaphiti islands are a living proof. After all, to this date there are still no cars on Koločep or Lopud. Koločep has only one grocery shop. The islands' children of various ages sit together in the same classroom and learn from the same schoolteacher. However, while harboring the romanticized idea of a pristine way of island life, we must also remember that this idea rests on external processes that have little if anything to do with the intrinsic value of islandness. The idea that the islands were exploited by Ragusa for economic reasons is equally inadequate. The more productive yet seldomly used approach is to ask how the Elaphiti islands contributed to the Ragusan economy. This approach presents a subtle difference, perhaps, but it is nevertheless meaningful, for it marks the shift in perspective and creates room for a broader and less inadvertently biased interpretation. From the tense relationship of the Elaphiti Islands and Ragusa arises a sense of balance of both control and relative autonomy; both imposed regulations and creative solutions designed to circumvent them. This is my point of departure, and it is such a framework that enables me to conceptualize the role of the Elaphiti islands both in relation to the mainland, and within greater cross-cultural exchanges.

A conceptual line cuts the Mediterranean Sea in half and forms an imagined boundary between the East and West.¹⁴ From ancient times, the waters of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, skirting the coast of Sicily and leading to North Africa, have divided cultures, materials and artistic movements. It was on this axis — the deepest part of the Mediterranean — that ships foundered, enforcing notions of danger and separation. The coasts to either side have always hosted different languages, art forms, and material cultures. This division has profusely affected the attitude of

¹⁴ Leslie Brubaker, "Space, Place and Culture: Processions Across the Mediterranean," in *Whose Mediterranean is it Anyway?*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou, (New York: Routledge, 2018), 219-235; Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communication and Commerce AD 300-900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 1-24.

scholarship, reinforced by the limitations of traditional area studies.¹⁵ For this reason, the Elaphiti Islands, which are rich in material remains and well attested in documents, are almost completely unknown in international scholarship. Conversely, the axis that divides the Mediterranean can also be understood as a site of connection. This study shifts the paradigm to argue that the Elaphiti Islands not only benefitted from their location on a permeable border between cultures and on a watery boundary between political hegemonies, but they were also active agents of commercial and cultural interchange.

In Chapter 1 I introduce questions of historiography, methodology and sources. Part of the chapter is centered on the Elaphiti Islands, their place within the broader fields of Island Studies and their position to the mainland. The other part focuses on Ragusa as the proximate mainland, the factors that contributed to its rise and the state of perpetual organization needed to prosper with minimal natural resources. Finally, I introduce the types of sources and evidence I have used for this project, elaborate on how these differ from the sources applied in areas of similar character and how they can contribute to a broader understanding of islandness in the Middle Ages.

The rest of the dissertation is structured in such a way that it starts with a local, micro-historical approach, and gradually expands towards a global framework. Chapter 2 focuses closely on the islands and their population based primarily on the archival sources. Each section of this chapter begins with the story of a particular individual recorded in the archive. I use these stories as a lens through which I view broader topics, including labor activities, leisure time and community building, settlements and the domestic environment. Antony Eastmond's book

¹⁵ For a recent examination of connectivity in the Adriatic, see Magdalena Skoblar, *Byzantium, Venice and the Medieval Adriatic, Spheres of Maritime Power and Influence, c. 700-1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Tamta's World has been instrumental in creating the structure of this dissertation. In the book the author uses a noblewoman, known to us only by a handful of accounts which recorded horrifying milestones of her life, as a literary device which helps him reconstruct the social, political and artistic world around her.¹⁶ Another publication in which I found methodological inspiration is *Maruša or the Trial of Love: Love-and-Marriage Story from Medieval Dubrovnik*, by historian Zdenka Janeković Römer.¹⁷ The author recounts the story of a 15th-century Ragusan woman who had two husbands. Set against the backdrop of the vibrant late medieval city, Maruša's case uncovers various aspects of the social life of the rising new elite. The book reads like a historical novel, but is completely founded on archival documents. Instead of one *Tamta*, or one Maruša, dozens of individuals help me knit the fabric of the medieval Elaphiti Islands. My protagonists are not the elite, but working people of differing economic means recorded in the 13th-century archival documents.

Still grounded on the islands, Chapter 3 explores the religious aspects of the Elaphities by examining the material remains of the churches. I employ architecture, sculpture and painting to discuss the issues of function, patronage as well as reexamine the identification of the painted saints and the titularies of the buildings. I also discuss the unusual elements of the painted cycles which open up new methodological directions, reveal clues about the users of the churches, and bring them in connection with the wider Mediterranean.

In order to understand the relationship of the islands to the mainland, in Chapter 4 I examine the seascape between the islands and Ragusa, and consider the contacts across the narrow

¹⁶ Antony Eastmond, *Tamta's World: The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹⁷ Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Maruša ili suđenje ljubavi: Bračno-ljubavna prica iz srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika* [Maruša or the Trial of Love: Love-and-Marriage Story from Medieval Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: Algoritam, 2007).

strait separating the coast from the archipelago. This smaller intermittent chapter is comprised of two parts. The first consists of two case studies from the documents which portray the issue of island-mainland communication in a different light than conceived by previous scholarship, and thus open the possibility of creating a different framework of island-mainland relations. The second part of the chapter focuses on material evidence of these interrelations in the City. I explore the monuments which reveal the same architectural forms or retain frescoes from the same period.

In Chapter 5 I examine the Elaphiti churches from the perspective of wider connectivity and relations with neighboring regions. I identify a number of sites in the Mediterranean which share various features with the Elaphiti monuments. This discussion is centered on the frescoes, since they demonstrate typically Mediterranean traits which have largely been ignored.¹⁸ The evidence available at present moment indicates that the Elaphiti were indeed part of a broader exchange of goods, artwork and ideas in the Mediterranean.

¹⁸ I had every intention of including coinage, but the main set of evidence — a box which contains archaeological finds from the excavations on the Elaphiti Islands, property of the Museums of Dubrovnik — is currently misplaced due to the relocation of the inventory. The prospective expansion of the topic to include this material would, doubtlessly, yield an even more convincing result.

CHAPTER 1: ISLANDLANDNESS: QUESTIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHOD

Islands: Chameleons of Identity

Geographically speaking, islands are land masses surrounded by water on all sides. Other aspects of insularity are more elusive, and have been shaped by the long history of interest in this subject. Discussions of islands have been guided by two opposing premises of insularity: isolation and connectivity. This dichotomy is reflected already in ancient writing,¹⁹ and has persisted throughout the periods, gradually expanding its semantic field to include a variety of constricted concepts that islands evoke. The notion of isolation has lent itself to such an expansion particularly well. Because of their geographic qualities, islands are by essence confined. They are difficult to access and challenging to escape. This idea is related to the fear of the sea. The medieval people of the Mediterranean thought of the sea as a part of the wilderness: it was uncultivated, unpredictable and untamable. They applied the same attributes to islands.²⁰ Yet, islands' spatial framing within strong geographic boundaries contributed to a sense of a controlled environment and allowed them to be examined from every angle. Islands thus became both the end of the world, and a comprehensive world on a small scale. It is no coincidence that the assembly of *isolarii* — the so-called island books which acted as chorographic encyclopedias of the early modern period

¹⁹ The ancient Greeks approached the topic either by discussing an island separately, or by integrating it into chapters on their proximate mainland. George Toliás, "Isolarii, Fifteenth to Seventeenth Century," in *History of Cartography*, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 264.

²⁰ According to Veronica Della Dora, this way of thinking is especially true in hagiographic texts. Veronica Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature and the Sacred in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 233.

—played an important role in the development of modern cartography.²¹ The perception of islands as laboratories for the study of natural and cultural processes arose from the same conviction.

Depending on the perspective, the sea at times acted as a defender, and at times as an enemy. This duality has made it possible for islands to assume a variety of identities in the realm of popular imagination as well as in historical realities. Countless written records demonstrate that in the Middle Ages islands were used as sites of exile, imprisonment, and quarantine.²² During harsh winters, islands could become metaphorical prisons, forcing outsiders to remain there until the weather improved.²³ Myths and legends that formed around islands often served to enhance the notion of danger and separation.²⁴ On the other hand, islands were also sites of religious seclusion, salvation from shipwrecks, refuge from disease, wars and other disasters, and safe havens in distant trade.²⁵

Many of these *topoi* feature in the history of the Elaphiti Islands. For example, the islets Sveti Andrija (St. Andrew) and Mrkan were home to the Benedictines, and also occasionally

²¹ Tolias, “Isolarij,” 264.

²² Sinclair Hood, “Isles of Refuge in the Early Byzantine Period,” *Annual of the British School at Athens* 65 (1970): 37-45; Bogdan-Petru Maleon, “Some Notes on the Clerical Exile in the Byzantine Empire since the End of the Antique World to the Macedonian Ascension,” *Classica et Christiana* 5 (2010): 351-367; Malamut, *Les îles de l'empire byzantin, 8e - 12e siècles* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 175-178.

²³ Zlata Blažina Tomić and Vesna Blažina, *Expelling the Plague: The Health Office and the Implementation of Quarantine in Dubrovnik, 1377-1533* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015, esp. 4-25; Christy Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire and the Aegean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 129-134.

²⁴ See for example *Poor Girl from Lopud*, a myth about a destitute girl who, in order to meet with her upscale lover, swam each night from Lopud to the monastery on the islet of Sveti Andrija where he was confined. When her brothers found out about this, they used trickery involving lights that made her swim further and further away from the island, eventually causing her to drown. Lisičar, *Tri dubrovačka otočića*, 116-122.

²⁵ Vicko Lisičar, *Lopud: Historički i savremeni prikaz* [Lopud: Historical and contemporary overview] (Dubrovnik: Dubrovačka hrvatska tiskara zast, 1931), 34-46.

served as political prisons and *lazaretti* during the period of the plague.²⁶ The most famous Ragusan narrative which conveys the power of an island, however, is that of the island of Lokrum. For centuries, the island was occupied by a powerful Benedictine monastery which owned substantial parcels of land on the other islands as well as on the mainland. The monastery was dissolved in 1798, shortly before Napoleon's occupation, and after a long period of decline. Before leaving the island, legend has it, the Benedictines cast a mysterious curse upon it. The exact content of the curse is unknown, for the story is kept only by word of mouth, but it is said that the monks went around the island with candles and hummed. According to popular belief this curse explains the gruesome death of several members of the Habsburg family, all of whom used the island as a leisure get-away.²⁷ The legend still persists, and the local authorities prohibit anyone from spending the night on Lokrum. In fact, a large sign on its main pier warns visitors that the last boat leaves at seven o'clock in the evening, and that no one is allowed to stay on the island past that time (Fig. 3).

The opposite of isolation is, of course, connectivity. While people feared the sea, they certainly did not keep to the land. The sea, in all of its formidability, was a "connective cosmopolitan tissue... that joined together lands and people, brought harmony, and, in the words of thirteenth-century Byzantine author George Pachymeres, made every inhospitable island a part of the mainland."²⁸ Pachymeres's assertion moves toward an idea of globalism, as well as the desire to

²⁶ Lisičar, *Tri dubrovačka otočiča*, 101-101; Ivica Puljić, "Sedam stoljeća otoka Mrkana u naslovu trebinjskih biskupa" [Seven Centuries of the Island of Mrkan in the Title of the Trebinje Bishops] *Hercegovina* 26/1 (2015): 89-114.

²⁷ On more information about the history of the island and the Lokrum curse, see Miho Miljanić, *Lokrum* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1986), esp. 26-41, 51-56.

²⁸ From George Pachymeres, *Progymnasmata*, published in Christian Walz, *Rhetores graeci ex codicibus florentinis, mediolanensibus, monacensibus, neapolitanis, parisiensibus, romanis, venetis, taurinensibus et vindobonensibus, Vol I* (Osnabrück, Germany: Otto Zeller, 1968), 585-586.

conquer and tame the untamable. Although his focus is the sea, rather than islands as such, he, perhaps unknowingly, reveals another trope pertaining to most Mediterranean islands: the presumed lack of agency. He makes it sound as though islands, intrinsically austere, wait to be colonized, and cultivated. De Sancy's remarks on the benefits to a powerful ruler have a similar overtone: islands are meant to be exploited.

Such has been the timeless fate of most Mediterranean islands, including the Elaphities. They have been opportunistically exploited for their natural resources, since they provided the conditions characteristic of rural settings: all kinds of agricultural activities, woodlands for timber, pastures for cattle, and human labor needed for these enterprises. A variety of other site-specific commercial activities developed on islands, employing materials that were abundant. Possibilities were endless, for islands are naturally diverse. Differences in geography, landscape, altitude, geology, quality of soil, availability of water and proximity to land created environments that were appealing for distinct reasons. Šipan, for instance, acted as the breadbasket, and Lopud was praised for its urbanity and beauty, which is partially why it became the administrative center in the early modern period. Koločep, while the smallest, was the first of the Elaphities to have a shipyard and a harbor. The island was also known for coral harvesting and coral trade.

Horden and Purcell maintain that most resources that islands supply can be found elsewhere, but that the islands were appealing precisely because of their *islandness*. In that aspect at least, islands were not isolated, but have “all-round connectivity.”²⁹ Yet, however lush they may be, or however well they can be harnessed, islands were and have remained peripheral.³⁰ In order to

²⁹ Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 227, 230.

³⁰ Possibly the only exceptions to this in the Mediterranean are Sicily and Cyprus, whose large surfaces and favorable environment made it an economic and cultural contender to mainland communities.

understand why, one needs to be aware of the sources of information. Historical records that concern islands were overwhelmingly written by mainlanders, and not just any mainlanders, but highly educated members of the urban elite. These city-dwellers were the principal creators of medieval written sources, whether literary or archival. When they wrote about islands, they did so for a specific purpose and with biases often directed towards the *other*. The tacit sense of comparison that stems from de Sancy's, and Pachymeres's remarks is not an aberration. Numerous accounts demonstrate an assessment of Mediterranean islands in juxtaposition to, and for the benefit of, the mainland.

The voices of island communities, on the other hand, can seldom be heard.³¹ Their populations, for the most part, could not read, let alone write.³² The majority of islanders were concerned with manual labor, rather than intellectual activities. It is challenging to reconstruct their perspectives, their thoughts on what lies on the other side of the sea, or their views of the world in general. However, the Elaphities are remarkably rich in that respect and lend themselves to a study of islandscapes as the islanders would have seen them. This type of outlook allows for a more nuanced analysis both of the micro-history of the islands, and of their contributions to the rise of the Ragusan State.

³¹ An exception to this is the Great Blasket Island in Ireland, which had an usually high number of books and autobiographies written by its inhabitants. See, among others, Peig Sayers, *An Old Woman's Reflections: The Life of a Blasket Island Storyteller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Maurice O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years A-Growing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³² Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 49-51.

The Elaphiti Landscapes

The Elaphiti Islands form an 18 km-long chain stretching along the coastline. The three largest islands, Koločep, Lopud and Šipan, are situated a distance of only eight, thirteen and fifteen kilometers from Dubrovnik,³³ and separated from the coast by the two-kilometer wide Koločep Channel. This close proximity allowed for quick passage by boat, both to the city and to mainland settlements within and outside the borders of the thirteenth-century State.

The sea was the principal means of travel in the medieval State of Ragusa. Intra-regional and trans-regional traffic (to the extent in which it was possible) were carried out by established navigational routes rather than by land. The rugged and precipitous mainland terrain required the use of donkeys. Sea routes were far more practical. The Ragusans were excellent ship builders, the evidence for which rests in the multiple shipyards (one of which was on the island of Koločep) recorded in medieval sources, as well as the attention paid to ships in the Statute of Ragusa.³⁴ Medieval sailors in this region knew how to use winds and currents in navigation.³⁵ Although the types of medieval ships have not been studied, it is clear from archival sources that larger ships were used for long distance journeys, whereas smaller boats with oars served for shorter travels, such as the ones to and from the Elaphiti Islands.³⁶ Such travels would have taken several hours.

³³ These approximated figures, calculated in Google Earth, refer not to the air distance, but to the standard navigation route. They represent the distances from the deepest point of the Gruž bay to the main settlements of the islands, except in the case of Šipan, where the cove of Suđurađ, rather than the Šipanska Luka was taken as a point of measurement.

³⁴ The entire Book Seven of the Statute is wholly dedicated to regulations of ships and their cargo. See Vesna Rimac, Vesna Baće and Nella Lonza, *The Statute of Dubrovnik of 1272: Liber Statutorum Civitatis Ragusii Compositus Anno MCCLXXII* (Dubrovnik: Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, 2012), VII/I-LXVII. Henceforth referred to as Rimac, Baće and Lonza, *The Statute*.

³⁵ Mithad Kozličić, “Adriatic Sea Routes from the Antiquity to the Early Modern Age,” *Histria (sic) Antiqua* 21 (2012): 17.

³⁶ See for example Josip Lučić, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije, knjiga III* [The Records of the Dubrovnik Office, Book III] (Zagreb: Monumenta Historica Ragusiana, 1988), doc. 457.

Nowadays the public transport ferry boat called “Postira” circulates several times a day to ensure constant connectivity with modern Dubrovnik, as well as between the islands (Fig. 4). It follows the river-like,³⁷ medieval travel route through the coastal seas of the Koločep Channel all the way to Šipan. This is the same route that Nicolas de Harlay de Sancy passed through, only in the opposite direction, on his way from Venice to Ragusa.

The Postira makes three stops — one on each inhabited island — allowing its passengers to feast on the spectacular panoramas, view the smaller islets (most of which are grouped around the larger three), observe the rugged rocks of the islands’ banks, and the underbrush and pine trees that hover above them (a typical southern Adriatic topography which dominates the shores of all the Elaphities), as well as to grasp the scale, intervisibility and distances between the modern settlements. Each of the three islands has two large coves – one facing east and one west. On Koločep, Gornje Čelo faces north - east and looks to the city, while Donje Čelo faces north - west and overlooks the other two inhabited islands.³⁸ Lopud’s only settlement (bearing the same name) faces north-west, while the uninhabited cove of Šunj is on the south-east side of the island. Finally, the orientations of the two coves on Šipan mirror those of Lopud, with Suđurađ to the south - east, intervisible with Lopud and only a 10-minute boat ride away from it, and Luka Šipanska (The Port of Šipan) to the north - west of the island. The east-facing coves are not only larger, deeper and better protected, but they are also somewhat concealed by the hilly and sparsely populated terrain of the islands’ banks. It is only after the Postira makes a sharp turn, does one spot, in a dramatic effect, the cove of Donje Čelo, with its settlement. The same thing occurs twenty minutes later,

³⁷ Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, 105.

³⁸ Both Gornje Čelo and Donje Čelo are direct translations from the Latin *Caput Superius* and - *Inferius* [Upper and Lower Head], which marks their relation to Ragusa, indicating that Gornje Čelo is closer to the city.

when the ship reaches the cove of Lopud (Fig. 5) and yet again an hour later, when it approaches Luka Šipanska.³⁹ The cove of Luka Šipanska is the deepest and largest of all those on the Elaphiti: it extends for over four kilometers on its northern side, and just under two kilometers on its southern. (Fig. 6). The island of Jakljan, as well as the islets Goleč, Tajan, Komeč, and Olipa, spread to the west of Šipan in the direction of the Pelješac peninsula, and act as an extended arm at the short end of the cove, shielding it from the winds of the open sea. There are no records that any of these islands were inhabited, including Jakljan, which is in its area the second largest of the Elaphities. However, one document does mention a church and a monastery on Jakljan, speaks of its land, and brings it into connection with individuals from Šipan.⁴⁰ It is likely that the island, while inhabited, was used as an extension of Šipan for economic purposes, for it provided additional space for agricultural activities and possibly pasturage.

The present-day settlements are organized around the coves. The oldest buildings still in use are mostly on the shore, while newer houses occupy a more elevated position in order to face the waterfront. The islands' settlements are connected by means of the *via communalis*, the communal path, occasionally mentioned in archival sources. In the case of Koločep and Lopud, the path runs sinuously up and down the hilly landscape through the inland of the respective island. On Šipan, however, where the hills are grouped around the island's edges, the road bisects the central agricultural plain in a straight line. These roads are now paved, but they likely correspond to the position of the medieval pathways. On Koločep and Lopud, the medieval churches are

³⁹ Up until a few years the Postira did go to Luka Šipanska. However, because of Šipan's elongated shape, trips there decreased the number of potential daily rounds. It was therefore decided to cancel this stop and make Suđurađ the last stop of the Postira. The passengers can reach Šipanska Luka from Suđurađ by bus that drives on a 5km long road through the plain that connects the two settlements.

⁴⁰ Lučić, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije III*, doc. 354.

located either directly on, or in close vicinity to the respective roads that connect the settlements (Figs. 7 and 8). In the Middle Ages the inlands of both islands were agricultural zones. This is still the case, but the scope of these activities has been significantly reduced with the decrease in population and the economic shift towards tourism and the service industry.

The cycles of human activities drastically altered the landscapes of the Elaphiti islands. By this I do not only mean the obvious conversion of pathways into paved roads, the replacement of wooden and stone houses with concrete ones, and the construction of expensive hotels for exclusive guests. I also have in mind the irreversible transformation of micro-ecology that came as a result of decultivation. Biological research at Šipan has shown that the island used to be dominated by forests of Aleppo pine and evergreen oak.⁴¹ These forests were razed to create arable land, pastures, as well as to supply the much-needed wood for Ragusa.⁴² When the population of the island diminished in the 17th century, many of the fields were abandoned. The aggressive high macchia that grew from the terra rossa soil took the place of the cultivated fields and forests. On Šipan, this happened along the slopes surrounding the central plain, while the plain itself remained continuously functional. The other two islands have not been studied in the same way, but the same trend of macchia groves spreading over once cultivated land is present, and arguably more intense when taking into consideration the smaller sizes of the islands. Situated only dozens of meters from the paved road, many of the islands' churches are now surrounded by aggressive vegetation which is not only largely responsible for their state of ruin, but also hinders the

⁴¹ Marija Hečimović, "Vegetacija razreda *Quercetea Ilicis* na otoku Šipanu" [Vegetation of Class *Quercetea Ilicis* on the Island of Šipan], *Acta Botanica Croata* 41 (1982): 77-85.

⁴² Dragan Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi na području Dubrovačke Republike od XIII do XV stoljeća* [Agrarian and Production Relations on the Territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik from the 13th to the 15th Century] (Zagreb: JAZU, 1955), 259-262.

possibility of conducting a comprehensive field survey. This is especially true of Koločep and to a lesser degree of Lopud, while on Šipan the surviving churches are still in the midst of functioning agricultural zones.

Another aspect of transformation on the islands is the settlement pattern. At present, as mentioned above, the settlements are formed around the coves. This, however, is a modern development that took place after the population decrease that led to the abandonment of agricultural facilities and of some of the churches. The documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik never explicitly mention the names medieval villages, but the fact that they note houses in relation to cultivated land defined by borders with neighbors indicates that households were dispersed throughout the islands. Numerous traces of dry stone, paved paths, secular buildings and cisterns that can still be found in the vicinity of the churches confirm that villages and/or hamlets once existed in these locations. Toponyms preserved by oral history suggest that these settlements did have a nucleus. Although these places have lost their original function, their names still resonate as landmarks in the minds of contemporary islanders, capturing their sense of local landscape.

Ragusa

Situated on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, Ragusa was the gateway to the Mediterranean from continental Europe and marked the conceptual borderline between the East and West. This position made the city desirable to a number of medieval powers.⁴³ Until the end of the 12th century, Ragusa — much like the rest of the Dalmatian coast — was dominated by Byzantium, culturally, if not always politically.⁴⁴ It has been described as “an effectively self-governing commune and a modest commercial power under Byzantine protection.”⁴⁵ After 1204 Venice assumed control of Ragusa, both for internal matters, as well as external policies. Venetian jurisdiction lasted until 1358, at which point the Hungarian Empire took power. From then, until 1433, Ragusa nominally acknowledged the sovereignty of the Hungarian king, but he had no control over the city’s institutions. With this began the period of relative independence in which Ragusa was essentially a vassal state; at first to the Hungarian and later to the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶ It retained this position until the arrival of Napoleon in 1806.

⁴³ Not only was Ragusa the target of interest of the three empires which asserted their dominance over the city in successive order – Byzantium, Venice and the Hungarian Empire, but it suffered frequent (for the most part unsuccessful) raids by other forces, including the Saracens, the Normans, and the Bulgarian Empire. In addition, the relationship with their hinterland neighbors of Rascia and Hum was not always harmonious. See Francis W. Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa): A Classic City-State* (London: Seminar Press, 1972), 51-67; Robin Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History* (SAQI: London, 2003), 33-45; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*. [History of Dubrovnik until 1808] (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod MH, 1980), 27-31.

⁴⁴ The initial stage of the Ragusan State is already marked by the attempt of the Venetians to establish supremacy over the city. Their attempts were successful on several occasions between the early 11th and the late 12th centuries, but the intervals of their jurisdiction were rather brief in this period. Dubrovnik was also under Norman rule for a period of four years between 1186 and 1190. Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, esp. 56-67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁶ Relative independence is the common description of the political status of Ragusa. Paying tributes to a particular empire was often a political decision, rooted in the notion of weighing the lesser evil, and affiliating themselves with a particular ally against a common enemy. Ragusa resorted to other diplomatic solutions in order to maintain its status. In 1699 it sold 12 km of its land to the Ottomans, thus creating a buffer zone between itself and Venice. This is the reason why Bosnia has a small portion of the coastline today. The *de facto* freedom which Ragusa maintained through prudent diplomatic resolutions was a source of great pride. *Libertas*, the Latin word for freedom, was the motto of the Ragusan State.

Scholars have often emphasized the significance of the city's geographic position, and rightly so, for Ragusa initially had not much other than its strategic location and a secure harbor. According to Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Ragusa was founded as an *isle of refuge* when the Slavs invaded the neighboring Epidaurum in the 7th century.⁴⁷ Robin Harris has claimed that Ragusa was the only Dalmatian town that directly overlooked the Adriatic.⁴⁸ Considering that Dalmatia is a coastal region with a number of towns, this might seem like an odd statement, but it is not without grounds. Namely, both Spalato (Split) and Zara (Zadar) grew around their respective inlets. In contrast, the inlet of Grausium (Gruž) was not the focal point of the settlement.⁴⁹ Instead, the city was founded on the opposite side of the peninsula, and its port was built to face the deep waters of the south-east Adriatic. While deep, these were not exactly open waters. Namely, the port was, and still is, protected from the elements by the islet of Lokrum situated some 600m to the south of the city. One could argue that environmental matters are paramount to the study of any area. Ragusa, however, was literally constrained by its environment. Situated on a terrain beneath the steep and barren hills of mount Srđ (part of the Dinaric Alps chain that meets the sea directly in southern Dalmatia) and surrounded by water from all other sides, Ragusa had nowhere to spread. Conceptually speaking, we could look at Ragusa as an island in its

⁴⁷ Scholars are inclined to look at the foundation story as a myth, as more and more archaeological points to the fact that Ragusa existed in the Roman period, and that it was inhabited continuously since then. See Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 19-29. For Constantine Porphyrogenetos's account in both Greek and English, see *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, transl. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest: Pazmany Peter Tudomanyegyetemi Gorog Filologiai Intezet, 1949), 134-135.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of both geographic and historical differences between the respective cities, as well as their common factors, see Bariša Krekić, "Developed Autonomy: The Patricians in Dubrovnik and Dalmatian Cities," in *The Urban Society of Eastern Europe in Pre-Modern Times*, ed. idem (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 185-215.

own right, and in the city's early history — before the canal located beneath the city's most famous street of Stradun was filled in — this was even more true.⁵⁰

Ragusa was defined by the two opposing geographic formations that Braudel saw as the core of the Mediterranean: the mountains to its north, which the Ragusans crossed to trade with the hinterland of the Balkans, and the sea, which had to be used as a conduit, rather than a nemesis. In this peculiar arrangement, understanding its own environment and its constraints would have been the greatest factor that ensured success. The Ragusans knew this very well.⁵¹ At the early stage, Ragusa's territory covered little else than the city itself, and the precipitous landscape offered little land suitable for cultivation. Natural resources were scarce. Nevertheless, Ragusa capitalized on the greatest potential at its disposal — trade — and transformed from a small port-town into a wealthy merchant city-state which in the early modern period sent two hundred large ships annually to Mediterranean and cross-Atlantic ports,⁵² and was a creditor to cities around the Balkans through an organized money-lending apparatus.⁵³

I focus on the time before this so-called Golden Age of Ragusa to examine the gradual rise and evolution of the state into a commercial power. This dissertation places emphasis on the 13th century for several reasons. First of all, the increase of written evidence from that period enables a meaningful reconstruction of the social, economic and political environment, both on the mainland and on the islands. The earliest sources from the Archive of Dubrovnik date to the 11th

⁵⁰ Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa)*, 9.

⁵¹ Elizabeth Crouzet-Pavan makes the same argument for the case of Venice in *Venice Triumphant* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), esp. 1-96.

⁵² Bariša Krekić, "Italian Creditors in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and the Balkan Trade, Thirteenth through Fifteenth Centuries," in *Dubrovnik, Italy and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. idem (Aldershot: Variorum, 1980), 255.

⁵³ Zdenko Zlatar, *Dubrovnik's Merchants and Capital in the Ottoman Empire (1520-1620): A Quantitative Study* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001), 2-25, esp. 23.

century, but it was not until after the legal codification of the State with the *Statute of Ragusa* of 1272 that systematic documentation began.⁵⁴ Furthermore, a portion of material evidence from the Elaphiti Islands dates to this period, which allows me to effectively explore the changing social conditions and seek patterns of cultural connections. Namely, the conquest of Constantinople and the establishment of a Crusader state in 1204 affected the entire Mediterranean and resulted in power shifts that would change various aspects of social life, not just for the inhabitants of the Eastern Mediterranean, but also for those in a much wider area. It triggered, among other things, a wave of migration of various social strata, which would alter demographic structures and enhance cultural interrelations.

Ragusa used the events following the Fourth Crusade to its advantage by expanding its trade routes and thus strengthening its economy. This was no easy task, since it was struggling with Venice, which, in its attempt to gain dominance over sea routes, greatly obstructed its maritime trade. Despite strong efforts, Venice was able to control Ragusa only so much; the city maintained its pre-established commercial routes to other Dalmatian cities, but also to neighboring Italy, as well as to the distant territories: the Levant to the east, and Spain and England to the west. In addition to these old maritime trade routes, Ragusa began to establish new ones on firm ground in the Balkan peninsula. Mining was developing in Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria around that time, and the power vacuum created by the aftermath of the Sack of Constantinople enabled Ragusa to step in and soon assume the role of a major commercial player in the region that Venice could not penetrate. Handling the precious commodities of gold and silver in great quantities and with

⁵⁴ In 1275 the government issued a law that all business transactions over the sum of 10 hyperpera must be recorded in a notarized document. Gregor Čremošnik, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije, knjiga I*: [The Records of the Dubrovnik office, book I], (Zagreb: JAZU, 1951), VI.

frequency allowed the Ragusans to develop the goldsmith's craft, as suggested by both archival sources, and the precious objects that survive in the treasury of the Cathedral.⁵⁵ Precious metal was just one of the many types of merchandise that were traded with the inland. All of the exportation of goods from the Balkans to the west, and importation to the Balkans from the east and the west ran through Ragusa.⁵⁶ On land Ragusa was the initial point of Via Drine (also called Via Ragusina), one of the safest inland roads which attached itself to the Via Egnatia.⁵⁷ At sea it maintained friendship agreements with various port-cities and was granted safe passage to practically any harbor in the Mediterranean.⁵⁸

At the same time, Ragusa was still in its territorial infancy, and lacked space to develop the agricultural production and animal husbandry needed to sustain the community. Scholars agree that Ragusa never had the natural resources to sustain itself without trade, for even the land it did gradually acquire could not support the growing population.⁵⁹ Naturally, food resources, just like all other goods, were acquired by trade. In fact, Ragusa had such an elaborate control system of importing cereals that the city was seldom struck by famine.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the State resorted to

⁵⁵ See Vinicije B. Lupis, "Historijat istraživanja i novi prilozi poznavanju najstarijeg sloja moćnika dubrovačke prvostolnice," [Historiography and New Contributions to the Study of the Oldest Group of Reliquaries in the Cathedral of Dubrovnik] *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/32 (2005): 129-148.

⁵⁶ Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries: A City Between East and West* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press: 1972), 110.

⁵⁷ For Via Drine, see Berislav Šebečić, "Srebrni putevi u Europi početkom novog vijeka i rudarsko-financijski imperiji Fuggerovih" [Silver Routes in Early Modern Europe and the Fuggers' Mining-Financial Empires], *Rudarsko-geološko-naftni Zbornik* 14 (2002): 77-88, esp. 78-80. For Via Egnatia, see David Schmid, Mihajlo St. Popović and Markus Breier, "From Via Egnatia to Prilep, Bitola and Ohrid: A Medieval Road Map based on Written Sources, Archaeological Remains and GIScience," in *Space, Landscapes and Settlements in Byzantium: Studies in Historical Geography of the Eastern Mediterranean* eds. Andreas Külzer and Mihajlo St. Popović (Novi Sad: Akademska Knjiga, 2017), 289-317.

⁵⁸ Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 1, 129.

⁵⁹ See for example Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant (1280-1460)* [Dubrovnik and the Levant 91280-1460)] (Beograd: Srpska Akademija Nauka, 1956), 5-12; Dragan Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, V-XIV.

⁶⁰ Among the written sources on Ragusa there are only eight mentions of famine in the period of over 500 years. Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, 107-108.

diplomatic measures and made treaties with neighboring territories in order to use their land for cultivation and pasture in exchange for annual tributes.⁶¹ Landowners within the territory of Ragusa were heavily taxed based on the quantity of land, rather than on the revenue acquired from it. In addition, they were required to pay a fee if their land was uncultivated. This was the State's way to ensure that resources were used to their full potential.⁶² All of this demonstrates that Ragusa was actively attempting to reach a level of sustainability. Even if that effectively did not happen, the effort itself is of great importance for the discussion of the Elaphiti Islands and their relationship with the city of Ragusa.

Land was a precious asset, and the Elaphiti Islands, which were Ragusa's earliest acquisition,⁶³ were the most fertile territory that the State possessed until the annexation of Konavle in the first third of the 15th century.⁶⁴ This is especially true of Šipan, the largest and most high-yielding island of the archipelago which still has an agricultural plain situated around a natural spring at its center (Fig. 9). Koločep and Lopud were also agriculturally productive, although to a lesser degree, because of their smaller size and rugged topography. Medieval documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik refer to Šipan far more frequently than to the other two islands, and paint the least comprehensive picture of Koločep. On the other hand, however, Koločep has preserved, relative to its size, much more medieval material evidence. Does this point to a difference in the functional character of the islands, or is it simply a matter of variation in settlement development? This question, along with many others pertaining to the social, economic

⁶¹ Ibid., Also Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa)*, 67-70.

⁶² Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, VIII.

⁶³ Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 71-76.

and religious mechanisms of the Elaphiti communities, have not been addressed in scholarship to date. What was the demographic structure of the islands' population? What was the role of the Elaphities in Ragusa's economy, and —conversely — what was Ragusa's role in the daily lives of the islanders?

Scholarly literature on the Elaphiti Islands thus far has been divided by discipline. Art historians have addressed the churches on the islands, focusing on their architecture and on stylistic features of their decoration. Their predominant focus has been on the 9th - and 10th - century construction phases. Such an approach is rooted in the specific role which the churches have played in the national historiography, which is an issue to which I will return later in this chapter. Historians, on the other hand, have seldom studied the islands. The only studies of the islands are two preliminary articles about Šipan, published by Josip Lučić in the 1960s,⁶⁵ and a chapter dedicated to the Elaphiti Islands in Dragan Roller's 1955 book on agriculture in the medieval State of Ragusa.⁶⁶ Literature about Ragusa to date has overwhelmingly concentrated on the city itself, while the islands have been addressed merely in passing. Viewing them as peripheral, scholars have frequently emphasized the islands' dependence on Ragusa. At the same time, they have not assigned them much significance, since they could not provide enough food to sustain the City completely.⁶⁷ This, however, does not mean that they did not play a vital role in Ragusa's economic development. Scholarship has started to move away from a traditional, center-focused outlook to consider the borders of empires and kingdoms as a generative force in complex networks of medieval trade, diplomacy and cultural transfers. I embrace this shift and, unlike scholars who

⁶⁵ Josip Lučić, "Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana do 1300 godine [The History of the Elaphiti Island of Šipan until 1300] *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, III/10 (1968): 93-163.

⁶⁶ Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, 128-159.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

have been dismissive of the role of the Elaphiti islands in Ragusan history, I examine the mainland and the islands as interdependent. However, before proceeding with the complex analysis of interrelations, it is necessary to examine the islands from up close.

Material Remains on the Islands

The corpus of medieval remains on the Elaphities is remarkably rich, especially taking into consideration the small areas in question. The most significant finds pertain to the fifteen small medieval churches that are distributed across the three islands. They were once decorated with stone sculpture with interlace motifs and frescoes that for the most part follow Byzantine traditions. The churches have undergone substantial changes since the time of their construction, and their chronologies and functions are not straightforward. The architectural features of the churches, as well as the rich body of evidence belonging to their inventories, reveal simultaneous stages of intervention, which roughly mark the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century.

The first person to write about the Elaphiti churches was Vicko Lisičar, a priest who, having frequented the islands, fell in love with their landscape and asked to be transferred to Lopud. In his attempt to popularize the islands, he published two books on Lopud and Koločep,⁶⁸ in which he provided an overview of the islands' landscape, history, and the most relevant monuments, using documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik, and conducting interviews with the residents. Both publications lay the groundwork for the study of the respective islands. His discussion of the

⁶⁸ Lisičar, *Lopud*; idem., *Koločep nekoć i sada* [Koločep Once and Now] (Dubrovnik: Dubrovačka hrvatska tiskara zast, 1932).

churches is an invaluable eyewitness account, since the conditions and shapes of many of these buildings have been drastically altered since the 1930s when he published his work. Moreover, his ethnographic studies traced the evolving functions of particular monuments through a collective memory that has slowly been vanishing because of demographic changes on the islands. While his overall approach to the islands is diachronic, he placed a great deal of emphasis on the medieval churches that are vital parts of their landscapes, and stressed their 9th- and 10th-century phases.

His interpretation was geared towards situating the monuments within the context of Croatian national art and highlighting their morphological distinction in relation to materials from the same period found in other areas of the Mediterranean. His approach serves the purpose of nation-building and bolstering the connection of Croatians with the territory, which has roots roughly in the period in which the churches in question were built. Lisičar's views were shaped by the political and intellectual climate in which he wrote, as well as the availability of evidence. A great deal of material that has emerged since then has reshaped perceptions of places, individuals, collectives, and communication patterns. We see the medieval world much differently today than scholars did in Lisičar's time. The same can be said of the Elaphiti Islands in particular. No archaeological excavation had yet been executed at the time when Lisičar wrote his two books, nor were the paintings in any of the churches yet revealed. On the other hand, the tendency to ascribe unique features to Croatian medieval heritage has persisted in Croatian scholarship, although it has gradually acquired a more nuanced form. The Elaphiti churches have a particular place in this narrative.

The churches in question are small in dimensions, single-aisled and built out of rough-cut stone which was then covered by mortar. Their walls are usually articulated by pilasters on the inside and blind arches on the outside, although there are plenty of variations to these features.

Finally, their middle bay is vaulted with a small dome. Architectural historians have labeled the churches as the *Southern Dalmatian dome type*,⁶⁹ and have dated them collectively to the 9th or 10th century. Examples of this architectural type spread from Omiš to Budva, but the greatest number of such monuments is found in the area of Dubrovnik, and their concentration is particularly dense on the Elaphiti Islands. In form, building method and the morphology of their sculptural inventories, the churches of the Southern Dalmatian dome type are parallel to the simple type of Croatian pre-Romanesque architecture found all over the Dalmatian coast, as well as on the islands, the inland territory of historic Croatia, and in Istria.⁷⁰

Leaning on Constantine Porphyrogennitos, who in *De Administrando Imperio* recounted the arrival of Croatians to the territory of the modern-day country in the 7th century,⁷¹ scholars have interpreted pre-Romanesque architecture as a signal of the Christianization of the newly arrived peoples, and a rapid Slavenization of the territory. In other words, these churches have served as material manifestations of Constantine's account and have helped bolster discussions of ethnogenesis, which is a major cornerstone of Croatian nation building. Ivica Žile and Tomislav Marasović have studied the Elaphiti churches in this context, the former by focusing on the monuments on Koločep, and the latter by outlining the various typologies of pre-Romanesque

⁶⁹ The term was coined by Tomislav Marasović in "Regionalni južnodalmatinski tip u arhitekturi ranog srednjeg vijeka," [Regional Southern Dalmatian Type in the Architecture of the Early Middle Ages] in *Beritićev zbornik: Zbornik radova iz dubrovačke povijesti u počast sedamdesetogodišnjice dubrovačkog konzervatora Lukše Beritića* [An Anthology to Beritić: A Collection of Essays on the History of Dubrovnik Honoring the 70th Birthday of Dubrovnik Conservator Lukša Beritić], ed. Slavomir Benić and Lukša Beritić (Dubrovnik: Društvo prijatelja dubrovačke starine, 1960). 33-47.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest: Razmani Peter Tudományegyetemi Gorog Filologiai Intezet, 1949), 123-151, esp. 147-151.

architecture on the Dalmatian coast.⁷² Conversely, recent scholarship has argued for the longevity of non-Slavic ethnic presence on the coast and a slower process of Slavenization.⁷³

The archaeological campaigns of the 1970s on the Elaphiti islands have unfortunately resulted in no publications, but they have brought to light substantial quantities of sculptural fragments and archeological finds — coinage and ceramics — in and around the churches. Ivica Žile provided a detailed study of the sculpture in his publication on Koločep.⁷⁴ Recently, Ivana Tomas did the same for the island of Lopud.⁷⁵ Archaeological and conservation campaigns during the 1990-es uncovered the frescoes underneath the layer of mortar in two functioning churches: Saint John on Šipan and Saint Nicholas on Koločep.⁷⁶ The team restored four churches and revealed additional sculptural material, including fragments of an altar screen, repurposed from a Roman sarcophagus.⁷⁷ These finds were collected and published by Željko Peković, along with an

⁷² See Ivica Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo otoka Koločepa* [Pre-Romanesque Church Architecture of the Island of Koločep], (Dubrovnik: Prošlost i sadašnjost, 2003), esp. 26-30 and 40-44; Marasović, “Regionalni južnodalmatinski tip u arhitekturi ranog srednjeg vijeka,” 33-49, Tomislav Marasović, *Graditeljstvo starohrvatskog doba u Dalmaciji* [Architecture of the Old-Croatian Period in Dalmatia] (Split: Književni krug, 1994), 160-165.

⁷³ Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also Zdenka Janeković Römer, “Građani, stanovnici, podanici, stranci, inovjerci u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku” [Citizens, Inhabitants, Subjects, Foreigners, Heterodox in Medieval Dubrovnik], in *Raukarov zbornik* [An anthology to Raukar], ed. Neven Budak (Zagreb: FF Press, 2005), 317-346, who states that the Slavenization of Dubrovnik only started in the 11th century, and that it was only in the 13th that the population of the city was dominantly Slavic, 328.

⁷⁴ Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo*, 45-114.

⁷⁵ Ivana Tomas and Maja Zeman, *Spomenici Otoka Lupuda od antike do srednjeg vijeka* [The Monuments of the Island of Lopud from Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages] (Zagreb: FF Press, 2017). The portion of this book that focuses on the Middle Ages begins on p. 35.

⁷⁶ While the frescoes in Saint Nicholas were uncovered during the archaeological campaign, the ones in Saint John have been known since 1977. The paintings were discovered by Ivan Prtenjak and his wife Jacqueline, an architect and art historian couple who own a house next to the church. Preliminary conservation work was done at that point, but the church was restored again in the 1990s campaign. The paintings in Saint Nicholas on Koločep were brought to light even later: during the archaeological and conservation campaigns of the 1990s and 2000s. See Željko Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve/Quattro chiese delle isole Elafite* (Split: Studia Mediterranea Archaeologica, 2008).42-47.

⁷⁷ See Željko Peković and Ante Milošević, *Oltarna Ograda s Koločepa* [The altar screen from Koločep] (Split: Muzej Hrvatskih Arheoloških Spomenika, 2000), and Vedrana Delonga, “Pisana uspomena na jednu “sestru i kraljicu” s Koločepa” [A Written Memory of a “Sister and Queen” from Koločep], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 34 (2007): 199-211.

account of the restoration process, and a stylistic interpretation of the painted material. Igor Fisković, too, examined the frescoes from a stylistic point of view.⁷⁸ The two scholars are in agreement about the Byzantine origin of the painters responsible for the two cycles, but disagree on the date.⁷⁹

I focus on the period when these churches had already been standing for some time and had gone through physical alterations, as well as possible changes in function. I do not intend to explore at length the complex issues of ethnogenesis, Slavenization and Christianization, nor do I aim to criticize previous scholarship, without whose efforts my task would have been more difficult. However, it is important to underline how institutional matters embedded in politics have shaped the narrow way in which these churches have been discussed. The very term “pre-Romanesque” is vexed, for it acts as an anticipation of the stylistic category that is imbedded in Western tradition. In other words, it disregards the intricate patterns of connectivity that defined this group of monuments. Declaring their period- and site-specificity overlooks the longevity of constructing simple building types,⁸⁰ as well as the wide distribution of comparable examples. Single-aisle domed churches built out of rough-cut stone can be found throughout the Mediterranean, from modern-day Turkey and Cyprus, all the way to Spain.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Igor Fisković, “Adriobizantiski sloj zidnog slikarstva u južnoj Hrvatskoj” [The Adrio-Byzantine Layer of Wall Painting in Southern Croatia] in *Radanje I. hrvatske kulture pejzaža* [The Birth of the First Croatian Cultural Landscape], ed. Miljenko Jurković, Tugomir Lukšić (Zagreb: Exegi monumentum, 1996), 371-385; idem, “O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici,” [On the 11th and 12th-Century Frescoes in Dubrovnik and the Area], *Radovi IPU* 33 (2009): 17–36.

⁷⁹ Peković dates them to the 11th century, whereas Fisković believes that they reflect the belated trends of the 11th century but were executed in the 12th.

⁸⁰ See for example Ivana Tomas, “Crkva Svete Marije na otoku Mljetu i njena povezanost s romaničkim spomenicima Apulije” [The Church of Saint Mary on the Island of Mljet and its Connection with the Romanesque Monuments of Apulia] *Prostor* 19 (2011): 296-309, esp. 298.

⁸¹ The most striking resemblance to the Southern Dalmatian dome type outside the region I have come across so far was a church of unknown titular in Cappadocia; in an unpublished site next to the underground city of Tatlarin. Its ground plan and articulation of interior space with blind pilasters is completely parallel to the Elaphiti examples, and

In discussions of the Southern Dalmatian dome type, the presence of the dome has repeatedly been seen as a sign of Byzantine influence. This architectural trope, applied to the material executed both in and after the period of Byzantine dominance in Dalmatia, is a way of acknowledging Byzantine presence in the territory without effectively assessing it. It is introduced as a brief side-note, leaving the impression that the occurrence was incidental and inconsequential. In fact, after the discovery of the frescoes in the Elaphiti churches, Peković raised the question whether the dome of the church of Saint Nicholas was part of the original construction, or it was added later, at the time of the execution of the frescoes.⁸² Given that he provided no additional arguments in support of this, Peković's question reads like an attempt to curtail the scope of "Byzantine influence."

Another term sometimes used interchangeably with Byzantine influence is Adriatic-Byzantinism. The term was coined by Einar Dyggve in the 1930s to denote the cultural specificity of the Adriatic basin and the Late Antique buildings which he studied, but it gradually expanded to include a variety of different forms and expressions in the time periods ranging from Late Antiquity to the Romanesque.⁸³ Rather than creating a meaningful framework, the term acts as a quick explanation for phenomena that defy narratives of Western connections. In a recent article, Miljenko Jurković reported on the history of the term and rejected its use for Late Antiquity, arguing that the Adriatic was by no means isolated in that period and that one should therefore not discuss a cultural climate nor regional styles specific to the Adriatic basin. On the other hand, he

the walls reveal traces of mortar. The roof-system of the church is not preserved, but considering the Byzantine traditions of the area, it is fairly safe to say that it was domed in its original form.

⁸² Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 12.

⁸³ Einar Dyggve, *History of Salonitan Christianity* (Oslo: Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, 1951), 3, 31, 81, and 137. As Jurković pointed out, Dyggve had coined the term before, but elaborated it here.

welcomed the employment of the term in the case of Southern Dalmatian fresco painting of the 11th and 12th century, pointing out that Igor Fisković used it to demonstrate that this painting is no longer pre-Romanesque, and not yet Romanesque.⁸⁴ The frescoes in question are the monumental decorations in the Cathedral of Dubrovnik and the Elaphiti churches. I do not believe that Adrio-Byzantinism provides a productive framework in which to study this material, either. The Adriatic was never isolated from the rest of the Mediterranean: on the contrary, it maintained close trade and diplomatic relations both with its neighbors and with more distant territories, which created dense albeit elusive networking patterns. The evidence for these networks rests in archival documents, as well as ceramics and coinage found both on the islands and the mainland.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the Elaphiti churches, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, in fact synthesize Western, Byzantine and indigenous elements, and are thus clear markers of cultural exchange. These churches contain some of the oldest frescoes on Dalmatian soil and have few parallels on the eastern side of the Adriatic.⁸⁶ At the same time, there is no pictorial evidence from

⁸⁴ Miljenko Jurković, “Adrio-Byzantinism and/or Byzantine Influence on Croatian Cultural Heritage - A Reconsideration,” *Voprosy vseobschei istorii arhitektury* [General Questions on the History of Architecture] 10/1 (2018): 104-120; Igor Fisković, “Adriobizantiski sloj zidnog slikarstva,” 28.

⁸⁵ For the study of connections between the Ragusan territory and the eastern Mediterranean, see Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*. For a discussion of coinage from the Dubrovnik area, see Matko Ilkić, Nikolina Topić and Željko Peković, “Numizmatički nalazi s arheoloških istraživanja u Dubrovniku,” [Numismatic Finds from Archaeological Excavations in Dubrovnik] *Anali Dubrovnik* 53/1 (2015): 1-30. For research involving medieval ceramics on the Dalmatian coast, see Karla Gusar, “Keramika kasnog srednjeg i ranog novog vijeka s područja grada Hvara” [Late Medieval and Early Modern Ceramics from the Territory of the City of Hvar], in *Znanstveni skup 'Dani Stjepana Gunjače: Hrvatska srednjovjekovna povijesno-arheološka baština, Međunarodne teme* [Collected Papers from the Conference Honoring Stjepan Gunjača: The Croatian Medieval Historical and Archaeological Heritage, International Topics], ed. Tomislav Šeparović (Split: Muzej Arheoloških Spomenika, 2010) 1-30; eadem, “Kasnosrednjovjekovna i novjektivna glazirana keramika s lokaliteta sv. Križ u Ninu” [Late Medieval and Early Modern Glazed Ceramics from the Church of St. Cross in Nin] *Archeologia Adriatica* (2007): 175-198.

⁸⁶ For an example of the so-called Adrio-Byzantinism outside the region of Dubrovnik, see the frescoes of the church of Saint Chrysogonus in Zara (modern Zadar), Ana Deanović, “Romaničke freske u Svetom Krševanu” [Romanesque Frescoes in Saint Chrysogonus], *Peristil* 2 (1957): 114-123.

the period that would counter these examples or to suggest that they would be an aberration at the time of Byzantine dominance in the Adriatic and shortly after.

Dismissive attitudes towards *influences* and *hybridity* are by no means unique to the scholars who wrote about the Elaphiti Islands, nor do they only appear in Croatian scholarship.⁸⁷ These are systemic matters, rooted in undertakings to fashion national histories with the assistance of art, and promulgated by the development of academic disciplines and the fragmentation of historical material into fields and area studies.⁸⁸ Peripheral states (particularly smaller ones) situated in between classified territories, and whose medieval material remains display various degrees of cultural overlap have been especially affected by attempts at stylistic categorization. For all of these reasons, I do not use the term Adrio-Byzantinism in the analysis of the Elaphiti monuments. Similarly, I depart from the framework of the Southern Dalmatian dome type and generally refrain from determinist stylistic categories. While formal classification is helpful in some instances, it would impose limitations on the study of the Elaphiti Islands. Namely, not all churches on the islands belong to the Southern Dalmatian dome type. Larger churches with other formal characteristics, such as the parish church of Koločep and Our Lady of Šunj (Santa Maria dei Bisognio) had already been erected by the thirteenth century, and are mentioned in the sources. Other churches do not have a dome, but were built in the same period as the Southern Dalmatian dome type monuments and share with them the spatial relationship with the rural landscape. Additional churches that no longer stand, but are recorded in archival sources without any

⁸⁷ For a recent critical overview of traditional approaches to the medieval Mediterranean artistic material characterized by signs of cultural absorption, see Michele Bacci, “Veneto-Byzantine ‘Hybrids:’ Towards a Reassessment,” *Studies in Iconography* 35 (2014), 73-106, esp. 73-80.

⁸⁸ For a comprehensive critical overview of the formation of academic disciplines and the impact they had on the creation of knowledge, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 1-22; Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean*, 400-800 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-14, esp. 2-3.

references to their physical features, must also be brought into discussion, for they will provide clues pertinent to their function and users, as well as their role in the Elaphiti landscapes.

The churches have so far been analyzed from a stylistic point of view and matters of function have not been effectively discussed. The proposition that the islands were used by hermits found its way into scholarship based on literary tradition leaning on Jerome, who placed Egyptian monks on Dalmatian islands.⁸⁹ He did he mention the Elaphiti Islands specifically, however, nor do the archeological, art-historical or archival sources suggest the presence of hermits.⁹⁰ Hermitages, as the very word suggests, arose in areas that were secluded or hardly accessible, which makes islands in general ideal settings for this function. However, material evidence from the Elaphities indicates that they were inhabited already in the period of Classical antiquity,⁹¹ and there are no evident signs of rupture to suggest that they were ever abandoned.⁹² Considering the sizes of the respective islands, it would be impossible for monks to live there in isolation. Furthermore, hermitages were connected to specific types of landscapes that were suitable for an

⁸⁹ This tradition rests on Jerome's Life of Saint Hilarion and has obscure and only partial paths of transmission. See Trpimir Vedriš, "Nekoliko opažanja o začecima štovanja sv. Krševana u Dalmaciji u ranome srednjem vijeku" [Several Observations about the Formation of the Cult of Saint Chrysogonus in Early Medieval Dalmatia], in *Spalatumque dedit ortum: Zbornik povodom desete godišnjice Odsjeka za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu* [Collected Papers on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split] ed. Ivan Basić and Marko Rimac (Split: Filozofski Fakultet u Splitu, 2014), 204.

⁹⁰ Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo*, 27-30.

⁹¹ See Nenad Cambi, "Fragmenti antičkih sarkofaga na otoku Koločepu" [Fragments of sarcophagi from Classical Antiquity on the island of Koločep] in *Arheološka istraživanja u Dubrovniku i dubrovačkom području* [Archaeological Research in Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik Area], ed. Željko Rapanić (Dubrovnik: Izdanja HAD, 1988), 129-137.

⁹² For medieval finds related to the period earlier than this dissertation discusses, see for example Dubravka Beritić, "Lopudski relikvijar - moćnik Reliquarium Elaphitense," [The Reliquary of Lopud: Reliquarium Elaphitense Reliquary], *Zbornik Dubrovačkog primorja i otoka* 8 (2001): 169-172; and Vinicije B. Lupis, "Iznova o lopudskim moćnicima" [Again on the Reliquaries of Lopud], *Histria antiqua: časopis Međunarodnog istraživačkog centra za arheologiju* 18/1 (2009): 473-480.

ascetic way of life: caves and ravines. Monks of Cappadocia, the Morea, Calabria and Basilicata — regions with large numbers of hermitages — lived in and around caves, where they usually had their cell and a designated space for prayer. There are no caves on the Elaphities, and the overall topography of the islands would make hermitages highly impractical. Furthermore, the claim is contradictory to the scholarly tradition that sees the Elaphiti Islands as part of the Christianization process of the Slavs. While archival sources never directly address the issue of function, they describe individuals who lived and worked close to the churches, and thus indirectly convey the level of impact that the churches had on the organization of daily lives on the islands. In order to properly examine the religious landscape of the Elaphiti Islands, it is necessary to juxtapose the written sources with the archaeological ones, and to study the churches in relation to the settlements and their communities.

Written Sources

The Archive of Dubrovnik is the central repository for documents issued on the Ragusan territory for over 800 years: from 1022, the date of the earliest document, until the annexation of Ragusa by the Habsburg Empire in 1815. The documents in the Archive concern statehood, law-making, public policy, trade, diplomacy, trans-regional relations, legal disputes, foundations of secular and religious institutions, ownership, and transfer of goods. Beyond these specific themes, they are remarkably insightful for the study of life in the city and its surrounding area, for they provide clues about a wide range of social aspects. It is not just the ruling elite that features prominently in the archival sources, but also the rising class of merchants and professionals, minority groups of different standing, various categories of villagers, as well as the lowest-income

individuals: slaves (in the period when Ragusa still had slaves),⁹³ the poor hanging around monasteries, and many others. The records of these various groups reveal their inter-relationships, community building and conflicts, their use of public and private spaces, as well as their physical and economic mobility.

As is the case with any archive, this one, too, is fragmentary. Records are abundant for particular brackets of years and completely absent for others. The selectiveness of individuals in charge of archiving at the time when these documents were written certainly contributed to the destruction of information. Documents that were no longer considered important were thrown away, or — in the Middle Ages — erased so that the parchment could be reused. Natural disasters, such as the fire in the Rector's Palace, the devastating earthquakes and fires of 1520 and 1667, played their parts, as well. In each of these instances the files were moved from the palace and left in a public space until the storage room was cleaned up. In addition to that, a great revision happened on the eve of the French occupation of 1806, when the Ragusan nobility destroyed confidential documents, a large number of letters and anything that was perceived to be harmful if it fell into enemy hands. The Archive has had a turbulent history as an institution, as well. Its inventory was shifted several times — to Vienna, Belgrade and back to Dubrovnik — and some parts of the material were never returned; many documents were lost or misplaced.⁹⁴ Despite these losses, the Archive is still remarkably rich. In fact, Fernand Braudel considered it the best archive for the study of everyday life in the entire Mediterranean.⁹⁵ As it stands, it is comprised of 92 series

⁹³ In 1416 Ragusa became the first state in the world to abolish trade of enslaved people.

⁹⁴ The history of the Archive is described in detail in the reference book for users held in the Archive of Dubrovnik. See also Josip Gelčić, "Dubrovački Arhiv" [The Archive of Dubrovnik], *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine* 22 (1910): 1-74.

⁹⁵ This information was given to me by Professor Bariša Krekić in personal communication.

divided both chronologically and thematically and contains countless documents, the majority of which have never been published.⁹⁶ The documents are written in ten languages and four scripts, although Latin prevails in the medieval and Italian in the subsequent periods.⁹⁷

Documents of the 11th and 12th century are fewer in number and have been published in the *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*.⁹⁸ Evidence begins to multiply around the last quarter of the 13th century, simultaneously with the legal codification of the State through the Statute of Ragusa. The first notarial books appear in this period. The earliest records of this type have been published in four volumes by Gregor Čremošnik and Josip Lučić.⁹⁹ The edited volumes are in Latin and contain Croatian titles which point to the editors' reading of the content. The books, linked to the works of three notaries: Tomaso da Savera, Aconius de Titullo, and Andrea de Benisa, encompass the years 1278-1286, 1295-1297 and 1295-1301 respectively. These books are the core of the written evidence upon which I rely in this dissertation.

⁹⁶ For a full catalogue of the Archive, see Josip Gelčić, "Dubrovački Arhiv," 7-73. For an overview of material published so far, see Vinko Foretić, "Dosadašnji rezultati i daljnje potrebe izdavanja arhivskih izvora Historijskog arhiva u Dubrovniku i ostalih dubrovačkih povijesnih vrela" [Recorded Results and the Need for Further Publishing of Archival Records from the Historical Archive of Dubrovnik and other sources of Dubrovnik], *Arhivski Vijesnik* 13/1 (1970): 445-461.

⁹⁷ The languages of the archives are: Latin, Italian, Slavonic (Croatian), Medieval Greek, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and French. Not all languages are equally represented, nor do they all appear in all periods. Documents in Medieval Greek pertain to the relations with the Byzantines in the early period of the Archive. Ottoman Turkish and Arabic are the languages of records that refer to the relations with the Ottomans. Russian appears among the documents of the 15th century. Spanish, Portuguese and French are the least represented. The scripts followed their linguistic use for the most part: Latin script was used for Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French; Cyrillic and Latin were used interchangeably for Slavonic; Russian documents, and documents that record relationships with the Balkan hinterland are in Cyrillic; Arabic script was used for documents in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic. However, there are instances of documents written in Latin that are in Cyrillic script.

⁹⁸ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* (Zagreb: Društvo za Jugoslavensku povijest i starine, 1874).

⁹⁹ Čremošnik, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije I*; Josip Lučić, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije, knjiga II* [The records of the Dubrovnik office, book II] (Zagreb: Monumenta Historica Ragusiana, 1984); idem, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije, knjiga III* [The records of the Dubrovnik office, book III] (Zagreb: Monumenta Historica Ragusiana, 1988); idem, *Spisi dubrovačke kancelarije, knjiga IV* [The records of the Dubrovnik office, book IV] (Zagreb: Monumenta Historica Ragusiana, 1993). These books are henceforth referred to as Čremošnik, *Spisi* and Lučić, *Spisi*, followed by the respective volume and document number.

There are several things that need to be stressed about these sources before proceeding with their analysis. First of all, these are not the original notary books, but rather their abbreviated versions, written and bound by the same notary. The abbreviation of the text was likely done for the purpose of economizing space and resources. The note on the cover of the first book confirms that there existed a longer codex recording the same matters.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, in the routine process of copying, the notaries occasionally confused names of parties, often with a name that featured in the previous document. Some documents are left unfinished. Others are written twice in the same exact form.

The documents reveal frequent mistakes in spelling and grammar and common use of Italian vernacular words instead of Latin ones. The spelling of personal names is particularly problematic. The same names appear in several different variants, often within the same text. These variations present difficulties in identifying the respective individuals. Surnames were used in Ragusa in this period, but they were primarily applied to the nobility and officials. The islanders are mostly referred to by their first name and patronym, or their name and profession. There are, of course, exceptions to this, and they are, I believe, a marker of a difference in status, as I will discuss in later chapters. Even individuals who are recorded by their surnames often had their surname written in different variants. The names of individuals are predominantly of Latin and Slavic origin. The fact that Slavic names prevail on the islands can be recognized behind the Latinized forms in which they were recorded. The names cannot, however, always be precisely identified or converted back into Slavonic with certainty. For this reason, I will refer to the inhabitants by the Latinized versions of their names.

¹⁰⁰ Tomaso da Savera wrote on the cover: “[Liber] in quo abbreviate sunt carte not,” *i.e.* “Book which contains abbreviated notarial documents.” Čremošnik, *Spisi I*, 342.

Similarly, the names of the islands exhibit multiple variants of the same root.¹⁰¹ Koločep is labeled *Calamota*, *Calamotum*, *Calamotus*, *Calametum* and *Calafota*. Curiously, the locals, both the islanders and mainlanders alike, still refer to the island by its old name *Kalamota*,¹⁰² and refuse to use the official name, which was imposed at some point in the 20th century. Lopud is mentioned as *Dalafota*, *Dalafotum*, *Dalafodum*, and in the early modern period as *Insula Media* (Central Island). Šipan is noted as *Jupana*, *Juppana*, *Zupana* or *Cupana*; Lokrum as *Lacroma* and *Lacromona*; Daksa as *Dacsa* or *Daxa*. Mrkan is referred to as *Mercana*, Sveti Andrija as *San Andrea de Pelago* (Saint Andrew on the Sea), and Jakljan as *Liciniana*. The other islets are not mentioned among the documents. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I will address the islands by their modern names.

The notarial documents are diverse in content. They register sales and purchases of land, contracts of land leases for the purpose of cultivation, dowry agreements, wills, and lawsuits – civil and criminal. Their formulaic language evokes the original setting: the notary office and the court room. Participants are recorded in the same order, beginning with the date and governmental officials (*i.e.* judges) who were present, and proceeding with the involved parties and their attorneys. The private partakers were not always present in court sessions. When a party was there, his name was accompanied with a “C,” an abbreviation for *coram* (in the presence of). Women were not allowed to appear in court in person, but were represented by an attorney or a male family member.¹⁰³ It is interesting to compare these sources with the Statute of Ragusa from 1272. Many

¹⁰¹ Many of these toponyms originate from Greek and date back to classical antiquity. For more on this issue, see Dubravka Ivšić, *Predslavenski sloj u hrvatskoj toponimiji* [Pre-Slavonic Layer in Croatian Toponymy], PhD diss (University of Rijeka, 2013), esp. 164-165.

¹⁰² Personal observation.

¹⁰³ Rimac, Baće and Lonza, *The Statute*, III/7 and III/9.

of the obligations between contracting parties had been standardized by the Statute, and appear in the notarial documents in a language so formulaic that the editors were able to abbreviate parts of the text to economize space. On the other hand, the documents frequently show deviations from the prescribed norms. Juxtaposing the notarial documents to the Statute allows us to trace the differences between laws on paper and their practical implementation, and to identify the mechanisms with which the loopholes in the regulations would have been taken advantage of by different constituencies.

The documents frequently refer to the Elaphiti Islands, recording the names of the islands' residents, providing clues about their different economic statuses, occupations, family bonds and relations with their neighbors. Furthermore, they deliver evidence of individuals who did not reside on the islands permanently, but were tied to them by business and personal affairs, such as affluent land owners from Ragusa, who leased their land and hired workers to take care of their estates in their absence, priests, monks and other *hereditaries* in charge of looking after the churches and their possessions, lawyers, judges and other state officials who investigated legal matters and maintained order, *men (homini)* – craftsmen and hired laborers with no land of their own who moved where they could find work, as well as tradesmen, who conducted business both with the islanders and on the islands.

These sources, as we shall see, show us a great deal more than just business transactions. Dowry contracts strengthen the people's economic and social standing, revealing a wide spectrum which ranges from lavish display of wealth to a struggle to meet the standard. Land sales and leases, apart from hinting at the individuals' economic standing, also provide clues into the spatial distribution of arable land on the islands. Wills, unsurprisingly, display the individuals' pious nature, and provide insights into the monasteries to which they were leaving smaller portions of

money.¹⁰⁴ However, they also reveal a number of objects from every-day life that belonged to the household, objects such as those that are commonly found in archaeological excavations, and that point to a range of quotidian activities, both individual and communal. Finally, the lawsuits are arguably the most interesting category in these books. The documents record business affairs, but also all sorts of conflicts, quarrels, petty thefts, destruction of property, arsons, physical attacks and even a possible attempt of rape. Some of them note the residents' testimonies about events that took place on the islands. They provide information about crucial spatial relations, the observation of religious feasts, neighborly relationships and attitudes towards outsiders. It is those records that most effectively take us out of the courtroom and show us how the islands' communities come together at crucial moments. Above all, they show that the islanders possessed a remarkable level of organization, creativity and agency.

¹⁰⁴ By the 13th century the government of Ragusa had instituted a law that prohibited people from leaving their land to monasteries. This law was designed to fight against the rising wealth of monasteries, and thus protect the authority of the State.

Chapter 2: LIVING ON THE ISLANDS

The Barren Property of Marinus: On Poverty, Wealth and Land Management

In May of 1283, a woman named Dobra and her son Marinus leased their vineyard and “quasi-arid” land on Lopud for the duration of twelve years, obliging the leaser, Phylippus de Vitalioce, to cultivate the land in order to keep three quarters of its yield.¹⁰⁵ Another document provides an ambiguous and contradictory view of the nature of this agreement, and three other records inform us that the owners triple-leased the same piece of property, and designated part of it as dowry for Dobra’s two daughters; Marinus’s sisters.¹⁰⁶ The most interesting part of the story, however, is the very assessment of the quality of land. The surprising admission that the land was relatively barren is unique among the records from the Archive of Dubrovnik. It signifies the impediments of living off of natural resources, the absence of which would have hindered the possibility of economic advancement. This is especially true in a contained environment such as the Elaphiti Islands, where agriculture was the primary, albeit not the only, source of income. Surely this was not the only land on the islands which was of poor quality, but both leasers and sellers of potentially infertile parcels would have had it in their interest to keep quiet about the matter.

The fact that the family pledged the same land over and over and translated it for dowry purposes suggest that this was the only land they had, and it was not of very good quality. This in and of itself should be taken as a clue of their lower economic status. The absence of a family name is also suggestive. Marinus, identified simply as son of late Dobrossius the barrell maker

¹⁰⁵ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/1067.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, II/468, II/768, II/769, II/1288, II/1289.

(the profession is not capitalized),¹⁰⁷ was the head of the household, and the debt, at least formally, fell on his shoulders. Borrowing money was relatively common on the islands, and land was often used as pledge. Taking out loans should not automatically be considered a sign of financial struggle. In fact, sources overwhelmingly confirm that people frequently borrowed money to invest in businesses, and would pay off the debt from their profits.¹⁰⁸ That, however, was not the case with this family. One of the documents notes that they borrowed 15 solidi denariorum grossum for the purpose of fixing their house.¹⁰⁹ Both this, and the objective of securing dowry for the two young women of the family who were not yet married, speak to the notion that they were trying to ensure basic living conditions.¹¹⁰ There are no follow-up documents that would inform us whether Marinus managed to pay off his debt, nor can we tell what entering the land — a right Marinus's creditors would gain should he fail to pay by the agreed deadline — would have looked like in practical terms.¹¹¹

The story of Marinus's family also testifies to the tight connection of the Elaphiti individuals to their land. By this I do not have in mind a physical, feudal connection, but rather a personal, territorial one. As I have laid out in the previous chapter, land was certainly not a pillar of the Ragusan economy. In a manner of speaking, however, it was its commanding force. It was the lack of land and resources, along with the beneficial geographic factors that made the Ragusans

¹⁰⁷ Angeliki Laiou elaborates the transformation of professions into proper family names in the 14th-century region of Macedonia, Greece. Laiou, *Peasant Society*, 120-127.

¹⁰⁸ For a comparative outlook on personal estates burdened with debt in medieval Marseille and Lucca, see Daniel Lord Smail, *Legal Plunder* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 1 and 116-123.

¹⁰⁹ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/468.

¹¹⁰ The Statute of Ragusa states that a dowry contract was not valid unless signed by the husband, Rimac, Baće and Longa, *The Statute*, III/22. However, the husbands were not mentioned in the document.

¹¹¹ For a comparative outlook on debt resolution regarding real estate in medieval Marseille, see Smail, *Legal Plunder*, 145-153.

turn to trade, which would eventually become the State's main industry. Throughout its history Ragusa attempted to overcome this lack, which is attested both in the State's attempt at territorial expansion, and in its various strategies to control who owned land and how they maintained it. The Elaphiti Islands were appealing precisely because of their agricultural potential. But beyond the widely acknowledged assessment of the role of land in Ragusan statehood lies a compelling argument about the ground-level bond which individuals had with their properties.¹¹² An overwhelming number of written sources related to the Elaphiti Islands revolve around land in one way or another. Naturally, land was sold, purchased, leased, inherited through wills, divided by successors, donated, given as dowry, and pawned for money. But we must also not forget that it was inhabited, cultivated, guarded, and trespassed. It was the place in which people spent a great deal of their time, both working and in leisure. It was the site of enjoyable, unpleasant, and at times even violent, encounters with neighbors. For Marinus and Dobra, and many other inhabitants of the Elaphiti Islands, it brought livelihood in various ways.

Based on books of birth and marriages, Lisičar calculated that five hundred families must have lived on Koločep in the 16th century.¹¹³ We do not have those kind of records for the 13th century, so it is impossible to give a precise estimate, but it is evident that the islands had a sizable population. Hundreds of individuals mentioned in the documents are designated as "x coming from the island of y." The context of these references varies, and they often do not refer to islands themselves, so we have to consider that some portion of these individuals originated from the Elaphiti Islands, but later moved to the city. Such individuals, as we shall see closely in Chapter

¹¹² For the role of land in Ragusan statehood, see Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, esp. V-XIV; Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa)*, 67-70; Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, 107-108.

¹¹³ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 7.

Four, nevertheless maintained close ties to the islands. There is no way of estimating how many individuals living on the Elaphities were not mentioned at all in the sources, for they had no court business in the years that the documents cover. Another thing to take into account is that the notaries did not label the people according to their origins consistently. For example, out of seven documents that mention a man by the name of Bogdassa de Scregna, only one specifies that he was from Lopud, whereas the others do not declare his origin, although the context makes it clear that they refer to the same person who most definitely resided on the island.¹¹⁴ Marinus and Dobra were not described as island dwellers, but there are strong reasons to believe that they were. For one, their names are only ever mentioned in association with the respective property situated on Lopud. Secondly, and more importantly, January 16, 1284, when Marinus made the extensive transactional maneuver of pledging his land to two different creditors and allocated parts of it for dowry purposes, was a Sunday, and Sunday was the day when the court in Ragusa was open to receive complaints and settle affairs of foreigners, and of those dwelling outside the city; namely islanders and villagers.¹¹⁵

There must have been a great number of families on the Elaphiti Islands, who, just like Marinus, owned a single property and lived modestly off the land and various types of manual labor. Scholars have referred to them as peasants, but I hesitate to use this term, partially because of its derogatory connotations, but mostly because of its elusive nature when it comes to the Ragusan area.¹¹⁶ In Greece, for example, monastic *praktika* refer to *paroikoi* — dependent

¹¹⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/147, I/210; Lučić, *Spisi*, III/425, III/726, III/902, III/918, III/1080.

¹¹⁵ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VIII/1.

¹¹⁶ On the idea that peasants owned land on the Elaphiti Islands, see Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, 129. On the rationale for using the word villager instead of peasant, see Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 2.

peasants who were tied to the land of their landlord — and define their fiscal responsibilities.¹¹⁷ In contrast, neither the notarial documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik, nor the Statute of Ragusa contain any words that would translate as *peasant*, making the group of people whose entire livelihood was based on the land virtually indistinguishable from those who had other sources of income.¹¹⁸ Obviously, “peasant” was not considered an occupation in the same way that “craftsman” — which often required extensive training — was.¹¹⁹

Numerous documents record various types of craftsmen on the Elaphiti Islands. Yet, we also find references to herdsmen, shepherds and other unspecified workers employed either in animal husbandry, agriculture, or possibly engaged in both. The workforce on the Elaphiti consisted of island men who were employed by landowners from the city. Sources tell us that these city-dwellers were present on the islands, although it is impossible to say how frequently. While they were absent, their employees cared for their land and any other affairs, and would notify them in case of any theft or damage that occurred on their properties.¹²⁰ We know almost nothing about employment contracts, since not a single one has been preserved. However, documents which record, in passing, workers on the Elaphiti Islands, demonstrate that the landowners from the city were well acquainted with the population on the ground and formed fluid business relationships,

¹¹⁷ Laiou, *Peasant Society*, esp. 3-15.

¹¹⁸ The closest to this would be the words *rusticus* and *villanus*, which, according to Lučić, denoted a topographic quality (i.e. living outside the city) and nature of employment (agricultural worker) respectively. Josip Lučić, “Prinos građi srednjovjekovnog latiniteta (capanna, casale, curia, homo, domus, rusticus, sella, villa, villanus)” [A Contribution to the Material on the Medieval Latinity (Capanna, Casale, Curia, Homo, Domus, Rusticus, Sella, Villa, Villanus)], *Arhivski vjesnik* 9/1: (1966), 285-297. However, the respective terms appear in the documents of the 13th century very rarely, and never refer to the Elaphiti Islands.

¹¹⁹ Josip Lučić breaks down the different groups of craftsmen of medieval Ragusa and identifies, where possible, the length of their training. The data varies from profession to profession, as well as from case to case, but on average it appears that craftsmen working with metal, stone, wood and textile would spend from five to seven years learning their respective craft. Josip Lučić, *Obrti i usluge u Dubrovniku do početka 14 stoljeća* [Crafts and Services in Dubrovnik Until the Beginning of the 14th Century] (Zagreb: Sveučiliste u Zagrebu, Institut za Hrvatsku Povijest, 1979), esp. 43, 55, 71 and 82.

¹²⁰ Theft and damage reports inform us of this. See Lučić, *Spisi*, III/444 and III/532.

which were not necessarily long lasting. For example, in 1284 a man called Peruech was employed by Marini de Gymano on Šipan, but in the previous year he had worked as a herdsman for Vladimirus de Grupsa.¹²¹ Such relationships undoubtedly opened the door to a variety of networking aspects which worked for the mutual benefit of both involved parties.

Archival sources clearly indicate that land on the Elaphiti Islands was in the hands of a wide social and economic range of people, including affluent individuals from Ragusa, monasteries and church officials of various ranks, to local villagers – whether they were craftsmen or other commoners. Some islanders were certainly in good financial standing. The Scregna family from Lopud, for instance, appears in 45 documents, the majority of which record their possessions and financial transactions. On Šipan no local family is that visible, but there are about 20 families that owned multiple vineyards.¹²² On the other hand, we also get occasional and brief instances of poverty and in certain cases, extreme destitution. In 1280 a woman named Bogdana from Šipan voluntarily gave herself as a servant for life (*i.e.* slave), to Clemens de Mostacia, an affluent citizen of Ragusa, whose name is often mentioned in archival documents of the 1280s, and who owned multiple properties, several boats, and had at least two other slaves. He frequently appeared as a witness in court, participated in various arbitrations, and acted as an executor of multiple wills. In contrast, there is only one document which records Bogdana, and we know nothing about her except that her father, Brachna de Volcxa from Šipan, was deceased at the point of the transaction.¹²³ Voluntarily entering slavery was not quite as rare as one would imagine: archival

¹²¹ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/457.

¹²² Lučić, “Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana, 122-124.

¹²³ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/403.

documents of Ragusa from the late 13th century record as many as twenty four such cases.¹²⁴ People were most likely forced to enter servitude if they fell on hard times and were pressed by financial responsibilities that they could not fulfill. Bogdana was probably unmarried, and the passing of her father likely left her with a great deal of debt. Although Clemens de Mostacia owned at least one property on Šipan, it is unlikely that Bogdana was allowed to stay on the island, for slaves were tied to the household of their master. However, at least one other enslaved individual is attested on the Elaphiti Islands: Dobrosclaua from Bosnia, whose master was Domagna de Screгна; a member of the most frequently mentioned Lopud family.¹²⁵

Land leases are among the most common types of documents related to the Elaphiti Islands. These contracts largely concerned uncultivated land, which was rented out to individuals and their families, sometimes for periods of several years, but often for long-term stretches ranging from two to three generations. The tenant would agree to clear the land of whatever was growing wild on it and gradually cultivate it. The terms varied from contract to contract, but the overall purpose of such agreements was always to convert the untended, deserted, overgrown or uncultivated lands (*terrae*) into vineyards (*vineae*). For this work the tenant would be entitled to keep some percentage of the future yield (usually half of it) or, alternatively, to receive a small annual compensation.¹²⁶ In the long run these land leases benefitted landowners, who at the end of the contract period got land of much greater value. One would think that individuals who agreed to such arrangements would do so because they did not have land of their own, but sources indicate that this was not

¹²⁴ Elmedina Duranović, “Žene iz Bosne na tržištu roblja u Dubrovniku 1279-1301” [Bosnian Women on the Slave Market in Dubrovnik 1279-1301], *Radovi (Historija, historija umjetnosti, arheologija)* III (2014): 52.

¹²⁵ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/825.

¹²⁶ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/463, I/674, I/843, I/1052, I/1109. Note that in the document which presents the agreement between Dobra, Marinus and Phylippus as a leasing contract, Phylippus is to keep three thirds of the yield of the newly grown vineyard. Such an arrangement is undoubtedly due to the poor quality of the soil. *Ibid.*, II/1067.

necessarily the case. One Rucota Codimiri from Šipan, for example, worked on multiple lands which belonged to various landowners from Ragusa, and took care of the estate of Vladimirus de Grupsa, although he owned at least one property.¹²⁷ We should probably observe this as a reflection of two factors. The first is the size of the respective lands which Rucota cultivated, of which there is no information, but which considering the area of the island and the general number of recorded estates, could not have been very great. Sources suggest that land by that time had been fragmented into smaller pieces through inheritance and possibly other circumstances, which would have made Rucota and men in a similar position bound to multiple landholders just to be able to sustain themselves.¹²⁸ The second factor is the presumed closeness of all of these properties. Namely, taking care of all of the respective pieces of land at the same time means they had to have been located in close proximity to one another, unless Rucota had a horse, which is unlikely.

In addition to private entities, land on the islands was also owned by monasteries. In order to control the acquisition of wealth, the State gradually started to implement various policies which would prevent the donation of land to the Church.¹²⁹ In the late 13th century, however, such policies were only at the initial stage. Dozens of records indicate that monasteries had a significant input in the agricultural landscape of the Elaphiti Islands. The monasteries of Lokrum and Saint Andrew, as well as the many small churches on the Elafities, owned land on all three islands and leased it for cultivation to various islanders. The monastery of Lokrum seems to have been the wealthiest

¹²⁷ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/306, III/415 and Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/1003, respectively.

¹²⁸ The largest recorded piece of property on any of the islands measures 8 solidi. A solidus of land is a unit of 1677 m². The land which Rucota owned was, according to the document, only 30 feet in length, and the pieces which he cultivated must have also been relatively small. See also Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, X.

¹²⁹ In order to control the accumulation of land, by the end of the 13th century State prohibited private citizens from giving their land to the Church. By mid 14th century the Church was required to ask permission when leasing or selling land. Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, IX. Similar trends can be found elsewhere. See Kostis Smyrlis, "The State, the Land and Private Property: Confiscating Monastic and Church Properties in the Palaiologan Period," in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2009), 58-87.

landholder on the islands, surpassing, unsurprisingly, the amount of land owned by any individual. A document details the terms of contract with as many as twenty-two men who had leased various pieces of land on Šipan from the monastery of Lokrum for the duration of twenty years. One of the individuals was the aforementioned Rucota Codimiri.¹³⁰ Perhaps it was the very process of land fragmentation which I mentioned above that led the monastery to issue its land to so many different individuals. The most common way in which monasteries in the Ragusan State — much like in the rest of the Mediterranean — had accumulated land by this time was through donations and wills from individuals. As a result, their properties were scattered, not only around the island, but all over the territory of Ragusa. Scholars have pointed to the fact that people who had no land of their own would move in search of work. However, in this case it is evident that the monastery overwhelmingly issued land to local inhabitants, likely because the area of the land was not large enough to sustain individuals and families.

Vineyards feature less frequently in leasing contracts than uncultivated land.¹³¹ Yet, they dominate the sale records because they were of greater value and could be sold at a higher price. According to one document, which breaks down the cost of land versus vineyard in a sale agreement, a vineyard was twice the price of a land of equal area.¹³² In-field thefts and damage reports confirm that more than just grapes were planted in the vineyards. On one occasion, a woman named Radosta was caught stealing figs from a vineyard.¹³³ On another, a Vrsacius Nichifori de Bodacia reported that somebody had stolen almonds from his vineyard.¹³⁴ Numerous

¹³⁰ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/576.

¹³¹ I have encountered ten documents in which *vinea* was leased, whereas the leasing of *terra* appeared in twenty-six.

¹³² Lučić, *Spisi*, II/880.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, III/444.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, III/127.

comparable records mention sorbus trees, olives, melons, quinces and peaches.¹³⁵ Josip Lučić suggested that these and similar trees that were planted in vineyards served the purpose of supporting the vines, which would grow around their trunks.¹³⁶ I have found no indication of this and I do not find the idea believable, considering that it defies the usual manner in which vineyards are planted and indicates possible negative effect on the fruit trees. I am more inclined to think that the term vineyard was equated with cultivated land because grapes were the dominant farm culture on the islands. The significance that wine held on the Elaphiti Island was immense, both in an economic and in a social sense, a point to which I will return later in this chapter.

In addition to engaging in agriculture, the inhabitants of the Elaphiti Islands also kept livestock. Archival sources most frequently mention cattle, but occasionally also goats and chickens. We know that at least one landowner on Šipán, Johannes de Piciniego, owned horses, since he employed a man named Stanissa as his groom.¹³⁷ While the islanders clearly practiced mixed farming, there are reasons to believe that animal husbandry was the subordinate activity. Animals were kept for domestic products — milk and eggs — and were probably used in agriculture.¹³⁸ The only time when the sources mention a large number of animals is in regards to a Descus de Busa, a man who traded one hundred *beasts* for a small piece of land on Šipán.¹³⁹ Apart from this curious transaction, there is not a single document recording a sale of livestock on

¹³⁵ Ibid., III/141, III/306, III/425, III/351 and III/506 respectively.

¹³⁶ Lučić, “Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana,” 149.

¹³⁷ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/457.

¹³⁸ Notarial documents explicitly note the gender of the animal. They mention both milk-producing animals and oxen with equal frequency. One record of a dispute over livestock specifies the gender of each goat in the flock, noting that there were five nannies and four billies. Ibid., II/1333.

¹³⁹ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/1002. The document refers to *besties*. These might have been different species of animals.

any of the islands.¹⁴⁰ Cattle was only recorded when it was stolen, or when it caused damage to someone's vineyard.

Available sources suggest that pastures were far fewer in number and area than vineyards or uncultivated land.¹⁴¹ Some portions of land on the islands *were* designated for animal grazing, but they were clearly not sufficient, and cattle from Šipan must have been transported to Mljet for pasture. The smaller uninhabited Elaphiti Islands could have been used for the same purposes. The pastoral connection between Šipan and Mljet is accepted in Croatian historiography, although it is unclear where the argument comes from.¹⁴² It is possible that the knowledge of such practices was transmitted by oral history. Ethnographic studies strengthen the assertion of remote pastoralism. This practice has been identified elsewhere in the Mediterranean, in areas that — similarly to the Elaphiti Islands — lack grazeland.¹⁴³ There are also clues contained in the archives that support this conclusion. According to theft reports, there were several people connected to Šipan who had their cattle stolen on Mljet on more than one occasion.¹⁴⁴ Admittedly, it is impossible to confirm that in these cases the animals were away from the island for the purpose of grazing, and not for another reason, but the documents do confirm livestock mobility.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ This is also the only document I have come across that does not involve the exchange of money.

¹⁴¹ Only two pastures were recorded for certain, one located on Šipan, and the other on Koločep. Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/184 and Lučić, *Spisi*, II/1197, respectively.

¹⁴² Professor Bariša Krekić, personal communication. See also Lučić, “Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana, 149, and Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, 34. Neither scholars refer to any particular documents.

¹⁴³ For an ethnographic study of this practice on the Greek island of Dokos, see P. Nick Kardulias, “Island Pastoralism, Isolation, and Connection: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Herding on Dokos, Greece,” in *The Ecology of Pastoralism*, ed. P. Nick Kardulias (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), 243-266, esp. 252-262.

¹⁴⁴ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/306, III/1089.

¹⁴⁵ Conversely, one document records a complaint by Dobrosclaus Dragusich from Šipan that three men from Ston stole his cow in Trnava. This location is quite remote from Šipan and it is therefore improbable that the cow was taken there to graze. It is more likely the plaintiff had just bought the cow, or that he was trying to sell it. *Ibid.*, III/833.

It is unclear how the inhabitants of Lopud and Koločep – islands much smaller than Šipan — solved the problem of pastureage. Both of them are further away from Mljet and other islands that could have been used for grazeland. The mainland would have been close enough, but the territory had not yet been in the hands of the Ragusan State, which would have made such endeavors potentially dangerous without proper permits. Documents only mention milk-producing animals and chickens on the two islands, and it is quite possible that there were no cows on either Lopud or Koločep, but that the animals used for milk were goats — creatures more agile than cows — and much more suited to the steep landscape of the respective islands.

While the sources discussed here provide some valuable insights into the demography of the islands, as well as the inhabitants' connection with the land and labor activities, we must be careful when reaching conclusions about systemic relationships based on fragmentary evidence that omits a variety of parameters. For example, the price of land tells us little if we do not know its size, or if we cannot estimate the value of money in the period. Similarly, the number of sale contracts is meaningless, not just because it is arbitrary, but because its significance is largely dependent on the size of the population, and we do not have that data. It would be tempting to equate the Ragusan land market in general, and the Elaphiti one in particular, with that of their Italian neighbors, where records of land sales have existed ever since the early medieval period, but the land was nevertheless not a commodity in the full sense of the word.¹⁴⁶ However, numerous

¹⁴⁶ Chris Wickham, “Land Sales and Land Market in in Tuscany in the Eleventh Century,” in *Land and Power: Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400-1200*, ed. idem (London: British School at Rome, 1994), 257-274, esp. 257-260. Wickham contrasts the situation in Tuscany, where one finds contracts of land sale dating back to the Early Middle Ages, to England, where sale contracts were a later *development*. Wickham uses the term *development* in italics in order to emphasize the aspect of transformation, rather than the positive connotation of the word. On the discussion of land as a fictitious commodity, see Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), 71-80.

criteria that we would need to have in order to make a meaningful comparison are absent.¹⁴⁷ What does seem fair to say is that although the State of Ragusa did take steps towards the enhancement of the free market economy early on, land sales do not appear to have been a decisive part of that market. The socio-economic purpose of land — its use value, to apply economic jargon — was still primary to its exchange value. We see this in the repeated endeavors to replant uncultivated land and in the State’s efforts to protect cultivation through legal channels. But the economic bond between the Elaphiti Islands and Ragusa was too complex to be reduced to land cultivation and its yield. In order to shed light on this intricate relationship, we must take some time to get better acquainted with the islands. We need to get to know their populations, discover the people’s customs and priorities, and investigate secular and religious landscapes.

2.2. Trouble in the Vineyard: A Discussion of Authorities, Conflict and Community Bonds

On a Sunday in October 1285, a wedding party was taking place on Lopud. As the event was winding down, a fight happening not far from the venue attracted islanders, and possibly ended the party altogether. It all started when Bratosclauus, returning home after the wedding dinner, caught Dimicus de Scregna with his daughter Stana in his vineyard. The two men engaged in a physical confrontation, which attracted the attention of people who were in the vicinity. At the same time, Bratosclauus’s wife went to inform Milennus — the *comes* of Lopud — about what had transpired. Milennus, gathering more men, went about restoring order.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Wickham, “Land Sales and Land Market in in Tuscany in the Eleventh Century,” 260.

¹⁴⁸ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/442.

The document which records the incident is full of contradicting testimonies, so it is hard to discern what actually happened.¹⁴⁹ These inconsistencies not only stem from the fluidity of memory and the differences in perception; it is evident that the participants were covering for themselves or their loved ones. In an explicit and rather graphic description, Bratosclauus accused Dimicus of attempting to rape Stana, but other reports suggest that he might have exaggerated his story. Apart from Dimicus's unsurprising denial of the allegation, we also have the statement of Stana, who noted that Dimicus did nothing more than grab her hand. Dimicus's brother, Grubessia, who was not even at the scene of the crime, claimed that Bratislauus offered his daughter to Dimicus in front of the other men, and that their conflict was not over Stana, but over stolen peaches. Combined, these testimonies point to the conclusion that Dimicus had just started to make a move on Stana when Bratosclauus showed up. Bratosclauus then acted out of impulse and likely attacked Dimicus hard, since several witnesses stated that they later saw Dimicus walking around with multiple blows on the head, shoulder and arm. When retelling the incident, Bratosclauus probably embellished in order to justify his reaction, and additionally, never admitted to striking Dimicus, but maintained that he simply grabbed him and eventually turned him over to the *comes*.

The disorder continued even after the *comes* Milennus and his men arrived on the scene. As the *comes* was interrogating the witnesses, Dimicus managed to wonder off and walked around injured until he was taken home by the *comes*'s men. Bratosclauus, likewise, left the scene and went to give a statement at the house of Michael Dersie, a lawyer from the city who owned property on Lopud and was clearly on the island at the time. After he returned to his house, Milennus and

¹⁴⁹ See Chris Wickham's remarks on the reliability of common knowledge (i.e. rumor) in court. Chris Wickham, "Fama and the Law in Twelfth-Century Tuscany," in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, eds. Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 17. These suspicions are also valid for individual eyewitness testimonies.

other men showed up at his doorstep and demanded that he came out. When he finally did, one of the men, Zepergna, punched him. There is no additional context to explain Zerpegna's attack, or an account of what happened next. As noted in the document, Bratosclausus was issued a monetary fine in accordance with the severity of his assault,¹⁵⁰ whereas the punishment for Dimicus and Zepergna was still pending. Clearly, the hearing for the case was to be continued at a later date, but there are no follow-up documents to be found in the archive.

Instead of guessing what may or may not have happened that night, we can observe the matter as an example of the fast response to conflict and the fervor to restore order within the community. There is a common pattern in all such incidents reported on the Elaphiti Islands. One notices a movement from one place to another as more and more people get involved. The solid number of witnesses coming out with opposing stories further highlights the hectic nature of such events. It is almost as though these conflicts were spectacles for people to watch. While some became engaged more actively to either resolve a dispute, assist, or settle an old score, others must have simply observed out of curiosity and perhaps the desire to be up to date with what was almost certainly the central point of talk the next day.¹⁵¹ But looking beyond the turmoil of the event described above, as well as similar violent encounters on the Elaphiti Islands, allows us to touch upon various communal aspects which would otherwise remain obscure. There are no records of people working together, helping each other out with the harvest, sharing equipment, or supporting each other in ways that neighbors usually do. While this must have been the case, there would have been little or no reason to document these instances. On the other hand, people had every incentive

¹⁵⁰ According to the Statute of Ragusa, an assault with a weapon was punished with 25 hyperpera per blow, whereas an assault with a fist would cost the perpetrator six hyperpera, which is how much Bratosclausus was set to pay. Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VI/3.

¹⁵¹ For a discussion on the significance of talk in the Middle Ages, see Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, "Introduction," in *Fama*, 1-11.

to report assaults and invasions of personal space. It is these accounts that provide the most transparent insights into interactions of the Elaphiti inhabitants. They provide clues of island customs and habits, parse out hierarchies, individuals' reputations and their interrelationships with other inhabitants, and — last but not least — point out alliances and collaborative efforts to quickly solve crises.

The main vehicle that made this possible was the *comes* of the island; the person responsible for maintaining order and restoring it when necessary. The State needed a way to control its remote areas, and the countryside *comites* were designated with this role: they acted as extended hands of the governing apparatus.¹⁵² Most Ragusan territories outside the city had their own *comites*, and the Elaphiti Islands were no exception. Although the Statute of Ragusa suggests that one person was overseeing all three inhabited islands,¹⁵³ archival sources indicate that Šipan and Lopud had their own separate *comites*, who resided on the respective islands. Their residences still stand, but date to the 15th century (Figs. 10 and 11).¹⁵⁴ By that time Ragusa had reformed its institutions and the Elaphiti Islands had become the jurisdiction of a single official who presided from Lopud. The two early modern buildings vividly illustrate this shift, for they differ not only in size and prominence, but also in placement. The one on Šipan is located in the middle of a field, and the one on Lopud assumes the elevated position directly on the waterfront.¹⁵⁵ There are no

¹⁵² On the structure of ruling institutions in medieval Ragusa, see Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808, knjiga I: Od osnutka do 1526* [History of Dubrovnik until 1808, book I: From its foundation to 1526], (Zagreb: Nakladni Zavod MH, 1980), 120-124. For a specific focus on the administrations of remote areas, see Josip Lučić, “Uprava u dubrovačkom vangradskom teritoriju (Astareja)” [Administration of the Dubrovnik Territory Outside the City (Astereja)], *Arhivski vjesnik*, 6/1 (1963): 231-249.

¹⁵³ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, II/33.

¹⁵⁴ Nada Grujić, “Knežev dvor na Lopudu” [The Prince's Place on Lopud] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 41/1 (2008): 237-267.

¹⁵⁵ The location of the house on Šipan was strategically chosen. The building is situated at equal distance from the two opposite capes on the island. However, since the cove of Luka Šipanska is much deeper than that of Suđurađ, the house turned out to be located much closer to the former settlement than to the latter. According to Marija Goravica,

traces of the *comes*'s residence on Koločep, nor are there any clues about where it might have stood.¹⁵⁶ Scholars suggest that Koločep was supervised by the *comes* of Lopud.¹⁵⁷ While this was certainly a possibility, and perhaps even a probability given its small size and the close proximity of the two islands, there are no records that would verify the administrative position of Koločep in the 13th century. Not only are there no mentions of any *comites* on the respective island, but there are no records of serious crimes there in the period in question, and hardly any damage reports. In fact, the information on social interactions on Koločep in the period is generally scarce, and one must rely on the evidence from the other two islands.

No term limits for the *comites* of the islands were imposed. A particular *comes* could remain appointed for as long as the *comes* of Ragusa desired.¹⁵⁸ However, this does not mean that the function was long-term. Three *comites* on the Elaphiti Islands were recorded in the 13th-century archival sources: the aforementioned Milennus on Lopud, and Radosta and Marinus Prodanelli on Šipan. Marinus Prodanelli is mentioned as *comes* only once: in a document written after his mandate was terminated.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, we do not have any insights into the ways in which he performed his duties, nor into his reception within the Šipan community. We can, however, say

an inhabitant of Šipan, the inhabitants of Suđurađ believe that this measure was deliberately taken to favor the settlers of Luka Šipanska. However, the decision might have also reflected the difference in population density.

¹⁵⁶ There are some indications that the medieval *comes*'s palace on Lopud might have been located on the southern side of the island, close to the cove of Šunj, and that the 15th – century palace was built on a new site in the cove of Lopud. Ibid., 238-239.

¹⁵⁷ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 27-28. Based on a document from the 1363, Lisičar notes that the Šipan was the administrative center for all three islands in the early period. However, considering the existence of simultaneous *comites* on Lopud and Šipan in 1284, this cannot be true for the 13th century.

¹⁵⁸ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, II/33. Cf. Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 27, where the author claims that the *comes* of the island was appointed for a period of six months.

¹⁵⁹ Lučić, *Spisi* III/306. The respective document dates to May 1285, but a significant amount of time must have passed between the incident and the record we have. Namely, the appointments of Marinus Prodanelli as *comes* of Šipan, Egidius Quirini as *comes* of Ragusa and Michael de Cluno as his deputy are all referred to in past tense. In fact, out of over 5000 documents related to intervals of the period from 1278 and 1301, this is the only record of Egidius Quirini. It is possible that he was an appointee from Venice and had left Ragusa prior to 1278.

with almost absolute certainty that he was not an islander, but a reputable and affluent citizen of Ragusa.¹⁶⁰ In contrast, the other two men — Milennus and Radosta — must have originated from the respective islands. Nowhere is this explicitly written, but it is evident from the manner in which they interacted with the locals. As I will demonstrate, details from their testimonies about the cases in which they had to intervene suggest that the *comes* of the island was a respected member of the community; an authoritative figure, yet still one of the people.

The duties and responsibilities of the *comes* are defined in the Statute of Ragusa. They consisted of investigating any type of criminal activity that happened on the respective island and reporting it to the authorities and through proper channels. The *comes* of the island was a subordinate of the *comes* of Ragusa and was required to sign an oath of loyalty to him and the Venetian *dodge* prior to his inauguration, disavowing any conspiratorial propensities.¹⁶¹ All crimes, except for murder, were resolved with a monetary fine which corresponded to the severity of the offense.¹⁶² The *comes* of the island would get a percentage of each collected remuneration, so he had an incentive to make sure that all culprits were brought to justice. The inhabitants also knew that it was in their best interest to assist the *comes* in his investigation. Namely, under Ragusan law, failure to bring forth a guilty party meant that the penalty was going to fall on the entire island community.¹⁶³ Thus, when a dinner party in Dobricna's house took an ugly turn and

¹⁶⁰ His name is mentioned in 51 additional documents, revealing that he was a lawyer and later a judge in the city.

¹⁶¹ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, II/33.

¹⁶² According to the Statute, murder resulted in capital punishment. In other types of crimes drastic corporal measures were implemented when a person was unable to pay the fine. Prison is not mentioned as a measure neither for violent crimes, nor for theft, unless the deed is committed by a woman. On punishments for various types of crimes, see Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VI/1-6 and 10-12, VIII/30-31. For a comparative outlook on the use of blood sanctions, see Daniel Lord Smail *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1423* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 178-180.

¹⁶³ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VIII/23-24 and 34.

one of the guests stabbed another multiple times, *comes* Radosta acted immediately, instructing the other men to seize the perpetrator and tie him up. They quickly complied.¹⁶⁴

The Statute of Ragusa did not make it a responsibility of the *comes* to resolve conflict as a way of restoring peace and ensuring harmony on the islands. His job, it seems, was designed primarily to protect the affluent landowners' property in their absence. Indeed, most of the damage and thefts recorded on the Elaphities were reported by wealthy Ragusan citizens. The offenses were primarily misdemeanors, namely, stealing fruit from the vineyards and the devastation of crops caused by cattle grazing. There were, however, occasional severe crimes perpetrated by unknown individuals. For example, in the summer of 1282 Janinus Dobrosclai de Sorgo's cottage on Šipan was destroyed by fire, and the wording of the document makes it clear that this was the result of arson.¹⁶⁵ The island *comes* must have investigated all of these cases, but none of the follow-ups and conclusions have been preserved.¹⁶⁶

When involved in cases that required immediate attention and action, the *comes* would act as a sheriff of a small town; he would gather men, arm them, and begin a chase. With the exception of the deputy, who is mentioned in a single source,¹⁶⁷ it does not appear that the men who accompanied him were officially appointed: they are simply described as the "best men of the island."¹⁶⁸ The metric of this statement is unclear: were they the strongest, the most honorable, the

¹⁶⁴ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/524.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, III/127.

¹⁶⁶ Only one out of over two dozen documents noting theft and vandalism on the islands of Lopud and Šipan mentions the *comes*'s investigation into the matters; Lučić, *Spisi*, III/464. This discrepancy comes from the documented stage of the court proceedings. All sources but the aforementioned III/464 record the initial charge filed by a landowner, which in such cases would predate the *comes*'s involvement, and would in fact form the grounds for it.

¹⁶⁷ Vicarius Sergulus was the deputy of *comes* Radosta on Šipan in June 1284. *Ibid.*, III/457.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

most dependable, or all of the above? In any case, the *comes* clearly trusted them, and it is quite possible that he formed alliances and called the same group of men to help him intervene whenever they could.¹⁶⁹ The fact that the *comes* was a law enforcer rather than a conflict resolver can be seen in his harsh treatment of the suspects. Prompted only by a statement of one person alleging that a man by the name of Vladimirus de Grupsa had stolen three of his oars, the *comes* Radosta summoned men, “armed a boat,” and went after Vladimirus, caught up with him in the middle of the cove, and started beating him in front of all the men who stood watching from the shore. In other known cases, the *comes* allowed his assistants to fervently attack and aggressively subdue the perpetrators, smacking them in the face or throwing rocks on them.¹⁷⁰ There are no indications in the archival sources that such actions were punished.

Despite his occasionally aggressive approach, islanders clearly held the *comes* in high regard. He would receive invitations to festivities, weddings, and informal gatherings, get seated at the head of the table, and was asked to stay after other men had left the party.¹⁷¹ Sources also reveal that people considered him to be a person of confidence, and turned to him for protection and command. After the fight in the vineyard described above, Bratosclausus’s wife went back to the wedding party specifically to inform *comes* Millenus about what had taken place. Presumably she did not want her husband to be apprehended (which is what ended up happening), but felt it was necessary to de-escalate the situation.¹⁷² On another occasion a Stanissa Radoeulich came

¹⁶⁹ There are not enough surviving cases of manhunts to claim this for certain. Only two instances are comparable because they took place on the same island and under the same *comes*. However, these two show overlaps in the method of chase, and the identity of some of the participants. See *Ibid.*, III/457 and III/471.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, III/442, III/471.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, III/442, III/524.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, III/442.

directly to *comes* Radosta's house on Šipan to report that his oxen had been stolen that same night, urging him to track down the thieves who were still on the island — which he eventually did.¹⁷³

It is not surprising that all of the aforementioned episodes took place at night. During the daytime the islands would have been too lively and busy for anyone to get away with vandalism or theft, especially in the open, such as in the middle of a vineyard, in front of conceivably dozens of witnesses who were going about their daily tasks in the vicinity. The night on the islands was the time when people were in their houses; sleeping or getting ready to go to sleep. It was quiet, and the fields were empty, which made it the perfect time for anyone with the intention of trespassing to do so with some hope that they would not get seen or caught. At the same time, the night — or rather the evening time — was also the time when people congregated and socialized. The violent encounters described above all happened during or after festivities, and the fact that these incidents were reported provides insights into the types of social gatherings that took place on the islands. Weddings, informal dinners, and celebrations of holy feasts must have been organized on a regular basis, but it is only when something went wrong that we hear about them.

It is likely that the reported episodes escalated because the participants were intoxicated. Grapes were the most common and the most profitable agricultural product on the Elaphiti Islands. Wine must have been served on special occasions, but there are indications that it was consumed more often than that. Specifically, when Grupsa from Šipan pleaded guilty to having stolen peaches from the vineyard of Pasqua de Poca, his excuse was that he was drunk.¹⁷⁴ The same type of defense was used in another case, when Rucota Codimiri and his friends, all of them drunk, supposedly found a bottle of wine floating in the sea and took it, which got them in trouble after it

¹⁷³ Ibid., III/471.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., III/506.

turned out that the bottle had been stolen from the *comes* of Ragusa. The *comes* must have believed their story and took pity on them, because he did not sentence them, but made them agree to make up for the loss out of their next harvest.¹⁷⁵ The aforementioned case suggests that islanders were selling their grapes in the city to individuals who would then make their own wine. The State of Ragusa, on the other hand, protected the islands' vine production through legal provisions pertaining to the origin of the wine. The wine sold to the taverns on a particular island could only have come from the respective island.¹⁷⁶

Interestingly, the article from the Statute of Ragusa detailing these measures presents the only surviving evidence of taverns on the islands. These institutions, where men would come to unwind, have a drink, and sometimes to enjoy the company of the opposite sex, provide us with some of the most vivid evidence of social interactions in fourteenth-century Ragusa. Rowdy and noisy, taverns were scenes of all sorts of quarrels, fights, con jobs, and thefts.¹⁷⁷ However, not only do the archives reveal nothing about thirteenth-century Elaphiti taverns, but they are not very telling on taverns in the city, either. While the number of taverns probably grew with time, and while the State did gradually institute measures that would ensure both quality and availability of wine, thus demonstrating the importance of this drink and the encouragement of its consumption,¹⁷⁸ the primary reason for the silence of the documents on thirteenth-century taverns is likely the quantity of available evidence, and not a different character of these establishments in the earlier period.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., III/306

¹⁷⁶ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VI/41. On trade of wine in medieval Ragusa, see Gordan Ravančić, *Život u krčmama srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika* [Life in the Taverns of Medieval Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: HIP, 2001), 20-38.

¹⁷⁷ Ravančić, *Život u krčmama*, 91-96.; A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 58-78.

¹⁷⁸ Ravančić, *Život u krčmama*, 40.

Despite the gaps in evidence, it is clear that life on the Elaphiti Islands alternated between everyday tasks related to the land and the household — performed in the daytime — and the evening, which was the time of leisure when people would sit with one another to rest and catch up over a glass of wine. In this small community everyone clearly knew each other, and knew how and where to track one another if the need arose. This was not necessarily a matter of meddling in other people’s business, but simply a question of living side by side, sharing the common space and being in a position to see — or hear — those who passed by your house. Even today, few things go unnoticed on a small island. There is no reason to think that things were any different in that regard in the thirteenth century. In fact, sources paint a picture of exactly that kind of compact community. At the same time, chatter and gossip have always been vital parts of rural life, reflecting the simultaneous connectedness with the neighbors, and distance they kept when it came to private matters, for the small family unit was cherished above the collective.¹⁷⁹

Numerous documents outline family relations of the inhabitants on the islands. Whether it was a criminal or a civil case, it was clearly part of the legal formula to name the father of an islander who was involved, or the husband’s name, if the party were a woman. This was partially done for the purpose of identification, *i.e.* in order to be able to distinguish between two individuals with the same first name by adding another variable. However, this convention was not exclusive to those that did not bear last names, but applied even to men from high ranking noble families. In those cases, the practice might indicate a person’s youth, and points to a type of validation or

¹⁷⁹ On gossip, see Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 96-100. On the connection between rumor and reputation, see Laurie Kain Hart Time, *Religion and Social Experience in Rural Greece* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1992), 153. On tension between neighbors, see Sayers, *An Old Woman’s Reflections: The Life of a Basket Island Storyteller*, 102-108. See also Mark James Pawlowski, “Intensive Architectural Survey of Byzantine Rural Settlements: A Case Study from the Mani,” *Journal of Greek Archaeology* 5 (2020): 505.

credibility which comes with the family name. This tendency is still present in the informal question “Čija/čiji si ti?” [i.e. Whose are you? To whom do you belong?], often posed to children, to which one should answer by stating the name of a parent or grandparent. The question is not posed out of mere curiosity: it reveals the expectation of acquaintanceship and the need for reassurance. Establishing a family connection is a way to evaluate quickly an individual’s value. Family members would protect one another, as was shown by the testimony of Grubessia de Scregna above. Apparently, there was even a law which prohibited people from appearing as character witnesses on behalf of family members.¹⁸⁰

Occasionally the sources allow us to trace members of the same family on the islands up to the third generation.¹⁸¹ The documents not only make note of the vertical father-and-son relationships, but also refer to brothers, sisters, step-parents and step-children, relatives and sometimes even mention sons- and fathers-in-law. Despite the abundance of names and the family connections they reveal, there is simply not enough information to comprehensively assess the typical structure of families on the Elaphiti Islands. Household size and configuration cannot be traced without tax records, and they were not preserved in the case of Ragusa; not only for the 13th century, but also for the entire medieval and early modern periods. Research from regions where tax records remain demonstrates that the dominant type of living arrangement was the nuclear family: a married couple with unwedded children.¹⁸² Once the children grew up and got married, they would move away from home. Marinus’s family, discussed earlier in this chapter, is probably

¹⁸⁰ I have found no such restriction in the Statute of Ragusa, but one archival document does imply it. The document makes note of testimony of a man named Cranienus from Šipan, who was summoned to court in order to state whether any of the other witnesses in a case against Purta from Šipan were related to the defendant. Lučić, *Spisi*, III-447.

¹⁸¹ See for example, *Ibid.*, IV/328.

¹⁸² Laiou, *Peasant Society*, 79.

an example of a nuclear family at a late stage. Marinus's mother Dobra was a widow and lived with her grown, unmarried children. The efforts to ensure dowry for the two young women of the family by dividing the family asset suggests that they would not have stayed in the household after the marriage. Angeliki Laiou points out that nuclear families were more common among people of lower economic standing, which was certainly the case with Marinus and his family.

The other common household type, the extended family household, prevailed among the more affluent, and consisted of three generations. Instead of leaving the family home upon marriage, male children would bring their bride into the house. Rarely was the situation reversed, when the husband moved in with his wife's family.¹⁸³ Living arrangements of the Elaphiti residents are seldom explicitly stated, and the rare cases when they are indicate that there were different types of households on the islands; from nuclear and extended families, to less conventional solutions, such as a man living with his in-laws after the passing of his wife, two sisters sharing a house with their sister-in-law and nephews, or a group of siblings living in a household where there is no mention of parents.¹⁸⁴

Archival sources make it seem that the Elaphiti landscape was dominated by men. It is overwhelmingly men who appear in documents: whether in sales or lease contracts, or as protagonists in civil and criminal lawsuits. Women were not allowed to appear in court, which is why their voices are so rarely reflected in records. When they do appear in the documents, they are referred to as mothers, wives, and sisters, and seem like passive observers rather than active

¹⁸³ Laiou points out that that these instances likely occurred when the man was of a lower socio-economic status than the woman. *Ibid.*, 84-87, 96-97. On the island of Lopud we find a man who is identified on the basis of the relationship with his father in law, and it appears that he assumed the last name of the family he married into. Lučić, *Spisi*, II/487 and II/497.

¹⁸⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/1053, I/495 and I/369 respectively. In the latter two cases the sisters were deemed *religiosae*; see pages 33, 35 and 53-54 of this chapter.

participants. The case of the fight in the vineyard verifies this point. While the other witnesses gave long statements, Stana's version of events is expressed in a single sentence, and given from the perspective of *comes* Milennus, although she was clearly at the center of the conflict.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, in the case of Marinus's barren land, Marinus was at the forefront of all the agreements, while his mother Dobra simply gave her concession to everything.¹⁸⁶ There are numerous cases of women mentioned only in this capacity.

There were, however, several women who managed to exert more agency, and had their voices heard more clearly even if they were not present in the courtroom themselves. Possibly the best example was a woman by the name of Francha, who owned a great deal of land on Šipan, and who — after becoming a widow in 1280 — found herself in the middle of several intense court cases, negotiating her inheritance with family members, and fighting her late husband's creditors and individuals who tried to lay claims to his property.¹⁸⁷ Although Francha and immediate members of her family were mentioned in 22 documents, there is very little we know about her family life. She was her husband's second wife — since she had a grown stepdaughter — and with her husband she had at least two children. The fact that these children are not mentioned by name might indicate that they were still not adults. If this is accurate, it is one of the rare mentions of children in the archive. Generally, the absence of any recorded age makes it impossible to discuss this demographic aspect.

Archival documents give us a relatively good account of male inhabitants of the islands through their daily tasks and leisure, and a less comprehensive view of women, which I will

¹⁸⁵ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/442.

¹⁸⁶ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/1067.

¹⁸⁷ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/186, I/187, I/191, I/204 and I/418; Lučić, *Spisi*, II/197.

continue to explore in the next section. Before that, however, one more question needs to be addressed: namely, who — other than the *comes* and his deputy — were the prominent people on the Elaphities and what role did they play in the island communities? Unfortunately, the documents do not provide sufficient information to answer this question in a comprehensive matter, but they do reveal occasional clues. For example, when the islanders sought legal representation, they would turn to the same few attorneys, who owned land on the islands and whom the locals clearly knew. Individuals such as Michael Dersie, Sersius Clemens and Nicholas de Crossio repeatedly represented habitants of the islands in court cases.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, it looks like court sessions were territorially divided, and that the same judges would repeatedly handle cases from the Elaphities. Dmitrius de Mence, Martolus de Zereua, Andrea de Benissa, and Michael de Cluno signed the majority of cases related to the islands. At least the latter two had strong ties to the Elaphities, the former owning land on Lopud, and the latter on both Lopud and Šipan. Apart from these men, other rich landowners frequently appear in the records, but I do not wish to exaggerate the level of their influence on the islands. They probably exerted a great deal of power over their employees, but that does not mean that they were generally revered or even respected by the locals. Not all of them participated in every-day affairs on the islands,¹⁸⁹ and when they were away, their properties were pillaged and vandalized.

The person of trust that we would expect to find as the pillar of any medieval community, the priest, seems completely absent from community life. This is just an impression that one gets from the sources: an impression which is most likely wrong and which stems from the character

¹⁸⁸ See for example Lučić, *Spisi*, III/55, III/207; Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/187, I/204.

¹⁸⁹ When he reported that trees had been cut in his vineyard on Šipan, Vrsacius de Viliarico noted that the incident in question happened eight days ago. Vrsacius was told about it and did not see the damage himself, which means he had been absent from the island for that amount of time, if not more. Lučić, *Spisi*, III/184.

of the records. The only time when priests are mentioned in relation to the islands is in records of leases and land disputes. These documents prove that priests were present, as one would suppose considering the fact that there were so many churches on the islands. Just by the virtue of their presence, and the nature of their job, they must have had an important impact on the islanders. I will discuss this matter further when I introduce additional evidence of religious life on the Elaphiti Islands. But before delving into religious concerns, let us explore the secular aspect further, and focus on the islanders' housing situations.

Dwellings and Settlements

A Theft in Vladimirus's Place: On Houses and Households

Sometime in early May of 1285, while Vladimirus de Grupsa was away from Šipan, a woman named Stancica Doncello broke into his house and robbed it. Rucota Codimiri, a man appointed to look after the house and vineyard while Vladimirus was away, and another inhabitant of Šipan, Liubennus Radonic, apparently caught her in the act and confronted her. According to Liubennus's testimony, they approached the house, saw that the outer door had been broken and the house was open, at which point they ran into Stancica, who was carrying a bag full of things in her hands. Rucota's statement was slightly different, for he claimed that Stancica was still in the house when they arrived. What he emphasized was the security of the house; he insisted that the door had been locked with a key. Reportedly he even asked Stancica how she had entered. She replied that she had come "how she could," by which she essentially admitted to the forced entry.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/415.

The account informs us that Vladimirus's house had a fenced garden which grew some type of crop and that it was locked: an important piece of data on the nature of housing, which we also find on Lopud. After an altercation between Bratosclauus and Dimicus of Scregna, which I have described above, Bratosclauus ran to his house and locked himself in. The eye-witness testimonies describe him eventually unlocking the door and stepping out on the doorstep, before he suffered a beating.¹⁹¹ Whether or not the inhabitants always kept their doors locked or not, we do not know. We also have few clues as to the specific location of the aforementioned houses within the respective islands, except for the notion that Vladimirus's house must have been in the vicinity of Rucota Codimiri's, and Bratosclauus's was somewhere close to his vineyard. Other than that, the documents reveal nothing about the layout of the respective houses, their interiors, or furniture within them.

There are not many accounts referring to houses on the Elaphiti Islands. While vineyards and land feature regularly in documents, contacts related to agricultural properties rarely mention any particular structures on the respective land. The details are left out, and whatever was on the ground is covered by the legal formula "all of its belongings."¹⁹² This could have been anything, from equipment and facilities, to actual fruits and products harvested from the land. The occasional references to physical structures further complicate matters by employing various terms to denote the buildings without providing any additional context. The most frequent words used are *domus* and *sella*, but others, such as *casale*, *capana* and *cannipa* also sometimes appear. These terms clearly reflected functional differences.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., III/442.

¹⁹² In Latin, "ominibus suis pertentiis."

Domus refers to a residential house which was not necessarily determined by parameters of typology, material, and urban or rural placement. Archival documents mention *domes* with one or two floors, some wooden and some made out of stone, some inside the walls, others located in remote territories.¹⁹³ A great majority of the aforementioned examples, however, are on the mainland. Another type of dwelling recorded both on the islands and the mainland was a *capana*, which likely denoted a smaller, probably wooden structure, a type of hut.¹⁹⁴ The term *casale* is ambiguous, since it could refer both to a construction site and some category of a house.¹⁹⁵ *Canipa* was a storage room for wine or oil, and it was located on arable land.¹⁹⁶ Finally, the term *sella* is the most troublesome, for the word in Latin generally signifies a seat, and it is used here to denote a building type that appears to be specific to the Ragusan area. Scholars have been translating it as a serf's house, which is strange, since feudal relations in the Ragusan State were supposedly not yet attested in the 13th century.¹⁹⁷ Such houses might have been used by tenants who cultivated leased land, but this is merely a supposition. In reality, the socio-economic situations of the occupants of such structures escape us. What is evident, however, is that documents never place

¹⁹³ Lučić, *Obrti i usluge u Dubrovniku do početka 14 stoljeća*, 43-44, 208-211.

¹⁹⁴ Marina Marasović-Alujević, "Romanizmi u graditeljskoj terminologiji u Dalmaciji" [Romanisms in the Terminology Related to Construction in Dalmatia], *Čakavska rič*, XII 1-2 (1984): 68.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ For the etymology of the word, see Paul Haupt "The Etymology of Cabinet," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28 (1907): 108-111.

¹⁹⁷ Historians have interpreted feudal relations in Ragusa as a consequence of the 1348 plague, which had a significant impact on the reduction of labor force. Even after the feudal system begun to form, it was less oppressive than in the territories of the medieval West. For a general introduction on feudalism in Europe, see Pliny O'Brian, *Feudalism in Medieval Europe*. (NYC: Cavendish Square Publishing, LLC, 2015). For a summary of discussions on the serfdom in Ragusa, see Roller, *Agrarno-proizvodni odnosi*, 108-127; Cf. Josip Lučić, "Dokumenti o počecima kmetstva u Dubrovniku" [Documents on the Beginning of Serfdom in Dubrovnik], *Arhivski vjesnik 4-5/1* (1962): 213-223. Lučić maintains that patterns of feudal relations can be seen in the 13th century, but does not mention the term *sella* as indicative of it.

sellae in urban contexts. Based on this, and the wording of sources referring to *sellae*, it is safe to say that the term referred to a type of farmhouse built in the immediate vicinity of the land.

There are no clues as to what any of these structures looked like. There must have been a variety of different forms and sizes, depending on the affluency of their owners. However, there are records, albeit rare, that do inform us about some of the items that were kept in residential houses. A document from late 1284, detailing a knife fight at a dinner party, is of interest in this regard. Let us pause in order to mentally recreate the scene in question. Eight men gathered for dinner at Dobricna's house. They were all seated around the table — with *comes* Radosta assuming at the head of it — and socializing over a meal. Meat was served, indicating that this was a festive occasion. The men were probably celebrating some kind of professional success, for they had just come back from a business venture on Mljet. At one point, however, the congenial atmosphere was interrupted by a violent outburst, after Bratcus Miculic and Radosta Codanic got into an argument over a piece of roasted meat. Bratcus grabbed a knife from the table and stabbed Radosta multiple times.¹⁹⁸

An illustration of the biblical episode of Salome's dance in the 13th-century painting of the church of Saint John the Baptist in Deliana, Crete allows us to visualize the setting of the dinner party (Fig. 12). The scene, which depicts an episode from the cycle of Saint John the Baptist, takes place in the court of Herod and conveys a much more luxurious environment than the one that we should imagine in a house of a commoner on the small island of Šipan. The men portrayed all wear lavish garments and fragments of the architecture of the palace are visible in the background. These aspects are of no concern to us, and neither is the figure of Salome, who dances next to the table

¹⁹⁸ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/524.

carrying the head of Saint John the Baptist in her headgear. However, the composition offers conspicuous similarities with the Elaphiti case. The table has the central position in the scene and the most prominent person is seated at the honorary position. Unlike in other *table scenes* found in wall paintings across the Mediterranean, there is nothing else on the table but bread and knives; there are no dishes and no other food. One of the men grabs one of the knives from the table and holds it firmly, curiously reminiscent of the gesture that Bratcus must have had before he stabbed Radosta Codanic.

I am not suggesting that the representation of Salome's dance from Deliana is somehow related to the Elaphiti Islands. The theme of Salome's dance is closely connected to the execution of John the Baptist, so the dominance of knives on the table and the central figure grabbing one of them might act to emphasize his anticipated death.¹⁹⁹ The parallels between the Deliana image and the scene that took place on Šipán are coincidental, but nevertheless striking. Scholars have noted the importance of textual archaeology in the study of material culture. The potential to identify certain objects and their use partially fills in the gaps produced by the absence of the objects themselves.²⁰⁰ In the case of the Elaphiti Islands and other places that have not been the subject of systematic archaeological excavation, the method of textual archaeology is all the more significant. Mentions of items from the household, even if they are scarce, allow us to gradually build the world around the inhabitants of the islands, whom we have already gotten to know well. This world

¹⁹⁹ For more on the death of Saint John the Baptist, see Nanette B. Rodney, "Salome." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 11/7 (1953): 190-200.

²⁰⁰ Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th – 15th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Smail, *Legal Plunder*, 1-10; Nicolas Oikonomides, "The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," *DOP* 44 (1990): 205-214; Anton Schuurman, "Probate Inventories: Research Issues, Problems and Results," in *Probate Inventories: A New Source for the Historical Study of Wealth, Material Culture and Agricultural Development*, eds. Ad van der Woude and Anton Schuurman (Utrecht, Hes Publishers, 1980), 19-31.

becomes more vivid if we bring in comparative imagery where possible, and carefully use it to reinforce their domains.

Records of action driven events happening in interiors are rare among the archival sources from Dubrovnik: in fact, the document about Dobricna's house is unique among all the sources related to the Elaphiti Islands. This comes as no surprise, since the household was the threshold between public and private life, and any tensions, quarrels or abuse that took place in the house — anything that would otherwise merit reporting — would typically stay within the four walls.²⁰¹ While the figures involved in this case are all men, the household was in fact a woman's domain. It is doubtful that women of the Elaphiti Islands were limited to the house in the same way that scholars believe women in the city were.²⁰² After all, before the vineyard incident which was discussed earlier, Stana and her mother left the wedding party unchaperoned, which indicates that their movement was not necessarily restricted.²⁰³ However, women were connected to the household in a way that men were not. The house was a woman's responsibility, and her role as its caretaker would have forced her to spend much more time indoors than would a man. Even though she is invisible in the document, it was probably Dobricna's wife who prepared the meal for the dinner party.

A woman's role, status and primary concerns are also brought to surface in two documents that contain lists of household items. Both of them refer to *religiosae*, unmarried pious women, who were granted permission to use their parents' property and were provided with everyday

²⁰¹ Dušanka Dinić-Knežević. *Položaj žena u Dubrovniku u XIII i XIV veku* [The Position of Women in Dubrovnik in the 13th and 14th Centuries] (Belgrade: Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1974), 106-107.

²⁰² Zdenka Janeković-Römer, *Rod i grad: Dubrovačka obitelj od XII do XV stoljeća* [Gender and the City: The Dubrovnik Family from the 13th to the 15th Century] (Dubrovnik: Zavod za Povijesne Znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1994), 126.

²⁰³ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/442.

objects to utilize. Fusca, wife of late Jacobus de Picinego, gave her daughter Maria her vineyard on Koločep, along with the following items (listed here in the same order as in the document): three casks, some sort of a tool (*metrocium*), a featherbed, two pillows, two covers, two boxes, two kettles, one frying pan and two cauldrons.²⁰⁴ Similarly, Michael de Cluno gave his daughters, Anna and Maria, a vineyard on Lopud with all of its belongings, his new house with a storage room, and the following objects: two casks, two bottles, a vat, a barrel, a *metrocium*, a kettle, a cauldron, a pair of chains, a featherbed, one feather pillow, two new covers and one cover *menatum*.²⁰⁵

These lists by no means represent the full inventories of the respective houses. They would have surely had a table and some kind of a bench to sit on, for those were a bare necessity of every dwelling. There would have also been other dishes and cutlery in the kitchen, cabinets or shelves used to keep delicate objects, and maybe a distaff. This is a conservative estimate, and there must have been many houses whose inventory was richer than that, as we find out from Vladimirus Grupsa's testimony. "I have many things in my house, like people have in their houses," he vaguely stated. It was not the intention of either of the documents related to the *religiosae* women to record the complete state of the houses into which they were about to move, but simply to specify the items that were given to them for their personal use. It is interesting to note the extent to which the lists overlap. In both instances the women were given cookware, larger storage vessels, and items to sleep on. Each element of the bed is noted separately, and the bedframe is not listed.²⁰⁶ The puzzling thing is that the number of items also more or less coincides, although they were to be

²⁰⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/528.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I/495.

²⁰⁶ Oikonomides argues that bedframes were exceptional, and used in monastic hospitals; for distinguished guests and by rich individuals. Oikonomides, "The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," 209-210.

received by one woman in one case, and two sisters in the other. Perhaps the two sisters, Anna and Maria, were expected to share a bed, but which one of them was to get the single pillow? It is also unclear why they would have gotten three bed covers for the two of them. Their father, Michael de Cluno, was not a poor man, but a respected judge and lawyer whose name is frequently mentioned in the archival sources.²⁰⁷ According to the very document in question, he had just built the respective house, so he must have been able to afford to give his daughters a decent bed set, and likely even a bed frame.²⁰⁸ This leads to the idea that the listed objects were somehow special; some of them were new and perhaps valuable, whereas others might have been family heirlooms.

In various ways the relationship of the so-called *religiosae* with their household would have been different than those of married women. These were women who had not yet become nuns, but lived a reclusive life and likely planned to join a monastery.²⁰⁹ The Statute of Ragusa does not specify whether the term was only applied to a women who never married, or a widow who decided to take vows. In any case, *religiosae* either had no children, or their children were grown and no longer shared the household with her. They chose to live self-sustainably and independent of men, which is perhaps the reason why their involvement in agricultural labor is more conspicuous than those of other island women.²¹⁰ The lack of evidence concerning the connection of women and farming in the Middle Ages has been observed elsewhere. Sharon Gerstel has assumed that women in the countryside of Late Byzantium worked in the fields, but

²⁰⁷ He is also the same person who acted as deputy of the *comes* of Ragusa in Lučić, *Spisi*, III/306.

²⁰⁸ Oikonomides argues that in Byzantium most commoners slept on a mattress and that bedframes were exceptional. Oikonomides, "The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," 209-21

²⁰⁹ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, IV/65.

²¹⁰ Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Alice-Mary Talbot, "Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside," *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 27 (2006): 481-90.

pointed out that there are no written records which would corroborate this assumption.²¹¹ Conversely, one document detailing the agreement between brothers and their two sisters *religiosae* about a property on Šipan gives specific instructions to the *religiosae* that they should cultivate the land which they had been granted.²¹² The lists of items given to the *religiosae* discussed earlier implies that the same was expected of them. Objects such as casks, vats, barrels were used to store wine, which suggests that the women were active in wine production.

No other documents from the Elaphiti Islands describe the interior of a house or provide clues about their inventories. Not only is the information scarce, but it also pertains to a group that is hardly representative of a typical Elaphiti resident. The data, while insufficient to draw wide-reaching conclusions about households, nevertheless provides insights into the basic tasks and routines that shaped their daily lives.

Settlements

Both rural housing and settlements are critically understudied topics in the scholarship of the Late Middle Ages. Numerous reports from archaeological excavations all around the Mediterranean have detailed the data from isolated sites, but few publications have examined finds in an analytical and comprehensive way.²¹³ When it comes to Dalmatia, scholars have focused on

²¹¹ Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 93. See also Angeliki Laiou, “The Role of Women in Byzantine Society,” *JÖB* 31/1 (1981): 248-249.

²¹² Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/369.

²¹³ Timothy Gregory, “People and Settlements of the Northeastern Peloponnese in the Late Middle Ages: An Archaeological Exploration,” in *Viewing the Morea: Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese*, ed. Sharon E. J. Gerstel (Washington, DC: DO Research and Library Collection, 2013), 278. For analytical studies, see Elefterios Sigalos, *Housing in Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2004); Sharon E. J. Gerstel, Mark Munn, Heather E. Grossman *et. al.* “A Late Medieval Settlement at Panakton,” *Hesperia* 72 (2003): 147-234. For an interdisciplinary study which brings in all the available evidence, see Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 10-43. For

ecclesiastical architecture much more than on secular structures, and domestic architecture has received the least amount of attention. This is true even in urban contexts, and stems, for the most part, from the obstructing factors that hinder this type of research. Not many medieval houses in Dalmatian cities survive, and those that do have gone through multiple post-medieval alterations. This is unsurprising, since cities are living entities that not only grow and expand, but constantly transform at the face of human-driven development and natural disasters. The city of Dubrovnik, for example, completely reshaped its urban fabric after the devastating earthquake of 1667. The oldest private houses date from the period of renewal which followed. In the absence of material remains, scholars have had to rely on texts and scarce graphic depictions when discussing the urban grid and private houses of the medieval city.²¹⁴

The state of research is even more dire for rural areas and islands, and the Elaphiti Islands are no exception. The few archaeological campaigns that have taken place have been localized to single structures and targeted examples of high production pertaining to the elite,²¹⁵ while traces of settlements and agricultural activity have gone unexcavated, unstudied and unpublished. An archaeological excavation of this type is unlikely to ever happen, not only because of the lack of resources and incentives, but also because such efforts would completely disrupt the lives of the local inhabitants. Namely, the copious traces of secular buildings, paved paths, cisterns and

a comparative study of houses in the Balkans, see George E. Megas, *Greek House: Its Evolution and its Relation to the Houses of other Balkan People* (Athens: Series of Publications of the Ministry of Reconstruction, 1951).

²¹⁴ Danko Zelić, “Wooden Houses in the Statutes and Urban Landscapes of Medieval Dalmatian Communes,” in *Splitski statut iz 1312. godine - povijest i pravo* [The Statute of Split from 1312: History and Law], eds. Željko Radić Marko Trogrlić, Massimo Meccarelli, *et al.* (Split: Književni krug, 2015), 489-507; idem, “‘Utilitas et lucrum’ - općinske kuće u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku” [‘Utilitas et lucrum’ – Communal Houses in Medieval Dubrovnik], in *Umjetnost i naručitelji; Zbornik Dana Cvita Fiskovića, sv. III* [Art and Patrons: Proceedings from the Days of Cvito Fisković Symposium, Volume III], ed. J. Gudelj (ed.), Zagreb, IPU, 2010), 9–24; Irena Benyovsky Latin and Danko Zelić, *Knjige nekretnina dubrovačke općine 13-18 stoljeća/ Libri domorum et terrenorum communis Ragusii deliberatis ad affectum* (Dubrovnik: HAZU, 2005).

²¹⁵ The excavation and restoration of the Prince’s (i.e. *comes*’s) Palace on Lopud is scheduled to start in the near future.

agricultural facilities are scattered around the islands, and a systematic excavation would turn an entire island into an archaeological site.

Without systematic research it is impossible to discuss these elements in a comprehensive way. Surveys are difficult, since the sites are covered with a thick layer of sand and/or concealed by the fast-growing maquis shrubland. The aggressive vegetation is prone to swallowing structures that are uncared for within a matter of years, converting what was once a cultivated space back into wilderness. The macchia forest occasionally gets cut and a site becomes temporarily accessible, each time in worse condition than when it was previously revealed. Not even churches are spared, and two churches in particular, Saint Barbara and Saint Sergius on Koločep, have been particularly affected by this.

Domestic architecture is extremely hard to date, even in more favorable conditions than those on the Elaphiti Islands.²¹⁶ The continuity of forms and construction methods, as well as the repurposing of the same building material, often make medieval structures indistinguishable from post-medieval ones. The best-preserved ruins of houses on the Elaphiti Islands, the ones that can actually be accessed and partially examined, do not date from the 13th century. Buildings such as the ones in the location called Bige on Koločep, about halfway between the churches of Saint Nicholas and Saint Sergius, are solid, two-story stone structures, whose articulation of large windows, niches and representative entrances are distinctly post-medieval (Fig. 13). Similar structures are found on other islands, and some of them — on Šipan — have been studied.²¹⁷ A particularly interesting example is the Beccadelli summer house (Fig. 14), a vacation home built

²¹⁶ Sigalos, *Housing in Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece*, 3.

²¹⁷ Nada Grujić, *Ladanjska arhitektura dubrovačkog područja* [Countryside Architecture of the Dubrovnik Area]. (Zagreb: IPU, 1991).

in the 16th century by Lodovico Beccadelli, and renovated in the 17th by Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesinni.²¹⁸ In the 16th century Šipan became a particularly popular vacation site for the elite in the city, which is the context in which the Beccadelli summer houses and comparative complexes have been examined.

Such a study goes beyond the scope of this project, and without proper investigation the early modern buildings are not particularly useful for the reconstruction of medieval settlements. However, there are certain deductions that we can make from the very locations of these finds. Namely, almost all of the older remains of human activity, both medieval and early modern, are outside of today's settlements. As soon as one walks out of the perimeters of the modern villages, all five of which arose around the largest coves of the three islands, one finds themselves in an agricultural landscape, full of walls marking the old borders of estates, small paths that lead to forgotten ruins that are now surrounded by thick forest, and — last but not least — churches. All but one of the surviving churches on the Elaphiti Islands relevant to this project are in agricultural zones.²¹⁹ On Koločep, the church of Saint Michael virtually marks the end of the Donje Čelo settlement and the beginning of the farming plain (Fig. 15). Walking along the modern paved road, one comes to the church of Saint Nicholas, and from there multiple paths divide to lead to the other churches, and eventually the Gornje Čelo settlement. On Lopud, too, an older paved road, possibly built in the 16th century when the castrum Sutvrač was constructed, also connects the churches

²¹⁸ Tanja Trška Miklošić, “Obnove nadbiskupskih posjeda u Dubrovniku u vrijeme nadbiskupa G. V. Lucchesinija” [The Renewals of the Estates of the Archdiocese at the Time of the Archbishop G. V. Lucchesini], *Peristil* 56 (2013): 143–154.

²¹⁹ Saint Anthony of Padua on Koločep is now located in the cove of Gornje Čelo, but it is quite possible that it stood in isolation when it was first built. There are a number of other churches in the modern settlements, but none of them have been built prior to the 15th century.

(Fig. 16). While there is no way of proving that, it is quite possible that these roads follow the layout of the medieval paths that connected significant places on the respective islands.

Šipan, being a significantly larger island than the other two, must have had a more intricate network of paths. While they cannot be reconstructed, archival sources do provide some information about communication patterns and borders between estates. In November 1280, Marinus de Bisti and Nichiforus Michaelis de Regnana, two neighbors on Šipan, reached an agreement in a civil lawsuit over the boundaries of their properties, which had been marked by a stone wall, and were located on either sides of the communal road in the direction of north to south, “by which all the people of the island of Šipan pass.”²²⁰ Another document makes a reference to a “new communal road” built next to the sea (but unclear on which side of the island),²²¹ and a third makes it known that there was another communal road leading to the mountain, possibly Velji Vrh on the north-west side of the island (Fig. 17).²²²

As I have discussed earlier, all three islands were relatively densely populated, and Šipan, considering its size, must have had the largest population. This is reflected in the much greater number of archival references to this island in comparison to the other two. The wider network of paths reflects a sizable population, and in combination with rare toponyms mentioned in the documents provides clues of the spatial disposition of the settlements. Thirteenth-century records from the archives never introduce the word “settlement,” and most references to physical places are general. We encounter mountains, roads and rocks of the shore we cannot place, as well as neighboring estates whose grid we cannot reconstruct. Occasionally, however, a toponym is

²²⁰ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/380.

²²¹ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/366.

²²² *Ibid.*, III/752.

mentioned, which allows us to tie the individual in question with a precise geographic location. Places such as Gorgna Rallica, Peclina, Calec, Pertuso and approximately twenty others on Šipan have retained the same names to this day.²²³ In fact, there is large number of toponyms on all three Elaphiti Islands.²²⁴ The etymologies of these names often reflect literal descriptions of the natural environment given to places that were obviously of high importance. Borje, for example, most likely used to be a place with a lot of pine trees, Jekavac was a place of strong echo, and Velji Vrh was the highest point.²²⁵

I believe that many of the toponyms that still persist on the islands are remnants of medieval settlements. One toponym in particular, Šilovo Selo, is suggestive of this phenomenon. Namely, the word *selo* literally means village.²²⁶ Previous scholarship has pointed out that that medieval settlements on the Elaphiti Islands were not confined to the coves as is the case today.²²⁷ That, however, does not mean that houses were scattered around the islands without any organization. Such an arrangement, or rather the lack of it, would be highly unusual and contradictory to the usual compressed nature of medieval rural settlements.²²⁸ It would also be impractical, especially given the small sizes of the islands, for it would significantly diminish the quantity of arable land. A rare contract from 1295 recording a sale of a house lists the neighboring properties. The house,

²²³ The names that appear in the sources are Latinized versions of the same names that these locations bear today. The Croatian variants of the aforementioned three are Gornja Ralica, Pakljena, Goleč and Prtuša. Josip Lučić successfully located the majority of the toponyms he found in the documents. Lučić, “Prošlost elafitskog otoka Šipana,” 96-99.

²²⁴ Mieczysław Karaś, *Toponimia Wysp Elafickich na Adriatyku* [Toponyms of the Elaphiti Islands on the Adriatic] (Warsaw: Zakł. nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1968).

²²⁵ Borje and Jekavac are toponyms on Koločep, whose names possibly come from Slavic words *bor* (pine) and *jeka* (echo). Velji Vrh on Šipan (likely from “veli vrh,” lit. “great point”) is indeed the highest point of Šipan, but the name refers to a wider elevated area and encompasses the church of Saint Peter.

²²⁶ The first word of the name, Šilovo, is a possessive adjective and probably comes from *šilo*, the word for bradawl.

²²⁷ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 33; Tomas and Zeman, *Spomenici Otoka Lupuda*, 48.

²²⁸ For a typical structure of medieval Mediterranean villages, see Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 10-11; Gerstel, et. al. “A Late Medieval Settlement at Panakton,” 154.

bought by Dragissa from Šipan, bordered on the east with Maria de Siuaz's house, on the west with the farmhouse of Leonardo de Cocote, on the side of the mountain with the communal road and with the house that belonged to *protomaster* Pasqua, while on the side of the sea there were rocks.²²⁹ Although it stands in isolation, this document confirms that houses were indeed grouped together. It is also significant that none of the houses that were mentioned were in the central agricultural plain of Šipan. This area, the largest and the most fertile agricultural zone of any of the islands and the only one that has a source of drinking water, must have always been reserved for farming (Fig. 18).

Scholars have also claimed that the coves of the islands were uninhabited prior to the early modern period, and that the dwellings were inland because of the dangers of pirates. This would be consistent with the situation on so many Mediterranean islands that were constantly under the threat. Indeed, no structures are older than the fifteenth century in the coves of either Koločep, Lopud or Šipan. Several details from thirteenth-century records, however, almost tacitly leave the impression that the cove of Luka Šipanska functioned as a settlement even in that period. Firstly, the aforementioned house of Dobrissa, as we have established, faced the mountain on the one side and the sea on the other. Not only does this information correspond to the geography of the northern part of the respective cove, but it is more probable that a residential house would have been placed in this location than in any other place that would match the description. Namely, the only other places that border both the sea and a mountain are on the northern shore of the island, which would have made the residence both unprotected from the elements and more susceptible to a pirate attack.

²²⁹ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/752.

The vibrant activity in the port that comes across through several sources discussed in the previous section also suggest that dwellings were not far away from one another. For example, when Rucota, the *comes* of Šipán summoned his men on the feast day of Saint Peter in 1284 to catch a thief, and when they beat him in the boat in the middle of the cove, at least a dozen individuals were watching the incident from land and later testified to what they saw in court.²³⁰ Some of these men were shepherds and employees of landowners who did not seem like they would have any business hanging around the port, if that was indeed all that the cove of Luka Šipanska was at the time. The scene acquires a distinct sense if we consider that the port might have been part of the settlement. We can then envision the cove as a hub of island life; a place in which people go about their daily tasks, but also celebrate, or roam around and enjoy their time of leisure.

The visible traces of medieval settlements are hard to uncover at the present time, but the evidence — archaeological, linguistic, and, above all, written — confirms the existence of vibrant communities that were not only multi-generational,²³¹ but also adaptive and enterprising. These communities built new houses, new communal roads and thus constantly transformed their living environments. And while the spatial pattern of their settlements escapes us, there are grounds to suggest that the inhabitants were organized in smaller units, perhaps similar in size to those which in other places of the Mediterranean are called hamlets,²³² which consistently communicated with one another and shared the common experience of island life. As we have discussed, they gathered, quarreled, and focused on all kinds of activities, among which the most significant were those

²³⁰ Ibid., III/457.

²³¹ Sharon Gerstel argues that the main characteristic of a late medieval village is its longevity. Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 11.

²³² Ibid., 10.

pertaining to their land. And scattered around this land were churches, which have their own histories, but whose stories were greatly intertwined with the islands' secular aspects.

Chapter 3: PIETY, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING MATERIAL REMAINS ON THE ELAPHITI ISLANDS

In the previous chapter I discussed secular features of daily life on the Elaphiti Islands. In this chapter I will bring into focus the religious aspects, which would have been no less important to the islanders, but which are impossible to study from the archival documents as vividly, as illustrated by one record. On March 17, 1285, Andreas de Benissa appeared in court to act as a witness in favor of a resident of Šipan, Rucota Codimiri. The case started off as an economic dispute between Rucota and Andreas's nephews, and resulted in an assault. This type of conflict was a relatively typical occurrence found in the archival records of Dubrovnik. It is not so much the incident itself that draws attention, but rather Andreas's side remark which makes the document interesting. Describing the circumstance of his involvement in the matter, he states: "I was in church, and the respective Rucota came up to me and said that Janinus and his brothers ambushed him..."²³³ Andreas's comment is the only instance in the thirteenth-century corpus of the Archive of Dubrovnik that informs us about someone's physical presence inside a church. On the one hand, the records frequently mention various churches in economic contexts: as owners of vineyards bordering estates that were sold or purchased, or as proprietors of land that was leased for the purpose of cultivation. On the other hand, however, the function of a particular church as a place of veneration, to my knowledge, is only introduced in this single document.

²³³ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/395.

The document does not identify which church was in question; only that it was one in the city.²³⁴ We also do not know where the individual was inside the building, what exactly he was doing, or whether there were other people in there with him or around him. In other words, the testimony lacks the specificity that would contribute to the examination of liturgical customs and rituals in the State of Ragusa. Perhaps it does not tell us anything we already do not know, but this, and other documents unique in their own right, most effectively reveal the limitations of the archival documents of Ragusa. Rather than dismissing Andreas's account as irrelevant, we might take it as evidence that helps us partly understand why there have been no comprehensive studies on churches and church institutions of medieval Ragusa from the standpoint of historical, i.e. textual, analysis.²³⁵

Symon's Debt to Saint Michael: on Religious Feasts and Debt Settlement

Archival evidence about piety on the Elaphities is scarce, but nevertheless revealing. There exists considerable unstudied material which pertains to holy feasts and demonstrates a specific type of connection between the liturgical and agricultural calendar. Focusing on a specific case demonstrates the nature of such sources and the type of information they uncover.

In July of 1281, Triphon de Chur Leo, clergyman and abbot of the church of Saint Michael on Lopud, leased the vineyard of the respective church to Symon de Cicagna. The provisions of

²³⁴ In his testimony Rucota specifies that he came from the island (of Šipan) that day, which means that the episode in question happened somewhere in the city of Ragusa.

²³⁵ The other reason for this lacuna has to do with politically imposed institutional limitations of scholarship during the Yugoslav period. I thank Professor Bariša Krekić for clarifying this point for me in personal communication.

the contract stipulated that Symon work the vineyard under the customs of Ragusa, keep the entire yield and pay twenty *denarius grossum* on the feast of Saint Michael, plus another five-grossum installment as a voucher for upcoming years.²³⁶ It would be tempting to assume, although the document makes no such suggestion, that the payment date corresponded to a religious feast on the abbot's demand. However, such an arrangement was not exclusive to transactions that involved individuals coming from ecclesiastical ranks. To the contrary; judging by archival records, feast days were a typical time to settle a debt, both on the Elaphiti Islands and in the wider Ragusan area. At least fifty-five contracts from 1279 to 1301 refer to a religious feast as a payment date. In contrast, documents in which a deadline is expressed in months or years are much scarcer. To be more precise, there are only eight such records. Furthermore, only thirteen out of the fifty-five documents feature a religious institution and/or an ecclesiastical figure as creditors, whereas the overwhelming majority constitute arrangements between two or multiple laymen who were connected to one another in various capacities, including tenant-landlord relationships, business loans, dowry contracts, as well as other commitments between family members.

Among the saints whose feasts were chosen as due dates for payment, Saint Michael is by far the most common. He appears in as many as seventeen documents, which is a number to which no other saint even comes close. In fact, the most recurring dates besides that of the feast of Saint Michael is Lent, which is mentioned six times. The Nativity and Easter are each mentioned four times, and so are Saint Elijah and Saint Peter, which makes them share the second place for most prevailing saint according to the existing documents.²³⁷ Other figures, namely Saints Martin, Andrew, George, Blasius, the Virgin, Simeon, Vitus, and Sergius and Bacchus appear in

²³⁶ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/575.

²³⁷ The feast of Saint Peter is mentioned in documents two additional times, but those cases have nothing to do with debt payment. Lučić, *Spisi*, III/457 and III/459.

documents three times or less. These feasts, for the most part, correspond in dedication and frequency to the contemporaneous archival records which refer to the wider area of the State of Ragusa.²³⁸

Although feast days were nominally standardized in liturgical calendars for areas belonging to a particular Christian denomination, in reality the date of their observation were subjected to local customs. For example, both Saint Blasius and Saint Simeon were of paramount importance for the State of Ragusa; the former as the city's principal patron saint,²³⁹ and the latter as a powerful instrument in the rivalry with the cities of Zara and Venice.²⁴⁰ Since the two saints shared a feast date, February 3, the solution was achieved by moving the feast of Saint Simeon and thus creating an additional feast day.²⁴¹ It was by no means unusual that saints would have more than one feast in a year, and it is quite possible that there were other examples of this in Ragusa. If there were, earlier archival records are largely silent about them. In fact, the dates of the feast are largely unspecified, with three significant and consistent exceptions. The feasts of Saint Peter, the Virgin

²³⁸ The only significant omission in comparison to the wider Ragusan area is that of the Pentecost. Interestingly, Pentecost was brought up in documents as many as twenty times between 1282 and 1284, and only once between 1295 and 1301. Other feasts that are not mentioned in the context of the Elaphiti Islands are those of Saints John, Demetrius, Luke, Mary Magdalene, and Margaret, but they were referred to only a few times.

²³⁹ On the cult of Saint Blasius and other early saints in Ragusa, see Ana Marinković, "Teritorijalno širenje Dubrovačke Komune/republike i crkve njezinih svetaca zaštitnika" [Territorial Expansion of the Commune/Republic of Dubrovnik and the Churches of its Patron Saints], *Dubrovnik Annals* 45 (2007): 219-234; Anđelko Badurina, "Motivi izbora Sv. Vlaha za patrona grada Dubrovnika," [Motifs for the Choice of Saint Blasius as the Patron Saint of the City of Dubrovnik] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 21 (1980): 142-148; Joško Belamarić, "Sveti Vlaho i dubrovačka obitelj svetaca zaštitnika," [Saint Blasius and the Dubrovnik Family of Protector Saints], in *Studije iz srednjovjekovne i renesansne umjetnosti na Jadranu* [Studies from the Medieval and Renaissance Art in the Adriatic], ed. idem (Split: Književni krug, 2001), 165-190.; Nella Lonza, "Sveti Vlaho, božanski zaštitnik Dubrovnika" [Saint Blasius, the Heavenly Protector of Dubrovnik] in *Zborna crkva sv. Vlaha u Dubrovniku* [The Collegiate Church of Saint Blasius in Dubrovnik], ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj (Dubrovnik-Zagreb: IPU, 2019), 19-39.

²⁴⁰ On the competition for the cult of Saint Simeon between these three Adriatic cities, see Anita Jambrek, "Case Study of Royal Piety in the 14th Century: The Story of the Shrine of Saint Simeon," MA thesis (Central European University, 2014).

²⁴¹ Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti: Ceremonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike 17. i 18. stoljeća* [A Theater of Governance: Ceremonial and State Holidays of the Republic of Ragusa in the 17th and 18th century], (Dubrovnik: HAZU, 2009), 358-386. A similar thing happened in Zara where the feast of Saint Simeon is observed in February and in October.

and Saint Michael are always accompanied by adverbials, “in June,” “in August,” and “in September,” respectively.

Given that specifying dates for feastes was obviously not standard procedure in archival documents, it might appear strange that Saint Peter was given one. The respective saint is commemorated, alongside Saint Paul, on June 29 in both the east and the west. There is, to my knowledge, no other day dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle, however, there are several other Peters commemorated in the Catholic calendar.²⁴² I have found no records that any of them were venerated in the area of Ragusa, but the possible plurality of namesake saints would explain why the feast of Saint Peter was routinely accompanied with a date.²⁴³ The two other examples of labeling are more evident. Namely, according to the Byzantine liturgical calendar, the feast date of Archangel Michael takes place in November, whereas the Latin rite commemorates the saint in September. The Ragusan area clearly celebrated the saint according to the Latin liturgical calendar. On the other hand, the persistent emphasis on the date in records might indicate the awareness of the Byzantine date and maybe even of its observance in the area. When it comes to the Virgin, there was a clear need for specification due to the multiple feast days dedicated to Mary. Archival records distinguish between the feasts of the Virgin in March (Annunciation) and in August (Assumption/Dormition).²⁴⁴ Judging by the number of records, the latter was a more prominent

²⁴² Miona Miliša, “Istraživanje, konzervacija, restauracija i prezentacija kamenih arheoloških artefakata iz crkve Sv. Petra u Dubrovniku” [Research, Restoration, Conservation and Presentation of Stone Archaeological Artefacts from the Church of St. Peter in Dubrovnik], PhD diss. (University of Zadar, 2013), 274.

²⁴³ It is worthy of note that Saint Paul’s name is consistently excluded, both in records of feast days and in titularies of churches in the Ragusan area.

²⁴⁴ Apart from these two, three other feasts in the Orthodox liturgical calendar are centered on the Virgin. These are The Birth of the Theotokos on September 8, The Entry of Theotokos into the Temple on November 21, and The Synaxis of the Theotokos on December 26. For full sermons conducted during these feasts, see Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (transl.), *The Festal Menaion* (South Canaan, PA, St. Tikhon Seminary Press: 1998), 98-130, 164-198, 290-294, 435-467 and 504-529. With the exception of the Synaxis, all of these feasts are observed in the Latin rite on the same days. The Catholic calendar lists about a dozen additional Marian feasts days. See

celebration, and when it comes to the Dubrovnik area this is true to this day. In fact, the annual island festival of Koločep corresponds to the feast of Assumption.²⁴⁵

Table 1 juxtaposes the frequency of recorded saintly feasts in documents related to the islands with the titulars of the Elaphiti churches. Some degree of overlap can be detected. For example, churches dedicated to Saint Peter were located on all three islands, and so were those dedicated to the Virgin. A church of Saint Michael not only existed on all three islands, but Šipan had at least two of them. On the other hand, Saint Nicholas and Saint John the Baptist were never recorded in relation to feasts. Even if they were originally not part of the core of saints venerated in the city, the number of dedications, the frequency of individuals with respective baptismal names, as well as certain liturgical evidence,²⁴⁶ suggests that they were some of the most venerated saints in Ragusa by the 13th century.²⁴⁷ Clearly there is a discrepancy here, and perhaps it stems from more than just the fragmentary state of records. It is not entirely clear why or by which criteria

Committee on Divine Worship, *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America 2020* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018), 11-44.

²⁴⁵ In Croatian the feast of Assumption is popularly called “Velika Gospa” (Great Lady) and is distinguished from “Mala Gospa” (Small Lady), which commemorates the Virgin’s birth on September 8.

²⁴⁶ By liturgical evidence, I have in mind the *Missale Ragusinum* and *Libellus Sancti Nicolai*, both 13th-century manuscripts of Ragusan origin, which verify a strong cult of Saint Nicholas in State of Ragusa. See Rozana Vojvoda, “Dalmatian Illuminated Manuscripts Written in Beneventan Script and Benedictine Scriptoria in Zadar, Dubrovnik and Trogir,” PhD diss. (Central European University, 2011); eadem, “A Fragment of St. Augustine’s Manuscript in Beneventan Script in the Scientific Library in Dubrovnik (MS. 950): Argument for its Dating and Dubrovnik Origin,” *Dubrovnik Annals* 24 (2020): 7-38. For translations of the original manuscripts, see Richard Francis Gyug, *Missale ragusinum: The Missal of Dubrovnik (Studies and Texts)* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990); Miho Demović, *Dubrovački beneventanski liturgijski priručnik legende i obreda blagdana sv. Nikole iz 11. stoljeća* [Dubrovnik’s 11th-Century Beneventan Liturgical Handbook of Legend and Rites Related to the Feast Day of St. Nicholas] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Kor Prvostolne Crkve Zagrebačke, 1998).

²⁴⁷ The earliest venerated saints in the city include Saints Peter, Stephen, Lawrence, Andrew, Hilarion, Zenobius and Zenobia, Pancras, Nereus, Achilleus, Domitilla, Petronilla and Saints Sergius and Bacchus. See Badurina, “Motivi izbora Sv. Vlaha za patrona grada Dubrovnika,” 142-148, esp. 143-146; Marinković, “Teritorijalno širenje,” 228-229. It has been suggested that the cults of other popular saints, including Saint Michael and Saint Nicholas, spread to Dalmatia directly from Apulia, although there is still a great deal of research to be done on this topic. See Emanuela Elba, “The Saints Across the Sea, the Overseas Saints: Cult and Images of St. Michael and St. Nicholas Between Apulia and Dalmatia in the Middle Ages (A Preliminary Study),” in *Cuius Patronio Tota Gaudet Region: Saints’ Cults and the Dynamics of Regional Cohesion*, ed. Stanislava Kuzmová, Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš (Zagreb: Hagiotecca, 2014), 91-107.

religious feasts were designated as payment dates. Does this phenomenon point to a special connection of the participating parties and the respective saint? Did it, perhaps, provide the creditors with greater certainty that they were going to get their money on time? The Archive reveals no clues about either of the issues. While the spiritual aspects of such arrangements should not be disregarded, there is reason to believe that the grounds for setting deadlines on certain feasts more than on others is to be sought in something more pragmatic. If one looks at the temporal distribution of the feast most commonly chosen for payment, one notices an interesting pattern: the majority of deadlines were arranged to take place between the months of June and November (Table 1). In other words, they would take place at the peak and the end of the agricultural cycle.²⁴⁸ This would have been especially important in cases of contracts that involved land leases, where debtors relied heavily on produce which was at its freshest precisely during the aforementioned period. In the case of payment in kind, which was admittedly rare, this would have been unavoidable.

It seems perfectly reasonable, and even somewhat poetic, that the Symon from the document cited above had to repay his dues to the church of Saint Michael on the day of the feast of the aforementioned saint. This was certainly not an isolated case, but in the case of the Elaphiti Islands one could not call it a recurring pattern, either. Only in two other documents does the feast day designated for payment correspond to the titular saint of the church that acted as a creditor, and in both of these cases the respective saint was the Archangel Michael.²⁴⁹ Conversely, in various

²⁴⁸ The agrarian calendar is determined by geography and climate, and thus varies from region to region. However, certain aspects can be taken as common for Mediterranean spaces. For example, it can be taken for certain that spring is planting time, whereas the summer and fall are harvesting season, particularly the months of June (grains) and September through November (grapes and olives). For a more detailed calendar, see Angeliki E. Laiou, "War, Peace and Economic Development in the Medieval Balkans," in *South-Eastern Europe in History: The Past, the Present and the Problems of Balkanology* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1999), 76–7.

²⁴⁹ Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/199, IV/550.

documents the two were unrelated. For example, the officials of the monastery of the Virgin on Lokrum set the payment date for their lessees on the feast of Saint Andrew multiple times, and once divided the deadline between the Nativity feast and the observation of Lent,²⁵⁰ but not once did they arrange the deadline to correspond with any of the feasts dedicated to the Virgin.

Scholars have for a long time been interested in various aspects of time, temporality, and its connection with space and landscape in both modern and pre-modern societies.²⁵¹ The connection between the liturgical and agrarian calendars has been widely known, and the phenomenon described above is by no means rare or unusual. However, such and similar occurrences, frequently appearing in sources, are seldom scrutinized or even described, although they contribute a great deal to the exploration of the holistic medieval experience.²⁵² As Laurie Hart has reiterated in her ethnographic study *Time, Religion and Social Experience in Rural Greece*, the observation of religious holidays featured a number of activities of secular character rooted in ancient Greece.²⁵³ The correlation between economic duties and liturgical calendar, as described above, occurred precisely because of the overlap of the sacred and the profane. Here we

²⁵⁰ One of the documents repeats the same condition 22 times on the same date, with the same creditors and the same deadline, but with different debtors and land. Čremošnik, *Spisi*, 576/1.

²⁵¹ The literature for this is too vast to enumerate. For some influential examples, see Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2013); Edward Palmer Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38 (1967): 56-97; Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archaeology* 25/2 (2009): 152-184.

²⁵² For longer publications which focus on the medieval calendar, primarily through the prism of pictorial representations of the labors of the month, see Bridget Ann Henisch, *The Medieval Calendar Year* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Judith Herrin, *A Medieval Miscellany* (New York, N.Y.: Viking Studio, 2000); Teresa Pérez Higuera, *Medieval Calendars* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998); Roger S. Wieck, *The Medieval Calendar: Locating Time in the Middle Ages* (New York: The Morgan Library & Museum and Scala Arts Publishers, Inc., 2017). These publications, however, are primarily meant to be a general introduction into the topic for a general audience.

²⁵³ Laurie Kain Hart, *Time, Religion and Social Experience*, 226.

see religion protruding into the sphere of secular life,²⁵⁴ generally because the line between the two was, at least in the Middle Ages, permeable and at times non-existent, and more specifically formed out of the necessity to measure time in the most accurate manner available. The liturgical calendar provided that possibility.

Holy feasts acted as — for the lack a better word — *timemarks*: they were temporal landmarks, days distinguished from all the others which would, when needed, also help situate an ordinary day in time. One document speaks directly to this point. On May 12, 1285, a man named Liubennus Radonic was called to court to testify about a theft he had witnessed in the house of Vladimir de Grupsa. Upon reporting what he had seen, Liubennus was asked when the described event had taken place. He responded that he did not know the exact day, but that it was after the feast of Saint George.²⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the feast of Saint George takes place on April 23, so that a maximum of two and a half weeks could have passed by between the respective episode and Liubennus's appearance in court. The fact that he could not be more specific after such a short period of time indicates that he would likely not have kept track of dates on a daily basis. While the evidence for this is not conclusive, we can assume that such an attitude would have been typical for a person of Liubennus's status.

Unfortunately, the archival documents reveal nothing about the ways in which any of the feasts on the Elaphiti islands were observed. There are no side remarks about the liturgical ceremonies conducted in churches, although this must have been the case, and no data about the worldly communal aspects that formed an important part of feast days. In his discussion about the

²⁵⁴ The reverse process is more comprehensible and more studied. For this, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1959), esp. 14-16.

²⁵⁵ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/415.

panegyric, a festivity with a wide range of definitions, but which always signified some sort of a gathering, Speros Vryonis examined the panegyres of Saints Thekla and Demetrius, *i.e.*, the feast celebrations of the respective saints with the accompanying religious, social and economic activities. In their forms such festivities were remnants from pre-Christian times which were gradually altered to fit Christian practices and changing customs. They included cult rituals, various communal gatherings and banquets, dances and even markets. Larger cities held markets of international importance which would last up to a week, which would attract pilgrims and other travelers.²⁵⁶

It would be exaggerated to presume that any of the Elaphiti feasts were remotely close in scale, complexity or even duration to some of the Mediterranean's largest panegyres described in written sources. While the specifics escape us, it is evident that feast days were observed in an organized manner and that they were an important part of the communal life. Although the evidence is slim, it is possible that people were coming to the islands specifically for the festivities. The only document that suggests this is a 1284 record of an assault in which Radosta, the *comes* of Šipan, in his testimony, reports: "I was on Šipan for the feast of Saint Peter."²⁵⁷ Larger celebrations must have taken place in the city itself, although there are no data about them, either.

²⁵⁶ Speros Vryonis Jr., "The Panegyris of a Byzantine Saint: The Study of the nature of a Medieval Institution, its Origins and Fate," in *The Byzantine Saint: Learned papers presented at the Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 196-228, esp. 198-204.; Max Ritter, "Panegyric Markets in the Byzantine Empire and their Role in the Pilgrimage Economy (5th-12th c.)," in *Für Seelenheil und Lebensglück: das byzantinische Pilgerwesen und seine Wurzeln*, eds. Despoina Ariantzi and Ina Eichner (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums 2018), 367-382.; André Binggeli, "Annual Fairs, Regional Networks, and Trade Routes in Syria, Sixth-Tenth Centuries, in *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, ed. Cécile Morrison (Washington, DC: DO Research Library and Collection, 2012), 281-296.

²⁵⁷ "Ego eram in Jappana (sic) in festo sancti Petri," Lučić, *Spisi*, III/457. It is unclear why Radosta (unlike any other witness in the case) emphasized his location unless he was on the islands for the purpose of the feast. However, that seems strange, since being on Šipan was part of his job.

Perhaps we would have had more luck finding evidence in the church archive of the Archbishopric,²⁵⁸ but those records were destroyed in the fire following the earthquake of 1667.

Although not particularly revealing in terms of aspects of ritual, the data about feasts on the Elaphiti Islands speaks unequivocally about the sheer importance of saints, testifying to their omnipresence and ubiquitous role in everyday affairs. Such liminal aspects, where the sacred and profane overlap, merit additional research outside the scope of Dubrovnik's archival documents. A wider study, targeting similar data, but expanding to places comparable to the Elaphiti Islands would undoubtedly shed additional light on rural customs and veneration processes. Meanwhile, the exploration of these matters as pertaining to the Elaphiti Islands does not stop with the archival records. Material remains pertaining to the area are abundant, and, unlike the written sources, the majority of them belongs to the religious realm – to the Elaphiti churches. It is the churches that will be the focal point for the rest of this chapter, starting from a wider typological analysis and the discussion of function, and continuing with a close examination of the most important aspects of their interiors.

²⁵⁸ Max Ritter argues that in Byzantium panegyric markets were organized by the Church and monasteries and that the most comprehensive records about them come from hagiography and theological writings. Max Ritter, "Panegyric Markets in the Byzantine Empire and their Role in the Pilgrimage Economy," 367.

“The Southern Dalmatian Dome Type:” Architecture and Administrative Matters

As many as fifteen churches, dated roughly between the ninth and the eleventh century, survive to some capacity on Koločep, Lopud and Šipan (Figs. 19-31).²⁵⁹ Their interiors and windows were adorned with sculpted liturgical furnishing and decorative patterns, and their walls covered with painting. Sculptural fragments were found in and around all of the churches, as well as scattered around the islands and reused as building material in secular contexts. Conversely, fresco cycles have been partially preserved *in situ* only in two churches — Saint John on Šipan and Saint Nicholas on Koločep — although traces of possibly contemporaneous paintings were found in the church of Saint Elijah on Lopud (Fig. 32).²⁶⁰ Additionally, younger frescoes dated to the early modern period are found in the church of Saint Michael on Pakljena (Fig. 33), and faint traces of paint are visible beneath the layer of mortar in the Saint Barbara on Šipan. At the present moment, a number of churches retain only the lower portion of their walls, so we cannot be sure of their roofing system, nor can we speak intelligently about the decorative aspects. Even the churches that are in better condition have been heavily altered. Some, like the two churches dedicated to Saint John the Baptist on Lopud and Šipan, have had their front façade removed and

²⁵⁹ On Šipan: Saint Peter, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Michael on Pakljena, Saint Barbara and Saint Michael on the Sea; on Lopud: Saint Elijah, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter and Saint Nicholas “the Greek;” on Koločep: Saint Nicholas, Saint Michael, Saint Sergius, Saint Barbara, Saint Francis, and Saint Anthony of Padua. Some of these churches have an Early Christian layer, and at least one church, that of the Virgin on Biskupija, is dated entirely to the 6th century.

²⁶⁰ These were the earliest known frescoes on the Elaphiti Islands, and they were discovered during the archeological campaign on the respective church in 1972. The scarce painting — a figural representation of an unidentified male saint in the apse and traces of ornament on the southern wall — were subsequently removed from the site and taken to the Parish Museum of Lopud located in the spaces of the Franciscan monastery, which has since been bought by Francesca von Habsburg and converted into a high-end hotel. For brief discussions of the frescoes, see Cvito Fisković, *Dalmatinske freske [Frescoes of Dalmatia]*, (Zagreb: Izdavačko poduzeće “Zora” 1965), 11-12, and Igor Fisković, “Adriobizantiski sloj zidnog slikarstva,” 384-385.

were converted into sanctuaries of larger buildings in a later period. Others, like Saint Nicholas on Koločep, have lost their dome and have only reacquired it after the recent restoration.

Because of the lack of archival sources and epigraphic evidence from the churches, exploring the connection between these buildings and their users is no easy task. There is only one preserved donor inscription in all of the Elaphiti churches. It comes from fragments of an altar screen found on Koločep and I will thoroughly discuss it later in this chapter. Other aspects of church construction and decoration on the islands, such as their proportions and locations, as well as hagiography, ornamental decoration and certain particularities found in the iconography, provide clues that are illustrative of the kinds of communities that occupied these spaces. By discussing architectural forms, sculpture and various details of the preserved painted material of the Elaphiti churches, I offer a more comprehensive image of the interrelation between these monuments and the people that inhabited the Elaphiti Islands in the Middle Ages. I also bring to light the aspects that these material remains have in common with monuments found elsewhere in the elsewhere in the Mediterranean, thus contributing to the study of intra- and inter-regional communication patterns and cultural transfers. I will not be carrying out a lengthy stylistic analysis, since that has been done before for all media on the Elaphiti Islands. My objective is not style or iconography in their own right. Dating or redating particular structures is not my end goal, although it will be necessary in some cases, since it comes out of the analysis itself.

When it comes to the Elaphiti churches, sculpture has been the basis for dating more than the architecture itself. All relief fragments found in excavations on Koločep, with the exception of those linked to the church of Saint Michael, have been dated to the ninth or the tenth century.²⁶¹

²⁶¹ Žile, *Predromaničko crkveno graditeljstvo*, 124.

However, these fragments are either too small or too badly preserved to serve as dating criteria. They demonstrate a variety of different patterns and stylistic solutions which do not appear to be contemporaneous (Figs. 34-36). Furthermore, architectural features cannot provide a more precise date for these structures, both because of the fact that the so-called Southern Dalmatian dome type, a category to which all of them belong,²⁶² had a long survival rate,²⁶³ and — more importantly — because of the poor condition of most of these churches.

Although it owes a great deal of its present condition to the respective restoration campaign, the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep provides the most elements for architectural analysis, since it is the most studied of all the Elaphiti churches, and the one that is best preserved. This is a small, single-aisled structure measuring 4 x 2.3 meters in its interior, with an apse which is round on the inside, and square on the outside. The exterior walls of the church are profiled with blind arches which are no more than half a meter in width each, and extend through the entire elevation of the church. They continue from the lateral walls onto the exterior of the apse, but haphazardly, breaking the established pattern of rhythm. This articulation is typical of most churches that have been preserved well enough for us meaningfully discuss them. Although it varies from church to church, it often results in the same effect: the respective church appears to be taller than it actually is, as if the builders were deliberately toying with the perception of proportions (Figs. 22, 24, 26 and 27). The interior space is divided into three bays. The central bay is framed by two pilasters on each side, which extend continuously across the vaulting, whereas the uninterrupted surface of

²⁶² The only possible exception to this might be the church of Saint Barbara on Šipan, which does not have a dome at present. Given that the building had never been studied, and that its vaulting system indicates early modern intervention, it is a possibility that a dome is concealed, although I find it doubtful. The church only has two bays, whereas the other churches have three, and the dome is in all cases located in the middle bay.

²⁶³ Tomas, “Crkva Svete Marije na otoku Mljetu,” 297-309. The same point has been brought up elsewhere. See for example Josip Lučić, “Građevinski spomenici 13. stoljeća na Šipanu” [Architectural Monuments of 13th-Century Šipan], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 13/1 (1961): 78-79.

the walls between the pilasters is profiled only by protruding semicircular frames just below the vault. All three bays are covered in barrel vaults, but the central one has an additional feature: in the center of the vault is a small dome. The pendentives, those spherical triangles which mark the transition from square shape in the nave to the circular shape of the dome, rise from the surface of the vault. Unsupported by columns, the dome simply hovers, but not because of a genius concealed structural solution, but because it is small enough to be supported by the thick walls of the church (Fig. 37). It does not command the space visually like domes usually do, neither from the interior, nor from the outside. In fact, the square form of its exterior, decorated with the same patterns of blind arches that we see in the lower registers, and protruding from the roof by less than a meter, appears more as a dwarf tower than a dome.

These common features, which the churches share with a number of buildings on the Dalmatian coast, have been the basis of the establishment of the so-called Southern Dalmatian dome type. I will bring forth the continental examples of this architectural type in the next chapter. However, before examining the undeniable similarities that stylistically bring the Elaphiti monuments into connection with their proximate mainland and shed light on matters of regional artistic transfers, it is important to look beyond the specificity of design and expand the view to get a perspective on the ways in which spaces of comparable architectural properties were used in areas similar in character to the Elaphiti Islands, namely islands and rural setting in general. Single-aisle churches, both with a dome and without, exist all over the Mediterranean. While they have never been a target of a comprehensive study, architectural scholars have argued that the increasing emergence of such small-scale structures in the Middle Byzantine period was a consequence of the changes in devotional practices and the “privatization of patronage” as a result of

Iconoclasm.²⁶⁴ Whether or not this was the case is open to discussion. What we should bear in mind is that a great majority of such buildings survive outside urban centers, so another way to think of them is through the idea that a more intimate and stratified type of patronage was reflective of the needs and the means of the population that used them. In rural areas of Greece single-aisle churches continued to be built throughout the Late Byzantine period, although cross-in-square churches always remained the dominant architectural type.

The names of the faithful that used the churches and took care of them — monks, nuns, priests and laymen alike — are frequently recorded in both painted and carved inscriptions. The concentration of inscriptions within a singular building demonstrates that churches often had multiple donors, who would team up together in order to finance repairs of areas that had been dilapidated and support construction and decoration of new liturgical furniture. Occasionally the inscriptions reveal that patronage was not measured only in financial contributions, but also in gifts of kind and even labor.²⁶⁵ This phenomenon paints a complex image of rural churches as elastic spaces that changed according to the necessities of their congregations, which grew and thrived when times were good, and maintained or deteriorated during times of hardship. Moreover, they were the very glue that tied the villagers together, allowing them to build communities which acted as collectives towards common goals. I believe that the Elaphiti churches, too, should be considered from this angle. Thirteenth-century archival sources record 26 churches on the Elaphiti Islands.²⁶⁶ They are mentioned mainly in economic contexts. The fact that these churches

²⁶⁴ Slobodan Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans: from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 321-322.

²⁶⁵ Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, esp. 47-48 and 102-103.

²⁶⁶ They are: On Šipan; Saint Nicholas, Saint Stephan, Saint Michael on Pakljena, Saint Peter, Saint George, Saint Barbara, Saint Elijah, Saint Andrew, Saint Michael on the Sea, saint John the Baptist and Saint Pancratius on Lopud; Saint Michael, Saint Barbara, Saint Elijah, Saint John, Saint Peter, Our Lady of Šunj (recorded as Santa Maria dei Bisogno); on Koločep: Saint Peter, Saint Michael, Saint John, Saint Sergius, and Saint Vitus. Josip Lučić identified

possessed land must have been a remnant from a period before the State started to impose measures to control the inheritance process.

Occasionally, however, especially through accounts of civic complaints and confrontations, we do get a glimpse into the odd, complex and ambiguous question of administrative jurisdiction over the churches. It appears that some of the churches — namely Saint John and Saint Peter on Koločep, Saint Michael on Lopud, Saint Andrew and Saint Michael in Pakljena on Šipan and Saint Isidore on Jakljan — had abbots, which is a title that unquestionably links them to a monastic function. Lisičar claimed that all of the churches on the Elaphiti Island probably had an official who bore the title of the abbot, but that the title was only nominal and acted as a remnant of an earlier period when the churches were monastic. He maintained that the area was used by hermits in the early medieval period, and his claim is embraced in Croatian historiography, although there is no evidence for it.²⁶⁷ By the 13th century, he argued, the churches had changed function, and became associated with the Ragusan Chapter.²⁶⁸

Lisičar's assertion that the title of the abbot on the Elaphiti Islands would have been purely symbolic and would not have reflected institutional function is at odds with the complex and formal church hierarchic system. It is particularly doubtful that this kind of loose nomenclature would have been applied in places of strong monastic presence, and sources confirm that the Elaphiti Islands were such areas. This would have been, to my knowledge, unique for both the Western and the Eastern Church. If Lisičar's statement has appeal, it is because it does seem strange that churches as miniscule in size as the ones preserved on Koločep, Lopud and Šipan

fourteen churches on the island of Šipan. Ibid., 80-82. However, he overlooked the church of Saint Helena, which is mentioned in Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/107.

²⁶⁷ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 78-79.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. This point is repeated by Tomas and Zeman, *Spomenici Otoka Lupuda*, 44.

would have been monastic. We have to remember, however, that only six Elaphiti churches were linked to an abbot in the 13th-century documents, and out of them only one — Saint Michael in Pakljena — survives today. This church has been connected to the Benedictine order since the 12th century. Beneath the early modern walls that still surround it might lie an older, unstudied monastic complex.²⁶⁹ Supposing that the monastic quarters were in fact there in the 13th century, which, considering written evidence, is a probability, the size of the church they used could have reflected the number of monks in the monastery. Namely, the church of Saint Michael would have been large enough to satisfy the needs of a monastic community of a few individuals, which was a type of foundation that was present in the area. For example, at the initial stage of its existence, the monastery on Daksa housed only four monks, and as the community grew, the complex was expanded.²⁷⁰

At the same time, another title emerges in relation to some of the Elaphiti churches; that of a *hereditarius*. The word does not appear frequently. It is never discussed in the Statute of Ragusa, and it was noted in less than two dozen archival documents of the 13th century, all of which referred to churches outside the urban milieu. The matter has received no attention in scholarship, which is hardly surprising, since there is to date not a single publication comprehensively focusing on the Church in Ragusa. The documents which mention the function of a *hereditarius* suggest that he was an individual administratively in charge of a church, and as such would have been implicated in any type of legal dispute on its behalf. In the case of monasteries, this person was the same as

²⁶⁹ Igor Fisković, “Bilješke o ranokršćanskim i ranosrednjovjekovnim spomenicima na otoku Šipanu” [Notes on Early Christian and Early Medieval Monuments on the Island of Šipan] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 18/1 (1970): 26; Josip Posedel, (1952) *Predromanički spomenici otoka Šipana* [Pre-Romanesque monuments of the island of Šipan], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/2, 125. The archaeological excavation is not likely to take place any time soon due to the complicated issues of ownership.

²⁷⁰ Lisičar, *Tri dubrovačka otočića*, 16-25.

the abbot, but for non-monastic churches this function was divided among multiple people. One source suggests that the title was passed down as an inheritance. Namely, Vitalis de Bogdacia and Mengacia de Stillo both identified themselves as “*hereditarius* of the church of Saint Martin in Gruž on the part of my mother,” Bela the daughter of late Calende de Mosca and Regina from the bloodline of those of Zamara, respectively.²⁷¹ Considering the position of women in the Ragusan State during the Middle Ages, it seems particularly strange that these individuals would inherit the title of *hereditarius* from their mothers, and indeed, they did not — at least not directly. They inherited it from an ancestor on their mother’s side. In the case of Vitalis de Bogdacia, that ancestor was almost certainly his grandfather, Calende de Mosca, who was deceased by that time, but who according to another document had acted as a *hereditarius* of the church of Saint Andrew on Šipan.²⁷²

At least four Elaphiti churches had *hereditarii*, but judging by the fact that both monastic and non-monastic churches were controlled by at least one person of this title, it is reasonable to assume that *hereditarii* were standard appointees in most, if not all rural churches. The sources paint a confusing picture of the nature of this position. On the one hand, most recorded *hereditarii* were church officials — abbots, priests and members of the clergy. On the other hand, however, laymen could also bear the title. In a document from 1285, *hereditarii* of the church of Saint Isidore on Jakljan stipulated that they were in dispute on behalf of the church with an individual from Šipan, Sergius Natalis, and requested that Marinus de Pesegna, likewise *hereditarius* of the respective church, renounced his position as Sersius’s attorney.²⁷³ How could Marinus have

²⁷¹ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/589.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, II/126.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, III/354.

overlooked this conflict of interest is beyond our knowledge. The more riveting question, however, is how did an attorney become a *hereditarius* alongside an abbot, a priest, a clergyman, and their unnamed “business partners”?

A partial answer to this question lies in the notion that the title of *hereditarius* was not necessarily bestowed through official ecclesiastical channels, but was conferred hereditarily, as suggested by the document about the church of Saint Martin in Gruž. Maybe the title should be understood as an evocation of past patronage, passed down from generation to generation from the time of the very individuals who once paid for the construction of the church, or contributed to its inventory. Creating a patronage lineage would have been a tangible way to constantly revive the memory of the churches’ original benefactors, while ensuring that these sacred places were properly cared for by individuals who were both devoted and emotionally invested. Scholars have agreed that the churches were initially built as private commissions, and assumed that the original patrons were wealthy landowners. However, the patronage of the altar screen of Saint Michael, which I will discuss shortly, demonstrates that this was not necessarily the case. In fact, the idea of cumulative patronage²⁷⁴ would explain why there were multiple *hereditarii* of a single building, and why some of them were laymen, while others were members of the clergy.

The churches almost certainly did see a change in administrative jurisdiction between the period of construction and the thirteenth century. However, the notion that they were passed into the hands of the Ragusan Chapter, as Lisičar argued, might not be accurate. In fact, the only document related the Elaphiti Islands that suggests direct Chapter jurisdiction, refers to the church of Saint John on Pusterla, which was not on the islands, but in the very heart of Ragusa, and only

²⁷⁴ I deliberately do not use the term collective patronage, because there is no evidence that the construction of any of the churches was the effort of a group of people.

had possessions on Šipan.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, it is possible that the available sources provide a skewed ratio of the clergy and laymen *hereditarii*. In the record related to the church of Saint Isidore on Jakljan only three individuals were listed as *hereditarii* by name, but they stipulated that they were acting on their own behalf and on the behalf of other men, who were also “patrons and *hereditarii*” of the church.²⁷⁶ The church officials spoke for the entire group, and the other men, likely laymen, were left unidentified.

Admittedly the evidence to support the theory of *hereditarii* as the heirs of church patrons is only circumstantial. However, the concept of cumulative patronage that would be passed down the line is compelling because it provides a fresh reading of the socio-religious environment of the Elaphiti Islands. This reading corresponds with the kind of stratification of the islands’ population which I have demonstrated in the previous chapter. Instead of the traditional scholarly emphasis on the singular influential donor, often otherwise unconnected to the territory, whose identity is linked to a particular monument based on the disproved notion that only rulers and affluent noblemen acted as patrons of churches in the Middle Ages, my analysis is concerned with the response of the communities of the Elaphiti Islands to their own needs.

²⁷⁵ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/164.

²⁷⁶ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/354.

Helena's Altar Screen: A Humble Devotion of a Medieval Queen or a Case of Mistaken Identity?

In 2007 Vedrana Delonga published an article about the inscription on the altar screen of Koločep, an ensemble which had been reconstructed during the 1990s restoration campaign of four churches on the Elaphiti Islands (Fig. 38).²⁷⁷ In the article, she discussed the partially preserved inscription, and provided her reconstruction of the missing parts. The full text, she argues, originally read: +QVESO VOS OM(NE)S Q(VI) ASPICITIS V[T FVNDATIS PRECES] P(RO) SORORE (E)T REGINA Q(UA) EDIFICA[VIT ECCLESIA(M) IN HONORE(M) S(AN)C(T)I MICHAELIS ARCHANGELI].²⁷⁸ The part of the inscription which would reveal the name of the church where this object was located has not been preserved, but it was reconstructed following a consensus with the restoration team. Based on the morphology of the letters, Delonga dated the inscription to the second half of the eleventh century, and linked it to a number of similar finds on the Dalmatian coast.²⁷⁹ Taking the analysis a step further, she proposed that the patron of the altar screen, and of the church itself, was none other than Queen Helena of Hungary.²⁸⁰ According to Delonga, Helena's tie to Ladislaus I of Hungary, and marriage to the Croatian king Demetrius Zvonimir would have made her a "sister and queen" of exactly the period to which the altar screen

²⁷⁷ Vedrana Delonga, "Pisana uspomena," 199-211.

²⁷⁸ I ask all of you reading this to [speak sincere prayers] for the sister and queen who built [the church in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel].

²⁷⁹ Delonga, "Pisana uspomena," 201-202.

²⁸⁰ For more on Queen Helena, see Andrija Mohorovičić, "Hrvatsko kulturnopovijesno ozračje u doba kralja Zvonimira" [Croatian Cultural and Historical Environment at the Time of King Zvonimir], in *Zvonimir, kralj hrvatski: zbornik radova* [Zvonimir, the King of Croatia: A Collection of Papers], ed. Ivo Goldstein, (HAZU, Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 1997), 7-10; Zdenka Janeković Römer, "Obiteljski odnosi u hrvatskom društvu XI stoljeća [Family Relations in the Croatian Society of the 11th Century] in *Ibid.*, 117-124.

was dated.²⁸¹ Despite the lack of evidence, this identification has, until recently, been widely accepted.²⁸²

Why would this queen, who was a descendent of the Arpad dynasty, commission a church on a small Dalmatian island to which she otherwise had no known connections? The premise itself is doubtful, and I will offer a different reading of the inscription, which will shed further light on the function and use of the Elaphiti churches; matters that have long been overlooked. Previous studies of the surviving churches have done the important task of uncovering the material, but have focused primarily on stylistic elements and architectural classification, emphasizing the ninth, tenth- and eleventh-century construction phases. They left aside, for the most part, the late medieval additions to the inventories, as well as issues of their functions, administrative control, and role in the thirteenth-century community on the islands. I will discuss these matters by analyzing the surviving materials and juxtaposing the finds with written records.

The reconstruction of the altar screen supposedly commissioned by Queen Helena has a long prequel. Its pieces were scattered all over the island and were gradually collected over the course of decades. The first fragment came from a wall of the island's parish church, where it had reportedly been enclosed by the parish priest of Koločep, Vicko Medini, at the beginning of the 20th century.²⁸³ The item was a spolium of an ancient sarcophagus, re-carved into a gable of an altar screen. On its front side it depicts the Archangel Michael dressed in a chlamys and carrying a scepter in his hand. The inscription underneath the representation, the same one that Vedrana

²⁸¹ Vedrana Delonga, "Pisana uspomena," 203-204.

²⁸² Magdalena Skoblar offered a different read in an article which was published as part of her book on eleventh century figural sculpture of Dalmatia. Magdalena Skoblar, "Regina and her Screen: The Church of St. Michael on the Island of Koločep." in *Figural Sculpture in Eleventh-Century Dalmatia and Croatia: Patronage, Architectural Context, History*, ed. eadem (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 155-176.

²⁸³ Medini presumably did this to preserve the fragment from being stolen, Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 87.

Delonga analyzed, was so fragmented (reading only SOROR+RE), that it could not be reconstructed at first. Years later, in 1984, a matching fragment found during the restoration of the church of Saint Sergius provided a partial continuation of the inscription, which now read SOROR+REGINA Q[AE] EDIFICA[VIT]. Finally, the campaign of the 1990s yielded a number of fragments of liturgical furnishings in the walls of the mortuary chapel which had been added to the church of Saint Nicholas in the late nineteenth century. Following the information provided by Lisičar from his interviews of the island's inhabitants that the deteriorated church of Saint Michael (Fig. 39), located only about two hundred meters from the church of Saint Nicholas, served as a source of construction material for the morgue of the newly declared cemetery church, scholars have concluded that the sculpture fragments must have come from Saint Michael.²⁸⁴ The same reasoning was applied to the spolia that had been found elsewhere, namely in the later additions to the churches of Santa Barbara and Saint Francis, in the walls of the more recent churches of Saint Mary and the Holy Trinity, as well as in a private secular context. The yard wall of a house in Gornje Čelo, all the way on the other side of the island, enclosed a fragment of an architrave with an inscription, which in its dimensions corresponded to the gable with the depiction of Archangel Michael. The assembly of all of these fragments allowed for the reconstruction of the altar screen.

Apart from the knowledge about the transfer of construction material from the church of Saint Michael to the church of Saint Nicholas in the 19th century, there is not a great deal of evidence which would verify the placement of the altar screen in the former church, rather than Saint Nicholas, where the majority of the fragments were found, or in any other church on the island for that matter. The very first reasoning for the connection between the altar screen and the church of Saint Michael was the correlation between the church's titulary and the representation

²⁸⁴ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 88-89.

on the gable, which is a strong argument.²⁸⁵ However, archaeology could not shed any light on the matter. The restoration team did not remove the early modern flooring, so it is impossible to compare the holes that presumably would have been found in the original pavement with the width of the gable and pilasters. Peković claimed that the dimensions of the screen correspond perfectly to the width between the piers closest to the sanctuary, which is the same place where the altar screen stood in the church of Saint Nicholas, and that the same area in Saint Nicholas is too narrow.²⁸⁶ Peković obviously only took into account the overall dimensions of the entire reconstructed altar screen, rather than the dimensions of its individual parts. Namely, he does not mention the fact that the width of the arch of the gable perfectly corresponds to the width between the grooves that are still visible in the flooring of the church of Saint Nicholas (Fig. 40).²⁸⁷ This suggests that the gable was part of the altar screen of the respective church.

One of the arguments used to group the fragments together was that they were all re-carved from ancient marble sarcophagi, and that the other pieces found during the restoration were made out of limestone. The two chancel slabs used in the reconstruction show different stylistic features (Fig. 41). The left one features a recurring guilloche which interlaces across a circle in the shape of the letter X. Within the rim of circle are two human figures playing the horn on the left and right, and what appears to be a winged lion and a hunting scene on top and bottom, respectively. Conversely, the right chancel slab features a circle with a diamond inscribed into it, and a set of four guilloche bands which interlace from the rim of the circle into the middle and form a smaller circle within the square. Leaf motifs extend from the guilloche, and other vegetal patterns interlace

²⁸⁵ This argument falls collapses if we consider that Koločep might have had more than one church dedicated to Saint Michael, as we know Šipan did.

²⁸⁶ He did not, however, provide the actual dimensions. Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 103.

²⁸⁷ Both widths are 49 cm.

on the frame, but there are no human figures. Grouping two different slabs on the same screen is far from unusual. In fact, in reconstructions of altar screens scholars have consistently matched fragments of various patterns and rhythms, so there would be no reason to be bothered by the small differences such as those of the aforementioned two fragments, if it were not for one thing.

Peković and his team did not use all of the chancel fragments found during the campaign in the church of Saint Nicholas for the reconstruction of the altar screen. Located in the Parish Museum on Koločep is an additional marble piece which once belonged to a chancel barrier (Fig. 42). It is severely damaged, trimmed, and, judging by the hole punctured in its middle, repurposed, but its decorative pattern is still clearly discernable. It depicts circle, diamond and guilloche motifs with leafy elements, identical to the right slab of the reconstructed altar screen, except for a bird (or another winged animal) in the place where the piece used in the reconstruction has a (reconstructed) flower. Moreover, another marble fragment inserted into the north wall of the fifteenth-century church of the Holy Trinity in Donje Čelo shares the same characteristics, and is remarkably well preserved (Fig. 43).²⁸⁸ In the center of this object is an animal resembling a griffin; an apotropaic creature that frequently appears in Byzantine sculpture.²⁸⁹ It is unclear why Peković did not include these fragments in his book, for it is evident that they should go together, although their exact arrangement remains debatable. Was more than one altar screen of almost identical decoration commissioned from the same workshop, or were the three matching pieces, and

²⁸⁸ Lisičar's guide who showed him around the island, a gentleman by the last name of Svilokos, worked on repairing the church in 1930, and placed the fragment, which had been laying around, into the wall himself. Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 80.

²⁸⁹ Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "An Alternate View of the Late Byzantine Sanctuary Screen," in *Thresholds of the Sacred*, ed. eadem (Washington, DC: DO Research Library and Collection, 2016), 148. See also Magdalena Skoblar, "Beast from the East: The Griffin's Journey to Dalmatian Eleventh-Century Sculpture," in *Aspice Hunc Opus Mirum: Festschrift on the Occasion of Nikola Jakšić's 70th Birthday*, ed. Ivan Josipović and Miljenko Jurković (Zadar/Zagreb: University of Zadar/International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 2020): 293-304.

possibly the fourth, with the guilloche motif, part of one structure, located in a larger, now vanished church?²⁹⁰

Sculptural inventory from the Elaphiti churches finds parallels to the material found at about a dozen sites, both in the city of Ragusa and on the islets of Lokrum, Saint Andrew and Mrkana, although the majority of them comes from two locations in the City of Ragusa: the church of Saint Steven and the church of Saint Peter. The church of Saint Steven, dedicated to one of the City's earliest venerated saints collapsed in the great earthquake of 1667 and was never repaired. It was then for centuries used as an impromptu lapidarium, where stones were brought to and taken from to other City locations. It is believed that a great deal of sculpture found there comes in fact from the church of Saint Peter, which was once Ragusa's Cathedral. This church was built in the 10th century and according to Peković's reconstruction, it was a domed church with bell-towers and a westwork type of construction. The church was remodeled in several stages, but subsequently deteriorated and was replaced by new monastic complexes.²⁹¹ The only remaining part of it standing today is the crypt, which is located underneath the City's Music School.

Cumulatively there are hundreds of fragments, featuring both purely geometric interlace patterns of various arrangements, and vegetal patterns. In fact, the floral and vine motifs are so diverse that the Archeological Museum of Dubrovnik, which now houses most of these pieces, prepared an exhibition in collaboration with botanists, who tried to uncover which kinds of plants are depicted on the representations.²⁹² The fragments differ in size and function, among them there

²⁹⁰ Epigraphic evidence confirms the existence of the parish church of Saint Mary in Donje Čelo in the 13th century, but it is possible that the church was built even earlier. Ibid., 68.

²⁹¹ For more on this church, see Željko Peković, *Crkva Sv. Petra Velikoga – Dubrovačka predromanička katedrala i njezina skulptura/La chiesa di S. Pietro Maggiore La cattedrale preromanica di Ragusa e il suo arredo scultoreo* (Split: Studia Mediteranea Archeologica, 2010).

²⁹² The exhibition is currently on display at the fortress of Revelin in Dubrovnik.

are parts of ciboria and chancel screens, pilasters, door frames, capitals, pillars and windows (Figs. 44-45).

The evidence from the urban churches is incomparable to that of the Elaphiti Islands. These are much larger buildings, more elaborate in their construction method and form, and with costlier furnishings which included marble. On the other hand, there are stylistic grounds for comparison (see for example Figs. 35 and 45), although the fragments from the Elaphiti and those from the city churches are not seen as contemporaneous. Copious pieces of stone liturgical furnishings dated from the ninth to eleventh century survive in the territory of Dalmatia. Similar to the sculpture from the territory of Ragusa, those of wider Dalmatia include fragments of altar screens and ciboria decorated with characteristic three-ribbon interlace patterns of braids and geometric shapes, interspersed with birds or floral motifs (Fig. 46). In the eleventh century, stylized and compressed human figures were introduced into the scenes (Fig. 47). Although reliefs with comparable stylistic features can be found all over Dalmatia and Istria, Croatian scholarship has been overwhelmingly focused on the network of workshops in the areas of Split, Trogir and Knin, linking the patronage of these objects with the first dynasty of Croatian rulers, and interpreting the commissions as an exhortation of statehood.²⁹³ In some cases this was true, since there are inscriptions accompanying

²⁹³ The literature is too extensive to be fully listed here. For a general introduction, see Tonči Burić, “Predromanička skulptura u Trogiru” [Pre-Romanesque Sculpture in Trogir], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/12 (1982): 127-160; idem., “Predromaničke oltarne ograde: vijek uporabe i sekundarna namjena” [Pre-Romanesque Altar Screens: Expiration Date and Secondary Use], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/24 (1997): 57-76; Stjepan Gunjača, *Starohrvatska baština* [Old-Croatian heritage], (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1976); Radovan Ivančević, *Umjetničko blago Hrvatske* [Artistic Treasures of Croatia] (Belgrade, Jugoslovenska revija - Motovun, 1986); Miljenko Jurković and Tugomir Lukšić, *Starohrvatska spomenička baština - rađanje prvog hrvatskog kulturnog pejzaža* [Old Croatian Artistic Heritage: The Birth of the First Croatian Cultural Landscape] (Zagreb: Muzejsko-Galerijski Centar, 1996); *Hrvatski spomenici u kninskoj okolini, uz ostale suvremene dalmatinske, iz dobe narodne hrvatske dinastije* [Croatian Monuments Around Knin and Other Contemporaneous Dalmatian Monuments from the Period of the Croatian National Dynasty] (S.I: Sagwan Press, 2015); Nikola Jakšić, “Predromaničko kiparstvo” [Pre-Romanesque Sculpture], in *Tisuću godina hrvatske skulpture* [A Thousand Years of Croatian Sculpture], ed. Igor Fisković, (Zagreb: Muzejsko-Galerijski centar, 1991) 13-26. For the territory of Istria, see Ante Milošević, *Hrvati i Karolinzi, I: Rasprave i vrele* [Croatians and the Carolingians; Volume I: Discussions and sources], (Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloskih spomenika, 2000); idem,

the imagery that mention names of Croatian kings,²⁹⁴ and one relief presents a royal portrait likely depicting Peter Krešimir IV (Fig. 48), inserted into a baptismal font at a later date.²⁹⁵ In the relative absence of written sources,²⁹⁶ these objects have been instrumental in recreating the narrative about the rulers. However, such isolated examples are not enough to attribute the entire category of early medieval stone carving to the royal dynasty.

Medieval scholars in general have overwhelmingly focused on patronage through the lens of royal figures and high-ranking officials, however, extensive material evidence demonstrates that people of various social and economic statuses acted as patrons of churches.²⁹⁷ In the Greek

Hrvati i Karolinzi, II: Katalog [Croatians and the Carolingians, Volume II: Catalogue] (Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloskih spomenika, 2000); Carl D. Sheppard, "Pre-Romanesque Sculpture: Evidence for the Cultural Evolution of the People of the Dalmatian Coast," *Gesta* 23/1 (1984): 7-16.

²⁹⁴ Vedrana Delonga, *Latinski epigrafički spomenici u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Hrvatskoj* [Epigraphic Monuments in Latin in Early Medieval Croatia] (Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1996), esp. 13-35.

²⁹⁵ The journal *Starohrvatska Prosvjeta* has an entire volume, written by Igor Fisković, dedicated to this object. See esp. Igor Fisković, "Reljef Petra Krešimira IV.: Odnos reljefa prema povijesti i baštini kasnog 11. stoljeća" [The Relief of Peter Krešimir IV: The Connection of the Relief to the History and Heritage of the Late 11th century], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, III/28-29 (2001): 218-252; "Reljef Petra Krešimira IV.: Kulturne i duhovne pretpostavke pojavi reljefa" [The Relief of Peter Krešimir IV: Cultural and Spiritual Implications], 161-188, and Reljef Petra Krešimira IV.: Mjesto reljefa u kiparstvu njegova doba [The Relief of Peter Krešimir IV: The Position of the Relief Among the Sculpture of its Time], 189-217. See also Tomislav Galović, "Croatia Benedictina: Hrvatsko Kraljevstvo, Petar Krešimir IV. i Ordo sancti Benedicti" [Croatia Benedictina: The Croatian Kingdom, Petar Krešimir IV and the Order of Saint Benedict], in *Abbatissa Ingenuitate Precipua: The Proceedings of the Scientific Colloquium "The 950th anniversary of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary in Zadar (1066-2016)*, ed. Pavuša Vežić and Ivan Josipović (Zadar: University of Zadar and the Monastery of Saint Mary in Zadar, 2020), 53-74.

²⁹⁶ Beside the inscriptions, the only written record that remains of the two hundred year-long dynasty of Croatian rulers are 29 documents, collected from various Dalmatian archives by historian Ivan Lučić in the 17th century, and a largely unreliable chronicle written by a priest in Duklja between the 12th and the 15th century. See Ivan Lučić, *O kraljevstvu Dalmacije i Hrvatske* [De regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae libri sex], trans. and ed. Bruna Kuntić Makvić (Zagreb: VPA, 1986); Diocleas, *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina* [Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja], ed. and trans. Slavko Miljušković (Podgorica: Grafički zavod, 1967). For analysis of these sources, see for example Nada Klaić, *Diplomatička analiza isprava iz doba hrvatskih narodnih vladara* [Analysis of Diplomatic Documents from the Period of Croatian National Rulers] (Zagreb: Povijesno društvo Hrvatske, 1965); Miljen Šamšalović, "Isprave iz vremena hrvatskih narodnih vladara u djelu Ivana Luciusa-Lučića" [Documents from the Period of Croatian National Rulers in the Work of Ivan Lucius-Lučić], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 6 (1969): 61-73.

²⁹⁷ Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, esp. 128-150; Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Alice-Mary Talbot, "The Culture of Lay Piety in Medieval Byzantium (1054-1453)," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, V, Eastern Christianity*, ed. Michael Angold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 79-100, esp. 97-100; Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, "Female Church Founders: The Agency of the Village Widow in Late Byzantium," in *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. Lioba Theis, Margaret Mullett and Michael Grünbart et. al. (Vienna: Bohlau

countryside, for example, there are numerous examples of collective commissions, and there are even instances of entire villages coming together to build and decorate their respective churches, and sharing the expense.²⁹⁸ Such examples defy not only the idea that one needed to be rich and high in status to display devotion through patronage, but also speak in favor of the ability of medieval common people in rural areas to act, organize, and immortalize their concerns in a creative manner. I believe that medieval workshops of carvers, whose projects survive alongside the entire Croatian coast, had more economically stratified buyers than it is traditionally considered, and that this is the context in which we should understand the altar screen from Koločep.

Which church originally housed the altar screen is beyond our knowledge at this point, but the idea that it was any of the surviving buildings contradicts the hypothesis that it was Queen Helena who commissioned it. All of these churches are extremely small in dimensions, and moreover, relatively modest in execution. Neither the construction method — the use of roughly cut stone — nor any of the decorative features suggest a lavish display worthy of royal commission. The use of marble should not delude us into thinking otherwise, for it is clear that it was not brought to the island for the occasion, but rather repurposed from the material that was likely lying around. Furthermore, the re-carving itself was done in a haphazard way, for the master did not bother to remove the reliefs of the two figures from the ancient sarcophagus he used to the

Verlag, 2012), 195-211; Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Alice-Mary Talbot, “Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside,” 481-90; Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini, Volume 5, 1992).

²⁹⁸ Sophia Kalopissi Verti, “Collective Patterns of Patronage in the Late Byzantine Village: The Evidence of Church Inscriptions”, in *Donation et donateurs dans le monde byzantine*, eds. Jean-Michel Spieser and Elisabeth Yota (Paris: Réalités Byzantines 14, 2012), 125-140; eadem, (13th -16th c.): *A Short Note.*” *Zbornik Radova Vizantinoloskog Instituta* 44 (2007), 333-340.

make the gable, but used the interior of the sarcophagus for the front, and left the figures standing on the reverse — headless and upside down — knowing that they would not have been visible to those who were not allowed to pass the threshold of the sanctuary (Fig. 49).

If the modest execution is not enough of a reason to discount the altar screen from being a royal commission, there is one clue that disproves the theory altogether. This evidence is found in the very inscription that I have introduced at the beginning of the chapter. As I have pointed out, countless inscriptions in churches all over the Mediterranean record medieval patrons of diverse economic means and ranks. What all of these patrons had in common was the aspiration of salvation, which was believed to be more achievable through the act of gift-giving.²⁹⁹ Leaving a permanent trace of their piety was part of this objective. Indeed, medieval donors always made sure that their names were included in inscriptions that described the circumstance of their commissions. Such dedications, naturally, often do not survive, but when they do, they are consistent in that regard. The only exceptions to this that I am aware of are collective commissions from Greek villages, where it would have been impractical or physically impossible to list all of the donors individually due to the lack of space.³⁰⁰ The fact that we do not find Helena's name on the inscription is evidence that she was not the one who commissioned the work. The idea that a queen would fail to identify herself in a dedicatory inscription would be unprecedented.

Moreover, there is another way in which the inscription can be read. Namely, Delonga noted that the letter between the words SORORE and REGINA was a T, which, she claimed,

²⁹⁹ Rico Franses, *Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art: The Vicissitudes of Contact between Human and Divine*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 87-151. On the intersectionality between art and devotion, see Ivan Drpić, *Epigram, Art and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016).

³⁰⁰ Kalopissi Verti, "Collective Patterns of Patronage," 128.

stands for an abbreviated form of ET.³⁰¹ She translated the phrase accordingly, as “sister and queen.” However, this character does not morphologically match the other T found on the inscription. It does, conversely, correlate with the cross which marks the beginning of the invocation. If we read it that way, the inscription states: SORORE + REGINA (Fig. 50). In other words, the patron was not an unnamed sister and queen, but *sister* Regina; a nun who requested that a cross be placed between her title and name, likely in order to emphasize her ordained status and in extension, her piety.³⁰²

It should not surprise us to find a nun acting as a patron of a rural church on an island. The study of female monasticism in rural areas is still in its infancy, but Gerstel and Alice-Mary Talbot have demonstrated the strong presence of nuns in the Byzantine countryside. They point out that over a hundred of the two hundred and fifty nuns recorded in the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologen Zeit* were in some way connected to non-urban environments, whether it was as residents of rural monasteries, patrons of rural churches, or simply owners of land in rural areas.³⁰³ As for the Elaphiti Islands, no records of a nunnery were found prior to the 15th century, but that is reflective of the state of research and it should not be taken for granted that one did not exist. Nuns feature in archival sources related to the islands well before the early modern period, admittedly not as frequently as monks, priests and other church officials, but nevertheless consistently. Thirteenth-century documents record the monastery of Saint Nicholas, a female

³⁰¹ Conversely, Magdalena Skoblar read the character as a beneventan abbreviation of the word “*eius*,” and thus interpreted the inscription as *soror eius Regina*, arguing that the screen was commissioned by a local patron whose name did not survive and his sister Regina. Skoblar, “Regina and her screen,” 168-169.

³⁰² Judging by the archival documents, Regina was a standard female name in medieval Ragusa. At least twelve women named Regina featured among 13th-century records, and their names appear in at least 20 documents. The respective women were of various socio-economic statuses, and one of them was a nun and an abbess of a monastery in the city. For more detailed references, see indexes of sourcebooks Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/391; Lučić, *Spisi*, II/406; III/362 and IV/381.

³⁰³ Gerstel and Talbot, “Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside,” 482.

nunnery which was likely located in the city, but owned property on Lopud,³⁰⁴ They also mention by name several nuns who were privately connected to the islands. One nun named Zida was set to benefit from the yield of a property on Lopud that her parents had leased for cultivation.³⁰⁵ Another nun acted as a creditor to her relative, who mortgaged his vineyard on Šipan to her as a bond for payment.³⁰⁶ Some women took vows after they were widowed. This was certainly the case with a woman named Slaua de Certello, a nun in the monastery of Saint Bartholomeus, who had land on Šipan as a dowry, but gave it up in favor of her brother-in-law in return for 50 solidi denariourum grossum. It was her abbess Radasclaua who accepted the payment.³⁰⁷

We cannot be sure that any of these women actually lived on the respective islands at the time that these documents were composed. However, a group of women referred to as *religiosae*, undoubtedly did. As we have discussed above, one of them, Maria, inherited her mother's vineyard on Koločep specifically with the purpose of dwelling. After she took her vows, she would receive 40 *hyperpera*, and after her passing, the property would be given to her brother.³⁰⁸ We see a similar agreement in an example of two sisters, Maria and Anna, whose brothers granted them tenant rights and a substantial vineyard on Šipan. The document specifies that the two women could stay in the same house with their brothers if they wished, but that the land must be returned after their passing. After they would take their vows, the brothers would give them 100 *hyperpera*.³⁰⁹ Both

³⁰⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/210.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I/674.

³⁰⁶ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/675.

³⁰⁷ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/630.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I/528.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I/369.

of these documents suggest that the women would stay in their respective houses even after they take their vows.³¹⁰

Such documents, albeit scarce, support the argument that the altar screen from Koločep could have been commissioned by a nun. After taking the mantle, women called *religiosae* were granted money that was specifically directed towards the salvation of their souls. These funds, which we can characterize as a type of dowry for those who were to marry God, must have varied depending on the means of the family, but in the aforementioned cases they were enough to secure a house and land. This I bring up just for the sake of comparison, for nuns did not necessarily need a house or land, although evidence shows that many of them did own property. There was a variety of ways in which the aspiration for salvation manifested itself for various groups of medieval people. Patronage was one of the most common and universal ones. But while connected to patronage, religious devotion was not dependent on it. Regardless of patronage, veneration practices left their trace in the pictorial record: saints depicted on church walls. This will be the focus of the next of discussion.

³¹⁰ Sharon Gerstel and Alice-Mary Talbot note the existence of women who lived in a monastic lifestyle, but in private houses in rural areas of Byzantium. Gerstel and Talbot, "Nuns in the Byzantine Countryside," 489.

The Wall Paintings of Saint John on Šipan and Saint Nicholas on Koločep: Program and Problems of Identification

Although it is likely that all the Elaphiti churches were once covered in wall painting, only two churches preserve parts of their decoration. Both of these churches — Saint Nicholas on Koločep and Saint John on Šipan — have had their wall paintings covered by mortar and lime, and the cycles were rediscovered relatively recently. Unsurprisingly, both of them are among the best-preserved of the Elaphiti churches, partially due to the conservation and restoration work undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and partially because they function still to this day. In other words, it is the continuous use of these buildings that has kept them maintained, even though the adaptations and late additions that occurred in both caused significant damage.

The church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep serves as the funerary chapel of the island's only cemetery, a function that it acquired — according to ethnographic data — in the nineteenth century, when the cemetery was moved to its present location.³¹¹ The prior function of the monument is uncertain. There are no mentions of it in the archival sources, and it is quite possible that Saint Nicholas is not its original dedication, a point to which I shall return. Around 1868 a covered porch was added to the west side of the church.³¹² Perhaps it was then that the belltower was built, but it is more likely that this element had already been standing for a while at that moment.³¹³ In any case, the original front entrance of the church was expanded during the

³¹¹ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 87; Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 10. The scaffolding was never removed after the restoration, which, due to the small dimensions of the building, hinders its function for the time being.

³¹² Some of the older residents whom Lisičar talked to before he published his book in 1932, who still had recollection of the matter, provided a specific date for the event. Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 87.

³¹³ The year 1536 is written on the bell, along with the signature of Ivan Krstitelj Rabljanin (Johannes Baptista Arbensis de la Tolle), a famous bellmaker from the island of Rab who was active in the State of Ragusa, but also in Italy and Spain. It is possible that the belltower was constructed in the 19th century and an old bell was installed into it, but given the position of the belltower, it is more likely that was built before the covered atrium was added to the church.

intervention.³¹⁴ The church of Saint John on Šipán went through a different kind of transformation with a similar result. Sometime in the early modern period, probably in the sixteenth century, a larger structure was built as an extension, effectively converting the old church into the sanctuary of the new one.

In other words, both Saint Nicholas and Saint John the Baptist lost their original façades, along with the entire decoration of their western walls. Despite the recent restoration, the state of preservation is not particularly good elsewhere in the buildings, either. The wall paintings are preserved only fragmentarily so we cannot definitively talk about the program as a whole. Due to their condition, it is in some respects not even possible to talk about style or iconography. It is apparent, however, that both churches demonstrate basic Byzantine themes and forms amalgamated with Western elements. While the cycles have been previously dated, and I will provide my own arguments for a redating in a later chapter, it needs to be acknowledged that dating wall painting exclusively based on style is an elusive endeavor to begin with. This is made harder by the fact that some of the remaining figures are in poor condition and have lost their identification marks, and or inscriptions on their scrolls. Furthermore, there are a number of iconographic and decorative elements in the painting which could be classified as unusual. Here I have in mind

Željko Peković dates the belltower to the 19th century, but states that it was the topic of contention among the colleagues who worked on the restoration. Peković *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 17. For more on master Ivan Krstitelj Rabljanin, see Vladimir Muljević, *Ljevač zvona i topova Ivan Krstitelj Rabljanin* [Bell- and Cannon Smelter Ivan Krstitelj Rabljanin] (Rab: SIZ za kulturu općine, 1990).

³¹⁴ The original narrow portal of the church was reconstructed during the recent restoration, the doorframe was restored to its place. Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 12-16. The exterior was painted based on the pigments taken from the façade of the church. For more on the chemical analysis of the pigments in the church, see Miona Miliša, “Interpretacije predromaničke pleterne skulpture iz aspekta polikromije i postupka izrade samih kamenih reljefa” [The Interpretation of the Pre-Romanesque Interlace Sculpture from the Aspect of Polychromy and the Method of Construction of the Stone Reliefs], in *Zbornik radova s prve medievističke znanstvene radionice u Rijeci* [Proceedings from the First Medieval Workshop in Rijeka], eds. Kosana Jovanović and Suzana Miljan (Rijeka: Filozofski Fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci, 2014), 173-205.

facets that are either overall rare, uncommon for the territory, or inconsistent with both Byzantine and Western traditions. Such traits, exhibited in ways specific to each area, can be found, among others, in the Peloponnese, Crete, Epiros, Sicily and the south of Italy— in other words, liminal zones, borderlines territories, and places of great cultural overlap.³¹⁵ As I discuss the Elaphiti painting, I will bring up parallels and comparisons and suggest possible connections and potentials for future trajectories in research.

In the apse of the church of Saint John the Baptist survives a rather typical example of the Deesis, with Christ seated in the middle and flanked by the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, both of whom are holding scrolls (Fig. 51). Below the Deesis are four medallions with busts of frontally placed figures, who, judging by their faintly recognizable episcopal garments — *omophoria* and possibly *polystavria* — as well as their placement within the sanctuary, should be identified as bishop saints (Figs. 52-53).³¹⁶ Outside the apse, fragments of painting are preserved from about a

³¹⁵ For artistic hybridity in such areas, see, among others, Sharon E. J. Gerstel, “Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea,” in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki Laiou and Roy Mottahedeh (Washington, DC: DO Research Library and Collection, 2001), 263-285; Angeliki Lymberopoulou, *Whose Mediterranean is it Anyway?* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), Anna Christidou, “Unknown Byzantine Art in the Balkan Area: Art, Power and Patronage in Twelfth to Fourteenth Century Churches in Albania,” PhD diss. (Courtauld Institute of Art, 2010); Eva R. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24/1 (2001): 17-50; Karen C. Britt, “Roger II of Sicily: Rex, Basileus, and Khalif? Identity, Politics, and Propaganda in the Cappella Palatina,” *Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2007): 21-45.; Charles E. Nicklies, “Builders, Patrons, and Identity: The Domed Basilicas of Sicily and Calabria,” *Gesta*, Vol. 43/2 (2004): 99-114; Linda Safran, *The Medieval Salento: Art and Identity in Southern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

³¹⁶ Nikolina Maraković and Tin Turković identify them as the four Church Fathers: Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzus and Athanasius of Alexandria. Nikolina Maraković and Tin Turković, “Liturgical Vestments in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century Mural Paintings of Dubrovnik and Elaphiti Islands – a Contribution to the Study of ‘Adrio-Byzantinism’ on the Eastern Adriatic,” *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 40 (2016): 12. However, it needs to be noted that there are no inscriptions preserved next to the figures any or other features that would point to their identity. Sharon Gerstel warns that the number of bishops in church sanctuaries varies, although four is the most common number, and that Basil the Great and John Chrysostom are always included, whereas the selection of the other two (or more) depends on multiple criteria. Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle and London: College Art Association with University of Washington Press, 1999), 23-24. For more on liturgical vestments, see Warren Woodfin, “Orthodox Liturgical Textiles and Clerical Self-Referentiality,” in *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages*, eds. Kate Dimitrova and Margaret Goehring (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 31-51.

meter high upwards. They are found everywhere: on the sixty-centimeter-wide band framing the sanctuary, on the indented arches between the pilasters which separate the bays, on the pilasters themselves, on the vaults, on the slanting planes beneath the dome, as well as on the small arched area directly below the pendentives (Fig. 54). In other words, the entire surface of the church used to be painted. The fact that no traces of it were discovered in the lower registers is in all likelihood due to the later interventions and the replacement of the original floor. On the south side of the band around the sanctuary partially survives an image of a young saint, dressed in a white garment, and holding in his hand a finely decorated box (Figure 55). A thin stole hanging from his left shoulder and freely falling down the body — the so-called *orarion* — points to the idea that we are looking at a deacon. This, along with the attribute in his hand, links the figure to standard depictions of Saint Stephen the Protomartyr in Byzantine churches, and indeed, the still visible letters S and NV(?)S that mark the beginning and the end of his name confirm this identification.³¹⁷

Close to Saint Stephen, but in the south-east corner of the church is a well-preserved male saint who occupies the indented arch beneath the vault, whose name is no longer visible. (Fig. 56). Considering his beard, dark hair, and a bold spot on the top of his head, he might be Saint Paul. However, given the lack of inscription and attribute, he could also be another saint with similar physiognomy.³¹⁸ Other traces of painting are visible as we move away from the sanctuary and

³¹⁷ The saint was, to my knowledge, first identified in Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 61. The author states that the inscription next to the saint reads S(TEPH)ANOS, but the condition of the painting has since then substantially deteriorated. The iconography of Saint Stephen has not received much attention in scholarship. For a brief history of the cult and eastern iconographic tradition, see Yuri Piatnitsky, et. al., *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia: Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (London: Saint Catherine Foundation, 2000), 112-113. For certain insights into details, particularly the presence of the deacon attire, see Dragan Vojvodić “Prilog poznavanju ikonografije i kulta Sv. Stefana u Vizantiji i Srbiji” [A Contribution to the Understanding of the Iconography and Cult of St. Stephen in Byzantium and Serbia], in *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana* [Mural Painting of the Monastery of Dečani], ed. Vojislav Đurić (Beograd: SANU, 1995), 537-538. For iconography of the saint on the west, see Kara Ann Morrow, “Ears and Eyes and Mouth and Heart... His Soul and His Senses: The Visual St. Stephen Narrative as the Essence of Ecclesiastical Authority,” PhD diss. (Florida State University, 2007).

³¹⁸ Cf. Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 60, who identifies the figure as Saint Peter.

examine the central and western arches. The state of preservation is so poor that it is impossible to say who was depicted on these scenes. The representation in the south-west corner stands out, at least in the compositional sense if not in terms of content. The only discernable thing on it is the bifora-like frame which, we can assume, used to depict two saints who have since vanished (Fig. 57). Structurally and decoratively the construction is close to what Sharon Gerstel and Michalis Kappas call *cosmatesque arches*, and interpret as a Western element.³¹⁹ The term *cosmatesque* refers to a type decoration which imitates the motifs of the interlace patterns produced by the Cosmati, a family of mosaicists active in Rome in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³²⁰

One of the most noticeable figures in the church is Archangel Michael, placed in the central bay on the north wall, in the area beneath the dome. He can be unmistakably identified based on his characteristic hairstyle, the fact that he wears a *loros* — an important component of Byzantine imperial attire reserved in painting for emperors and Archangels — and the inscription right and left to his head that reads MI-CHAEL (Fig. 58). Next to him, on the pilaster band separating the central bay from the eastern one is a small saint of unknown identity. His only distinguishing features are his youthful appearance and the cross he holds in his right hand (Fig. 59). Dozens of different martyr saints with the same description, identifiable by inscriptions next to them, can be found in churches all over Greece. A great number of them are found in similar locations within the church, and wear a red himation over a blue chiton, just like the aforementioned saint. Female saints, too, share the same characteristics. However, in the majority of cases their head is covered,

³¹⁹ Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Michalis Kappas, “Between East and West: Locating Monumental Painting from the Peloponnese” in *Whose Mediterranean is it Anyway?*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou, (New York, NY : Routledge, 2018), 191-192.

³²⁰ The term is useful in a descriptive sense, but should not be taken literally as a source of origin for the motifs, which were spread across different media and territories long before the 12th century.

which does not seem to be the case in the depiction from the church of Saint John. Furthermore, the cloak worn over one shoulder identifies the figure as a male saint.³²¹

The apse of the church of Saint Nicholas, like the one of Saint John, depicts a three-figure composition with Christ in the center. On this representation, however, he is not flanked by the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, but by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Fig. 60). The Archangel to Christ's right, most likely Michael, can still be recognized based on the fragment of his wing and the medallion he is holding (Fig. 61). On the other hand, the Archangel on his left has almost completely vanished: all that remains of him is the outline of his halo and the red paint of his vestment, which corresponds to that of his companion. The two Archangels appear once more in the church: they are depicted facing one another in the central bay beneath the dome (Fig. 62 and 63).

The iconographic theme of Christ flanked by Archangels is not as common as the classic Deesis, but it does appear in Byzantine churches, particularly in sanctuaries of churches dedicated to the Taxiarchs. Similarly, the two Archangels also flank the enthroned Virgin with child, and that representation finds its place in the apses of churches whose titular saint is Archangel Michael, such as the church dedicated to the Archangel Michael in Ano Boularioi, Mani (Greece). There are grounds to consider the idea that the Elaphiti church — the church of Saint Nicholas — might have originally been dedicated to Saint Michael. The Archangels in the apse make a strong argument for this — since it has been shown that titular saints often appear next to Christ in the

³²¹ Cf. Fisković, "Adriobizantiski sloj zidnog slikarstva," 378, where the author identifies the figure as one of the healing saints. Also cf. Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 59. The author interprets the blue chiton as a shield hanging from the saint's right shoulder, which leads him to identify the figure as Saint George. While the visible part of the garment is incidentally shaped like a shield, it would be unusual for a saint's shield to be tucked at his front, and especially on his right shoulder.

sanctuary³²²— and so does the repetition of these figures in another prominent position below the dome. For example, in the church dedicated to Archangel Michael in Kavalariana, Crete, the saint is painted at least three times: once in each of the arcosolia in the south wall, and once on the west, next to the donor inscription.

The potential titulary of Saint Michael is supported not only by pictorial evidence, but also by the imagery on Regina's altar screen discussed in the previous sub-chapter. The fact that the Archangel is depicted on the gable, and that the inscription mentions Saint Michael were the main arguments for the placement of the altar screen into the only known church with the corresponding titulary, i.e. the church of Saint Michael located about two hundred meters away. However, as I have already pointed out, most of the fragments used for reconstruction of the altar screen were found in the church presently dedicated to Saint Nicholas, and the dimensions of the altar screen in the respective church match the dimensions of the gable. In other words, the visual clues allow for a convincing case to be made about the change in dedication of the church of Saint Nicholas to Saint Michael,³²³ a practice which was by no means unusual, and of which there is at least one other instance on Koločep.³²⁴ There are no indications when this might have happened or why, and the most puzzling question of all is: why would two churches located so close to one another be dedicated to the same saint? There is no answer to this question at this point. Perhaps the church

³²² Most commonly in the classic Deesis composition. Gerstel, "An Alternate View," 139.

³²³ Lisičar, too, believed that the church of Saint Nicholas acquired its present name at a later period. However, he equated building with the church of Saint Vitus, a church mentioned in a document from 1283. However, the indications that the two buildings would have been one and the same are slim. Lisičar's interpretation is based on an information provided to him by a villager that an altar painting containing an image of Saint Vitus had been in this church, but was moved to another location 64 years prior. Furthermore, he noted that a 15th-century document placed the church in the vicinity of female nuns, and they were indeed linked to a building complex not far away from the present church of Saint Nicholas. However, there were other churches in the vicinity of that convent, as it is also possible that there was more than one group of nuns living on the island. Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 87, 109-111. For the document mentioning the church of Saint Vitus, see Lučić, *Spisi*, II-1071.

³²⁴ The church of Saint Anthony of Padova was dated to the 12th century, so this could not have been its original dedication.

presently known as Saint Michael also changed titular at one point, or the dedications of the two churches became confused after a period of disuse. Or, maybe the repeated dedication is less unusual than we tend to believe, but our understanding is skewed by the lack of churches so close to one another? After all, the neighboring island of Šipán had as many as three churches dedicated to Saint Michael, and although the buildings are not *that* close to one another, they are still within walking distance. Their co-existence demonstrates the popularity of the respective saint, and possibly indicates that the buildings in question had different functions, or a different set of users. All of these are suppositions, but their discussion is warranted in the light of the visual data that have been put forward. However, in order to avoid confusion, I will continue to refer to the church on Koločep as Saint Nicholas, since this is the dedication by which it is known in literature and among the inhabitants of the islands.

Let us go back to the questions of interior decoration. Overall, the respective church reveals a great deal of symmetry. This is more evident than with the building on Šipán, simply due to the state of preservation. The surviving figures here are in some sort of visual relationship to one another and complement each other — or so it appears. Previous scholarship has identified the saints preserved in the upper registers of the north and south walls as pairs: Saint Peter is juxtaposed to Saint Paul on the opposite wall, and the deacon Saints Maurus and Stephen are flanking the triumphal arch of the sanctuary (Fig. 64). Saint George, portrayed beneath the Archangel Michael on the north wall, has lost his pair.³²⁵ However, a closer look at the iconography reveals both uncertainties and definite errors in the identification of the respective saints.

³²⁵ Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 24-39.

Their inscriptions have either completely faded, or survive only in traces of individual letters which often cannot be put together into a sensible expression or name. Saint George, Saint Paul, Saint Peter and Saint Maurus cannot be identified with certainty. In fact, it is highly possible, and in some cases probable, that the aforementioned saints were not the ones depicted in the respective locations. For example, the figure identified as Saint George, depicted on the north wall of the central bay beneath Archangel Michael, has been recognized based on his military costume and hairstyle (Fig. 65). Yet the category of military saints, popularized from around the turn of the first millennium onwards, included a whole array of figures. Their iconographies are complex, multifold and vary based on the hagiographic text or legend from which they derive. The saints can be depicted as frontally placed iconic representations, as equestrians, or as protagonists in the narrative of their martyrdom.³²⁶ This depends on the specific program intended for a particular church or object. However, in the instances of iconic depictions, which is the case in the church of Saint Nicholas, there are few meaningful ways of distinguishing between the warrior saints in the absence of identifying inscriptions.³²⁷ For instance, Saints George, Demetrius and Sergius, all of whom were venerated in the State of Ragusa, are always depicted beardless, so any one of the three could be represented on the respective fresco. This having been said, Saint George is, admittedly, the most significant among them. The youthful beardless appearance and hairstyle of

³²⁶ For the most comprehensive study, see Christopher Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003). For a study focusing on the cult of military saints on borderline territories, specifically the Levant, see Gerstel, "Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea," 263-85; Heather A. Badamo, "Image and Community: Representations of Military Saints in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean," PhD diss. (University of Michigan, 2011).

³²⁷ Walter discusses the fact that some saints, including George, are always depicted clean-shaven, whereas others are always bearded, and moreover, always depicted with a specific type of beard. He states, however, that the beard is the safest way to distinguish between them. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, esp. 60, 65, 78 and 104.

the saint depicted in the church of Saint Nicholas makes George the strongest contender for the position out of all military saints.

However, when we thoroughly inspect what the saint is wearing, he starts to become less and less like a warrior. He is dressed in an intricately decorated blue cloak or himation over a white tunic or chiton. There are no signs of armor or a red cape, both of which are associated with military saints. Furthermore, the saint is receiving prayer with his left hand. This is an unusual, although not a unique gesture for military saints (Fig. 66), who are normally depicted holding a weapon. The position of his right hand, along with the contrast in the pigment shows that he did hold something, but the object is now completely destroyed. Judging by the face alone, the figure could just as easily be identified as Panteleimon, who shares with George both the hairstyle and a youthful, beardless physiognomy. However, as one of the *Anargyroi*, Saint Panteleimon is typically depicted holding medical equipment; most commonly a scalpel and a physician's box,³²⁸ which is not the case in the church of Saint Nicholas. In other words, neither George, nor Panteleimon are secure identifications for the figure in the respective church. There is at this point simply not enough information to identify the saint.

The presumption that the figure on the north side of the sanctuary is that of Saint Maurus is also problematic (Fig. 67). While there existed multiple saints by the name Maurus, the one supposedly portrayed in the church of Saint Nicholas was a follower of Saint Benedict whose cult was wide-spread in France from the ninth century and in Italy as of the eleventh.³²⁹ It has even

³²⁸ Alexander Petrovich Kazhdan, et. al, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 85, 1572-1573 and 1637.

³²⁹ The spread of cult in both cases is associated with particular individuals. Abbot Odo of Glanfeuil was responsible for the collection of the saint's Miracula in 868, and Abbot Odilo of Cluny brought a relic of the saint in Monte Cassino in 1028. John B. Wickstrom, *The Life and Miracles of Saint Maurus: Disciple of Benedict, Apostle to France* (Collegville, MI: Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press, 2008).

been suggested that his depiction in the church of Saint Nicholas is an affirmation of the strong presence of the Benedictines in the area.³³⁰ However, if that were the case, would he not have been portrayed in a Benedictine robe, like in churches of Italy and France? Instead of a Benedictine monk, the figure presumably depicting Saint Maurus shows a deacon. Just like Saint Stephen, who is depicted across on the south side of the sanctuary (Fig. 68), this saint wears an *orarion*, which undoubtedly verifies his occupation as a deacon. The cult of Saint Maurus never spread east of Italy and there are, to my knowledge, no representations of him in Byzantium. In other words, this portrayal does not correspond to any known iconographic type of Saint Maurus. Furthermore, the text in the inscription does not point to Saint Maurus. While it seems convincing to read the end of the name as UROS (interpreting the P as an R which had lost its leg), the beginning letters are not MA (Fig. 69). The more likely solution is that the inscription reads EUP[L]OS. The L is not visible, and based on the limited space between the letters P and O, it is likely that it was either completely omitted, or squeezed in after the name had been written out. This would not be out of the ordinary: numerous examples of inscriptions on wall painting reveal spelling errors. In fact, one of them is related to this very representation: the word saint, written on the other side of the figure is misspelled, and reads SACTUS, instead of SANCTUS (Figure 70).

Euplos (also called Euplius), the patron saint of Catania, Sicily, and a martyr during Diocletian's persecutions, is consistently portrayed as a deacon wearing an alb and an *orarion* which hangs over his left shoulder. In one hand he carries a box, whereas with the other hand he is censuring. The saint is usually depicted with a beard, but not always. The figure in the church of Saint Nicholas is clean-shaven, and the lower part of his body is destroyed so there is no trace of

³³⁰ Emanuela Elba, "The Saints across the Sea," 105.

the censor. Only the upper edge of the item that he holds is preserved, so we cannot be sure what the object is.³³¹ However, considering the garment and the letters of the inscription, Euplos is the most likely identification of the saint.

Finally, the interpretation of the figures in the north and south arch of the eastern bay as Saints Peter and Paul derives from the reading of the inscription next to the saint on the north wall as a monogram of Saint Paul, revealing the letters PAOL (Fig. 71). Monograms were common in diplomatic and administrative circles: they were used as authentication by rulers, aristocracy, and various court and church officials. In addition to the sigillographic material, they were also found in manuscripts, and incorporated into architecture.³³² However, the placement of a cross monogram next to a saintly figure other than Christ on a church wall is rare — if not unique — both in the Byzantine and in the Western world. Inscriptions identifying saints were usually written horizontally or vertically. Sporadically the two ways were combined on one inscription, and particular names and words were consistently abbreviated in certain geographic settings, but I have thus far not encountered a form that would be reminiscent of cross monograms such as those that were widespread on coins and seals.³³³ We have to keep in mind, however, that the inscription is severely damaged and any reading of it is, therefore, ambivalent at best.

The inscription alone cannot determine the identity of the painted figure. We must therefore turn to the very image of the saint in search for identification clues, which is — in this instance, at

³³¹ Although the box that deacons carry can vary in size, shape, and decoration, I have so far not encountered a box as wide and oval as this particular object. In some post-Byzantine representations saint Euplos is depicted holding his own head as an indicator of the way in which he died. However, there are, to my knowledge, no such portrayals dated to the Byzantine period. For an example of Saint Euplos holding a marker of his decapitation, see the painting of the saint in the Church of the Holy Cross of Ayiasmati on Cyprus, dated to the end of the 15th century. See more in Chrestos Argyrou, *The Church of the Holy Cross of Ayiasmati* (S.I: Guides to the Byzantine Monuments of Cyprus, Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and Holy Bishopric of Morphou, 2006).

³³² Kazhdan, et. al, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1397-1398.

³³³ George Zacos and Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals, Vols I-III* (Basel: s.n, 1972), 367, 847 and 1597.

least — a much more revealing method, since saints were, despite all the iconographic overlap, portrayed in order to be recognizable even without inscriptions.³³⁴ And while typological physiognomy does not manage to solve the identity of the presumed figure of Saint George, in this case it is of great help. Not only is it evident that the saint in the north-eastern arch is not Saint Paul, for he bears no likeness to him, but the physiognomy of his head reveals his identity with a fair degree of certainty. Although the lower part of his face is lost, the gray hair neatly combed to both sides and a high forehead as a sign of baldness both point to Saint Nicholas (Fig. 72). The position next to the sanctuary makes a sensible place for a saint of Nicholas's prominence, bearing in mind that his cult had by the time in question already spread from Apulia.³³⁵ It is less certain who the figure on the opposite wall is (Fig. 73), since his identity as Saint Peter was determined solely in relation to the proposed identification of the aforementioned saint as Paul. And while his physiognomy is certainly closer to Peter than the former's is to Paul, there are a number of other saints who were depicted as old men with a gray beard and gray thick hair, including, for example Saint Andrew, whose bushy and disheveled hairstyle is much more in line with what we see here than Peter's curls. To my knowledge, there are no special connections between Saint Nicholas and Saint Peter in iconography, nor Saint Nicholas and Saint Andrew, for that matter. The question, however, is whether images on opposite walls of the churches of Saint Nicholas on Koločep and Saint John on Šipan necessarily formed a semantic connection. This is an unanswered question this point, but a deeper look into iconographic issues might bring us a step closer to the answer.

³³⁴ Leonid Mihailovich Škaruba, *Osnovy ikonovedenija* [Fundamentals of Iconology] (Novosibirsk Svin'in i synov'ja, 2008), 174.

³³⁵ The evidence for the spread of the cult is not only the existence of churches which bore the Saint Nicholas's name, but also an 11th-century manuscript on the saint's legend and veneration. See Miho Demović, *Dubrovački beneventanski liturgijski priručnik*.

Clues of Use: Towards a Reconstruction of the Iconographic Program

Stylistic similarities of the two cycles on the Elaphiti Islands undoubtedly point to the fact that the two were executed in the same period and by the same workshop. Parallels in form have been thoroughly elaborated and particular scenes were ascribed to three different masters.³³⁶ At the same time, previous scholarship has taken this resemblance as a sign that the cycles were iconographically identical. Saints in one church were identified by drawing on the images preserved in the other, even when these identifications disregarded iconographic traditions for the portrayal of the respective characters. Thus, the aforementioned case of interpretation based on the reading of an equivocal inscription as *PAUL* determined the identities not only of the saints next to it and across it, but also the identity of a saint painted in the southern blind arch in the church of Saint John on Šipan. He was identified as Saint Peter based on location, and contrary to any iconographic standard (Figs. 56 and 73). Similarly, it was concluded that fragments of a saint's face found on the floor of the church of Saint John on Šipan close to the sanctuary must have belonged to Saint Maurus, based on the likeness with the supposed figure from the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep. However, as I have demonstrated earlier, the figure from the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep is not Maurus. The difficulties of identifying the saintly figures in the Elaphiti churches cast doubt on the prospect of reconstructing a comprehensive artistic program. But although the visual information is incomplete and insufficient to offer a reconstruction of the

³³⁶ Peković, *Četiri elafitske crkve*, 79-80. Although he never explicitly references it, Peković uses the Morellian method, identifying authorship of three different painters based on the shapes of the figures' ears. He does not, however, consider that the different ear forms might result from different hairstyles. For more on the Morellian method, see Patrick Lawrence, "The Morelli Method and the Conjectural Paradigm as Narrative Semiotic," *Watermark* 2 (2008): 103-116.

cycles, there are still various conclusions to be drawn; both from that which remains and from that which is not present.

The remaining fragments of painting, even if they are not completely recognizable, offer a general understanding of the type of decoration which adorned particular parts of the church. Except for the area in and around the sanctuary, saints — represented in full-length frontal positions — occupied the large blind arches of the north and south walls. Above the figures in the central bay is another register, depicting one saint on each wall (in both churches this place is reserved for the Archangels). The spaces below, above and between the iconic representations were filled with ornament, which I will discuss at length in Chapter Five. At this point, however, I emphasize the placement of the ornament in the Elaphiti churches for a different reason: to stress the fact that the areas occupied by geometric patterns in the respective buildings would have otherwise been designated for imagery with various theological messages.

Indeed, there is not a single narrative scene in either of the churches, and based on what we know about the layout, this type of representation was simply not part of the design. The only area we have no information about is the west wall, so technically there is a chance that narrative scenes, such as those that are usually part of the Last Judgement cycle, originally occupied the west wall of one or both churches. Even if that were the case, the quantity of such scenes would still be limited, and we would still be talking about an emphasized devotional character of the cycle. For Byzantine traditions, this is unusual. It is not that Byzantine churches are not devotional in character — on the contrary — but the iconic representations are always accompanied by narrative scenes. While iconographic programs differ depending on the regional context and setting, function, patrons and a variety of other factors, story-telling is an integral part of the interior decoration in churches everywhere in the Byzantine world.

Perhaps the only exception to this is southern Italy, and more specifically Apulia. There we find a strong propensity towards iconic representations over narrative scenes, particularly in rock-cut churches. While such structures have traditionally considered markers for monastic function, in Apulia they have interpreted as part of an elaborate system of lay settlements, sometimes called *the rupestrian civilization*, and linked to private devotion.³³⁷ This is still a greatly understudied topic, and much about it remains unclear, but the inscriptions, along with the quotidian character of the adjoining rooms indeed point to the idea that laymen used such complexes.³³⁸ The painting in Apulian rock-cut churches reveals copious examples of full-length frontally positioned saints, frequently depicted at eye's length and often architectonically framed in niches or blind arches. At present time, devotional imagery represents the cornerstone of Apulian rock-cut cycles — the examples of narrative scenes are scant (although they do exist) — but this must be taken with caution, since the majority of these churches are in poor state of preservation. There is still a great deal we do not understand about medieval liturgy.³³⁹ But if the argument about the connection between laymen use and dominance of devotional representations is correct, then the same case can be made about the two painted cycles on the Elaphiti Islands.

Such a reading would shed new light on the question of who used these churches and in which capacity, a question whose answer has been blurred not only by the absence of direct evidence, but also by the lack of research of church matters, and the reliance on old and to some

³³⁷ The term “civiltà rupestri” was coined by Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, who proposed a theory that these settlements functioned in isolation from the urban centers on the coast. See for example Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, *Civiltà delle grotte: Mezzogiorno rupestre* (Naples: Edizioni del Sole, 1988).

³³⁸ Linda Safran, “Public Textual Cultures: A Case Study in Southern Italy,” in *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy*, ed. William Robins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2011), 121. For a database of inscriptions in Salento, Apulia, see eadem, *Art and Identity in Southern Italy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, 239-336.

³³⁹ For the connection between art and liturgy, see, for example, Sharon E. J. Gerstel, Chris Kyriakakis, Konstantinos T. Raptis, et. al., “Soundscapes of Byzantium: The Acheiropoietos Basilica and the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki,” *Hesperia* 87/1 (2018): 177-213; Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*.

degree even disputed scholarly traditions which nevertheless remain present in recent scholarship. In the case of the Elaphiti, one of such long-lasting traditions is the unsupported claim that hermits inhabited the islands at one point, and that the churches might have belonged to them. The other is the idea that the Benedictines played a significant role in the painted programs of the churches. Finally, the third is the interpretation of material remains from the churches as elite or even royal commissions, which likely stems from the disproven idea that villagers did not commission churches. The thesis of lay islanders using the churches goes against all of these traditions. The evidence for this is undeniably inferred and there are no hard data for it, but it is important to keep in mind that it does not in any way go against the existing data. It also does not suggest that all the Elaphiti churches that shared the form of the Southern Dalmatian dome type functioned in the same way, or challenge the fact that some were or could have been monastic, like Saint Michael on Pakljena undoubtedly was, while others, like the ones with the preserved wall painting, might have been constructed independently of direct monastic involvement.

Much about devotional practices in Ragusa remains unknown, especially during the period shortly after the Great Schism, when the State was administratively tied to Byzantium, and ecclesiastically connected to Rome. While we know that the rite performed in Ragusa was Latin, both written and material sources demonstrate strong relations to eastern traditions even in spiritual matters. Aspects such as veneration of saints otherwise not celebrated in the west, or the popularity of icons in Dalmatia, merit more research.³⁴⁰ However, it is evident that established traditions lingered for long periods, and that they should not be confused with sporadic influence. In that respect, when discussing the date of the Elaphiti frescoes, one should consider various features of

³⁴⁰ One such example is that of Saint Elijah, see Gyug, *Missale ragusinum: The Missal of Dubrovnik*, 130. For icons on the Dalmatian coast, see Zoraida Demori-Stančić, *Javni kultovi ikona u Dalmaciji* [Public Cults of Icons in Dalmatia] (Split: HRZ, 2017).

the painting, rather than making conclusions based on which period was the likeliest for the Byzantine presence to manifest itself. In fact, comparisons of style, iconographic details and ornament with analogous monuments in the Mediterranean, which will be examined in Chapter Five, open up the possibility that the churches of Saint Nicholas on Koločep and Saint John on Šipan were not painted in the second half or the 11th century, or even in the beginning of the 12th, but rather in the 13th century. Furthermore, it is impossible to say to which extent iconic depictions were a norm in Ragusan churches, or in Dalmatian ones for that matter, since painted cycles preserved on the Dalmatian coast are scarce and there are so few points of comparison. This is one of the things that makes the Elaphiti frescoes so important as historical sources: they provide additional insights into devotional practices in the area.

Most of the saints depicted in the Elaphiti churches that can be identified with certainty — Michael, Nicholas and Stephen, as well as John the Baptist and the Virgin — belong to the nucleus of the Ragusan saintly choir. In other words, they were, by the time when these cycles were painted, among the most venerated saints in the Ragusan area. The same applies to those saints whom I have not been able to identify with certainty: George, Paul, Andrew and Peter. This is confirmed by church titularies from the period, as well as by the choice of their names in christenings of lay individuals, which is something that can be consistently followed in the archival records. Moreover, all of these saints, short of Stephen, have churches devoted to them on the very islands. Additionally, the feast days of most of them, as I have pointed out, functioned as due dates for debt payments, which only further verifies their popularity. In fact, the only saint that appears in the Elaphiti paintings, but was not a popular saint under the criteria laid out above is Gabriel. This, however, is not particularly surprising considering that Gabriel comes second in the order of Archangels, and other than the Annunciation scene, almost always appears in tandem with

Michael. It seems like his cult was not particularly spread in the Ragusan area, but his presence in the churches was nevertheless relevant for the emphasis of celestial hierarchy.

In the churches of Saint Nicholas and Saint John, as well as in all other churches with walls standing, there are small niches, designed most likely for votive offerings (Figs. 74 and 75). We can find similar arrangements in churches in rural Greece. In that setting ethnography is of great use, and Sharon Gerstel successfully bridges the gap between the past and the present in her book *Rural Lives in Late Byzantium*.³⁴¹ Contemporary practices in Greece, as well as epigraphic evidence, pictorial traces and material remains allow us to understand that people would have come, during a break or after a hard-days work, to light a candle asking their preferred saint for assistance in matters that were of importance to them. This could have ranged from curing an illness or conceiving a child to helping with the crop. Particular saints often expanded their patronage and acquired more specialized, local roles in rural areas. We know nothing of such practices for the Elaphiti Islands, but given the importance of land cultivation as a source of income, there must have been saints dedicated to various agricultural activities.

A number of problems related to the Elaphiti churches remain unresolved. Some of these are major concerns, such as matters of function, administrative jurisdiction and individual piety. Others are more specific, such as the titularies of particular buildings and their corresponding inventories. All of these issues are blurred either by the absence of sources, or contradictions in them. However, this chapter has brought in all the relevant material, raised paramount questions that have so far been overlooked, and proposed — where data allows it — potential explanations which cannot be proven or disproved. This is all that can be done before new evidence appears.

³⁴¹ Gerstel, *Rural Lives*.

On the other hand, there is still a great deal that the Elaphiti structures can reveal about matters more secular than those that were discussed in this chapter. Their physical features are witnesses to the fact that travel brought not only movement of people and exchange of goods, but also transfer of ideas. In the next chapter I aim to show how that communication functioned on a small, intra-regional scale and which role the Elaphiti Islands had in it.

Chapter 4: THE ELAPHITI SEASCAPES: RECONSIDERING THE ISLAND-MAINLAND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ELAPHITI AND RAGUSA

Nuns' Missing Cargo on its Way to Koločep: On Harboring on the Islands

On October 1, 1284 the court of Ragusa handled the case of missing property of the nuns of the monastery of Saint Blaise.³⁴² The nuns had planned to send certain items off on a ship, and asked a man named Andreas de Vixi for his help. Andreas then hired a man named Domanga and several other people to transfer the things from the monastery to a ship which was anchored on Koločep. They came to the monastery by boat, docked below the church of Saint Blaise and, while they were in the monastery, they picked up presbyter Barbius Longus who had retreated there and took him to the same ship, which he boarded. Somewhere along the way the belongings of the nuns were presumably stolen, although this is never explicitly stated. Barbius Longus and Andrea de Vixi testified in court on what they knew of the matter, whereas Domanga was not present, and was called to make an appearance under the warning of financial penalty.

Once again the specifics of the event are ambiguous, but the document is nevertheless an invaluable source for various topics,³⁴³ one of which is of particular interest to this dissertation. I am referring here to the role of islands in long-distance commercial networks. The fact that the

³⁴² Lučić, *Spisi*, III/509.

³⁴³ The detail mentioned in passing about how Domanga and the other men accessed the monastery could contribute to the long and yet unresolved scholarly discussion about the location of the medieval church of Saint Blaise in the City of Ragusa. Moreover, this is, to my knowledge, the first mention of its monastic function. This, however, is an issue which merits a longer discussion elsewhere. For thorough historiography and latest considerations on the location of church, see Željko Peković and Kristina Babić, “Ubikacija prve crkve sv. Vlaha u Dubrovniku,” [Locating the First Church of St. Blaise in Dubrovnik] *Starohrvatska Prosvjeta* 44-45 (2017-2018): 237-258.

ship — *navis*, as it is referred to in the document, a term which was used for sailing vessels³⁴⁴ — was harbored on Koločep indicates that it was not only large Mediterranean islands that functioned as stations for international trade, but also small ones. This aspect is greatly overlooked, and small islands are still — for the most part — framed as destitute, isolated and exploited.³⁴⁵ Yet documents such as this one demonstrate a more complex situation, at least when it comes to the relationship between the ports of the City of Ragusa and the Elaphiti Islands.

Lengthy medieval travels required many stopping points,³⁴⁶ and islands provided safe harboring in the case of bad weather or nightfall.³⁴⁷ We can presume that the islands' harbors were used in such a way, however, the aforementioned document suggests something different, as demonstrated by the timeline of the event. The nuns were asking for Andreas's help for at least six days before he finally responded. In other words, they either somehow knew that the ship was coming, or — more likely — the ship was anchored on Koločep for the whole time. Unloading the cargo that came on it and stocking the vessel anew surely did not take a week, but remaining anchored for this long would have given prospective passengers and cargo senders time to find out about the vessel's whereabouts.

³⁴⁴ For discussions of ships in Ragusa, see Stjepan Vekarić, "Vrste i tipovi dubrovačkih brodova XIV stoljeća," [Categories and Types of Ships in 14th-Century Dubrovnik] *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 10-11 (1966): 19-42.

³⁴⁵ Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 224-230, never discuss trade as a feature of a small Mediterranean island, although they constantly emphasize connectivity and accessibility. For a study that puts a small Aegean Island front and center and touches upon the topic of regional and interregional trade, see Elli Tzavella, "Dhaskalio, Keros: An Unknown Early Byzantine Church, its Ceramic Finds, and Small-Scale Navigation in the Central Aegean," in *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean: Insular Responses to Regional Change*, ed. James Crow and David Hill (Athens: The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2018), 177-194.

³⁴⁶ For example, the *Life of Leo of Catania* explicitly mentions that a travel from Constantinople to Sicily lasted for 15 days. Sine nomine, *The Greek Life of Saint Leo Bishop of Catania (BGH 981b)*, ed. A. G. Alexakis, trans. S. Wessel (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 2011), 65.

³⁴⁷ Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 15-16.

In his book on the port of Ragusa, Antun Ničetić wrote that the *Statute of Customs* from 1277 prohibited the city ships headed in certain directions from docking, loading or unloading cargo on the islands of Šipan, Lopud and Koločep.³⁴⁸ This information begs the question of *de jure* versus *de facto* governing over the islands. It also suggests a sense of *foreignness* directed towards the islands: not an *otherness* — which we would expect³⁴⁹ — but rather a type of competitive interrelation between Ragusa and the Elaphiti, a state of affairs in which the islands would display an autonomous involvement in commercial activity. I found no article with this content in the respective Statute. Instead, I identified no more than three articles that refer to the Elaphiti Islands, only one of which mentions them by name.³⁵⁰ One of them addresses buying fur coats, the other one selling livestock or its meat, and the third one pertains to trading wine.³⁵¹ All of them call for a fee to be paid to the *comes* of Ragusa and to the Office of Customs when embarking on respective activities, but there are no restrictions of movement, or even any kind of references to ships or harbors. Restrictions did appear, but at a later date — in 1366 — according to the Book of Reformations. It was then decided to prohibit ships from stopping on Koločep, Lopud or Šipan with any kind of merchandise, whether heading west, east or to Apulia, or arriving from these

³⁴⁸ Antun Ničetić, *Povijest dubrovačke luke* [A History of the Dubrovnik Port] (Dubrovnik: HAZU, 1996), 120.

³⁴⁹ I am referring here to otherness in the way that Edward Said used his seminal work, and in the way the word is used in Post-Colonial studies, which involves the assumption that another group was inferior or unable to self-govern. See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), esp. 1-31. There is extensive literature on islands and otherness, primarily related to their representation in popular literature. For recent works on this, see Octavian More, “Island Solitudes: Selfhood and Otherness in the Poetry of Matthew Arnold and Thomas Hardy,” *British and American Studies* 25 (2019): 71-80; and Benedicte Andre, “‘Il y a toujours l’Autre:’ Towards a Photomosaic Reading of Otherness in Island Short Story Collections,” *Australian journal of French studies* 55 (2018), 40-51.

³⁵⁰ Josip Lučić, *Knjiga odredaba dubrovačke carinarnice 1277/Liber statutorum doane 1277* (Dubrovnik: Historijski Arhiv Dubrovnik, 1989), cap. 65 (sic). In the other two the archipelago is referred to as “Insulae in district Ragusi”, *i.e.* Islands in the territory of Ragusa (capitalized, as opposed to the islands outside of the territory of Ragusa). *Ibid.*, caps. VI and XVIII.

³⁵¹ The same directive is written in the Statute of Ragusa from 1272. See Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VI/41.

directions to Ragusa.³⁵² These restrictions prove that on all three Elaphiti Islands had ports which were used for commercial activities.

Why would a serious player in the international trade market, such as Ragusa, see islands which were under its control as a threat? One would think that ports on islands and in other settlements outside the city walls were developed out of the need for expansion of commercial activity controlled by the State; for trade was the pillar of Ragusan economy, and the City itself was always constrained by geographic factors, and so was, in extension, its harbor.³⁵³ I believe that the answer to this lies in supply and demand. Surely the expansion of the City port to the *outskirts* of the State of Ragusa must have allowed for a greater influx of ships in the Ragusa territory. In good times this brought more revenue, and the State surely took its percentage out of every vessel which docked within its borders. It was therefore to the State's advantage to delegate each overflowing ship to harbors on the islands and elsewhere in the territory of Ragusa. There would have probably been no notable distinction between the main port and its branches looking from abroad. What I mean by this is that if someone was to record a journey for any reason, the ship in question would, in all likelihood, be considered to set sail for Ragusa regardless of whether she harbored in the City itself or in a designated place outside its walls.³⁵⁴ During bad times, on the other hand, the State would presumably protect the City's interests first, which is, I imagine,

³⁵² Aleksandar V. Solovjev, *Liber Omnium Reformationum civitatis Ragusi* (Belgrade: Srpska Kraljevska akademija, 1936), 80-81. Bariša Krekić mentions a second document from the same book which repeats the order in 1377, in *Reformationes*, 23, 29. See Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 55. It is tempting to look at these restrictions as a result of the plague. Indeed, the State issued the first quarantine measure only in 1377, only a year after the second prohibition of stopping on the Elaphiti Islands. Gordan Ravančić, "Epidemije kuge u Dubrovniku u drugoj polovici 14. stoljeća. Koliko su kroničarski zapisi pouzdan izvor za proučavanje epidemija?" [Plague Epidemics in Dubrovnik in the Second Half of the 14th Century. How Reliable of a Source are the Records of Chroniclers for the Study of Epidemics?], *Povijesni prilozi* 40, br. 61 (2021): 46. However, the specificity of restrictions — the fact that it includes certain destinations, but not others — suggests that something else is at stake.

³⁵³ Ničetić, *Povijest dubrovačke luke*, 121-124.

³⁵⁴ The examination of archival sources in other Mediterranean ports is outside the scope of this dissertation, but the potential silence of external sources about the Elaphiti Islands could be explained by this argument.

the reason behind the two restrictions from the Book of Reformations. The fact that the two decisions were so close in date suggests that they were temporary and dependent upon external conditions.

Looking at the matter from this perspective, the ship stationed on Koločep from the court case document is an example of the reciprocal relationship between Ragusa and the respective island. Namely, the islanders must have had ample advantages from these arrangements. Such enterprises would have placed the islands on the map and increased their visibility. It would have given the islanders access to direct routes of communication with remote ports of the Mediterranean, as well as the opportunity to embark on trade endeavors of their own. The archival sources speak to islanders' agency. Indeed, from the beginning of the 14th century we see a number of island inhabitants and individuals close to the islands participating in trade activities.³⁵⁵ Some of them were taking or giving out credits, and on at least two occasions the credit was for the explicit purpose of travel.³⁵⁶ Others had associates with which they conducted business.³⁵⁷ They owned boats, which they would sometimes lend or lease. Thus when Vladimirus de Grupsa, whom we have already encountered in Chapter 2, received a beating from the *comes* of Šipan and his men over a case of three missing oars, he was traveling in the boat belonging to his relative Pribisclaus de Grupsa.³⁵⁸ There are likewise documents mentioning shared ownership of boats,

³⁵⁵ There are less such documents in the 13th-century record, but that most likely reflects the state of preservation, rather than a real increase of activity.

³⁵⁶ Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/81.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, IV/619, IV/723.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, III/471.

and even sale records of a cut in the respective property.³⁵⁹ All of these present implicit evidence of trade endeavors, as I will discuss shortly.

There are no similar records mentioning large ships harbored in islands' ports among the surviving 13th-century sources. However, a record from April 1300 is more explicit than the average document when it comes to matters of island-mainland connectivity and back and forth travel. This is a lease agreement between the monastery of Pakljena on Šipan and two locals, the brothers Elia and Bratovecus, who rented the monastic land for the next three generations. The contract starts in typical and a formulaic way, defining the borders of the property by listing the neighboring territories, and determining the responsibilities of the leaseholders. The last term of the contract, however, is interesting, and exceptional in relation to similar agreements which I have examined. According to the text, both the original leaseholders and their heirs were obliged to “carry all of the load from the port of Saint George to Pakljena and from Pakljena to this port whenever there should be need to carry things of the respective monastery, and they should take the abbot of the monastery to Ragusa and from Ragusa to Šipan at the expenses of the monastery.”³⁶⁰ The contract sets up the scenery for frequent travel from the islands and back, and underlines the relationship between the abbot and the leaseholders which looks more like of an employer-employee than it does a landlord-tenant.

Clearly this is not the type of agreement that Andreas de Vixi had with the nuns, since they had to call for him to arrange transfer multiple times before he responded. If they had signed a contract of some sort, whether it was an obligation to be at constant disposal, like Elia and Bratovecus agreed to be to the abbot, or whether it was any other kind of permanent arrangement,

³⁵⁹ Ibid., III/81.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., IV/199.

the nuns would have referred to it. Instead, they were simply displeased, and appealed to common decency, as Andreas noted in his testimony: “Why did you not come to us, for we have sent for you so many times? There is not a man in Ragusa who did not come to us after we sent for him so many times.”³⁶¹ The parties obviously knew each other, and had possibly communicated in a similar capacity earlier. Andreas’s testimony does not lead us to believe that this was a rare or exceptional incident. If anything, the tone and the fine points of the story make it sound like the individuals in question had done this before, and that, while something went wrong, there was an established process on how to handle these types of transactions.³⁶²

Indeed, the impression that one gets from studying the archival sources is that the State of Ragusa was not just a well-structured territory, but also one that functioned by the sense of familiarity characteristic of small areas in which people were acquainted with one another. These acquaintanceships did not stop with the borders of the City, or with the mainland for that matter, but extended to the islands.³⁶³ All of this contributes to the creation of a mental image of the maritime corridor as a connective tissue between the islands and the mainland. It speaks to a reciprocity of contact, suggesting that the islands were not simply *used* by rich landlords, but interacted with the mainland — through the actions of its inhabitants — in all sorts of ways. Moreover, mainlanders communicated *back* with the islands. They used their resources not only in an exploitative manner as De Sancy suggested, but also to the mutual benefit of both sides.

³⁶¹ Ibid., III/509.

³⁶² In fact, multiple articles in the Statute of Customs equate the customs fee for goods that were carried out of the territory of Ragusa personally with those that were taken out — by land or sea — through an intermediary. This indicates that items were frequently sent through a third party. See Lučić, *Liber statutorum doane*, cap. I, III, VIII, X, XXV, XXVIII.

³⁶³ In their testimonies, both Presbyter Barbius Longus and Andreas de Vixi placed emphasis on the fact that they did not know the other men from Koločep who came on the boat to the monastery together with Domanga, which implies that they knew Domanga. Lučić, *Spisi*, III/509.

The lack of material and written evidence from the period prevents a comprehensive reconstruction of the islands' maritime infrastructure. Nevertheless, even what can be read between the lines helps set the stage for regional and interregional interrelations. Koločep was an ideal place for a remote harbor adjacent to the City for several reasons, all of which have to do with environmental qualities. There is no doubt that the harbor in question was located in the larger of the two coves: the one corresponding to the modern settlement of Donje Čelo. Already a look at the physical landscape is revealing (Fig. 4). The cove is long, deep and well protected by its capes which extend inwards, which enables setting sail in any direction. The island is also the closest out of all the Elaphiti — only about five nautical miles away from the City port — which allowed for fairly quick transport. In the same cove was a shipyard, recorded in late medieval archival sources.³⁶⁴

The physical layout of Šipan also provides clues about the islanders' activities. The two main coves, Sudurad and Luka Šipanska, situated on the remote edges of the elongated body of the island, mark the two opposite routes of travel. Sudurad; the old Port of Saint George whence the brothers Elia and Bratoveçus agreed to carry the load to the monastery of Pakljena and take its abbot to Ragusa whenever he requires, faces the two other Elaphities and Ragusa. This would have been, and still is, the location from which to initiate travel to Ragusa. Luka Šipanska, on the other hand, is geographically closer and oriented towards the island of Mljet and the peninsula of Pelješac, and must have been used as a stopping point in northbound travels. Today sea travel between the two coves is done along the southern ridges of the island, for this is the shorter way.

³⁶⁴ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 35, mentions that he found a reference to a shipyard among the archival sources, but Professor Bariša Krekić has told me in personal communication that the shipyard is recorded even earlier, in the 14th century. No trace of the shipyard survives today, but its position is known from oral tradition. To my knowledge, no one has written on this matter.

Medieval travelers would have surely chosen the longer, but safer way, alongside the coast and through the Koločep Channel, where the island itself provides protection from rough waters.

However, physical remains of a church on the southern side of the island suggest a more direct involvement of Šipán with the open sea. The respective church is dedicated to Saint Michael and distinguished from the other church which bears the same titular by its position within the landscape, which has become part of its popular name. The locals call it Saint Michael above the Sea or Saint Michael on the Rocks, both of which perfectly correspond to its layout (Fig. 19). Namely, the church is built on an outer ridge on the island's south side, at roughly equal distance to both the coves. However, there is no access to it from either of the coves. In order to reach the church, one must start in the island's central field and take a challenging and lengthy hike which lasts about an hour, through maquis shrubland and up the steep ridge (Fig. 76). The path is overgrown and it is nearly impossible to break through during the summer season. In fact, the church is erected in a place that it is naturally accessed from the sea, rather than from the land. The small cove beneath the rock where the building is located enables harboring, and a path leads up to the monument.

The architectural features of the church of Saint Michael are simple and modest: it is a single-aisle building made out of rough-cut stone. At present it is in a state of ruin; it lacks a roofing system and a door, its floor is covered a thick layer of soil, and the stones which fell on the ground when the roof collapsed are still scattered in and around the building (Fig. 77). Traces of mortar and red pigment are still visible in the interior. The northern wall and facade show obvious signs of remodeling ; the window in the shape of a pointed arch and the door frame respectively indicates

an early modern phase of the building.³⁶⁵ The church has never been thoroughly studied. Only two scholars wrote more than a few words about it, and disagreed on its date. Samuel Puhiera compared it to the other small churches on the Elaphiti Islands and concluded that it was built in the 10th or the 11th century, whereas Igor Fisković dated it earlier, to the 6th century.³⁶⁶

In the context of this dissertation the date of the church is not as relevant as the question of function, which has received no attention in scholarship. The only clue on this matter the position of the monument in the landscape. The church is incised into an elevated rock and overlooks the small cove almost like a lighthouse. According to oral tradition, the site was used to send signals of danger to Ragusa. I am not convinced that this could have been the case, since the site is remote and its view obstructed by the other islands. If signals were sent from it, they would have been directed toward the open sea. The dedication to Saint Michael also speaks in favor to this idea, since the Archangel is, among others, a patron saint of sailors.³⁶⁷ This theory is further strengthened by the building's direct connection to the sea.

In fact, the high number of churches on the Elaphiti Islands dedicated to Saint Michael and Saint Nicholas can also be considered a signal of the importance of maritime activities for the islanders. Already the 14th-century documents are richer and islanders are mentioned in relation to maritime activities much more frequently. Lisičar identified thirty-seven captains on Koločep, all

³⁶⁵ Igor Fisković noted that the church had been abandoned and was renewed by the archbishops of Ragusa, whose summer house was located in the central field not far from the place where the path skews onto the ridge and towards the church of Saint Michael. However, since he provided no reference for this information, this claim probably arises from his own reflection about the monument, rather than from sources. Igor Fisković, "Bilješke o starokršćanskim i ranosrednjovjekovnim spomenicima na otoku Šipanu," [Notes on the Early Christian and Early Medieval Monuments on the Island of Šipan] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 18/1 (1970): 6-14.

³⁶⁶ Fisković, "Bilješke o starokršćanskim i ranosrednjovjekovnim spomenicima," 13; Samuel Puhiera, "Srednjovjekovne crkve na ostrvu Šipanu kod Dubrovnika" [Medieval Churches on the Island of Šipan next to Dubrovnik], *Starinar* V-VI (1954-1955): 231-232.

³⁶⁷ Frederick Holweck, "St. Michael the Archangel," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), 595.

of whom had ships (*barcusia*, *cochae* and brigantines) which were stationed on the respective island.³⁶⁸ Records of ships setting sail from the islands to distant Mediterranean islands such as Chios or Rhodes explicate the range of contacts that the islanders maintained.³⁶⁹ Additionally, we must remember that coral, which was harvested around Koločep, was exported to Italy, the interior of the Balkan peninsula, and occasionally even to Egypt and Syria.³⁷⁰ If these connections appear random and accidental, or too focused on one island, this is only due to the state of research. Previous scholarship has not had much interest in socio-economic conditions of the Elaphiti Islands, let alone their trans-maritime communication. And while the abundant 14th-century documents are likely to contain numerous other references to the Elaphities, the examination of those documents surpasses the limitation of this study. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that long-distance travel from the islands was, similarly to short trips to the city, at least a recurring matter, if not part of every-day experience.

Junius's Journey with Salt: On the Islanders' Trade Endeavors

An archival document from February 1297 records a man by the name of Flor de Mangano selling a large quantity of salt which he had on his boat on Šipan to a man referred to as Junius de Dabro. Junius was to take the salt — 4000 *modia* of it³⁷¹ — to Pasqua Picurarius or his associates

³⁶⁸ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 50-52.

³⁶⁹ Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 67 and 84 respectively.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 121. Krekić even mentions, a “coral master” (magister a corallis) named Thodore, who had come from Candia and settled in Ragusa in the second half of the 14th century.

³⁷¹ 1 modium equaled 42.27 kg.

in a place called Saint Sergius on Drim.³⁷² This was a prominent Benedictine monastery in northern Albania, located on the affluent of the Bojana River, approximately 29 km upstream from the Gulf of Drin, which shared its name with a settlement which grew around it. This site and its port was an important layover on the way from the sea to the interior.³⁷³ The full name of the abbey is Saint Sergius and Bacchus, but it is systematically abbreviated in archival sources all over the Balkans. Ruins of this important monastery still exist and reveal epigraphic evidence which links this institution to the Serbian royal family (Fig. 78).³⁷⁴ Despite that, it has received surprisingly little attention in scholarship.³⁷⁵ The site is mentioned in the 13th-century source of Ragusa multiple times, and always in relation to trade activity which took place on the route from the territory of Ragusa to the respective site.

The name of the buyer of salt in this contract might add further geographical implications to this transaction. Namely, while Flor's attribute "de Mangano" is a last name, Junius's "de Dabro," might be one of the alternative spellings — so common in the notarial books — of a place called Debar, which would refer to either a village in the Neretva county, or a town on the lake by the same name on the border between Albania and Northern Macedonia, some 300 km from Ragusa and 140 km to the east of the Gulf of Drin. Considering the geographic context of the

³⁷² Lučić, *Spisi*, III/1082.

³⁷³ Luigi Villari, *The Republic of Ragusa: An Episode in the Turkish Conquest* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1904), 139.

³⁷⁴ Two inscriptions carved in the stone which was once part of the portal of the church show patronage of the Nemanjići family: Helena of Anjou and her sons, Stephen Dragoš and Stephen Uroš II Milutin. See Jelena Erdeljan, "Two Inscriptions from the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus near Shkodër and the Question of Text and Image as Markers of Identity in Medieval Serbia," in *Tekstove, nadpisi, obrazi: izkustvovedski chetenia* [Texts, inscriptions, images: Art readings], eds. Emmanuel Moutafov and Jelena Erdeljan (Sofia: Institut za izsledvane na izkustvata: 2016), 129-143; Marija M. Shipley, "Natpis kraljice Jelene iz crkve Sv. Segija i Vakh/The Inscription of Queen Helena from the Church of Sts. Segius and Baccus," in *Nova antička Duklja XI* [New Ancient Doclea XI], ed. Dragan Radović (Podgorica: JU Muzeji i Galerije Podgorice, 2020), 99-111.

³⁷⁵ Apart from the aforementioned articles, see Vojislav Korač, Sv. Sergije (Srđ) i Vakh na Bojani [Saints Sergius and Bacchus on Bojana], *Starinar* 12 (1961): 35-43; Vojislav Korač and Jorjo Tadić, *Graditeljska škola pomorja* [Architectural School of the Coast], Belgrade 1965, 26-32, 179-189.

document, he could have come from either of these places. Then again, it is possible that he was simply Junius, son of Dabrus. Several sources mention an individual under this name, but the spelling is different every time and the name is rather generic, there is no certainty that they refer to the same person.

Junius's last name *per se* is of little consequence to this dissertation. Nonetheless, if we knew that it stood for his geographic origin, this would give us an important insight into the route of this and similar activities. There are no clues where Flor got the salt from. He may have acquired it at a different location, perhaps at another place on the Dalmatian coast known for salt production, such as Šibenik.³⁷⁶ However, it is also quite possible that it came from the island of Šipan itself. This is an exciting prospect. It would be compelling to conceptualize this journey and its preparation, filling the gaps in information with mental images which come with ease now that we have gotten to know the island better. We can almost see Flor with the yield from the island's salt pan, as he transfers the product from the storage facility to his boat (likely a larger boat to fit 4000 *modia* of salt). He could not have done this by himself. The locals must have been employed on this detail, the same way they worked on performing various other manual labors for pay. Then Flor presumably brought it to Ragusa, where it was taken over by Junius before he later embarked on the journey to northern Albania. This, however, is speculation. In reality the document reveals nothing about the origin of the salt, how it was transferred from Šipan, nor the way in which Junius travelled to Saint Sergius on Drim. This exercise, however, helps bring this event into context, thus making the most out of the snippets of information that we are given; snippets that uncover

³⁷⁶ Josip Lučić, "Prilog povijesti veza između Šibenika i Dubrovnika u srednjem vijeku," [A Contribution to the History of Connections between Šibenik and Dubrovnik in the Middle Ages], *HZ* 21-22 (1971): 332.

the activities on the islands, as well as the narrow channel that divides them from and attaches them to the mainland and the broader seas by which they communicated with more distant lands.

The particularities of the travel of the 4000 *modii* of salt may be unknown, but one detail of my reconstruction is accurate: Šipan did have a salt pan. No traces of it remain today and it is lost even to oral tradition, but it is mentioned in historical sources. In fact, this was the oldest recorded salt pan in the State of Ragusa and one of the rare locations on the territory where salt was manufactured in the 13th century (the others were Zaton and Gruž).³⁷⁷ Before the acquisition of Ston in 1333, Šipan's and the other two salt pans must have been of great significance. Judging by the landscape of the island, it was probably located in Luka Šipanska rather than in Suđurađ, for the much larger cove of Luka Šipanska would have provided room for such an activity. Presumably the locals would have been employed in the collection of salt, but there are some indications that foreigners worked on the site, too.³⁷⁸

Scholars repeatedly mention salt as one of Ragusa's most important trade goods, yet the State had very little salt of its own. Various factors, however, allow us to make deductions about the importance of the product in the Ragusan trade industry. Namely, through diplomatic channels the City strived and eventually managed to limit the trading venues of this important product and to create a monopoly for itself between the rivers of Neretva and Bojana, a monopoly which was based predominantly on import and export. The area between the two rivers, indicated in the aforementioned document, was the main route of the salt trade and Ragusa was a practically

³⁷⁷ Vladimir Taljeran, *Zrnca za povijest Stona* [Grains for the History of Ston] (Dubrovnik: Jadran, 1935), 89.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. The author mentions that individuals from Durres (modern Albania) worked in the salt pan of Šipan, but he does not provide a reference to any document.

unavoidable intermediary.³⁷⁹ An elaborate system of purchase, sale, and transfer of salt was created by the State, with legal repercussions and fines for anyone who did not comply. All of this is detailed in various articles of the Statute of Ragusa of 1272, as well as in the Statute of Customs.³⁸⁰ All receipts related to salt trade were to be noted in the Book of Communal Affairs, which was the responsibility of two notaries who were supervised by two customs officers.³⁸¹ In fact, there was even a special office (*comerclum*),³⁸² which was in charge with matters related to salt, including its transfer from the harbor to the City's storage facilities, which were located alongside the City walls on the north-east, close to the harbor.³⁸³ These storages, however, were built at the end of the 14th century.³⁸⁴ There is no mention of older, in all probability, more modest facilities, but they must have been in the vicinity of the port, as well.

Scholars working on salt trade in Dalmatia have only focused on the 14th century and beyond.³⁸⁵ However, the Statute makes it clear that Ragusa had a well elaborated trade of salt even in the 13th century. It is difficult to study these activities comprehensively since the Books of Communal Affairs have not been preserved for this period, and the notary books that still exist provide only occasional references. This makes the aforementioned document about Junius's

³⁷⁹ Milena Gecić, "Dubrovačka trgovina solju u XIV. Stoljeću" [Salt Trade of Dubrovnik in the 14th Century], *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu* 3 (1955): 95-153.

³⁸⁰ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, II/8-9, VI/16-17, VIII/47, 63, 65, 73, 7; Lučić, *Statute of Customs*, 34.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, VIII/47.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, VIII/65.

³⁸³ For more on their locations, Lukša Beritić, "Ubikacija nestalih građevinskih spomenika u Dubrovniku," [Locating the Vanished Architectural Monuments in Dubrovnik], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 10/1 (1956): 46-48.

³⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, based on *Reformationes*, 25, 85.

³⁸⁵ This topic is still largely unexplored. Apart from the abovementioned article which focuses on the Ragusan trade, see also Tomislav Raukar, "Zadarska trgovina solju u XIV. i XV. stoljeću" [Salt Trade in Zadar in the 14th and 15th Century], *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta: Odsjek za povijest* 7-8 (1970): 19-79; Neven Čolak, "Proizvodnja i pomorska trgovina paškom soli do pada Paga pod mletačku vlast g. 1409" [The Production and Maritime Trade of Salt from Pag Before the Island Fell into the Hands of Venice in 1409], *Pomorski zbornik* 1 (1963): 477—515.

journey all the more important. The route between Ragusa and Saint Sergius is generally considered to be one of the most important salt-trading corridors in the Balkans. The document represents the early traceable stage of Ragusan trade on this generally underexplored route, and demonstrates that the islands clearly participated in trading endeavors.

Tracing commercial activities of the islanders is a difficult task, hindered by various factors, all of which are related to the nature of the sources. Namely, while all four of the notary books which have been examined in this dissertation are an amalgamation of different types of documents, certain books lend themselves to the study of particular topics better than others. Thus the first two books prominently feature sale contracts and land leases. Criminal lawsuits can be found in book three, while book four has a large number of bonds. These bonds provide circumstantial about business ventures, since commercial activities in medieval Ragusa largely ran on credit.³⁸⁶ One of the obstructing circumstance in the search for the islanders' business endeavors is the fact that book four of the gathered notarial documents is particularly inconsistent with the practice of noting a place of origin next to individuals' names, which further blurs the boundaries between the islands and mainland. In other words, we cannot be certain whether someone was an islander or not. It is hard to say to which extent this was a matter of notarial redaction, and to which a consequence of relocation. We know that some people did move to the mainland, or at least bought property there.³⁸⁷ A group that must have particularly strived to settle on the mainland were craftsmen, for the City could provide them with better working conditions and more customers. In

³⁸⁶ Marijan Premović, "Ulcinjani u kreditnoj trgovini Dubrovnika u drugoj polovici XIV. Stoljeća" [The Inhabitants of Ulcinj in the Credit Trade of Dubrovnik in the Second Half of the 14th Century], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 61 (2019), 182. For an elaborate study on the topic of credit trade in medieval Ragusa, see Ignacij Voje, *Kreditna trgovina u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku* [Credit Trade in Medieval Dubrovnik] (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1976).

³⁸⁷ Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/572, II/1287.

a matter of speaking, this was an opportunity for social climbing. Nevertheless, only one possible case of this is recorded among the 13th-century documents. Carpenter Michaelus, son of Radoa from Lopud, took up an a boy named Radoslauus as an apprentice for 12 years.³⁸⁸ While it is possible that Radoslauus came to the island of Lopud to pursue his craft, the more likely explanation is that Michaelus had moved from Lopud to the City back when he was still an apprentice. The silence of the sources in regards to this matter, which must have been a common occurrence, suggests that we should not take the scarcity of islanders' names attached to bonds as a sign that islanders did not take out loans.

There were numerous reasons why individuals would take up loans, and most of these reasons were left unspecified in the documents. However, one of the notaries used the following formulaic phrase at the end of some of the bonds: “if I return to Ragusa prior to this date, I should pay the said denarii earlier.” This allows us to link some of the islanders to trade activities.³⁸⁹ Every now and then one comes across a document in which the parties indicate that the loan was taken out as a credit for a business venture. For example, in June of 1299 Domana de Screгна committed to Blasius de Sorrento³⁹⁰ that he would pay him the loan of 31 hyperpera, which he took for the purpose of travel. In December that same year Domana and his son Matheus³⁹¹ drew up a contract in which they acknowledged the debt of 36 hyperpera to one Vita de Babalo, who had

³⁸⁸ Ibid., IV/219.

³⁸⁹ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/1011 and I/1015; Lučić, *Spisi*, II/157.

³⁹⁰ This is probably a case when a place of origin (Sorrento, Italy) eventually became a last name.

³⁹¹ Now unlabeled with a note of geographic origins, Domana and Matheus are most likely descendants of the Scregnas who we encounter in relation to the island of Lopud some 20 years prior. See for example idem, *Spisi*, III/442. The family tree of the Scregnas is impossible to reconstruct, and there is no direct evidence that the aforementioned Domana and Matheus were a direct line of the Scregnas from chapter 2 of this dissertation. However, I find it significant that the early documents only mention this family in relation to the island of Lopud.

sold them half his boat and loaned them money which they would use for a travel.³⁹² A few days later Domana and Vita de Babalo took out a loan of almost 55 hyperpera together, and pledged to pay the money back by the next Lent to a man named Blasius de Sorento. In a similar contract, Stanislauus de Tholisa and Cureco de Ninaca, of whom the latter was labeled as “from Šipan” and the former was not, planned a business trip in a boat of which they bought a cut of 50 percent from a goldsmith named Basilius. These contracts suggest a kind of partnership which was called *collagencia* — an arrangement in which the more affluent partner, *socius stans*, provided the funds and stayed in the City, while the less situated one, *socius tractans*, traveled and carried out the actual trading, *i.e.* contributed to the partnership with his own labor.³⁹³ One document related to islander Grupsa de Screгна specifically mentions the formation of a *collagencia*. Grupsa stated that he received 20 solidi denariorum grossum from his partner Michael de Gondula, which he will pay back together with Michael’ share of the profit by the next feast of Saint Martin.

Copious land sales and leases, which I have already discussed, coupled with the islands’ landscape indicate that agriculture, rather than trade, was the main occupation on the Elaphiti. Nonetheless, archival sources, although rare, demonstrate that islanders did engage in trade activities. These activities are not explicated, but we can assume that they mostly involved trading staple foods such as salt and wheat, and possibly wine, since this product formed such a large part of the islands’ economy. Significantly, the aforementioned documents show that they would have

³⁹² Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/723.

³⁹³ This form of partnership corresponds to the *komenda*, present in many Mediterranean cities, and shares its name with a similar arrangement which was characteristic of Venetian trade. Ignacij Voje, “Prilog proučavanju dubrovačkih trgovačkih društava” [A Contribution to the Study of Trade Associations in Dubrovnik], in *Zbornik radova u čast akademiku Desanki Kovačević Kojić*, ed. Rajko Kuzmanović, Dragoljub Mirjanić and Đuro Tošić (Banja Luka: ANURUS, 2015), 178. *Collagenciae* were usually formed between only two parties, but it is possible that Matheus, who is not mentioned in the latter document, was not a permanent associate, but acted as a partner to his father on occasions.

been the ones who were doing the travelling, which is significant because it suggests a broad scope of their movement, as well as potential encounters with people from different spheres and exposures to various cultural trends.

The Elaphiti Islands not only maintained frequent relations with, but also gravitated toward the City of Ragusa. That much is clear and has always been clear. However, my intention with the documents which I have presented here is to reframe the way in which we view this communication. I do not consider the islanders as perpetually deprived nor do I view the mainlanders, i.e. city-dwellers as constant exploiters. On the contrary, at least some of that relationship was based on reciprocity. While not very many documents illustrate this idea, those that do are all the more significant because they show the islanders in a new light; as industrious, driven, and willing to embark upon new opportunities. I believe that reality on the ground would have been more in line with this than the sources portray. In the following two subchapters, I will probe the connection with the mainland through material sources, examining the buildings in the City which share the same architectural features as the Elaphiti churches, as well as discussing a monument whose one layer of painting was likely executed by the same workshop. At first glance this connection might seem one-sided, for surely artistic trends travelled from the mainland to the islands, and not vice versa? However, understanding the islanders agency in matters related to their livelihood allows us to conceptualize their role in other affairs, and therefore discard the notion that they were passive recipients of mainland trends.

The Southern Dalmatian Dome Type Churches of the City: Returning to the Question of Function

In the spring of 1281 the executors of the will of a man named Bogdanus de Pisino distributed funds to individuals affiliated with various churches, which was money that Bogdanus had left for his soul. The document lists twenty-six beneficiaries of the will — twenty of which were women (some abbesses, some *reclusae*), and six men (guardians, abbots, and, interestingly, one founder of a monastery) — who were given different sums. One Bona, a *reclusa* of the Transfiguration of [our] Lord, was given 6 denari and 20 follari.³⁹⁴ The respective church of the Transfiguration (locally known as Sigurata),³⁹⁵ of which this is the first surviving mention, is still preserved and located in the Old Town of Ragusa. The building is of interest to us because its architectural forms place it in the category of the so-called Southern Dalmatian dome type; a group to which many of the Elaphiti churches also belong.

There are three such churches within the city walls; in addition to the Sigurata, these are churches of Saint Luke and Saint Nicholas at Prijeko (Figs. 79-82). Just like some of the Elaphiti example, the three churches are remarkably close to one another. Saint Nicholas and the Sigurata are about a five minute walk from one another, on elevated turf and connected through the Prijeko Street, which was built in the 13th century. Saint Nicholas is in the south-east part of the street, close to the port and behind the old customs office, which was on the same location as the existing

³⁹⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/486.

³⁹⁵ The name is an abbreviated and adapted form of the word Transfiguration, i.e. [Tran]s[f]igurata. Interestingly, the ending –a, which indicates female gender, refers to the Virgin. Namely, the modern name is Gospa od Sigurate [Our Lady of Sigurata, i.e. of Transfiguration].

building from the 16th century,³⁹⁶ while the Sigurata is in the north-west corner above it: closer to the main city gate. The church of Saint Luke is in the eastern most part of the city; in the street leading up to the Dominican monastery; its apse is built into the city walls. Today all three are located in the heart of the City, but at the time of construction they were in the suburbs just outside of the city walls, in the place of the natural inlet that was filled to make room for the city to spread. The entire area was incorporated into the city with the expansion of the fortifications in the 13th century (Fig. 83).

The archival records which I have examined refer to the Sigurata church multiple times; with the exception of the aforementioned document, they always specify the location of a property that was being sold or leased.³⁹⁷ Neither of the other two churches are mentioned in the 13th-century archival records that I have been studying. The church of Saint Nicholas is even mentioned in the Statute of Ragusa of 1272 in relation to the plan to regulate the streets in that quarter after the town was hit by fire.³⁹⁸ All of this shows that both the Sigurata and Saint Nicholas acted as important landmarks in the medieval City. The situation was different with the church of Saint Luke, as far as can be inferred from the silence of sources.³⁹⁹ Nineteenth-century chronicler Josip Gelčić links the church of Saint Luke to the Volpetti family in mid- 13th century.⁴⁰⁰ Even if this information is

³⁹⁶ The existing building had a number of public functions, including the customs office. Today this is where the Archive of Dubrovnik is located.

³⁹⁷ See for example Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/324.

³⁹⁸ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, VIII/57.

³⁹⁹ There has also been much less interest in scholarship in this church than the other two. Archeological excavations took place in the church in 1980, but to my knowledge, resulted in no publications. In fact, the only to give the church more than a passing notice was Ivana Tomas in her PhD dissertation.

⁴⁰⁰ Josip Gelčić, *Dello sviluppo civile di Ragusa considerato ne' suoi monumenti storici ed artistici* (London: Forgotten Books Classic Reprint Series, 2018), 23.

true,⁴⁰¹ it ceased to be the case by the mid-15th century when the church was in a state of neglect and needed repair.⁴⁰²

The pre-Romanesque phases⁴⁰³ of these buildings show all the same traits as the island churches: a single aisle divided into three bays framed by ribs,⁴⁰⁴ *i.e.* pilasters which begin at ground level on both lateral walls and run continuously across the vault. The middle bay is crowned by a small dome. (Figs. 81 and 84). In the spaces between the pilasters are large blind arches, ideal to situate large saintly representations, just like in the Elafiti churches.⁴⁰⁵ Naturally, the churches are not identical; they vary in sizes and proportions. The differences between them also occur in the articulation of the exterior walls and the apse, on the basis of which they were dated to different periods: Saint Nicholas to the late 11th century, the Sigurata to the early 12th century, and the church of Saint Luke to the mid or late 12th century.⁴⁰⁶ These and similar architectural features are often used as chronological determinates. However, I am not convinced that architectural details of this type provide enough grounds for dating by themselves and without additional evidence. Even if they are taken as pointers to a different period of construction, rather than *playfulness* of the same masters, it is difficult to say which element came first.

⁴⁰¹ I find it curious that there is not a single mention of this family in the 13th-century archival records.

⁴⁰² Lukša Beritić, *Utvrdjenja grada Dubrovnika* [The Fortifications of the City of Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: JAZU, 1955), 64.

⁴⁰³ Although I generally prefer to avoid this word, here I am using it for the sake of precision.

⁴⁰⁴ The bays were almost certainly barrow vaulted. The pavilion vault that exists today is a later modification.

⁴⁰⁵ Traces of painting were found in the Sigurata church, but they are badly damaged and its subject matter is unrecognizable. According to the restaurateurs which worked on the church, the paintings date from the 14th century. See Veronika Šulić, *Zidno slikarstvo grada Dubrovnika* [Wall Paintings of the City of Dubrovnik] (Dubrovnik: HRZ, 2016), 14-15.

⁴⁰⁶ “Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve s kupolom južne Dalmacije i Boka Kotorske,” [Medieval Single-Aisle Domed Churches of Southern Dalmatia and Boka Kotorska] PhD. diss. (University of Zagreb, 2014), 61-90.

However, my aim here is not to discuss chronology, nor architecture as such. What interests me is the potential of these buildings to shed more light on the matters of function. The architectural features of the churches from the phase relevant for this dissertation are not immediately apparent. The Sigurata was built on the foundations of an earlier, possibly Early Christian church, which makes the pre-Romanesque Southern Dalmatian dome type the second phase of construction. The church was later enlarged into a three-aisle building, probably after the great earthquake of 1667, and its dome was concealed in the roofing system of this new building until the restoration of the church in the 1990s.⁴⁰⁷ Saint Nicholas, too, went through a radical change in the early 17th century, when the church acquired a new enlarged façade whose proportions structurally burdened the church.⁴⁰⁸ Saint Luke endured the same fate as some of the island churches when a larger church of the Annunciation was built in front of it, destroying its façade and effectively turning Saint Luke into a sanctuary.⁴⁰⁹ These are the most drastic historical adaptations that the churches underwent. Their complicated stratigraphies show multiple stages of construction and phases of interior decoration. Ivana Tomas outlined the architectural history and historiography of each church and provided their detailed descriptions as part of her PhD

⁴⁰⁷ Željko Peković, "Crkva Sigurata na Prijekom," [The Sigurata church at Prijeko] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 35/1 (1995): 268. See also Željko Peković and Ivica Žile, *Ranosrednjovjekovna crkva Sigurata na Prijekom u Dubrovniku/The Early Medieval Church of Sigurata at Prijeko in Dubrovnik* (Split: Muzej Hrvatskih Arheoloških Spomenika, 1999), 10-20.

⁴⁰⁸ The year 1607 is written on the inscription on the façade of the church. For more on the churches, see Željko Peković, "Crkva Sv. Nikole na Prijekom," [The Saint Nicholas Church at Prijeko] *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III-21 (1991): 159-170.

⁴⁰⁹ The church was probably built in the late 15th century. According to oral tradition, it was built by Petar Andrijić, a master builder from Korčula active at the turn of the 15th to the 16th century, who built several churches in the City and worked on the repair of the Rector's Palace. The sculpture in the portal has been attributed to the work of the Petrović brothers, a duo master carvers who were likewise active in Ragusa at that time. For more on this, see Igor Fisković, "Dubrovački kipari Leonard i Petar Petrović," [Dubrovnik sculptors Leonard i Petar Petrović] in *Sic ars deprenditur arte: zbornik u čast Vladimira Markovića* [Sic Ars Deprenditur arte: Collection of Articles Honoring Vladimir Marković], ed. Sanja Cvetnić, Milan Pelc and Daniel Premerl (Zagreb: IPU, 2009), 165-198.

dissertation.⁴¹⁰ I will not repeat them here, because it would take a much longer and detailed study to propose new conclusions based on the formal aspects of the material. At this point, unfortunately, there is little about these forms that indicates function.

The aforementioned document about Bogdanus de Pisino's will, on the other hand, gives us more than an indication of function: it provides a direct corroboration of at least one user of the church. Scholars focusing on the church have interpreted the mention of Bona as evidence that the church belonged to a female monastery,⁴¹¹ and at first glance this seems like a sensible conclusion. After all, the church is associated with monastic life even today: it is led by the nuns of the Third Franciscan Order.⁴¹² Based on written, as well material sources it appears that nuns were continuously affiliated with the church, looking after it and maintaining it with alms.⁴¹³ Ethnographic evidence shows that they performed tasks typically related to women, such as weaving and baking.⁴¹⁴ However, all of this was later, in the early modern period. The only clue of a monastic function in the 13th century is word *reclusa* next to Bona's name, which is not as straightforward as some scholars believed.

⁴¹⁰ Tomas, "Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve."

⁴¹¹ See Ibid., 61; Igor Fisković, "Crkvice 'Sigurate' u Dubrovniku: ratom ostećeni te obnovljeni višeznačni spomenik" [The church of Sigurata in Dubrovnik: A Damaged-by-War and Renewed Monument of Multifold Importance], *Radovi IPU* 20 (1996), 60.

⁴¹² It is said that the nuns initially followed the rule of Saint Francis, but as of the 18th century they have their own set of rules and regulations, specific to this institution, which is still kept in the Archive of Dubrovnik, but which have not had a chance to examine. As far as I know, the document has never been translated or published in its entirety. For more on this, see Anđelko Badurina, *Sigurata: Crkva i samostan Preobraženja Kristova u Dubrovniku* [The Sigurata: Church and Monastery of the Transfiguration of Christ in Dubrovnik] (Sigurata, Samostan školskih sestara franjevki: Dubrovnik, 1986), 1. Today the monastery is officially a branch of Franciscan nuns from Split, who call themselves Družba školskih sestara franjevki Provincije Presvetog srca Isusovog [lit. Cohort of Franciscan School Sisters of the Province of Most Holy Heart of Jesus], which was founded out of the Third Franciscan Order in the 19th century.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 19-20.

⁴¹⁴ 18th-century looms belonging to the nuns are still kept in the collection of the monastery. Ibid., 19.

In 2016 Nella Lonza published an article on the phenomenon of *reclusae*, pointing out that these women were not nuns, but simply pious members of the laity.⁴¹⁵ Her reading is in line with what I have encountered in the archival documents. Namely, the concept appears similar to one of the *religiosae* which I have discussed in previous chapters, except that the *reclusae* chose to live in cells attached to a church. This does not mean that they were necessarily isolated, for Ragusan *reclusae* maintained social connections while they lived in solitude. In most cases a church had one *reclitorium* which housed one woman. The church of Saint Nicholas at Prijeko probably had a *reclitorium*, as well, as suggested by an early medieval document which mentions a door leading into a room behind the choir.⁴¹⁶ No archaeological evidence of this remains, but *reclitoria* from Italy reveal similar arrangements.⁴¹⁷ The number of women sharing the same space starts to multiply in the 14th century. Moreover, *reclitoria* were sometimes taken over by monastic communities,⁴¹⁸ which is probably what happened in the case of the Sigurata church. Even after that, the Sigurata was not a typical closed and self-sufficient monastery. In fact, the church and other monastic quarters were detached from one another. The nuns lived in two houses which were located on two parallel streets to the south of the church.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ Nella Lonza, “The Houses of Recluse (Reclutoria) in the Urban and Suburban Setting of Medieval Dubrovnik,” in *Scripta in honorem Igor Fisković: Zbornik povodom sedamdesetog rođendana* [Scripta in Honorem Igor Fisković: Anthology on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday], ed. Miljenko Jurković and Predrag Marković (Zagreb-Motovun: Međunarodni istraživački centar za kasnu antiku i srednji vijek, 2016), 302. The author argues that this was a pan-European phenomenon which is seriously understudied.

⁴¹⁶ Giustizieria, ser. 13, vol. 2, f. 67v. I have not seen the original document so I cannot speak to its context, but Nella Lonza interprets the phrase “in choro iuxta portam” as a *reclitorium*. “The Houses of Recluse,” 302. The document was first examined by Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Maruša ili suđenje ljubavi: Bračno-ljubavna priča iz srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika*, 118-119, but the author focused on a completely different matter.

⁴¹⁷ Lonza, “The Houses of Recluse,” 302

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 304.

⁴¹⁹ Badurina, *Sigurata*, 19-21.

In addition to this, the churches were associated with various confraternities. In the case of the Sigurata these were the confraternities of the blacksmiths and wool combers. While the latter appear to have been temporary, the former had a long history of affiliation with the church since; its foundation in the 14th century until the 19th century. Tombstones found both in and around the church have been brought into connection, among others, with members of this guild.⁴²⁰ The church of Saint Nicholas was used by one of the confraternities of tradesmen⁴²¹ and perhaps that of butchers,⁴²² whereas the church of Saint Luke might have been linked to the confraternity of store merchants.⁴²³ An elaborate system of confraternities which developed in late medieval and early modern Ragusa is still greatly understudied. The two most prominent confraternities of merchants — those of Saint Anthony and Saint Lazarus, popularly known as the Antunins and the Lazars — have been studied,⁴²⁴ while the other confraternities have received no scholarly attention,

⁴²⁰ Igor Fisković states that the tombstones reveal features characteristic of burials of both commoners and noblemen, but does not go into the specifics. Igor Fisković, “Crkvice ‘Sigurate’ u Dubrovniku: ratom oštećeni te obnovljeni višeznačni spomenik” [The Church of Sigurata in Dubrovnik: A Damaged-by-War and Renewed Monument of Multifold Importance], *Radovi IPU* 20 (1996), 69.

⁴²¹ Merchants and tradesmen were at one point organized into several different confraternities based on their specific activities and their social and economic status. The confraternity linked to this church was that of the Holy Spirit, which later merged with the confraternity of Saint Anthony, the most prominent association of its kind in Ragusa. See Zrinka Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti. Dubrovački antunini u kasnom srednjem vijeku* [On the Threshold of Power: The Antunini of Dubrovnik in the Late Middle Ages] (Dubrovnik/Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku i Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012), 18-31.

⁴²² Each of the confraternities had its own patron saint after which the group was named, and the butchers called themselves the Confraternity of Saint Nicholas. Nikola Gjivanović, “Tri veoma stare sačuvane crkvice dubrovačke: ‘Sv. Nikola na Prijekom’, ‘Sv. Jakob na Pelinama’ i ‘Sigurat’” [Three Very Old Surviving Churches of Dubrovnik: ‘Saint Nicholas on Prijeko,’ ‘Saint Jacob on Pecline’ and ‘Sigurat’], *Glasnik Dubrovačkog učenog društva Sv. Vlaho* 1 (1929): 166. However, the name of the confraternity did not always correspond to the titular of the church in which they were based, as is evident even from the examples mentioned here. Namely, the confraternity of blacksmiths bore the name Saint John the Baptist, while wool combers were gathered in the Confraternity of Saint Blaise — and both of these groups used the Sigurata church.

⁴²³ Store merchants called themselves the Confraternity of Saint Luke; Ante Marinović, “Prilozi proučavanja dubrovačkih bratovština,” *Anali Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 1 (1952): 235. This seems to be the only reason why scholarship has associated them with the respective church.

⁴²⁴ See the previous three footnotes for references, as well as Irena Benyovsky Latin, Zrinka Pešorda Vardić and Ivana Haničar Buljan, “Antunini na Placi: prostorni razmještaj članova Bratovštine sv. Antuna duž dubrovačke Place u 15. Stoljeću,” [The Antunins on Placa: Spatial Distribution of the Members Along the Dubrovnik Placa in the 15th Century], *Povijesni prilozi* 37/55 (2018): 57-136; Štefica Curčić Lenert and Nella Lonza, “Bratovština Sv. Lazara u Dubrovniku (1531-1808): osnutak, ustroj, članstvo,” [The Confraternity of Saint Lazarus in Dubrovnik (1531-1808):

except in passing. It is difficult to access more conclusive information about all of these groups and to assess their role in the history of these churches, or in the life of medieval Ragusa in general. There is no doubt that the scholarly interest for the two most influential confraternities is due to prestige, but can the opposite be inferred for the rest of the confraternities? Possibly so, since it does not appear to be a matter of evidence.⁴²⁵ Scholarship is still in a lot of ways dominated by the study of the elite. The Antunites and the Lazars were rising to become the second elite in early modern Ragusa; the other confraternities were not.

Therein, I believe, lies the factor which connects all of these groups and individuals which were using the three aforementioned churches. Apart from the dubious case of the Volpetti family, all of them were commoners, and not the type of new money commoners — some of which would eventually get richer than the nobility⁴²⁶ — but commoners of a more modest kind. The *reclusae* came from the commoners' ranks, and so did, at least in principle, the sisters of the Third Franciscan order. The interactions between these individuals and/or groups remain enigmatic. It would take a great deal more of research into what I imagine is a multitude of archival documents which mention the churches over the course of centuries of their active use to shed more light on these issues. However, even the evidence which I have presented here reveals a demographic trend that has escaped previous scholarship.

Foundation, Structure, Membership] *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku*, br. 54/1 (2016): 39-113; Štefica Curić Lenert, and Nella Lonza. "Bratovština Sv. Lazara među trgovačkim i obrtničkim bratovštinama ranonovovjekovnog Dubrovnika," [Confraternity of Saint Lazarus Among the Confraternities of Tradesmen and Craftsmen of Early Modern Dubrovnik], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 57 (2019): 175-198.

⁴²⁵ Archival sources seem to frequently mention members of various confraternities. See statistical charts and sheets in Curić Lenert and Lonza, "Bratovština Sv. Lazara," esp. 177 and 180.

⁴²⁶ Bariša Krekić, "Images of Urban Life: Contributions to the Study of Daily Life in Dubrovnik at the Time of Humanism and the Renaissance," in *Dubrovnik: A Mediterranean Urban Society 1300-1600*, ed. idem (Adelshot: Variorum, 1997), 1-17.

Just as with the Elaphiti examples, scholars have proposed involvement of the ecclesiastical elite in the foundation and use of the aforementioned churches, particularly that of the Sigurata, which has received the most attention of the three. Ivana Tomas claimed that they were commissioned by the Ragusan Chapter, and that their homogenous forms should be regarded as the aspiration to mark the territory.⁴²⁷ Fisković and Marasović's readings of these monuments are on the same trail, but less explicit in formulation.⁴²⁸ These interpretations are rooted in the scholarly tradition which, as far as I can trace, started with Lisičar, and which seems to correlate with the hermitage theory, suggesting that the churches which once belonged to hermits latter passed into the hands of the Chapter.⁴²⁹ However, there are no sources to corroborate these assumptions; neither written nor material. The circumstantial evidence in support of such a theory is scarce; it primarily comes down to the longevity of the use the monuments and the richness of their interior decorations.⁴³⁰ In the case of the Sigurata, the argument extends to the church's titular, the transfer of its icon of the Virgin into the cathedral,⁴³¹ and a note that the state treasurers were

⁴²⁷ Tomas, "Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve," 5, 16, 59, 108, 124, 126, 140, 143, 179, 233 and 336.

⁴²⁸ Marasović (referring to the southern Dalmatian dome type churches in general) states that only the "metropolitan authority of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) could have executed this kind of program," referring presumably to the Archdioceses. See Tomislav Marasović, *Dalmatia praeromanica: Ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji 1: Rasprava* [Dalmatia Praeromanica (sic): Early Medieval Architecture in Dalmatia 1: Discussion] (Split-Zagreb: Biblioteka Knjiga Mediterana, 2008), 259. Fisković acknowledges the factor of the commoners, but nevertheless maintains that the church had a special status among the "leading institutions of the city." Fisković, "Crkvice 'Sigurate' u Dubrovniku," 71.

⁴²⁹ Lučić states: "The construction [of the Elaphiti churches] outside the settlements is a form of memory on the ancient days of early Christianity when they were probably inhabited by hermits. However, the replacement of the term church manager with the word abbot does not always derive from the hermit's chapel. Certain managers of of small churches in Dubrovnik [Ragusa] gave themselves the title of abbot (*abbas*). Besides, it is considered that particular churches in Dubrovnik, and therefore on these islands, were excluded from the jurisdiction of local parish priests. Giving them the label of abbey was meant to demark their independence in relation to the local pastor and the dependence to the Chapter. Josip Lučić, "Lopud i Koločep u XIII stoljeću [Lopud and Koločep in Thirteenth Century], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 12 (1970): 84. Lučić does not refer to any sources based on which he reached these conclusions.

⁴³⁰ The church was supplied with beautiful altars, Fisković, "Crkvice 'Sigurate' u Dubrovniku: ratom ostećeni te obnovljeni vičeznačni spomenik," 71.

⁴³¹ The icon of Our Lady of Porat, which was ordinarily kept in the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin, but had been temporarily transferred to the church of Saint Blaise, burned in the fire that broke out in the latter church in

somehow involved with the church, provided with no additional context.⁴³² There is a different explanation for most of this.

In my view, there is no doubt that the City's high-ranking ecclesiastical officials would have had the authority — whether *de jure* or *de facto* to access and requisition a church's inventory when the need arose, especially in cases of utmost urgency such as the destruction of the Cathedral icon. The offering institution (in this case the Sigurata church) would have presumably received praise for such an important gift and perhaps some kind of promise of support or guardianship. However, that does not necessarily mean that the Chapter was directly involved in the patronage, maintenance or functioning of the respective church. Furthermore, I find the remarks on the bounty of interior decoration and masterful construction to be an overstatement. These are, after all, simple buildings, and while they are stable and sturdy, they can hardly be compared to the lavish displays of the City's most important monuments — namely the churches of Saint Peter, the Cathedral of Assumption and Saint Steven — whose finds I mentioned in the previous chapter, and of which at least the first two were directly run by the Ragusan Chapter.

Archaeological examinations of the churches of the Sigurata and Saint Nicholas revealed hardly any sculpture contemporaneous to the three aforementioned churches. In Saint Nicholas only two fragments were uncovered. One is a window fragment made out of limestone. The other is a far more luxurious find: a chancel slab repurposed as an altar front. It is a single piece of what would ordinarily be two slabs, featuring two differing interlace decorations. On the left two concentric circles intersect with a Greek cross and feature four birds. The left one is an intricate

1706. The icon was then replaced by that of the Virgin of the Sigurata, and the respective church was provided with a *copy*. With the act of translation, the Virgin of Sigurata *became* the Virgin of Porat. For the complicated history and the semantic merger of the two icons, see Demori-Stančić, *Javni kultovi ikona u Dalmaciji*, 289-291.

⁴³² I was not able to trace the information to the original document or documents.

pattern of lilies and other floral and vegetal motifs. Its large size suggests that the object was originally part of the inventory of another church.⁴³³ The finds of the Sigurata are not much greater. They include remains of a bifora window decorated with a simple cross, which was attributed to the church's Early Christian phase, and a fragment of a lintel dated to the pre-Romanesque phase.⁴³⁴ Clearly, the churches had been furnished with sculpture, but its content — which likely would have been modest and more in line with the limestone window than the marble double-slab — was probably scattered and repurposed, as was so often the case with furnishings of this type.

Furthermore, the mutual patronage from high up in the ecclesiastical ranks does not explain the distribution of comparable buildings outside the Ragusan territory.⁴³⁵ As I have mentioned in previous chapters, these examples are fewer in numbers, and the highest concentration of this type of churches is on the Elaphiti Islands. Monuments which share not only the simple ground plan, but also the organization of space, the articulation of the walls and the dwarf dome do exist outside the Ragusan territory.⁴³⁶ There is no reason to suggest that they, too, were commissioned by the ecclesiastical elite of Ragusa. Of course, corresponding architectural features do not necessarily indicate the same exact patron. Rather, they suggest a kind of function, or to put it differently, point to a certain type of patron. The forms of these churches do not suggest a connection with

⁴³³ Romana Menalo, *Ranosrednjovjekovna skulptura iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku/Early Medieval Sculpture from the Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Dubrovnik* (Dubrovnik: Dubrovački Muzeji, 2018), 39.

⁴³⁴ Fisković, Crkvice 'Sigurate' u Dubrovniku: ratom oštećeni te obnovljeni viseznačni spomenik," 61 and 64.

⁴³⁵ Ivana Tomas framed her PhD as a study of domed churches in southern Dalmatia, rather than the examination of the so-called Southern Dalmatian dome type. In that capacity, she excluded the cases of the type outside the territory of Ragusa. Tomas, "Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve."

⁴³⁶ Their number is uncertain since there are a great deal of examples whose roof system is not preserved and cannot be reconstructed. However, there are at least four fully elevated churches with these features in middle Dalmatia (Saint Petar in Omiš, Saint Michael in Dol (island of Hvar), Saint Nicholas in Selca (island of Brač) and Saint George in Tučepi, and one in Montenegro (Saint Thomas in Kuti). Marasović, *Dalmatia praeromanica*, 253-254. The respective author also represents the opinion that the commissions came from high ecclesiastical ranks of Ragusa. *Ibid.*, 259.

high-ranking officials of the church. This brings me back to the idea of a collective and cumulative commission which I have laid out in the previous chapter.

We already know that the respective churches were utilized collectively in the late medieval and early modern period, i.e. that they were used by various confraternities. I cannot help wondering whether they were always used that way. There are no records of confraternities in Ragusa earlier than the 13th century⁴³⁷ and no data elsewhere prior to the 12th. I am not suggesting to reexamine these monuments as confraternity patronage in the modern sense of the word. However, even before the formation of organized institutions such as guilds and confraternities, people were inclined to gather around a common interest and share expenses in order to maximize the outcome. This, after all, is what collectives are for. There is no way to substantiate with hard evidence how or by whom the respective churches were initially used. However, linking them to craftsmen is an appealing thought, especially when taking into consideration their positions just outside the city walls, which is where a large number of craftsmen had their shops in medieval fortified cities, including Ragusa.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ Kosta knez Vojnović, *Bratovštine i obrtne korporacije u Republici Dubrovovačkoj od XIII do konca XVIII veka, sveska I* [Confraternities and Guilds in the Republic of Dubrovnik from the 13th to the End of the 18th Century], (Zagreb: Tisak dioničke tiskare, 1899), I.

⁴³⁸ Irena Benyovsky Latin, “Obrtnici i općinsko predgrađe Dubrovnika krajem 13. stoljeća” [Artisans in Dubrovnik's Communal Suburb in the Late Thirteenth Century], in *Artisani et mercatores: O obrtnicima i trgovcima na Jadranskom prostoru* [Artisani et Mercatores: On Craftsmen and Merchants in the Adriatic Area], ed. Marija Mogořović Crljenko and Elena Uljančić (Poreč: Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine, 2019), 52-80, esp. 52-53.

The Frescoes Beneath the Cathedral of Assumption

The three simple churches discussed in the previous subchapters are only a small fragment of the medieval artistic material that the City of Ragusa has to offer. Apart from being a treasure trove of Mediterranean Gothic profane architecture, featuring splendid and excellently preserved buildings which are still in use, the City preserves several older, mostly ecclesiastical, structures, dated to period from the 6th to the 12th centuries. The most significant of them are, as I have mentioned, the churches of Saint Peter, Saint Stephen, Saint John on Pusterla and the spaces beneath the The Cathedral of Assumption. All of them are located in the oldest parts of town (Fig. 83).⁴³⁹ Their architectural forms, preserved sculptural inventories and/or pictorial decoration reveal various stages of construction and/or intervention thus demonstrate a continuous prosperity of the City. Their present state of ruin, on the other hand, speaks to the complexities and changing priorities of long-lived cities which constantly reinvent themselves, often abandoning structures that were once of utmost importance.

Even this brief glance demonstrates the difficulties of retrieving and interpreting material remains in Ragusa. I have already briefly spoken of the sculptural inventories of these churches in Chapter 3. My aim here is to not to expand this analysis, nor to discuss the material site by site. It would take a separate study to examine the abundant sculptural material and architectural stages. The monuments in question have received attention, and continue to receive attention as new material resurfaces in archaeological research and art-historical examinations. Nevertheless, issues related to their stratigraphy, their appearance, as well as their role in development of Ragusa

⁴³⁹ The City was divided into six quarters, *sexterii*, of which the first three are the oldest. For more on the City at its early stages, see Beritić, *Utvrdjenja grada Dubrovnika*, 7-20.

remain to be debated. These debates are both thematically and chronologically remote from the focus of this dissertation, and I will not enter them. I intend to focus on one site: the space beneath the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin,⁴⁴⁰ which contains the some of the earliest some of the oldest frescoes on the Croatian coast. The Elaphiti paintings, which were discovered around the same time, have always been analyzed in relation to its pictorial finds. Some scholars have suggested that they are contemporaneous and a work of the same workshop. Others have argued that the frescoes beneath the Cathedral were painted in several phases and proposed a chronological gap between them and the Elaphiti cycles. Differing views on matters of quality have also been put forth. In the following pages I will discuss the finds in order to bring to the foreground these considerations and offer my own reflections about the painted material of this monument of utmost importance, which is still largely unknown to international scholarship. Before I turn to the examination of the frescoes, which will help place the Elaphiti paintings in a regional context and thus shed further light on the issues of island-mainland relations, a brief note on their discovery is needed.

The present Cathedral is a Baroque building constructed after the great earthquake of 1667. Beneath it are traces of a least two older buildings (Fig. 85). One is the Romanesque Cathedral built in the 12th century, with which scholarship was familiar from old representations of the City (Fig. 86) and from the description of Filip Diversis, who wrote about it in his *ekphrasis* of the city

⁴⁴⁰ This is the titular of the present Cathedral. The buildings that preceded might have had the same titular, as a church by this name is twice mentioned before the 12th century. See Danko Zelić, “Arhitektura starih katedrala” [The Architecture of the Old Cathedrals (of Ragusa)], in *Katedrala Gospe Velike u Dubrovniku* [The Cathedral of Our Great Lady in Dubrovnik], ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj (Dubrovnik - Zagreb: Gradska župa Gospe Velike - Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2014), 30-31.

in 1440.⁴⁴¹ The other one is an older monument, dated to the 6th or perhaps the 7th century, which had been completely unknown until 1981, when it was unearthed by the archaeological salvage campaign following the earthquake of 1979. Prior to this, the origins of Ragusa were linked to Constantine Porphyrogenetos's *De Administrando Imperio*, where he recounted the story of the fall of the nearby Epidaurum and the settlement of its fleeing inhabitants on the location of the present City of Ragusa.⁴⁴² Since then a plethora of material contradicting the foundation myth has been uncovered, and a new chronology was established which demonstrates a continuity of habitation since Classical Antiquity.⁴⁴³ However, none of it had seen the light of day at the time when the oldest church (in some circles also called "the Byzantine Cathedral")⁴⁴⁴ was discovered, so it is hardly surprising that its discovery was a truly riveting event, which shook the academic community, as well as the wider public. Several years later, a distinguished art historian, Milan Prelog, reflected on the connection between the past and the present and the revelation that changed the chronology of the City over night: "With all due respect to the old chronographers and other records, it has to be said that they knew how to mislead scholars..."⁴⁴⁵

The salvation campaign lasted for six years and extended over an area of 1200 meters square, covering the surface beneath the Cathedral and the square of Bunićeva Poljana, with which

⁴⁴¹ Filip Diversis, *Opis Slavnoga Grada Dubrovnika/Lucensis atrium doctoris eximii et oratoris situs aedificorum, politiae, et laudabilium conuetudinum inclitae civitatis Ragusii*, ed. and trans. Zdenka Janeković Römer (Zagreb: Dom i Svijet, 2004), 49-50.

⁴⁴² Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 134-135.

⁴⁴³ The oldest finds date to the 5th century BCE. For a list of evidence contradicting the foundation myth, see Antun Ničetić, *Nove spoznaje o postanku Dubrovnika, o njegovom brodarstvu i plovidbi Svetog Pavla* [New Understandings of the Foundation of Dubrovnik, its Shipping and the Sailing of Saint Paul] (Dubrovnik: Sveučilište u Dubrovniku, 2005), 26-29.

⁴⁴⁴ In addition to the *ad hoc* proclamation of the attribute Byzantine, this nickname is misleading since it is a question whether the older building served the function of a Cathedral.

⁴⁴⁵ Milan Prelog, "Bilješke uz radove na obnovi Dubrovnika," [Notes About the Works on the Renewal of Dubrovnik] *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 10–11 (1984-1985): 25.

the older two buildings formed an inseparable ensemble. It uncovered the remains of the first Cathedral, dated to the 6th or the 7th century,⁴⁴⁶ a 31 meter long and 16 meter wide three aisle basilica with three apses (Fig. 87), whose remains of frescoes are still preserved in the central apse, in the southern aisle and on one of the pillars (Figs. 88-90). The Romanesque building corresponded to it in ground plan, but it was a longer and wider monument, and placed stratigraphically above the earlier building. Unlike the present cathedral, both of these churches were oriented. On the southern exterior wall facing Bunićeva Poljana, a fortunate find provided a definite terminus *ante quem* for the Romanesque building. Namely, an arcosolium with a large painted inscription identifying the deceased as Gerard, likely a Ragusan archbishop who died in 1130, indicated that the Romanesque church was already standing by that time. Furthermore, the excavations uncovered the bell tower corresponding to the Romanesque Cathedral, an early medieval tetraconch structure with tombs, dated to the same period when the first building was remodeled, and a Late Antique fortification wall (Fig. 91). Apart from the architectural finds, the campaign discovered a remarkably rich pool of diverse evidence, including frescoes, pottery shreds and coinage, liturgical furnishings, sculpture, and various miscellanea — in short — thousands of objects ranging from the 3rd to the 17th century.

Despite the importance of these discoveries, the material, unparalleled in volume to any other excavation in the City, remains largely unexamined. Josip Stošić, one of the leaders of the campaign, published the finds in several preliminary articles during the excavations, and shortly after they ended.⁴⁴⁷ Scholars have offered their analysis on parts of the fundus, focusing on

⁴⁴⁶ This date was set by Josip Stošić during the excavation, but this interpretation is now being reevaluated. See Danko Zelić, “Arhitektura starih katedrala,” 30-64.

⁴⁴⁷ Josip Stošić, “Prikaz nalaza ispod Katedrale i Bunićeve Poljane Dubrovniku” [A Review of Finds Under the Cathedral and Bunićeva Poljana in Dubrovnik] in *Arheološka istraživanja u Dubrovniku i dubrovačkom području: znanstveni skup, Dubrovnik, 1. - 4. 10. 1984* [Archaeological Research in Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik Area:

sculpture, frescoes or numismatic evidence.⁴⁴⁸ The data was also employed to argue in favor of a different original position of the harbor than previously considered.⁴⁴⁹ Danko Zelić offered the most recent reflection on the architectural aspects in an article which was published as part of a monograph largely focusing on the present Cathedral across its entire history.⁴⁵⁰ However, a comprehensive analysis of the site below the standing church was never published, largely due to the fact that the war of the 1990s interrupted further research of the complex. The two older buildings are still hidden underneath the Baroque church, accessed from a hole covered by a wooden board and a carpet in the southern aisle of the building. Steep metal steps lead into the underground structures which are left as they were when the campaign ended in the late 1980s: unrepresented, dark, and only accessible by appointment.

In 2015 the University of Zagreb launched an educational and research project called “Discovering the Old Cathedrals of Dubrovnik”, focused on the examination of the small finds which were uncovered during the salvage campaign, and which are stored in the rooms above the Cathedral. In collaboration with the Archdiocese of Dubrovnik, as well as the City’s Conservation Institute, the project has gathered scholars from the departments for Art History and Restoration

Academic Symposium, Dubrovnik October 1-4, 1984], ed. Željko Rapanić (Zagreb: Hrvatsko arheološko društvo, 1988), 15-38.

⁴⁴⁸ Antun Ničetić, “Dubrovačka luka i arheološka istraživanja ispod Katedrale i Bunićeve Poljane [The Dubrovnik Harbor and Archaeological Research under the Cathedral and Bunićeva Poljana], *Naše More* 36/3-4 (1989): 131-138. The author demonstrates that the harbor was always situated at its present location, which was at odds with the previous notion that the main port until the 12th century was Kalarinja, to the west of the city, next to the city gate.

⁴⁴⁹ For small archaeological finds —principally coins — connected to Byzantium, see Ivan Mirnik, “Numizmatički nalazi u Dubrovniku (prethodni izvještaj o bizantskom novcu),” [Numismatic Finds in Dubrovnik: Preliminary Report on Byzantine Coinage] in *Etnogeneza Hrvata* [Ethnogenesis of Croatians] ed. Neven Budak (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1995), 169-177; Nikolina Topić and Matko Ilkić, Numizmatički nalazi s arheoloških istraživanja u Dubrovniku [Numismatic Finds from Archaeological Research in Dubrovnik], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 53/1 (2015): 1-13. For the Romanesque sculpture, see Igor Fisković “Još o romaničkoj skulpturi s dubrovačke katedrale,” [More Reflections on the Romanesque Sculpture from the Cathedral of Dubrovnik] *Ars Adriatica* 5 (2015): 39-66.

⁴⁵⁰ Zelić, “Arhitektura starih katedrala,” 30-64.

and Conservation from the University of Zagreb, as well as the Institute for Art History and the Institute for Archaeology, and has included students of these disciplines, in at least six stages of research conducted so far.⁴⁵¹ The method has been to first salvage, classify, and subsequently interpret the finds of glass, bone, and sculptural fragments of liturgical furnishings, as well as ceramics and wall paintings.⁴⁵² One of the highlights of the project has been the categorization of over ten thousand fragments of frescoes, and their scientific and academic analysis. The ongoing examination of mortar has determined multiple layers of painting, but the research is not finished, and its conclusions have not yet been published.

The results of the respective project will without a doubt reveal important information for the decoration of the respective church and shed light on various topics which at the moment are difficult to examine, including the artistic circles of medieval Ragusa, as well as their further connections with the Mediterranean. In that respect my reflection on the frescoes is somehow premature, for I can only do what scholars before me have done: examine the paintings found in situ. Nevertheless, it is important to include them here, even if it is in such a partial form, because previous scholarship has so closely tied them to the Elaphiti monuments, and because in certain respects the three cycles do merit comparison. I have also noticed aspects about the frescoes which have escaped previous scholarship, and I find it necessary to discuss them.

Very little remains of the paintings in situ: only lower parts of the body of several figures in three separate representations. All figures are preserved to the same height due to the elevation

⁴⁵¹ Maja Zeman, "Preliminarna analiza rezultata aktivnosti istraživačko-edukacijskoga projekta "Otkrivanje starih dubrovačkih katedrala (2018.–2020.)" [Preliminary Analysis of Results of the Activities of the Research- and Educational Project "Discovering the Old Dubrovnik Cathedrals]" (2018–2020), *AIA XVI/1* (2020): 269-282.

⁴⁵² The analysis of glass has been completed under the leadership of archaeologist Nikolina Topić and a monograph is currently in preparation.

of the second church in relation to the first. The largest surviving fragment is preserved in the lower register of the apse. It depicts four bishops, with garments that fall straight, and whose lower edges are wavy and evenly folded (Fig. 88). The feature which identifies them as bishops is the omophorion which each of them wears.⁴⁵³ At first glance the figures float in space, feetless, and one gets the impression that their long robes cover their feet entirely. However, a closer look reveals that the feet are there, except they are stylized and minuscule — too small to carry these bodies — and faded to the point that they became invisible from far away (Fig. 92). Similar traits are apparent in the figure preserved in the southern aisle (Fig. 89), except the feet are more obvious and the edges of the attire pointier. He, too, wears an omophorion, which is shorter than those of the bishops in the apse, but that might be because his hands are likely lifted for prayer, as suggested by the shape of his himation. Igor Fisković has interpreted this figure as part of the same layer, and chemical analysis has confirmed the same pigments and mortar type used in both cases.⁴⁵⁴ He dated both paintings to the middle of the 11th century.⁴⁵⁵ The only other painting surviving in situ is a figure dressed in blue with a red himation (Fig. 90). His drapery is heavy and fall in curtain-like folds around his legs, which are, unlike the other characters', proportional to the saint's body. On his feet he wears simple thong sandals, the kind that Christ and his disciples, as well as other saints, often wear in Byzantine representations of various periods. While Peković dated this figure to the same layer as the ones in the apse and in the southern aisle, Fisković argued that this image is slightly later, and dates it to the end of the 11th century.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵³ For a more elaborated analysis of the bishops' costumes, see Maraković and Turković "Liturgical Vestments," 7-19, esp. 7-10.

⁴⁵⁴ Maja Zeman, "Preliminarna analiza rezultata aktivnosti," 280.

⁴⁵⁵ Fisković, "O freskama 11 i 12 stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici," 19-21.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., and Peković, *Četiri Elafitske crkve*, 75.

None of these images can be connected to the programs from the Elaphiti Islands. However, one face salvaged from the debris of the ten thousands fragments shows a saint with features fully in line with the Elaphiti frescoes (Fig. 93). The long and pointy nose, the rounded eyebrows and the almond shaped eyes have lead Fisković to argue that this fragment is the work of the same master who painted the churches of Saint John the Baptist on Šipan and Saint Nicholas on Koločep. The figure retrieved beneath the Cathedral is more nuanced; the transitions between the colors are more gradual and the eyes are emphasized by subtly modulated pupils. In contrast, the pupils of the saints in the churches on Šipan and Koločep are barely a smudge, and the irises are positioned in a way that gives the figures a squinty-eyed appearance. This could be a result of the state of preservation, but in that case it would not manifest itself so consistently in all of the preserved figures. So while arguing in favor of the same *hand* is a reach, there are strong grounds to link these program to the same circle of artists, who were employed on larger commissions, such as the first church beneath the Cathedral, together, but possibly also worked independently or in smaller groups on small-scale project, such as the ones on the Elaphiti Islands.

When was this layer executed? Stošić, as well as Peković after him, interpreted all the wall paintings of the first church beneath the Cathedral as simultaneous, and the latter dated the Elaphiti frescoes accordingly, to the late 11th century. Conversely, Fisković proposed an early - 12th-century date for the face from the debris, calling it a belated echo of the layer to which the saint wearing sandals belongs, which he concluded based on the similarity with the footwear of Christ in the Deesis representation on Šipan, and details such as outlined fingernails. Prominent cycles, such as the mosaics of Torcello and Sant'Angelo in Formis were evoked to demonstrate parallels in the treatment of the figures, the frontal positioning of the saints and the lack of volume.⁴⁵⁷ Connections

⁴⁵⁷ Fisković, "O freskama 11 i 12 stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici," 25.

with Montecassino were also brought forth, based on the proposed analogies between Sant'Angelo in Formis (province of Caserta, Campania)⁴⁵⁸ and the Elaphiti paintings, as well as the emphasis of the strong Benedictine presence in Dubrovnik and the circulation of Montecassino manuscripts in medieval Ragusa, confirmed by the large number of Beneventan manuscripts found on the Dalmatian coast.⁴⁵⁹ While the latter was certainly true, it does not automatically imply a causal relationship. The Beneventan manuscripts from Ragusa which are linked to Montecassino do not allow for a meaningful art historical comparison because they are, for the most part, not illuminated.⁴⁶⁰ The parallels with Sant'Angelo in Formis, on the other hand, are not specific enough to be consequential, especially if we consider the difference in context between the monuments in question. Finally, as I have already laid out in the previous chapter, there is no evidence — written or visual — which would connect the Elaphiti churches with the Benedictines. The only exception to this is Saint Michael on Pakljena on Šipan, which was without a doubt a Benedictine abbey.

Determinates of style are neither accurate nor absolute, for they are greatly based on the eye of the beholder. This makes dating based on style problematic, especially in cases where there

⁴⁵⁸ The abbey of Sant'Angelo in Formis was Monte Cassinos's daughter monastery. For more information about the site, see Janine Wettstein, *Sant'Angelo in Formis et La Peinture Medievale en Campanie* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960) and Raffaello Causa, *Sant'Angelo in Formis* (Milan: Officine Grafiche Ricordi, 1963). The frescoes in Sant'Angelo in Formis were painted in the late 12th century, which means that they were executed after the proposed date for the Elaphiti paintings. Igor Fisković, who brought about this analogy, is well aware of that fact, but he nevertheless considered the cycles to belong to the same circle of ideas. The suggested parallel has been taken over by his doctoral student Tatjana Mičević Đurić in her doctoral dissertation, "Bizant u srednjovjekovnome zidnom slikarstvu od Budve do Kvarnera" [Byzantium in the Medieval Wall painting from Budva to Kvarner], PhD diss. (University of Zagreb, 2012), 34.

⁴⁵⁹ For more on Beneventan manuscripts, see Virginia Brown, Richard Gyug and Roger E. Reynolds, *Beneventan Discoveries: Collected Manuscript Catalogues, 1978-2008* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012), 13-14, 64-65, 165-166, 336-239 and 321-323. This book presents a part of finds of a decades-long project of archival search for Beneventan manuscripts. It is by no means exhaustive, but the lists of manuscripts found in Dubrovnik in other Dalmatian cities demonstrates the richness of material.

⁴⁶⁰ Vojvoda, "Dalmatian Illuminated Manuscripts," 101-174.

is so little data to support visual analysis. What further hinders dating is primarily the poor state of preservation. Secondly, iconic representations are as a rule more static and monumental, and the absence of narrative scenes prevents us from seeing a potentially more malleable form of the painter's expression. Finally, one should bear in mind that stylistic features are cyclical: they go in and out of fashion, and then make a come-back.⁴⁶¹ Byzantine art was no exception in that regard, and a great deal of the characteristics of the 11th-century painting resurfaced in the 13th century.

Over the course of the discipline, art historians have started applying methods other than stylistic analysis to date painting, methods which also involve the investigation of formal features, but tend to be less subjective than the description of facial features and contours of the body. For example, changes in iconography, which were often a result of a major political or liturgical shifts, can in some cases provide us with a *terminus post quem*. Similarly, certain types of costumes worn by saints can be instructive for considerations of chronology. For example, the imperial attire can lend itself to such a study, since there are enough written sources against which to juxtapose the visual evidence. Archangels in monumental painting often wear the imperial costume, which in some cases facilitates dating. Furthermore, clues for dating can potentially be found in the inscriptions, as well, even when they do not provide the year of the consecration, patrons and/or other details related to the making of a certain monument. Namely, different types of scripts were used for different periods, and epigraphic analysis⁴⁶² can help narrow down the timeframe. While

⁴⁶¹ For cyclicity in Byzantine art, see Olga Sigismundovna Popova, "Obraz i stil' v vizantijskom iskusstve VI i XI veka" [Image and Style in Byzantine Art of the 6th and 11th Centuries] in *Problemy Vizantijskogo iskusstva: Mozaiki, freski, ikony*, [Problems of Byzantine Art: Mosaics, Icons, Frescoes], ed. eadem (Moscow: Severny palomnik, 2006), 67-82.

⁴⁶² In Byzantine studies epigraphy is still to a large extent overlooked. For a recent publication containing a discussion of the state of scholarship and historiography, see Andreas Rhoby, "A Short History of Byzantine Epigraphy," in *Inscriptions in Byzantium and Beyond: Methods – Projects – Case Studies*, ed. idem (Vienna: OAW, 2015), 17-29. See also the work of Panagiotis Katsafados, a scholar whose scholarship focuses primarily on the Late- and post-Byzantine inscriptions in the Greek region of the Mani. For example, Panagiotis Katsafados, "New Evidence on the

the Elaphiti paintings reveal potential for some of these approaches, unfortunately, as I will demonstrate shortly, they nevertheless leave us with an ambiguous proposition for a date.

In my view, the face from the debris, and the Elaphiti frescoes in extension, show little resemblance to the aforementioned mosaic and wall painting. Furthermore, I do not see that they conform to any of the dominant currents of the 11th century. If anything, the soft modulation and the large almond-shaped eyes which dominate the face are more characteristic of 10th century-painting, the likes of which can be seen from proximate Apulia (see for example the Church of Santa Maria della Croce in Casarano) all the way to remote Cappadocia (see for example the painting in the New Church of Tokali Kilise). The analysis of mortar confirmed that there was another layer of painting beneath the bishops in the apse, which means that the church was painted before the bishops in the apse were executed. However, I doubt that the face from the debris came from that early stage of the building for the simple reason that it is too well preserved. As I have already mentioned, the Romanesque church was built on top of the first building, destroying all of its painted figures from the waist up. It is highly unlikely that a face from an even earlier layer would have survived several interventions and still retain enough pieces to be reassembled. At this point the circumstance of the retrieval of its fragments is unclear. I do not know in which part of the building it was found or to which stratigraphic layer it belongs. Hopefully the examination of the extensive and disorderly documentation of the excavations will shed some light on this in the future. Until then, I am inclined to believe that the fragmented face belongs to the second building.

To my knowledge, no one has come up with this line of reasoning yet, perhaps it is because the byzantinizing features, which can easily be explained for the period when Dalmatia was under

Dedicatory Inscriptions (13th Century) in the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi, Anno Poula, Inner Mani," *AXAE* 36 (2015): 275-288.

imperial dominance, are seemingly hard to account for in a church which was *Romanesque*. In reality, the boundaries between particular styles were much more fluid than we tend to think, especially in areas characterized by cross-cultural connections. Ragusa was always such a place, and it maintained relations with the Eastern Mediterranean throughout its history. These connections could have reflected on the frescoes of the late 12th or 13th century just as easily as it could on 11th-century monuments. Considering the respective frescoes, both the ones beneath the Cathedral and the ones on the Elaphiti Islands as a result of frequent commercial, social and cultural connectivity, rather than governance and commissions from high up, allows us to reexamine them within a context larger than Ragusa, and its imposing powers. This is the outlook from which I have examined, and will continue to examine the respective painting.

Chapter 5: BETWEEN CULTURES: RESTORING THE FORGOTTEN LINKS OF THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN NETWORKS

In early fall of 1282 Domanga de Screгна sold Dobrosclaua from Bosnia to Constantinus Catalacti, an inhabitant of Crete.⁴⁶³ This document is the only time that either Constantinus or Dobrosclaua are ever mentioned in the Archive of Dubrovnik. Conversely, Domanga appears in the notarial books from 1282 to 1285 about a dozen times, which allows us to trace some of his financial activities and get some sense of his family tree.⁴⁶⁴ Although he is not explicitly linked to the Elaphiti Islands in the document, his last name, and particularly the connection with his son, Dimicus de Screгна, whom we have met through the document about rape allegations discussed in Chapter 2, unquestionably places him on the island of Lopud. His financial transactions, on the other hand, suggest that he was probably a man of considerable connections in the city of Ragusa.

The short document which records him selling Dobrosclava off to Crete confirms that Domanga's attachments ranged much further than the City itself. The very fact that transaction is recorded in the Archive of Dubrovnik suggests that it took place in Ragusa. As was often the case, the details and the social aspects of the encounter are left unwritten. There is no way of telling, for example, how Domanga and Constantinus came in touch with one another in the first place, and whether this was their first and only contact, or whether they were regular trading associates. But while the document leaves us begging for more information, at the same time it offers a brief

⁴⁶³ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/825. The document refers to Constantinus as a *habitor* of Crete, which indicates that he was likely who was most likely a Venetian living on the islands. For the use of *cives* (citizen) and *habitor* (inhabitant) in Dalmatian documents, see Tomislav Raukar, “*Cives, Habitatores, Forenses* u srednjovjekovnim dalmatinskim gradovima” [*Cives, Habitatores, Forenses* in Medieval Cities of Dalmatia], *HZ* 29 (1977): 139-149. For acquiring citizenship, albeit in Ragusa, see Sima M. Ćirković, “Iz starog Dubrovnika: Građani rođeni i građani stečeni” [Tales from the Old Dubrovnik: Citizens by Birth and Citizens by Acquisition] *Istorijski časopis* 56 (2008): 21-38.

⁴⁶⁴ Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/1011, I/1015, Lučić, *Spisi*, II/475, II/897, II/487, II/825, III/39, III/49, III/57, III/442, III/539, III/987.

glimpse into the world of long-distance and cross-water ties that Ragusans, and islanders alike, maintained.

This world still merits a great deal of research, especially when it comes to the Ragusan relationship with its eastern neighbors in the Middle Ages. The connections of Ragusa to the wider Mediterranean have thus far been examined in an uneven fashion. Particular parts of the Apennine Peninsula —namely Venice and Apulia — have received attention in scholarship on Ragusa, albeit as side topics rather than main focal points. The former has frequently been part of the narrative of oppression which the Ragusan State suffered by its hand, while the latter has been discussed from the perspective of goods exchange and occasionally artistic transfers.⁴⁶⁵ Southern lands of the eastern Adriatic and Ionian Seas, on the other hand, have been largely overlooked in the historiography of medieval Ragusa, although relations with these regions are relatively well documented even before the early modern period. Even the relations with the region of Zeta, where the monastery of Saint Sergius and Bachus is located, are not that well studied, even though the route from Ragusa to the respective monastery was one of the most important ones in the Balkans.⁴⁶⁶ Thirteenth-century loan records from the Archive of Dubrovnik reveal that various inhabitants of Durres and Valona were present in Ragusa and conducted business with the locals and even took up loans from them.⁴⁶⁷ There is ample fourteenth- and fifteenth-century evidence of

⁴⁶⁵ The literature for Venice is too vast to be enumerated. Namely, due to Venetian involvement in Ragusan statehood from 1205 to 1358, every book about Ragusa has a chapter about the period of Venetian rule in the city. For a publication dedicated entirely to Venetian-Ragusan relations, see Bariša Krekić, *Unequal Rivals: Essays on Relations between Dubrovnik and Venice in the 13th and 14th Centuries* (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: HAZU, 2007), esp. 9-46. As for Apulia, the region is consistently brought up the breadbasket of Ragusa, since a significant portion of wheat needed for daily consumption in Ragusa came from there. For the topic of Dalmatian-Apulian relations in general, and artistic transfers in particular, see Jorjo Tadić, Pier Fausto Palumbo et al., *Per una storia delle relazioni tra le due sponde adriatiche* (Bari: Società di storia patria per la Puglia, 1962).

⁴⁶⁶ In a recent article, Marijan Premović urges for a more comprehensive study of the topic. Marijan Premović, “Trgovački odnosi Zete i Dubrovnika od 1385. do 1403. godine” [Trade Relations of Zeta and Dubrovnik from 1385 to 1403], *Acta Historiae* 26 (2018): 873-898.

⁴⁶⁷ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/114, II/115, II/579, III/1008.

relations of Ragusa and Arta and some with Ioannina.⁴⁶⁸ Criminal reports are likewise useful, as they record testimonies of Ragusans who had their things stolen and/or were attacked when they were on their way to these destinations. Furthermore, all of these locations are mentioned in the Statute of Ragusa as common trading partners.⁴⁶⁹ However, the reach of Ragusa's trade went even further.

Several other 13th-century documents from the Archive of Dubrovnik mention Crete.⁴⁷⁰ Interestingly, all but one of them record the sales of enslaved Bosnian women from Ragusa to the respective island.⁴⁷¹ There is no definite explanation for this. We know that a substantial percentage of enslaved individuals sold in Ragusa were brought from Bosnia.⁴⁷² We also know that this type of trade was one of Ragusa's lucrative businesses.⁴⁷³ However, there were certainly other destinations where Ragusans sold enslaved people,⁴⁷⁴ as well as other locations in Greece whence enslaved people were sold off to Ragusa.⁴⁷⁵ Naturally, various goods of other kind were being exchanged between Ragusa and Eastern Mediterranean ports. The State's most important merchandise were wheat, salt and linen (regularly imported to Ragusa), as well as wine and textiles

⁴⁶⁸ See Jonathan Shea, "The Late Byzantine City: Social, Economic and Institutional Profile," PhD diss. (University of Birmingham, 2010), esp. 131 and 176-208. See also multiple references of relations with Arta throughout Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*.

⁴⁶⁹ Rimac, Baće and Longa, *Statute*, I/13.

⁴⁷⁰ Lučić, *Spisi*, II/816, II/817, II/825, IV/513 and IV/517.

⁴⁷¹ One document records the sale of a male, likewise from Bosnia. Lučić, *Spisi*, IV/517.

⁴⁷² Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 96.

⁴⁷³ Ibid. For an extensive record from the Archive of Dubrovnik on enslaved individuals, see Mihajlo J. Dinić, *Iz dubrovačkog arhiva, Knjiga III* [From the Archive of Dubrovnik, Book III] (Belgrade: SANU, 1967), 5-180. The publication contains most (if not all) documents related to enslaved people from the beginning of the 14th century to 1500, published in Latin and arranged chronologically without commentary.

⁴⁷⁴ For a study focusing on 11th- and 13th-century visual evidence in the Bari province, see Marcello Mignozzi, "Schiave dai Balcani a Bari tra XI e XIII secolo: Affreschi pugliesi per una storia del costume medievale. Riletture della Lavanda del Bambino nella pittura bizantina," *Studi Medievali* LVII/1 (2016): 129-160. The author argues that the two women bathing Christ in the Nativity scenes likely present enslaved individuals coming from the Balkans, and that their costumes reflect low-income fashion of the period.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 97.

other than linen (most commonly exported from Ragusa).⁴⁷⁶ Other frequently imported goods, particularly from Apulia, included oil, salted meat, fruits and vegetables, and even fish.⁴⁷⁷ The trade between Ragusa and the Eastern Mediterranean was taking place with a solid degree of frequency, as indicated by hundreds of documented cases concerning various Ragusan actors, their economic endeavors in remote ports and the mishaps that befell them on their way.⁴⁷⁸ Archival sources also documented numerous foreigners in the city of Ragusa — including Greeks, the most intriguing being the Palaiologan family⁴⁷⁹ — as well as Ragusans in various places of the Mediterranean, both passing tradesmen and those permanently settled outside of Ragusa.⁴⁸⁰

To what extent the islanders from the Elaphiti archipelago participated in this exchange is difficult to say. Other than the aforementioned document concerning the sale of Dobrosclaua off to Crete, I found no direct contacts between the Elaphiti inhabitants and individuals from the Eastern Mediterranean among the 13th-century documents. However, the documents discussed in the previous chapter, are significant, and references from the 14th century suggest that the islands were well populated and contained a number of frequent travelers. Although these numbers cannot be transposed to the 13th century, there is no doubt that tradesmen were living on the Elafities even

⁴⁷⁶ Each of these products corresponds to a chapter in Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*.

⁴⁷⁷ David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 389.

⁴⁷⁸ Apart from bonds, the most revealing type of 13th-century archival document for relations of Ragusa with the wider Mediterranean are criminal records. Victims of mugging, theft, assaults and batteries, as well as witnesses of respective events describe their physical whereabouts and circumstance, which is how we know that many such incidents happened on the way to or back from abroad. For the later period there exists a range of archival documents labeled “Doana” [Customs], focused around the matters of import and export.

⁴⁷⁹ Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 117-133. For other significant groups of foreigners in Ragusa, see idem, “Contributions of Foreigners to Dubrovnik’s Economic Growth in the Middle Ages,” *Viator* 9 (1978: 375-394, esp. 379.

⁴⁸⁰ Although these topics have not been targets of a systematic inquiry, there are studies focusing on some of these matters on a micro level. See, for example, M. Aleksandrovna Andreeva, “Torgovyj dogovor Vizantii i Dubrovnika i istorija ego podgotovki.” [Trade agreement of Byzantium and Dubrovnik and the history of its preparation] *Byzantinoslavica* 6 (1935): 110-164. Andreeva concluded that there was an intense trade relationship between Thessaloniki and Ragusa. Confer. Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 142-143, who argued that the relationship was sporadic and of minor importance.

in that period. There is no reason to think that their commercial activities would have been confined to the proximate mainland.

Bariša Krekić's book *Dubrovnik i Levant* is full of examples from the archives, with which he substantiated his arguments about goods exchange between Ragusans and various cities and islands of the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁸¹ This work has been, to my knowledge, the first and only general overview of Ragusa's maritime interplay with regions to its east.⁴⁸² All of the primary sources for Krekić's book came from 13th-, 14th- and 15th-century archival documents which have to this day only partially been published. This makes them particularly vulnerable to loss due to destruction or misplacement,⁴⁸³ and in that respect, Krekić's manuscript is of immense value. However, his research was based exclusively on the archival record. He did not include any other type of evidence about Ragusa's commercial activity, namely neither art nor material culture. His work belongs to a period of great interest in the Archive of Dubrovnik; a period when scholars were industriously translating archival documents, and publishing works on overarching topics based on these sources.

This period was hardly a flourishing time for the study of material culture related to medieval Ragusa. As I have laid out in the previous chapter, the quantity of known material evidence has grown significantly in the 70 years since Krekić's book. In other words, the pool of

⁴⁸¹ This was Krekić's first book, which came out of his PhD dissertation. After the first edition, published in Serbian in 1956, the book was translated into French. See Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Age* (Paris: Mouton, 1961).

⁴⁸² Krekić refers to these regions as *the Levant*. The term, as he used it, comprises the territories from the island of Corfu to the south and east, including Greece, Egypt and Syria. This, he states, corresponds to the data from the archival sources. Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*, 7.

⁴⁸³ When it comes to documents in Greek kept in the Archive of Dubrovnik, only the diplomatic records have been published. See Miroslav Marković, "Bizantske povelje Dubrovačkog arhiva" [Byzantine Charters of the Dubrovnik Archive] (Belgrade: Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta XXI, vol. I, 1952), 205-258.

material evidence about the links between Ragusa and the Eastern Mediterranean would have been more limited than today, even if he had decided to incorporate it.⁴⁸⁴ At the time that he published his book, neither the first Cathedral, nor the frescoes on the Elaphiti Islands had yet been discovered.

Decades following their discovery and restoration, the Elaphiti paintings still have a great deal to offer to scholarship of the Byzantine, and generally Mediterranean realm. Their visual features in various ways mirror the artistic production in the Eastern Mediterranean, and are, I argue, a result of frequent commercial interchange. Namely, inter-regional connections in the Great Sea were not confined to exchange of every-day goods. On the contrary, ships that carried cargo also transported luxurious items, such as (but not limited to) portable artworks and embellished textiles, as well as passengers from different walks of life, including artists, whose movements are considered to have intensified as a result of the Fourth Crusade. There is not a compact body of written sources about this, although there is likely a plethora of references scattered here and there in various folders of different archives.⁴⁸⁵ However, the evidence of this is found in stylistic analogies across regions and cultures, as well as ornamental patterns that were translated from coast to coast and medium to medium. In the following pages I will gradually unpack the visual elements of the Elaphiti painting from the angle of maritime connectivity and

⁴⁸⁴ The most famous objects of material culture are kept within the Treasury of the Cathedral. The Treasury contains several items which date to the Byzantine period, and/or display stylistic features close to Byzantine traditions. Those include the relic of the True Cross and the hand and head of Saint Blaise. See Vincije B. Lupis, “Moćnik Katedrale” [The Cathedral Reliquary], in *Katedrala Gospe Velike u Dubrovniku* [The Cathedral of Great Our Lady in Dubrovnik], ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj (Dubrovnik and Zagreb: Gradska Župa Gospe Velike and IPU, 2014), 399-439, esp. 405-411; idem, “Historijat istraživanja,” 129-148.

⁴⁸⁵ The publication closest this topic is the proceedings from the Thirty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Ruth Macrides, *Travel in the Byzantine World* (Ashgate Variorum: Aldershot, 2002)., esp. Michael McCormick, “Byzantium on the Move: Imagining a Communications History,” 3-29; John H. Pryor, “Types of Ships and their Performance Capabilities,” 35-58; and Johannes Koder, “Maritime Trade and the Food Supply for Constantinople in the Middle Ages,” 109-125. However, none of the articles in the publication discusses the movement of artists.

present the similarities they share with various cycles of monumental painting in the Mediterranean realm.

Stanche the Painter's Travel to Apulia

In late 1295 a painter named Stanche met up in court with a certain Jacobus del Muso to request the return of his eight hyperpera through official channels. This, the document states, was money that he had lent to the aforementioned Jacobus in Apulia for an unspecified purpose.⁴⁸⁶ That a painter would be a creditor is an interesting discovery which speaks about an artist's agency in a way that we seldom see. Even more important for the sake of this dissertation is the fact that the money in question was lent in Apulia.

While there are records that Ragusan artists working in other media — particularly builders and stone carvers — travelled abroad, we do not know a great deal about painters.⁴⁸⁷ Not many of them are mentioned in the 13th-century archival sources of Ragusa; in fact, Stanche is one of only three.⁴⁸⁸ None of them are documented for doing their job; in other words, there are no accounts of them being commissioned to do any work.⁴⁸⁹ Instead, we see them going about their

⁴⁸⁶ Lučić, *Spisi*, III/607.

⁴⁸⁷ Cvito Fisković, "Dubrovački i primorski graditelji XIII-XVI stoljeća u Srbiji, Bosni i Hercegovini," [13-16th-Century Builders from Dubrovnik and the Coast in Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina] *Peristil* 5 (1962): 36-44.

⁴⁸⁸ For an extensive record of documents related to painters in Dubrovnik from the 13th to the 16th centuries, see Jorjo Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj školi u Dubrovniku XIII-XVI veka* [Records of the School of Painting in Dubrovnik from the 13th to the 16th Century] (Belgrade: SANU, 1952), esp. 1-2. The author included only four 13th-century documents mentioning painters; other than Stancha, a painter Joannes was recorded once, and a painter Nichola twice. However, since the aforementioned document about Stancha and his debtor is not part of the publication, it is possible that there are other documents which were not included into this publication.

⁴⁸⁹ It is much more common to find such documents in later periods. Already in the 14th century there are ample records of contracts between artists and patrons. *Ibid.*, esp. 3-4, 7-9.

private affairs. Thus the painter Joannes is recorded buying a house together with his wife Ana, while the painter Nichola pressed charges against his servant, accusing her of theft. It is only because of the practice of writing a profession next to an individual's name that we even know about these individuals' line of work. Our Stanche – the third painter mentioned in 13th-century Ragusa — is the single one recorded in relation to another region. There is no telling what he was doing in Apulia, how long he was there, whether it was just the once that he went, or whether it was his frequent destination. But because of this document we know he was there. We know that he travelled from one coast of the Adriatic to the other. This is in and of itself a valuable piece of information, since the movement of artists is not very well documented in written records,⁴⁹⁰ even though it must have been happening constantly; especially in the period after the Sack of Constantinople in 1204.

Stanche's presence in the archival sources extends into the beginning of the fourteenth century, when he is mentioned lending money to the State and to an individual from Venice in 1302 and 1304 respectively. He is recorded again in 1307, when he bought wine from a vineyard in Gruž.⁴⁹¹ There is not a shred of evidence linking him, or any of the other two painters to the Elaphities. In fact, there is only one artist, a stone carver named Pobratu de Cicagna, who is mentioned in relation to the archipelago.⁴⁹² Pobratu bought a vineyard on Šipan in October of 1280. However, this could have been his only connection to the island.⁴⁹³ Artistic activity on the

⁴⁹⁰ See an example of another recorded 13th-century artist travelling from region to region in Linda Safran, "Exploring Artistic Links Between Epirus and Apulia in the Thirteenth Century: The Problem of Sculpture and Wall Painting," in *Praktika Diethnous Symposiou gia to Despotato tis Epeirou*, ed. Evangelos K. Chrysos (Arta: Mousikofilologikos Sillogos Arti "O Skoufas," 1992), 455-474.

⁴⁹¹ Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj skoli*, 2-3.

⁴⁹² Čremošnik, *Spisi*, I/359.

⁴⁹³ He got rid of the property the very same day when he purchased it, although there are no details to shed clues of what he was trying to accomplish with this arrangement.

Elafiti Islands in this early period is completely unregistered in the existing written sources. Yet it is the churches themselves which are living proof of the presence of artists there. While I do not claim that Stancha had anything to do with the painting of the churches on the Elafiti Islands, there was certainly once a painter or a workshop of painters not unlike Stancha on the islands. These artisans had seen things — both immovable objects such as monumental painting in remote areas, and small artefacts from far away that circulated in the Mediterranean — and were inspired to use stories, designs and patterns that were otherwise not common to the area. Whether they encountered these objects through travels or perhaps on the vibrant international market in the City of Ragusa is impossible to say. Likewise, it is also unfeasible to determine the territorial origin of the painter or painters. While the latter might be a paramount question for the construction — or deconstruction — of nationalist narratives, it is less important in an inquiry which emphasizes the process of connection over the search for linear transfers of goods and ideas. In the absence of relevant written sources, it would be impossible to uncover the mysterious person(s) behind the Elaphiti paintings. However, the paintings themselves can and should be examined as expressions of Mediterranean connectivity, continuity and cultural baggage.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹⁴ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 64.

Byzantine Traits of the Elaphiti Cycles

I believe that elements similar to the paintings in Saint Nicholas on Koločep and Saint John on Šipan should be examined primarily in the realm close to ordinary people; in villages and the countryside, as well as coastal areas, particularly islands. Not only are these environments comparable to the Elaphiti, but as far as the number of preserved medieval churches is concerned, they are consistently the most fruitful areas in the Mediterranean, even if they are, with some exceptions, seldom discussed.⁴⁹⁵ Port cities, too, would make excellent places to search for stylistic and iconographic analogies. However, due to the ever-changing nature of urban milieus, not very many monumental painting cycles still survive in large cities. In fact, it is the rural churches that can help fill the gap of missing art in urban centers. The idea becomes more feasible if we consider the strong connectivity of the countryside to the city and island to mainland through agricultural production and trade, migrations and various forms of human interaction I have discussed in earlier chapters.⁴⁹⁶ In the long run, the Elaphiti frescoes can be exceptionally useful in that regard, as well — providing that they are placed in a suitable context.

While I introduce parallels of the Elaphiti frescoes, I wish to also reiterate and expand on the Byzantine aspects of the paintings, which I have briefly introduced in Chapter 3. Are the cycles Byzantine, byzantinizing, or Italianate? Classification is not my aim, but in this case, identifying

⁴⁹⁵ For example, rock cut churches in Cappadocia, Turkey, have received wide scholarly attention, starting from the pioneering early 20th-century researchers and continuing to this date. For most recent publication which an extensive bibliography, see Robert G. Ousterhout, *Visualizing Community: Art Material Culture, and Settlement in Byzantine Cappadocia*, (Washington, DC: DO Studies 46, 2017). A similar phenomenon in southern Italy has received less attention and its study has largely been limited to national scholarship.

⁴⁹⁶ On connections and artistic transfers between rural areas of southern Italy and an urban center on the Dalmatian coast, see Franka Horvat, “Byzantine Art Beyond the Borders of the Empire: A Case Study of the Church of Saint Chrysogonus in Zara,” in *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, ed. Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki and Lorenzo M. Bondioli (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 385-424.

Byzantine features is not a matter of classification as such. It is rather a matter of avoiding the vague discourse of Byzantine influence which has prevailed in discussions about these frescoes so far, and prevailed for a reason. For example, in Greece, a country whose roots have been associated among others with the cultural dominance of Byzantium in the Middle Ages, Byzantine traditions are considered natural and almost inherent, even though the territory experienced a great deal of cultural overlap. But for Croatia, a country which has been building its modern identity through the emphasis of connections with the West, Byzantine characteristics are looked upon as something foreign and out of the ordinary.⁴⁹⁷ I have another reason to categorize the frescoes: namely, doing so helps me situate them on the spectrum of Mediterranean painting and enables the search for patterns found in other monuments, and sheds light on the pathways of these patterns.

For a long time the so-called Southern Dalmatian dome type churches, a group to which the Elaphiti monuments belong, have been considered paramount variants of Croatian pre-Romanesque art: perhaps influenced by remote cultural currents, but nevertheless unique in their features and primarily rooted in local tradition.⁴⁹⁸ In certain regards this idea still persists. On the other hand, it is hard to maintain indigenous origins of the paintings which have practically no parallels in the territory and exhibit obvious connections to Byzantine artistic circles. The persistence of categories such as Adrio-Byzantinism have made it possible to highlight ties with the West, emphasize the distinctiveness of the Elaphiti monuments, and acknowledge the

⁴⁹⁷ For an overview which covers many of the ideological problems of medieval scholarship in Croatia (even if it does not explicitly address Byzantium), see Mladen Ančić, “U potrazi za “zlatim dobom:” Stvarni i zamišljeni hrvatski “sveti prostori,” [In the Pursuit of “The Golden Age:” Real and Imaginary Croatian “Sacred Spaces”], in *Što svi znaju i što je “svima jasno:” Historiografija i nacionalizam*, [What “Everyone Knows” and What “is Clear to Everyone:” Historiography and Nationalism], ed. idem (Zagreb: HIP, 2008), 31-50.

⁴⁹⁸ Lisičar, *Koločep nekoć i sada*, 16-25.

“Byzantine component”⁴⁹⁹ without studying it closely. However, the more productive way of studying these monuments, I believe, is to regard the monuments as Mediterranean. This allows us to find comparative monuments without resorting to ideological prejudice or preferences.

The surviving representations in the churches of Saint Nicholas on Koločep and Saint John on Šipan are Byzantine in theme. As I have discussed earlier, the figures preserved on the lateral walls are, to the extent that we can identify them, all saints venerated in Ragusa from as early as we can trace the written evidence. At the same time, however, they belong to the Orthodox Christian pantheon of saints. Not only do the same saints appear in churches of Byzantine cultural circle — Greece, Turkey, Russia, Serbia, and wider — but they are often depicted in the same locations and following comparative iconographic standards.

The Elaphiti saints also wear typical Byzantine apparel. As I have already mentioned, all of the archangels in the two churches are dressed in *loros* which is crossed at the chest (Figs. 58, 62 and 63). This was the older fashion of wearing this important piece of imperial costume. A *loros* was essentially a decorated scarf wrapped around the body, whose heaviness made it both complicated to put on and to wear. It was then simplified in the Middle Byzantine period, creating an opening for the head, widening the collar and narrowing the elongated part. The change was reflected in visual representations soon after. According to Maria Parani, the earlier, crossed version existed parallel to the modified one in the 11th century, but disappeared in the 12th. For the 13th century she listed only the examples of the simplified *loros*.⁵⁰⁰ It is true that the crossed *loros* is rarely seen in the later period, however it must have lingered, at least in iconographic tradition if not in actuality. For example, in the representation from the church of Saint Erasmus near Ohrid

⁴⁹⁹ Fisković, “O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća,” 18.

⁵⁰⁰ Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 18-20.

the emperor himself — Michael VIII Palaiologos — wears the crossed kind rather than the modified one.⁵⁰¹ This is not the place to go into the reasons for this deviation. I am simply trying to point out that the crossed *loros* did not completely vanish by the 12th century, and therefore cannot be taken as a marker for date of the Elaphiti paintings.

This *loros* is not the only garment in the respective churches which points to Byzantine traditions. The ornament with which some of the saints' garments are decorated also points in the same direction.⁵⁰² The same is true of the garment which John the Baptist has on in the Deesis scene in the church dedicated to him on Šipan (Fig. 94). John the Baptist is traditionally dressed in fur, but in this representation he wears a cloak with meticulously bedecked fur lining, which is a common variation of the fur garment found in various locations in the Mediterranean, such as for example, Chapel 19 in *Göreme*, Cappadocia. Saint Stephen, too, wears Byzantine attire; he is dressed as a deacon, and carries all the attributes of that office (Figs. 55 and 68). The costumes of the other figures, for the most part, represent the classic chiton-himation combinations typical for saints' garments, which are also in line with Byzantine iconography.⁵⁰³

Frontally positioned large-scale saints which dominate both Elaphiti cycles are in fact iconic representations. They are found in churches all over the Byzantine world, positioned primarily in lower registers so they could be in face to face contact with the faithful and maintain communication with them. The painted figures often-times communicate with one another, as well.

⁵⁰¹ The same was noticed by Anna Christidou, "Unknown Byzantine Art," 178.

⁵⁰² Warren Woodfin, "Wall, Veil, and Body: Textiles and Architecture in the Late Byzantine Church," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden/The Kariye Camii Reconsidered*, ed. Holger Klein, Robert Ousterhout, and B. Pitarakis (Istanbul: Istanbul Araştırmaları İnstitüsü, 2011), 358-385.

⁵⁰³ For Byzantine dress, See Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*. For analysis of dress in places of cultural overlap, see Cristina Stancioiu, "Objects and Identity: An Analysis of Some Material Remains of the Latin and Orthodox Residents of Late Medieval Rhodes, Cyprus, and Crete," PhD diss. (UCLA, 2009) and Andrea Mattiello, "Latin Basilissai in Palaiologian Mystras: Art and Agency," PhD diss. (University of Birmingham, 2018), 110-135.

In fact, dialogue plays an important role in Byzantine wall painting, and it often extends beyond the spoken word; into the realm of gestures and various devices which trigger memories of the text and evoke past experiences.⁵⁰⁴ The two painted cycles on the Elaphiti Island are no exception to this, which is evident from position of the saints' hands which signals that they are ready to receive prayer (Fig. 51). The same body language is noticeable in the Deesis, which essentially depicts the entire process of intercession. Both the *classical* Deesis, depicting Christ, the Virgin and John the Baptist, like the one found in the church of Saint John the Baptist on Šipan, and the three figure composition of Christ flanked by the Archangels like in the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep (Fig. 60), are traditionally Byzantine representations.⁵⁰⁵ Deesis with the Virgin and John the Baptist as intercessors is frequent in Italy, but the point of departure for this scene is Byzantium.⁵⁰⁶ Conversely, the Taxiarchs standing next to Christ in the apse are not a particularly common type of representation. It is much more frequent to find a composition in which the Archangels flank the Virgin, although the arrangement with Christ in the center can be found in Cappadocian and Greek churches. When it comes to Italy, I have located it in only one church: that of Santi Stefani near Vaste (Fig. 95), to which I will return later.

⁵⁰⁴ Henry Maguire argues that the conversation is truly two-sided, and that the painted saints engage with the viewer.

Henry Maguire, *Image and Imagination: The Byzantine Epigram as Evidence for Viewer Response* (Toronto: Canadian Institute for Balkan Studies, 1996), 5. See also Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "Monastic Soundspaces: The Art and Act of Chanting," in *Resounding Images: The Aural and Visual Arts [in Harmony], 800-1500*, eds. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 135.

⁵⁰⁵ Literary sources indicate that the word "deesis" in Byzantium did not pertain exclusively to Christ flanked by the Virgin and John the Baptist, but was also used in relation to other saintly groupings. In modern art history, however, the term primarily is used for this composition. For more on this topic, see Anthony Cutler, "Under the Sign of the Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature," *DOP* 41 (1987): 145-154; Christopher Walter, "Two Notes on the Deesis," *Revue des études byzantines* 26 (1968): 311-336; and idem, "Further Notes on the Deesis," *Revue des études byzantines* 28 (1970): 161-187.

⁵⁰⁶ The subject of Deesis underwent great transformations in the West. For more information, see Catherine Oakes, *Ora pro nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion* (London/Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008), esp. 68-92; and Sean Gilsdorf, "Deesis Deconstructed: Imagining Intercession in the Medieval West," *Viator* 43 (2012): 131-173.

The more explicit type of communication of the saints with the congregation — and with one another — is exemplified through inscriptions, which in Byzantium often contain prayers, verses from particular hymns or specific lines pointing to particular liturgies.⁵⁰⁷ Both Elaphiti churches had devotional inscriptions preserved on painted scrolls, but it is impossible to decipher the texts which they contained. Judging by the identifying inscriptions from the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep, they were likely written in Latin, which once more brings up the complex matters of users and their identities. The churches are an obvious case of cultural overlap. Archival sources suggest that the area was by the time in question predominantly Slavic, and according to scholarly tradition, the cultural ties were overwhelmingly established with Latin Italy. Yet what we have in front of us are frescoes of Byzantine iconography supplemented, at least partially, by Latin inscriptions. Things become even more complicated if we zoom in to focus on the details of the representations.

Painted Scrolls and the Elaphiti Inscriptions

This brings us to the scrolls in the hands of the Virgin and John the Baptist in the apse of the church of Saint John on Šipan (Figs. 96 and 97), and in the hand of Saint Nicholas in the homonymous church on Koločep (Fig. 98). The latter scroll is in bad condition and is not particularly useful for analysis. However, the former two are well preserved, and look like typical Byzantine rolls; objects which were used for all kinds of documents of secular and religious

⁵⁰⁷ Gerstel, “Monastic Soundspaces,” esp. 135-137.

nature.⁵⁰⁸ It is, however, the liturgical scrolls that have survived in greatest numbers. They participated in the Orthodox liturgy and would be unreolled and read at specific moments of the ceremony.⁵⁰⁹ This practice was imitated in Byzantine art from the 12th century and the painted scrolls, held by bishops, often contained verses connected to the Divine Liturgy.⁵¹⁰ Copious examples of bishop-holding scrolls are found all over the Byzantine world. Furthermore, various other characters — prophets, isolated saints and lateral members of the Deesis composition — also carry scrolls in their hands. These are not restricted to painting, but appear in sculpture, as well, as exemplified by prophets from the portals of the Church of Paragoritissa in Arta. While there are a great deal of minor variations in terms of the anatomy of the scroll, all of them are essentially elongated sheets rolled around a baton. The scrolls in Saint John on Šipan are clearly of this shape — with the rolled paper emphasized as a snail motif — however, the writing surface is ruled differently. The text is still written in a single column which runs across the short side of the sheet, but the horizontal lines separating the text are red. Furthermore, they do not extend to the edge of the scroll, but have a margin.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ For different use of scrolls, see Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15-22.

⁵⁰⁹ Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 29-30. Based on written sources and material evidence, Gerstel notes that important churches and monastic foundations must have had larger collection of scrolls. Mount Athos, for example, still preserves more than a hundred scrolls. For the surviving objects in the collection of two of the most important Greek monasteries on the site, see Chrysostomos Lavriotos, “Katalogos leiturgikon eiletarion tes Hieras Mones Megistes Lauras,” *Makedonika* 4 (1955-1960), 391-402; Linos Polites, “Katalogos leiturgikon eiletarion tes Hieras Mones Vatopedi,” *Makedonika* 4 (1955-1960), 403-9.

⁵¹⁰ The majority of the preserved scrolls contain the liturgies of Basil or John Chrysostom with brief instructions. More rarely they included the liturgy of James, communion prayers, the pre-sanctified liturgy and/or other liturgical texts. Sharon E. J. Gerstel, “Liturgical Scrolls in the Byzantine Sanctuary,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine studies* 35/2 (1994): 197-198. For some of the texts on the painted scrolls, see Gordana Babić and Christopher Walter, “The Inscriptions upon Liturgical Rolls in Byzantine Apse Decoration,” *Revue des études byzantines* 74 (1976): 271-272. For the connection between chanted liturgy and painted scrolls, Gerstel, “Monastic Soundspaces,” 135-52.

⁵¹¹ Byzantine liturgical scrolls are up to 12 meters long and written in a single column, as opposed to the Greco-Roman examples, where the text was arranged in multiple columns along the long side of the sheet. Vasileios Marinis, “Liturgical Scrolls,” in *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, ed. Vasiliki Tsamakda (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 311.

Was the text written on the scroll an active part of the liturgy? Are the objects held by the figures from the church on Šipan in fact liturgical scrolls, or are we looking at a different kind of dialogue between this representation and its viewers? The text in the scrolls would have provided fine clues for this, but unfortunately, the inscriptions are lost.⁵¹² There are several letters surviving on the Virgin's scroll, but they are so faint that not only is the inscription impossible to read, but it is even hard to tell for certain in which script it was written. Namely, all of the letters that are preserved unambiguously carry meaning in both Latin and Greek scripts. Some of the saintly labels in the church on of Saint Nicholas on Koločep are legible, and written in Latin. Moreover, in the church of Saint John the Baptist there is a partially preserved inscription next to the Archangel below the dome, likewise in Latin, which reads [MI]CHAE[L]. Taking this into consideration, one would assume that the inscriptions on the scrolls in the apse of church of Saint John the Baptist were in Latin, as well. However, the conspicuous presence of Greek letters *Iota* and *Omega*, written next to the figure of John the Baptist casts a shadow of doubt on this otherwise reasonable conclusion (Fig. 94). *Iω* [sic] is a standard and fairly common way of abbreviating the saint's name in Byzantine art. The inscription even has a ligature mark written above the *Omega*. Furthermore, the abbreviated label next to the Virgin seems to read *MP* (Fig. 96), which represents the Greek letters M and R as the first part of the *nomen sacrum* of the Virgin (*MP ΘΥ = Μητηρ θεου*, i.e.

⁵¹² Cf. Fisković, "Adriobizantiski sloj zidnog slikarstva," 376-377, initially believed that the text had never been written in the first place. In a latter article he corrected this, stating that the text was written at a later date in secco, which he concluded was because the master, if he was literate, was unfamiliar with the language of the local church and therefore more educated people had to come after him and fill in the lines painted out on the scrolls. Fisković, "O freskama 11 i 12 stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici," 26-27. However, he does not take into account that the final touches in Byzantine wall painting, including inscriptions, were often executed in secco technique.

Mother of God).⁵¹³ Overscored *nomina sacra* also appear in the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep alongside the archangels, but they are written in Latin script (see for example Fig. 63).

Bilingual and multilingual inscriptions are commonly found in areas of great cultural overlap. Copious examples of monuments where two or even three different scripts are present can be found in the southern Italian region of Salento.⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, in the State of Ragusa there was a clear preference towards Latin over Greek, which was a reflection of the dominance of Latin rite in the territory and the demographic structure of the State: namely, the fact that Greeks formed a negligible portion of the population by the period when it is possible to study this topic through the written record. Linda Safran argues that, in Salento at least, the *nomina sacra* of Christ and the Virgin cannot be taken as markers for a linguistic affiliation of either patrons or painters, since they were widespread in both Greek and Latin by the twelfth century.⁵¹⁵ She does not, however, specify, how common it is, if at all, to find *nomina sacra* and longer inscriptions in different languages on the same representation. If it was indeed the case on Šipan that the labels were in Greek but the inscriptions on the scroll in Latin, does that indicate that the frescoes in the respective church had a Greek painter, or a painter who knew both Greek and Latin? Furthermore, if this was not the case — if all of the inscriptions were in Greek — what does this tell us about the identity of both the artist and the patron/patrons?

⁵¹³ Ludwig Traube, *Nomina sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (München: C.H. Beck, 1907), esp. 120-121.

⁵¹⁴ In the case of Salento, these are Greek, Latin and Hebrew, which are sometimes even combined in a single text. For more, see Safran, “Public Textual Cultures,” 115-144.

⁵¹⁵ Linda Safran, “Language Choice in the Medieval Salento: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Greek and Latin Inscriptions,” in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Lars M. Hoffmann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 856.

Moreover, if the script of the *nomina sacra* on Šipan is not a sign of identity of the parties involved in the making of the respective painting, what does it then signal? In a place like Salento, where larger groups of minorities lived side by side, an occurrence such as this would be anticipated. But in the State of Ragusa, where the permanent population was more or less homogenous, at least that we know of, this phenomenon merits attention not so much because it would be unexpected, but because it has been overlooked for so long that it came to be regarded as a rare or passing feature. Tracing territorial origins of the hand of the master based on pictorial evidence is a complicated and risky affair which can perpetuate the divide of scholarship into area studies and national histories. The same can be said of the identity of the patron assigned without dedicatory inscriptions; evidence which is sometimes preserved on the walls of churches, but which is completely absent in the case of the Elaphiti monuments. There is a chance, however small, that the church of Saint John the Baptist had a Greek patron who commissioned the painting and requested that the *nomina sacra* be in their native tongue. This sort of language divergence presents an important building block towards a case for collective patronage; a matter which I have discussed in the previous chapters. Furthermore, it is obvious that the painter of both this cycle, and the one on Koločep, was well acquainted with Byzantine themes and aesthetics. On the other hand, the saints' facial features are not entirely in line with what is considered Byzantine traits.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁶ For matters of style, see Anna Zacharova, "The murals in the Church of the Virgin Eleousa in Veljuša and Byzantine Painting of the Second Half of the Eleventh Century," *Zograf* 44 (2020): 37-57; Olga Sigismundovna Popova, *Problemy vizantijskogo iskusstva: mozaiki, fresky, ikony* [Problems of Byzantine Art: Mosaics, Frescoes, Icons] (Moscow: Severny Palomnik, 2006); esp. essays "Asketicheskoe napravljenie v vizantijskom iskusstve vtoroj chetverty 11 veka i ego daljnjejshaja sud'ba" [The Ascetic Trend in Byzantine Art of the Second Quarter of the 11th Century and its Subsequent Faith], 149-210; "Mozaiki Sofii Kievskoi i vizantijskaja monumentalnaja zhivopis' vtoroj chetvrti 11 veka" [The Mosaics of Saint Sophia in Kiev and Monumental Painting of the Second Quarter of the 11th Century], 211-296; "Mozaiki Mihailovskogo Zlatoverhogo monastyrja v Kieve i vizantijskoe iskusstvo konca 11 – nachala 12 veka" [Mosaics of the Monastery of Saint Michael the Golden Domed in Kiev and Byzantine Art of the End of the 11th - Beginning of the 12th Century], 297-352; "Freski Dmitrievskogo sobora vo Vladimire i vizantijskaja zhivopis' 12 veka" [Frescoes of the Cathedral of Saint Dimitry at Vladimir and Byzantine Painting of the 12th Century], 353-404.

It is hard to say whether the Elaphiti frescoes are *sufficiently* Byzantine in style to allow us to determine whether the master was Greek, or rather merely Greek-trained. However, I do not see it as productive to frame the Elaphiti cycles as neither the work of a workshop trained “in the East,” nor a mediocre painter who was not up to the “excellence of Byzantine stylistics.”⁵¹⁷

But whether or not the artist, or even the patron for that matter, was Greek, is not essential. Artistic features do not drift or stray: when they are found far away from what is considered usual, this is typically not a consequence of a fluke singular occurrence, but a result of the formation of communication systems which allow for the transmission of elements through means of travel, exchange, and immersion, and in the long run led to the creation of a common, Mediterranean language.⁵¹⁸ Likewise, the Byzantine components of the painting in the two Elaphiti churches should not be considered products of an individual artist of a particular origin, but a testament to the longevity of contact between various Mediterranean areas, which led to the ubiquity, alteration and appropriation of certain themes and motifs.

The scroll is certainly one of such motifs. It was recurrent in the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean, but it also existed in Italy, and perhaps even in Western Europe.⁵¹⁹ In an effort to shed light on the functionality of the figures carrying scrolls in the apse of Saint John on Šipan, we must turn to comparative imagery. Mary who holds the scroll is the so-called intercessory Virgin (*Paraklesis*). This is an old and relatively common type of representation in the Byzantine

⁵¹⁷ See Peković, *Četiri Elafitske Crkve*, 77 and Fisković, “O freskama 11 i 12 stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici, 27, respectively.

⁵¹⁸ Eva R. Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability,” 20-21.

⁵¹⁹ In southern Italy there are copious examples of physical scrolls preserved; the so-called Exultet scrolls. There are also examples of painted figures holding both rolled and unfolded scrolls. Written evidence also point to the existence of scrolls in France. Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy*, 22-23.

world, with notable examples preserved in Greece and Serbia.⁵²⁰ In earlier representations, the Virgin typically turns towards Christ, whom she addresses on behalf of the faithful. Alternatively she is part of the three-figure Deesis scene, which is not unlike what is represented in the apse of the church on Šipan. Unsurprisingly, yet nevertheless frustratingly, the key lies in the inscription. Namely, at a later date the text written on the scroll begins to reflect Christ and Mary's imagined conversation, sometimes even in the form of a dialogue.⁵²¹ Since the inscriptions in the apse of the church on Šipan are now lost, it is impossible to say whether this would have been true of the respective representation.

Marina Falla Castelfranchi argues that the Virgin *Paraklesis* as part of the Deesis is extremely rare,⁵²² but that is not quite the case. She might not be as common as the *Hagiosoritissa*, but examples of the Deesis with the Virgin holding a scroll can be found in various churches in the Mediterranean. At present time the cases when she is the only scroll-bearer are more frequent, but there are instances where both she and John the Baptist have scrolls in their hands (see for example Saint Nicholas Phountoukli in Eleousa, Rhodes, dated to the 15th century).⁵²³ Neither of these examples, unfortunately, preserves the text of the inscription. In fact, there are not enough examples with surviving inscriptions known to me as to establish a recurring epigraphic pattern

⁵²⁰ Ivan M. Djordjević and Miodrag Marković, "On the Dialogue Relationship Between the Virgin and Christ in East Christian Art," *Zograf* 28 (2000 – 2001): 13–48.

⁵²¹ The earliest known examples of this type come from the churches Kurbinovo and Hagioi Anargyroiroi in Kastoria, which are both dated to the end of the 12th century. *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵²² Marina Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia* (Milan: Electa, 1991), 166. Similarly, Ivan M. Djordjević and Miodrag Marković in the aforementioned article "On the Dialogue Relationship Between the Virgin and Christ in East Christian Art" never specified whether any of the Virgin Parakleses they discuss were part of a Deesis scene. The role of John the Baptist in the conversation between Christ and the Virgin remains to be examined.

⁵²³ For more on this church, see Sharon. E. J. Gerstel, "Crossing Borders: The ornamental Decoration of Saint Nicholas at Phountoukli on Rhodes," in *Mélanges Catherine Jolivet-Lévy*, eds. Sulamith Brodbeck, Andréas Nicolaïdès; Paule Pagès et. al. (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2016), 155-169.

and subsequently speculate whether the respective pattern was followed in the fresco of Saint John the Baptist on Šipan.⁵²⁴

Parallels in the Neighboring Regions

While the analysis of the inscriptions has unfortunately reached a dead end, the search for overlapping forms and expressions comparable to the Elaphiti frescoes has not been exhausted. To the contrary, there are plenty of parallels yet to be drawn. Dalmatian art has traditionally been compared, and culturally linked to its closest maritime neighbor — Italy. This correlation is not objectionable by itself, but there is an obvious, yet crucial detail to keep in mind. Namely, Italy is a diverse and complex territory which was by no means uniform in the Middle Ages. It is often conceptually unwittingly homogenized, especially when it is used as a territorial source for artistic comparanda. It is also frequently equated to the West, likely as a result of a somewhat *whiggish* anticipation of the Renaissance. The comparison of the paintings from the Elaphiti churches and from the first church below the Cathedral of Ragusa to the frescoes of Sant' Angelo in Formis and the mosaics of Torcello are part of the same narrative.

It is in fact the regions of the southern Italy, geographically the closest to Ragusa, that maintained the strongest cultural proximity to Byzantium. They were part of the Empire the longest and retained a solid Greek population even after the Norman Conquest. As a result, a great quantity of medieval material survives in southern Italy and is in line with Byzantine traditions. At the same time, the development of Italian traits, as well as those of other ethnicities and cultures, is evident.

⁵²⁴ The only wall painting that I am aware of in which the scrolls of the Virgin and John the Baptist are legible is the 13th-century Deesis representation from the rock-cut church of Padre Eterno in Castellaneta, Otranto.

This is true of the entire Mezzogiorno, although material evidence in each of the provinces demonstrates its own unique flavor of artistic amalgamation. The territory was always characterized by cultural overlap — before the 11th century as well as after — a place where Greeks and Latins, and in certain parts Arabs and/or Jews lived side by side and often shared the same spaces.⁵²⁵

When it comes to painting, which is of especial interest to this dissertation, southern Italy provides an immensely rich and fruitful ground. In addition to the built churches, the potential for comparative imagery with those of the Elaphiti is found in rock-cut churches. I do not believe that one should focus exclusively on them when looking for comparative evidence for Dalmatian paintings, and not all churches that I am about to discuss belong to this category. However, rock-cut churches do make up a large portion of the painted Italian Byzantine corpus and offer the kind of evidence which is often lost in the built churches. There are hundreds of such locations in southern Italy. Traditionally, the function of these churches was identified according to the region where they are located, so that Calabrian rock-cut constructions were labeled monastic, whereas the Apulian ones were studied from the framework of the so-called rupestrian civilization, according to which laymen inhabited those spaces.⁵²⁶ These considerations are now being reexamined.⁵²⁷ Despite being well published, these churches are still an underexplored subject,

⁵²⁵ Safran, *The Medieval Salento*, esp. 1-16.

⁵²⁶ For more on rock-cut churches, see for example Franco dell’Aquila, Aldo Messina, *Le chiese rupestri di Puglia e Basilicata*, (Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 1998); Endico Menestò, *Eremitismo e habitat rupestre: Atti dell VI Convegno internazionale sulla civiltà rupestre 13-15 novembre 2013* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2015); idem, *Dalla Chiesa in grotto alle aree della civiltà rupestre: Gli strumenti di pianificazione territoriale: Atti dell VIII Convegno internazionale sulla civiltà rupestre 29 novembre – 1 dicembre 2018* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2019); Marcello Mignozzi and Roberto Rotondo *Puglia rupestre inedita: Archeologia, Arte, Devozione* (Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2016); Annabel Jane Wharton, *Art of Empire: Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery – A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* (University Park, PA and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988).

⁵²⁷ For this, see for example Lorenzo Riccardi, “Art and Architecture for Byzantine Monks in Calabria: Sources, Monuments, Paintings and Objects (Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries),” in *Greek Monasticism in Southern Italy: The Life*

whose study is hindered by the sheer quantity of material, vandalism of the sites which has resulted in a poor state of preservation, and various other problems.⁵²⁸ The topic continues to be studied by Italian scholars and currently there is a project in place focusing on the reevaluation of Apulian sites.⁵²⁹

In previous scholarship Apulia is acknowledged as one of the most important trading destinations for Ragusans. Archival sources show early trading arrangements with various cities of this region,⁵³⁰ and continue to show constant fluctuation of goods and various groups of people across the Adriatic Sea, on established routes. I have been mentioning Apulia in that context throughout this dissertation. There is every reason to argue that the proximity and the *longue durée* of close connections reflected in artistic production, through the travels of artisans such as Stancha, and translations of objects of art. Indeed, juxtaposing the visual material of the two coasts has already yielded some interesting results. However, one does not have to limit the search of parallels with Dalmatian art to Apulia alone. Other regions in southern Italy, as I am about to show, demonstrate meaningful analogies, indicating a wider networking scheme which consisted of both maritime and land routes.

of Neilos in Context, ed. Barbara Crostini and Ines Angeli Murzaku (London-New York: Routledge 2018), 97-99, where the author questions the pan-monastic theory and explains that monks were not the only driving force of art production in Calabria.

⁵²⁸ See Damiano Grassi, Salvatore Grimaldi, Luigia Sabbatini et. al., “Principali cause del degrado del cospicuo patrimonio artistico ospitato dagli insediamenti rupestri della Puglia,” *Giornale di Geologia Applicata* 4 (2006): 73-78.

⁵²⁹ The project, called *Corpus della pittura rupestre*, is led by Marcello Mignozzi of University of Bari Alto Moro. For more information, see the official website of the project, <https://corpus-della-pittura-rupestre-pugliese.jimdosite.com/>, last accessed February 17, 2022.

⁵³⁰ Zoran Perović, *Najranija dubrovačka stoljeća* [The Earliest Centuries of Dubrovnik] (Dubrovnik: Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku, 2011), 36, 37, 39.

Tatjana Mičević-Đurić, who analyzed the Elaphiti pictorial programs in her doctoral thesis as part of a larger investigation of Byzantine influences in medieval frescoes on the eastern Adriatic coast, pointed to several analogies with paintings from the Apennine peninsula. She was the first who attempted to find analogies with the Elaphiti in concrete sites other than Sant' Angelo in Formis, and her research, I believe, took her in the right geographic direction. She introduced the rock-cut churches of Santi Stefani at Vaste (province of Lecce, Apulia), San Nicola in Mottola (province of Taranto, Apulia), and San Biaggio in San Vito Dei Normanni (province of Brindisi, Apulia). As far as built churches are concerned, in addition to Sant' Angelo in Formis, she referred to Santa Maria di Monte d'Elio (province of Foggia, Apulia) and Santa Maria in Poggiardo (province of Lecce, Apulia). However, she believed that the similarities with these sites are general in nature and stop at ubiquitous elements such as ornament, stiffness of the figures and usual iconographic solutions.⁵³¹ However, her focus was primarily on style and she pointed out the differences in the treatment of the figures, shapes, contours and the quality of painting eloquently, almost as though she expected to find evidence of the same manner of painting or the same circle of artists. In reality, when it comes to the Middle Ages, this hardly ever happens.⁵³² However, it is possible to draw conclusions based on the common elements. The (absent) stylistic overlap aside, analogies that point to factors other than authorship do exist.

⁵³¹ Mičević Đurić, "Bizant u srednjovjekovnome zidnom slikarstvu," 34-35.

⁵³² The 11th-century sculptor Niketas made a number of liturgical furnishings in the region of the Mani, Greece. In the 13th century in Thessaloniki wall painters Michael Astrapas and Eutybios had their own workshop and likewise signed their work. Icon-painter Manuel Panselinos was active in the same territory and the same period. On Crete, a wall painter by the name of Ioannis Pagomenos worked on about a dozen churches in the early 14th century. All of the aforementioned artists signed their work. In other words, there are cases when art historians can attribute a work of art to the same painter or workshop with a solid degree of certainty, but they are scarce, and require a great deal more of evidence to pronounce than exists on the Elaphiti Islands. For more on this matter, see Maria Lidova, "Manifestations of Authorship: Artists' Signatures in Byzantium" *Venezia Arti* 26 (2017): 89-105, esp. 94-100.

Ornamental patterns, as she points out, are indeed ubiquitous. The same motifs appear in various media, across periods and watery and territorial boundaries. They are copious, it is hard to trace their origin and they are generally less exciting to examine, which is why they so often get overlooked. However, they can also be regarded as signals of larger trends of travel, connections and transfers. Furthermore, certain solutions are especially prevalent in particular geographic areas and can be indicative of particular groups. Pearl haloes, for example, appear so often in southern Italian rock-cut painting and in so many variants that there have even been attempts to grapple with their typology.⁵³³ However, when it comes to fresco painting, they are primarily a rural phenomenon, which, I believe, is suggestive of the wishes of their patrons and users. I will come back to this issue in the last section of this dissertation in which I focus exclusively on ornament.

The emphasis on iconic representations and scarceness of narrative scenes characteristic of both the Elaphiti paintings, and the Apulian rock-cut churches is significant on its own merit. Namely, the painted decorations of churches indicate that the patron's desires, and veneration — reflected in devotional imagery — would have been more important than the theological implications of the narrative scenes (even if their purpose was, among other, didactic). In other words, this kind of arrangement, at least in the case of the respective Apulian monuments, is considered to be one of the signs of laymen function.⁵³⁴ As for the Elaphiti cycles, such a parallel has never been drawn, but seems plausible in the light of evidence which I have shown in the previous chapters. Moreover, areas which preserve abundant traces of artistic activity often reveal

⁵³³ Michaela Rizzi, "Ornamenta: tipologia e diffusione degli orecchini negli affreschi rupestri de area pugliese," in *Agiografia e iconografia nelle aree della civiltà rupestre: Atti dell VI Convegno internazionale sulla civiltà rupestre 17-19 novembre 2011*, ed. Endico Menestò (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2013), 283-293.

⁵³⁴ For other pointers of laymen function, see Marina Falla Castelfranchi, "La decorazione pittorica delle chiese rupestri," in *Le chiese rupestri di Puglia e Basilicata*, ed. Franco Dell'Aquila and Aldo Messina (Bari: Mario Adda, 1998), 129.

iconographic solutions which would be considered unusual or uncommon elsewhere. The frequency of the Deesis in the apse in southern Italian wall painting is an example of this, even though the incentive behind it escapes us.⁵³⁵ The fact that the same preference occurs in Dalmatian wall painting is no accident, but a reflection of systematic contact.

One site which Mičević-Đurić mentioned, namely the 11th- century painting in the double-apse rock-cut church of Santi Sefani in Vaste, provides more concrete analogies with the Elaphiti cycles than she realized,⁵³⁶ One of the apses of this church, in fact, displays the same protagonists as the apse of the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep (Fig. 95).⁵³⁷ This is neither the classical Deesis, nor a Deesis in which John the Baptist and or the Virgin are replaced with saints of special local importance. This is a particular type of Deesis in which Christ is flanked by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Given the rarity of the respective theme in apses of medieval churches, this overlap is noteworthy, even though the arrangement is somewhat different. Namely, in the Vaste church Christ is in standing position and the Archangels bend toward him. On Koločep he appears to be seated on a lyre-backed throne.⁵³⁸ Both Christ and his throne are oversized, and the Archangels, while fully upright, are cramped, each in their respective edge of the apse.

Other traits of more formal nature in this church allow for comparison with the Elaphiti frescoes, as well. Namely, the pearl-haloed saints from the same layer — both those on the lateral walls and those in the other apse — are painted in the same manner (Figs. 100 and 101). Their full

⁵³⁵ Scholars have suggested that the Deesis in the apse was in indication of funerary function. See for example Christopher Walker, “Bulletin on the Deësis and the Paraclesis,” *Revue des études byzantines* 38 (1980): 262. However, to my knowledge there are no comprehensive studies on this matter.

⁵³⁶ For more on the frescoes of this church, see Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 56-79.

⁵³⁷ Mičević-Đurić interprets the scene from Koločep as Christ in Majesty, “Bizant u srednjovjekovnome zidnom slikarstvu,” 127.

⁵³⁸ For lyre-backed thrones, see James D. Breckenridge “Christ on the Lyre-Backed Throne,” *DOP* 34/35 (1980/1981): 247-260.

frontality enhances their monumentality, and their emotionless expressions leave a subtle impression of strictness, especially in the case of older saints. While the size of the figures differs, the proportions leave the same impression. The drapery seems to fall in the same way as in the Elaphiti paintings, as well, at as far can be deduced from the limited visual information. In the case of the Elaphiti, namely, the poor state of preservation greatly hinders stylistic analysis.

Similar features, on the other hand, can be found in one of the frescoes of the church of San Donato al Pantano at San Donato di Ninea (province of Cosenza, Calabria) (Fig. 102). This monastic church of complex stratigraphy retains recently discovered paintings in at least two layers, the later of which is dated to the 13th century.⁵³⁹ Christ seated on a lushly decorated lyre throne exhibits the same formal elements as the Vaste saints, but he appears even closer to the Elaphiti paintings. In Vaste the contours of the head and body, as well as the facial features, hair and garments, are precisely outlined. In San Donato al Pantano, on the other hand, as in the Elaphiti frescoes, the lines and coloristic gradation are employed in conjunction, resulting in a softer expression. The figures share the elongated nose with delicately flared nostrils, the rounded eyebrows and the shape of the eyes; they even have in common the slight tilt of the iris which results in a squinty-eyed look. The dominant colors, the creases of the garment with a square-shaped collar, as well as the overall proneness to ornamentalization — displayed in the San Donato al Pantano Christ through his pearl halo and the meticulous pattern on his throne — are all in line with the Elaphiti paintings.

⁵³⁹ The frescoes were discovered in 2003. For more information of the church, stratigraphy and paintings, see Lorenzo Riccardi, “Le pitture murali della chiesa di S. Donato al Pantano di San Donato di Ninea (CS): note preliminari,” *Calabria Letteraria* 4-6/59 (2011): 50-60, and Lorenzo Riccardi, *Corpus della pittura monumentale bizantina in Italia II/Calabria* (Soveria Manelli: Rubbetinno Editore, 2021), 86-99.

Many of these characteristics can be found in paintings on other sites in southern Italy. Worthy of note is the earlier layer of the monastic church of Santa Maria di Cerrate (province of Lecce), as well as the rock cut churches of Santa Marina in Muro Leccese (province of Lecce, Apulia), Sant' Angelo in Mottola (Province of Taranto, Apulia), a church of unknown denomination in Llama del Antico near Fasano (province of Bari, Apulia), and particular representations in the complex trogladite settlement of Matera, such as the enthroned Virgin from the rock-cut church of Madona delle tre porte (Province of Matera, Basilicata) (Figs. 103-106).⁵⁴⁰ Interestingly, all of these cycles have been dated to the 13th century. And while chronologies based on style can be unstable and might be disproven in the future, the willingness to date similar artistic features into such a time frame of two hundred years is an acknowledgement of the longevity of styles in the territory.

This is relevant for the Elaphiti frescoes, as well, considering the fact that they have been disputed in date, which was based on style but with no proper parallels offered. I do not insist that the similarities of the Elaphiti paintings with the aforementioned frescoes should lead to a redating of the former to the 13th century. Rather, I am pointing out the possibility that these paintings are later than it has been considered. Attributing the fresco remains found beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa to the second church, rather than the first, would make another strong argument for the

⁵⁴⁰ For more on these monuments and their paintings, see Valentino Pace, "La chiesa di Santa Maria delle Cerrate e i suoi affreschi," in *Obraz Vizantii. Sbornik statei v cest' O.S. Popovoi* [The Image of Byzantium: A Collection of Papers Honoring O. S. Popova], ed. Anna V. Zakharova (Moscow: Severny Palomnik, 2008), 377-398; Gioia Bertelli, *Puglia Preromanica* (Milan: Edipuglia, 2004), 193-205; Valentino Pace, "Santa Marina a Muro Leccese. Una questione di metodo e una riflessione sulla pittura «bizantina» in Puglia," in *Mélanges Catherine Jolivet-Lévy*, eds. Sulamith Brodbeck, Andréas Nicolaidès; Paule Pagès et. al. (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2016), 397-413; M. Luisa Semeraro Herrmann and Raffaele Semeraro, *Arte Medioevale nelle lame di Fasano*, (Fasano: Schena editore, 1996); Raffaello de Ruggieri, *Le chiese Rupestri di Matera* (Rome: De Luca Editore, 1966), esp. 244-246.

same case. At this point such an interpretation seems viable, and further analysis of mortar will hopefully reveal more information.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the lingering of comparative stylistic traits in southern Italy is not, as it is usually considered, the delay in artistic trends in relation to the great centers, but it is rather the constant interregional and intraregional connectedness which enables the return of the same kind of features. This kind of ricochet effect would have coexisted with and independently of elite metropolitan art, not because there was no communication between sites such as those that I have spoken of above and metropolitan centers, but because people commissioned the kind of art that they found relatable and affordable. It is important to emphasize this, because this kind of framing allows the Elaphiti paintings to break free from the preconceived tie with the Benedictines, and from discussions about quality, and allows them to become the result of intensified contact with the Mediterranean which involved personal agency.

The physical landscape around the aforementioned churches is revealing in that regard. They are situated alongside the foot and heel of the Italian boot; all of them inland but remarkably close to the sea and to the principal travel routes. It is almost as though they mirror the maritime path which leads from the Adriatic to Sicily, following the coast wherever possible. The churches on this tangent could be interpreted as a living memory of frequent contacts in this part of the Mediterranean. Some of the churches, such as Santi Stefani at Vaste, have been brought into connection with the island of Corfu,⁵⁴¹ which is a valid point grounded both in artistic and geographic aspects. In fact, the Ionian Islands offer parallels with the Elaphiti frescoes, as well, and thus introduce another cardinal direction of frequent medieval travel. Unfortunately, not many

⁵⁴¹ Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 72.

decorative programs in the churches there survive considering the size and number of the islands, which are comparative, for example, to archipelagos in the Aegean. Those that do, however, lend themselves to a comparison with the Elaphiti paintings in several ways. They are painted in predominantly Byzantine traditions, but are not short on western elements, both in terms of style and in miscellaneous details. These different components come together in very similar ways as in both the Elaphities, and the Apulian churches. In all of these cases we are talking about a subtle blend of Greek and Latin culture.

Just like Ragusa, the Ionian Islands were taken over by Venice after the Fourth Crusade, and after a long period of Byzantine rule. But it is perhaps in the economic grounds behind the change in governance more than source of political control itself where one should seek the origins of their decorative features. Venice was interested in the Ionian Islands principally because of their key position on the waterway between the Adriatic and Constantinople.⁵⁴² Naturally, the Ionian Islands are much larger and of much greater consequence than the Elaphiti, and still retain churches of different sizes, functions and relationships to the environment. Yet it is, once again, almost exclusively in rural churches that paintings survive, albeit often poorly preserved or exposed to the elements.

One monument — the church of Saints Jason and Sosipater on Corfu — lends itself to comparison with all of the aforementioned churches particularly well. This is the oldest surviving church on the island, whose embedment in local traditions is evident even in its name.⁵⁴³ The

⁵⁴² For more on the reasons for Venetian interest in Ionian Islands, see Ruthy Gertwagen, “Venice’s Policy Towards the Ionian and Aegean Islands 1204-1423,” *The International Journal of Maritime History* 26/3 (2014): esp. 534-535.

⁵⁴³ Jason and Sosipater were early martyrs, disciples of Saint Paul and part of the group of Seventy Apostles. Their most prominent mission was on Corfu, where they preached the Gospel and baptized.

church was expanded at least once, changed functions several times and preserves at least three layers of frescoes from the Byzantine period.⁵⁴⁴ Of interest for the comparison is the middle one, dated to the 12th century. It depicts bishops in the apse of the prothesis, as well an equestrian saint on the western wall of the narthex (Figs. 107 and 108). Whether the former and the latter were painted simultaneously could be the subject of debate. The treatment of the faces is dissimilar, and not only because of the variation in pose. The pigments used for the bishops are darker than those of the equestrian saint, their facial expressions differ, and the placement of the figures — the fact that the equestrian saint breaks the limitation of his register so comfortably — all leave an overall impression that the figures are at least works of different hands. On the other hand, they appear to share the same background and, more importantly, the same attention to detail. Every crease on the drapery is neatly outlined. Ornament is used on the garments extensively and meticulously, especially on the military costume of the equestrian, but also on the collars of the bishops, the book that each of them holds and their beards in which every individual hair is delineated. The figures' haloes are adorned with pearls. All of this can be said of the Elaphiti paintings, as well.

The similarity goes beyond propensity to ornamentation. The vegetal motif above the apse window in the Church of Saints Jason and Sosipater is practically identical to the one on the rim of the apse in the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep, and the use of the pigments is the same, as well. The motionless frontal postures and reserved faces of the bishops are close to the iconic Elaphiti representations, even if their facial features are more nuanced than the Elaphiti saints. The qualities that the cycles share with the Elaphiti, as well as the Apulian paintings, such as

⁵⁴⁴ Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egreterio Bizantion tichografikon tis Ellados: Ionia Nisia* (Athens: Akademia Athenon, 2018), 64-69.

comparable stylistic traits of the figures, the use of color, the overlapping patterns and the thought put into embellishments places all of them in the same circle of ideas.

Interestingly, some of the Ionian monuments share with the Elaphiti thematic details that must not be overlooked, such as the depiction of scrolls; and not just any scrolls, but scrolls with margins in red pigment, just like in the frescoes on the Elaphiti Islands (Fig. 109). Such scrolls appear consistently in Ionian churches, but they are often altered, or rather, distorted to a lesser or greater degree. Sometimes their bottoms are rolled up in a messy and almost wrinkled manner, at other times they are smaller relative to the size of the hand that holds them and their bottom ends in an odd-looking tail, while in some churches they are depicted as though they were made out of light-weight fabric which was then folded along the longer edge so that a corner of it emerges from the back (Fig. 110).

I briefly discussed the conceptual yet infamous line which cuts the Mediterranean in half and reinforces the fragmentation of the Sea into area studies on regional basis. The entire Dalmatia could be considered part of that axis, but it is really Ragusa in particular that best demonstrates the encounter of different worlds in more ways than one: geographically, economically, socially and artistically. In other words, Ragusa is situated on a territorial fringe, with lands belonging to the Byzantine cultural circle to its east and the medieval West to its west. While it is the western connections that most often get reinforced, the throat of the Adriatic basin is positioned towards the east; making the eastern lands more easily accessible through the sea than western ones. Moreover, the features of the Elaphiti paintings confirm that it is in that direction that parallels and analogies should be sought for. Places which were once stopping points on corridors and

waterways that lead to and from the Eastern Mediterranean⁵⁴⁵ have offered, and can still offer, plenty of insights in that regard. At the end of this glance into the world of artistic links between the Elaphiti Islands and the Mediterranean, one thing remains to be examined: the ornament. Although it is generally overlooked in scholarship, ornament can be a good marker of cultural ties and transfers. In the case of the Elaphiti Islands, it enables us to expand on the artistic connections even further than what has so far been discussed.

Hidden in Plain Sight: The Path of an Ornament

Ornament has for a long time received little critical attention in the field of Byzantine studies, despite its omnipresence in wall painting, mosaics, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, textiles and small objects, and practically in any medium one can think of.⁵⁴⁶ The interest in ornament as decoration has its history, and traditional books of ornament which classified various types and styles of patterns across geographies and periods still serve as valuable reference catalogues.⁵⁴⁷ Their primary focus, however, has always been formal analysis and the embellishing

⁵⁴⁵ Pryor, “Types of Ships and their Performance Capabilities,” 35.

⁵⁴⁶ An exception to the lack of attention in ornament in the Byzantine *oikumene* are the Balkans, where the topic has received more scrutiny. See catalogue of the exhibition held September-October 1961 in the Museum of Applied Art (Muzej Primenjene Umetnosti) in Belgrade: Zagorka Janc, *Ornamenti fresaka iz Srbije i Makedonije od XII do sredine XV veka* [Ornaments in the Serbian and Macedonian frescoes from the XII to the middle of the XV century] (Belgrade: Muzej Primenjene Umetnosti, 1961); Liliana Mavrodinova, “L’ornementation dans la peinture murale en Bulgarie medieval: Principes decoratifs, motifs, paralleles,” in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, eds. Doula Mouriki, et. al. (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology of Princeton University, 1995), 277-282. In the largely aniconic Islamic world, the situation is different, and ornament has received a great deal of attention. For a classic and still paramount book on the topic, see Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series XXXV 38, 1992). For a recent publication, see Margaret S. Graves, *Art of Allusion: Object, Ornament, and Architecture in Medieval Islam* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁵⁴⁷ See Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (Lyon: PCM, 2006); Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Analysis of Ornament. The Characteristics of Styles: An Introduction to the Study of the History of Ornamental Art* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896); Alfred Dwight Foster Hamlin, *A History of Ornament: Ancient and Medieval* (New York:

character of the motifs. On the other hand, up until recently there were almost no discussions on the substance of ornaments: whether on its meaning in a semiotic sense, or its flexibility and potential to transform, adapt, or shift from medium to medium.⁵⁴⁸ One could argue that ornament and marginalia have been particularly overlooked in the realm of monumental painting, where they assume — or so it has been tacitly agreed upon — a subsidiary position to iconic representations. Yet it is in the margins that painters had the most autonomy from canonic depictions and exercised creativity and individuality.⁵⁴⁹ Therefore, not only is the dismissive attitude on the account of subordination an unfair assessment, but in the case of the Elaphiti frescoes it is categorically

The Century Co., 1916); Franz Sales Mayer, *A Handbook of Ornament* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1957). For a Byzantine context see Alison Frantz “Byzantine Illuminated Ornament: A Study in Chronology,” *Art Bulletin* 16/1 (1934): 42-101.

⁵⁴⁸ Lately scholarship has started to show more nuanced interest in ornament, and over the past five years the topic has, in various ways, been the focus of conferences, exhibitions and research projects. See for example the workshop “Purple Ornament in Medieval Manuscripts,” held at the University of Zurich in November 2021 as part of a research project Textures of Sacred Scripture: Materials and Semantics of Sacred Book Ornament in the Western Middle Ages, 780-1300; DO exhibition titled “Ornament: Fragments of Byzantine Fashion” shown in late 2019 and early 2020; the conference Art Readings 2018, in Sofia, Bulgaria, themed “Marginalia;” and one panel at 4th Medieval Forum in Berlin, Germany, 2017 dedicated to “Late Byzantine Ornaments (13th–15th Centuries): Crossing Genres, Cultural Boundaries and Research Disciplines,” featuring six papers. None of these events have been followed by a publication yet. For selected published work which has critically examined ornament, see Jasmina Čirić, “Solar Discs in the Architecture of Byzantine Constantinople: Examples and Parallels,” in *Diethnes Epistimoniko Simposio Pros Timin tou Omotimou Kathigiti Georgiou Veleni*, eds. Dimitris Athanosoulis, Atanasios Markopolous, Paolo Odorico, et. al. (Athens: Ipouggio Politismou kai Athlitismou), 583- 597; eadem, “‘For the Entrance to the Tent Make a Curtain:’ Ornaments, Curtains and Passages in Early Byzantine Sacred Context,” in *Niš and Byzantium: Proceedings of the 16th International symposium*, ed. Miša Rakocija (Niš: Univerzitet u Nišu, 2017), 221-232.; Metin Kaya, “Kapadokya Bölgesi Duvar Resimlerinde Kutsal Anlam Taşınan ve Apotropaik Etkili Motifler” [Motifs with Sacred and Apotropaic Meanings on the Wall Paintings of Cappadocia Region], in *24. Uluslararası Ortaçağ ve Türk Dönemi Kazıları ve Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları Sempozyumu* [24th International Symposium on Medieval and Turkish archaeology and Art History Studies], ed. Semih Aketin, et. al. (Nevşehir, Turkey, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, 2020), 409-435; Leslie Brubaker, “Aniconic Decoration in the Christian World (6th-11th Century): East and West,” in *Cristianità d'occidente e cristianità d'oriente (secoli VI-XI)* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2004), 573-596; Jeffrey C. Anderson, “Introduction to Ornamental Tiles,” in *A Lost Art Rediscovered*, ed. Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Julie A. Lauffenburger (Baltimore, Maryland and University Park, Pennsylvania: The Walters art Museum and The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 89-117; William Tronzo, “The Vagaries of a Motif and Other Observations on Ornament,” in *A Lost Art Rediscovered*, 143-157.

⁵⁴⁹ The fringes of painted programs are often adorned with ornamental patterns. However, sometimes, particularly in the dado zone, painters insert imagery unrelated to theological matters, such as vignettes from everyday life or literature. For one such example from the dado zone, see Laura Horan, “The Unique Late Byzantine Image from the Epic of Digenes Akritas: A Study of the Dado Zone in the Church of Panagia Chrysaphitissa,” MA thesis (UCLA, 2018). For reflections on origins and meaning of ornament, see Metin Kaya’s presentation from the 4th Medieval Forum, titled “Is Ornament a Space of Liberty or of the Subordinate? The Case of Cappadocian Frescoes.”

untrue. As I have stated earlier, ornament plays a significant part in the fresco decoration of the respective two churches.

First of all, both programs are overall highly ornamented, i.e. in both programs there is a substantial emphasis on the decorative aspect of smaller units. The drapery of some of the figures, namely the Archangels and the unknown saint below the dome, are especially lushly garnished and feature a series of repeated decorated concentric circles which simulate embroidery.⁵⁵⁰ Embellished attires occur frequently in Byzantine wall painting, most notably in connection to imperial figures and archangels. Most figures in the Elaphiti churches are dressed in simpler, less luxurious clothing. But even when this is the case, their garments, haloes and furniture around them are all adorned with densely lined white dots which represent pearls. The same pearls frame the borders of particular representations. As one of the symbols of the riches, pearls are likewise frequent in Byzantine art. They appear in early Byzantium and continue to appear through the Middle Byzantine and into the Late Byzantine period. When it comes to elite art, they are customary in the medium of mosaic.⁵⁵¹ In wall painting, on the other hand, they are ubiquitous in rural areas. In fact, it seems as though this feature, since it is easily replicated in the painted medium, is used in churches of the Mediterranean countryside with the idea of compensating for the lack of costly materials and with the intention of leaving the impression of wealth.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ For repetitiveness in textile, see Warren Woodfin, "Repetition and Replication: Sacred and Secular Patterned Textiles," in *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies in Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*, ed. Claire Nesbitt and Mark Jackson (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 35-55.

⁵⁵¹ See for example the mosaic of Justinian and Theodora in San Vitale in Ravenna, mosaics of the gallery of Hagia Sofia in Constantinople and the mosaic of Theodore Metochites in the Chora monastery.

⁵⁵² It is common for one material to imitate another, usually more expensive one. There are numerous combinations, but the most common ones involve wall painting which mimics marble or textile and plaster which mimics stone. Gerstel, "An Alternate View," 138, 144. See also Gerstel, *Rural Lives*, 52.

More notable, however, is the ornament independent of the saintly figures and their accessories. Ornamental patterns adorn medieval churches almost without exception, decorating the arches and bands, pilasters, capitals and other smaller spaces, filling every empty area of the wall as though they bridge the gap between figural representations. In the Elaphiti churches, however, ornamental patterns not only cover the narrow in-between spaces where no representation is small enough to fit, but they also deliberately emulate other media and entirely cover the vaulted spaces which would ordinarily be reserved for narrative scenes. The surviving motifs are diverse and encompass both vegetation and geometric designs.⁵⁵³ Some motifs found in the border zones of both churches are unusual and hard to make sense of since they are either too poorly preserved or of too small a surface. Others, like the stylized vegetation depicted in the church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep (Fig. 111) are fairly standard and occur throughout the Mediterranean not only in wall painting, but also in stonework, ivory, metal and illuminated manuscripts.⁵⁵⁴ The same goes for the polychrome chevron motif which frames the figures of the saints in the vault beneath the dome of the respective church (Figs. 62 and 63). In the church of Saint John on Šipan, the area next to the niches on the north and south walls houses two rectangular ornaments rendered on a monochromatic background. The first is a series of white squares on a dark blue hue, greatly resembling traditional plaid table cloths (Fig. 112). The other motif is set against the same backdrop, but the pattern is different. It simulates replicated cubes in reverse perspective, depicted in lines of alternating white and yellow (Fig. 75). This motif, albeit in a more

⁵⁵³ For more on the function of the two and their role in the organization of space, see Brubaker, "Aniconic Decoration in the Christian World," esp. 573-578.

⁵⁵⁴ For a detailed classification of different kinds of vegetal ornaments found in different illuminated manuscripts, see Frantz "Byzantine Illuminated Ornament," plate XIII.

elaborate and more colorful form, is a relatively common Mediterranean pattern, found in Turkey, Greece, as well as Italy.

Finally, the most distinguishing ornamental pattern in the two respective churches is the so-called labrys, i.e. the double-bladed axe motif, which could just as easily be called an hourglass pattern. On the most basic level the ornament consists out of a series of parallel meandering white lines cutting across parallel meandering ochre lines. The shapes created at their intersections are then interchangeably painted in blue and red, creating the impression of repeated patterns (Fig. 113). The most striking element of the ornament, however, is not so much its appearance, but rather the large surface that it covers. It is used to completely cover the vaults which flank the dome in both churches. Nowadays it is much better preserved in the church of Saint John, but its traces survive in the same locations in the church of Saint Nicholas (Fig. 114).

Why does this pattern take over larger areas that could have otherwise been used for iconic or didactic representations? Does its notable, practically independent, role in the programs of the two churches imply that the motif is perhaps infused with some sort of symbolic meaning? It is not unique for painting of Byzantine traditions to have non-iconic imagery in prominent places. Such an arrangement can be seen, for example, in Cappadocian churches. In some churches, such as Chapel 7 in Göreme, larger surfaces of ornament emerge from below a later layer dominated by figural painting. In others, like Chapels 19, 29 and 33 or the Chapel of Saint Stephen in the Archangel's Monastery at Çemil, it is evident that the two types of representation coexisted in a single layer. Whatever explanation can be used for this in Cappadocia — whether a church was painted shortly after Iconoclasm, or whether the geographic closeness to iconoclastic tradition must have taken its toll — cannot be applied to the Elaphiti Islands. Such comparisons should therefore be taken with a grain of salt, while still keeping an eye on the likeness that arises from

similar function or character of a structure, as well as those elements that cross cultural and geographic boundaries.

At first glance it does not seem like the double axe motif would be one which bridges geographies and cultures. None of the general books of ornaments even mention it, and when discussing Byzantine ornament, Alison Frantz classifies it as miscellaneous and states that it is rarely found in Byzantium, providing only two examples from illuminated manuscripts.⁵⁵⁵ Robert B. O'Connor and C. R. Morey, who discussed the respective ornament back in 1920, argued that it was characteristic of the West. According to the authors, it developed from ancient floor mosaics and assumed a more patterned form in the Carolingian period, where it can be found on a number of manuscripts. Having vanished for a period of several centuries, it reappeared in sculpture on columns of Romanesque cathedrals.⁵⁵⁶ O'Connor and Morey thought that the motif features in a limited area. They presented all the examples they were aware of and believed that the discovery of new ones would not significantly change our understanding of this motif.⁵⁵⁷ However, they were not acquainted with any of the instances of the pattern from the Byzantine realm, and as it turns out, these instances are much more common than Alison Frantz assumed.

In the search of comparative evidence for the Elaphiti churches, I have found fourteen additional cases of the respective pattern: all of them in the Byzantine realm. This is by no means an exhaustive number, since the ornament is literally hiding in plain sight. Although it is seldom talked about, it embellishes the sanctuaries and naves of well-known Byzantine and Byzantine commonwealth sites, including, but not limited to, the monastery of Visoki Dečani in Kosovo,

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁵⁶ Robert B. O'Connor and C. R. Morey, "The Mediaeval History of the Double-Axe Motif," *American Journal of Archaeology* 24/2 (1920): 151-172.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 170.

Hagioi Anargyroi in Kastoria, Greece, and Saint Panteleimon in Nerezi, the Republic of North Macedonia (Figs. 115-117). The examples I have identified spread across five Mediterranean nation states and three media: wall painting, illuminated manuscript and stucco (Figs. 118-124).⁵⁵⁸ The one in stucco, located in Italy, is the earliest of the respective examples and dates earlier than the 10th century (Fig. 124).⁵⁵⁹ The other ones are from the late Komnenian and early Palaiologan period, with the earliest securely dated instance from 1164, and the latest ones from the 14th century.

Various examples of the pattern display differences in color, placement and the number of multiplications. Whether the motif was really meant to look like a labrys remains an open question. Namely, due to the varying alignment of the meandering lines, some of them resemble a set of multiplied double axes, while others look more like hour glasses, or have a pronounced geometric component. Regardless of the distinctions, all of the aforementioned examples evidently derive from the same idea and are by no means accidentally alike. The developmental line of this ornament is obviously less straight-forward than O'Connor and Morey originally thought. The first recorded instances, as O'Connor and Morey noted, are found in Carolingian manuscripts,⁵⁶⁰ but the pattern appeared simultaneously in Italy, as confirmed by the stucco fragment that the authors were unaware of.

⁵⁵⁸ Two examples of the ornament, in the Old Catholicon of Moni Kalamiou, Arcadia, Greece and in the Monastery of the Forty Martyrs, Laconia, Greece, were brought to my attention through the talk of Panagiota Katopedi at the XAE Symposium held on October 29, 2021.

⁵⁵⁹ Gioia Bertelli, *Le Diocesi della Puglia Centro-Settentrionale: Aecae, Bari, Bovino, Egnathia, Herdonia, Lucera, Siponto, Trani, Vieste: Corpus della scultura altomedievale 15* (Bari: Fondazione CISAM, 2002), 162-163. I thank Flavia Vanni for bringing this to my attention.

⁵⁶⁰ O'Connor and Morey, "The Mediaeval History of the Double-Axe Motif," 154-155.

Based on the number of registered instances, at this juncture it seems like the motif spread from west to east, but it is possible that the uncovering of new examples would change the course of this reconstructed trajectory. A great deal more data needs to be collected in order to understand its chronology and evolution. One thing, however, is clear: this is not a western pattern, as O'Connor and Morey claimed, but a Mediterranean one. Both its origin and its expansion paths are Mediterranean. Ornaments are often taken for granted or dismissed as mere embellishment, however, at the very least they are instrumental in the study of connectivity and physical and intellectual transfers. They present visual documents of these processes. In fact, this ornament — common enough to merit close scrutiny and yet rare enough to remain completely overlooked for the past one hundred years since O'Connor and Morey published their article — can be regarded as one of the facets with which to trace and examine the movement of motifs, objects and ideas in the Mediterranean. The ornament is found both in the East and West, in rural and urban, elite and non-elite contexts, and in various media: wall painting, illuminated manuscripts, stucco and stone reliefs.

The labrys ornamental pattern is just one of many medieval motifs which persevered throughout periods, crossed the boundaries of empires and cultures, and adapted as it traveled from medium to medium. Traditional scholars worked on attributing these motifs to a geographic origin, and it is in this light that O'Connor and Morey's efforts should be observed. Due to the lack of solid evidence, however, such attempts seldom yield a conclusive, unbiased result,⁵⁶¹ which is why modern scholarship has been looking for other ways in which to tackle the topic. The pluritopic model, conceptualized by Eva R. Hoffman, is particularly useful for the discussion of the Elaphiti

⁵⁶¹ A variety of motifs widely used in Byzantium are considered Islamic in origin and although they are omnipresent, they are often viewed as foreign or exotic.

paintings. Rather than focusing on the point of departure, the pluritopic model asks the question why the same motif can be found in so many different locations.⁵⁶² In the past, the reconstruction of the source of activities and ideas has, unwittingly or knowingly, contributed to the separation of area studies and consolidation of national histories. The pluritopic model, conversely, approaches the matter from a supranational viewpoint. It shifts the perspective away from the linear notion of center and periphery — in which the latter is subservient to the former — and re-conceptualizes the power relations between these entities. It places emphasis on the pathways of communication and thus restores the agency of micro-centers.

I use the word *micro-center* here as a protraction of Horden and Purcell’s narrative on micro-regions and micro-ecologies of the Mediterranean, and with mindfulness that the authors’ use of the prefix *micro-* pertains to entities which can greatly vary in size. Due to the psychological expectations one has of the word *center* — expectations created by the *longue durée* of *overwhelming focus on the grand centers* — it might seem like an exaggeration to attribute the word to the Elaphiti Islands, even while using the prefix *micro-*. On the other hand, doing so can help define their position in the Mediterranean’s networking scheme, which is more useful than to study them in isolation. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, these sites not only extensively communicated with the nearby mainland, but over time acquired a vibrant role of connectors; through ship-building enterprise and by harboring large vessels which would set off to remote destinations. The fact that the Elaphities were not independent in these undertakings, but acted as an extension to the City of Ragusa, in no way diminishes their economic importance.

⁵⁶² Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability,” 21.

The extensive building activity on the islands at the turn of the millennium and in the early centuries of the second millennium, the remains of which are still present in the form of churches and their interior decorations, should be observed in the context of intra-regional, inter-regional and cross-Mediterranean connectivity. While there are no written documents to directly confirm this, material evidence acts like a visual document. When it comes to the long-distance relations, the labrys ornament becomes especially relevant. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, drawing iconographic or stylistic parallels to the Elaphiti frescoes is no easy task. While both cycles show clear connections to Byzantine traditions, as well as analogies with decorations of particular churches in neighboring regions, the overall state of preservation and the lack of narrative scenes make it impossible to detect many of the details related to the figural representations which would otherwise yield clearer parallels. However, the existence of the labrys ornament in the Elaphiti churches, and its presence in Aegean, Balkan, and Adriatic monuments,⁵⁶³ enable discussions about actual artistic transfers, rather than just a broad and intangible cultural circle of shared motifs.

To talk about direct transfers does not necessarily imply immediate or linear connections between the places where the respective ornament is preserved. This would be an oversimplification, since we have to assume that there are unrecognized locations where the ornament has survived, as well as lost sites where it used to be depicted. On the other hand, it is possible to talk about elaborate schemes of routes which connected major trading centers both by land and sea, and in which the aforementioned sites must have been stations. In this network,

⁵⁶³ Considering the nature of the painted decoration of the Elaphiti churches, the examples of the labrys ornament from the Eastern Mediterranean sites are more relevant for comparison at this juncture than the ones which O'Connor and Morey uncovered. On the other hand, the overall character of medieval art in Dalmatia, namely the strong presence of Carolingian traditions in the Early Medieval period and Romanesque in the late Middle Ages, leaves room for an expansion of this subject.

the Ragusan State had an important position, as it not only established trade relations both in the Balkan Peninsula and in ports all around the Mediterranean, but also acted as their intermediary. The elaborate schemes of medieval roads and sea routes from East to West and vice versa surpass the limitations of this dissertation.⁵⁶⁴ It is evident, however, that there is an intrinsic connection between communication systems and medieval monuments alongside them, and that each of them helps us better understand the other.

Thinking about the ways in which ideas travel often comes down to reconstructive efforts, the details of which are elusive. We know, for example, that motifs that can be found abundantly in different media and in various sites of the Mediterranean were most commonly transmitted through small and easily portable objects, but the surviving examples of such transfers are scarce when it comes to the labrys design. Not a single object in metal or ivory containing the pattern has been preserved in the city of Ragusa, or, to my knowledge, elsewhere. The few instances of Byzantine manuscripts which incorporate it on the margins of particular illuminations is all that we have. However, the most likely medium through which the respective pattern was carried to the Elaphiti Islands, where it is still found, is not metal, ivory or parchment, but textile. I base this assumption on several factors which have to do with the historical importance of textiles in the medieval State of Ragusa, but also on the visual pointers in the Elaphiti paintings.

⁵⁶⁴ For a recent comprehensive study with the focus on Central Europe, see Magdolna Szilágyi, *On the Road: The History and Archaeology of Medieval Communication Networks in East-Central Europe* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2014). For new approaches in the study of landscapes and land connections, with a focus on Via Egnatia in the period that corresponds to the interest of this thesis, see Schmid, Popović and Breier, “From Via Egnatia to Prilep, Bitola and Ohrid,” esp. 302-309.

The quantity of written sources related to fabric production and commerce demonstrate that textiles were not only an important commodity, but — along with salt — one of the main trading goods in 13th-century Ragusa.⁵⁶⁵ No piece of fabric of any kind older than the early modern period has survived in the Ragusan area,⁵⁶⁶ but this is not surprising considering how delicate and perishable textiles are. However, it can be argued that some of the ornaments in the Elaphiti churches may be associated with textiles in a curious way. Firstly, the rectangular patterns at the side of the niches in the church of Saint John on Šipan — the plaid table cloth and the cubes in reverse perspective (Fig. 75) — clearly emulate fabric, although they do not mimic its texture, as is often the case in Mediterranean and Balkan churches, but the design itself. The labrys ornament from the churches on Šipan and Koločep could be read the same way, understanding that the painted surfaces simulate larger pieces of drapery. The area of vaults are just the size of the envisioned curtains or carpets, and the replicated geometric pattern conforms to the way in which such pieces could have been decorated.

The most compelling clue to the idea that the respective ornament was transmitted through textiles comes not from the Elaphiti, but from an image from the region of the Mani, Greece. In the late-13th- or early-14th-century representation of on the outer wall of the church of Saint Panteleimon in Ano Boulari, the saint — Kyriaki — wears a mantle with the labrys pattern (Fig. 125).⁵⁶⁷ Sainly garments, especially those of saintly women, typically consist of

⁵⁶⁵ Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, *Tkanine u privredi srednjovekovnog Dubrovnika* [Textiles in the Economy of Medieval Dubrovnik] (Belgrade: SANU, 1982), esp. 1-87.

⁵⁶⁶ For early preserved pieces, see Danijela Jemo and Djurdjica Parac-Osterman, “Revealing the Origin: The Secrets of Textile Fragments Hidden inside the 19th-Century Chasuble from Dubrovnik,” *Materials* 14/16 (2021): 1-20; Danijela Jemo, “Razvojni tijekovi proizvodnje, tehnologije bojenja i trgovine tekstilom u kontekstu pomorsko - trgovačkih puteva Dubrovnika” [The Development of Production, Technology of Dyeing and Textile Trading in the Context of Maritime- and Trade Routes of Dubrovnik], *Naše More* 63/1 (2016), 36-43, esp. 42.

⁵⁶⁷ For more on this church and the image of the saint, see Nikolaos B. Drandakes, “Agios Panteleimon Boularion,” *Epetēris Etaireias byzantinōn spoudōn* 37 (1969-70): 437-458.

monochrome layers which are plain and unadorned. Female saints, or even male saints for that matter, dressed in such an elaborate and evidently luxurious attire are rare, although not completely uncommon. The respective image of Kyriaki belongs to the second layer of painting. It is a votive image, and the preserved inscription identifies its patrons as servant of God Kyriaki and her husband Nicholas Orphanos.⁵⁶⁸ The patron Kyriaki clearly felt a closeness to her holy namesake and even a sense of self-identification with her, so it is possible that she wanted to display her and her husband's own affluence through the saint. The way in which the labys ornament is incorporated into the image suggest that the design was worn on items of clothing and that it could have been transmitted through trade of garments.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Nikolaos B. Drandakes, *Byzantines toichographies tes Mesa Manes* (Athens: Archaeological Society, 1995), 390-391.

⁵⁶⁹ For reliability of images for the reconstruction of clothing, see Maria Parani "Fabrics and Clothing," in *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine studies*, eds. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon and Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 408.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have explored the complex and understudied role of the small Mediterranean island through the case study of the Elaphiti Islands in the Middle Ages. These islands have been, and still are, intricately linked to their proximate mainland center, Ragusa, however, their part in the history of Ragusan State has not been considered by previous scholarship. Like many other small islands in the Mediterranean, these islands have so far been perceived through the lens of destitution and exploitation. Yet the 13th-century sources from Archive of Dubrovnik paint a different picture; a picture of a dynamic community with structure, hierarchy and the capability to self-organize, resolve problems, and occasionally defy authorities.

This project has had at its core a reevaluation of *islandness* and island agency. Not only do the archival records uncover names, professions, possessions and other clues about the lives on the Elaphiti Islands, but they also give us a glimpse into the islanders' thoughts, wishes and opinions, recorded in their own words through the recorded testimonies at the criminal court of Ragusa. The uncovering of island agency has been one of the largest contribution of this research, since it is rare to be able to see the medieval world through the eyes of those living outside of elite centers. This has also made it possible to place the islands in a new strategic context. I have argued that these islands, situated at the gateway into the Mediterranean basin, with Byzantine territories to the east and Italian cities to the west, were actors in commercial and artistic exchanges in the Mediterranean, benefitting from their location on a permeable border between cultures and on a watery boundary between political hegemonies.

Such a framework has been the point of departure for broader investigations, first into the connections with Ragusa, and then into long-distance connections with sites both within the

Adriatic and further afield. The Elaphiti Islands gravitated towards Ragusa. This is evident from the islanders' frequent travels to the City, where they appeared in court and testified to various matters, took out loans and settled debts, and made all sorts of business arrangements. Some islanders relocated to the City, which gave them more opportunity for social mobility. Conversely, the Ragusans were also tied to these islands, through the properties they owned and various other financial concerns. The islands were of interest to the mainlanders for reasons that had to do with natural resources – from lands and yield to ports and ships.

The other focus of this dissertation has been the reconsideration of the islands' material heritage. In addition to being so well represented in the archival records, the inhabited islands in the chain — Koločep, Lopud and Šipan — preserve abundant archaeological, architectural, sculptural, and painted remains. Traces of settlements, including secular buildings, cisterns, agricultural facilities, and paved paths, are still scattered around the islands. Moreover, the islands preserve fifteen churches dating from the ninth to thirteenth century, featuring architecture and decoration that synthesize Byzantine, Western, and indigenous elements. I have focused primarily on the churches, with special emphasis on two remaining painted cycles, since they have largely been misinterpreted by previous scholarship.

The Elaphiti churches have received scholarly attention, but they have never been studied in the framework that I have put forward. At first glance, the two cycles of wall paintings on the Elaphiti Islands do not offer a great deal of material to work with. They are preserved fragmentarily, with only some of the figures identifiable, with no textual information about painters or patrons, or legible inscriptions on scrolls which would give us any more iconographic context. There is very little which directly speaks to function. However, certain crucial aspects were overlooked by previous scholarship. By closely examining the buildings, I have proposed a

different location for the alter screen from Koločep, and a different original dedication for the church of Saint Nicholas on the respective island. I corrected some of the identifications of the painted saints. In juxtaposition with the 13th-century sources that mention the churches, I have suggested that the respective buildings and/or their inventories might have been commissioned by islanders, perhaps in a case of collective patronage.

Furthermore, I have explored the connections of the churches to broader Mediterranean trends. Looking at the Elaphiti paintings through the lens of Byzantine iconography has shown familiar themes executed in a way which is neither typical, nor unprecedented. The absence of contemporaneous frescoes from the territory of Ragusa or even Dalmatia makes it impossible to determine whether the features of the two painted cycles should be considered a systematic adaptation to local customs, or simply a matter of individual preference. Illegible inscriptions in undetermined languages hinder interpretation even more. Yet through the uncertainty of analysis, particular connections have nonetheless began to crystalize. I have found analogies to particular visual features of the Elaphiti in various sites of the Mediterranean, while the south of Italy and islands and sites in the Aegean and Ionian Seas have offered the most fruitful iconographic and stylistic parallels. Moreover, I have probed the labrys ornament that the two Elaphiti share and found the same motif in fourteen other sites in Mediterranean and Balkan churches. All of this is evidence of connectivity — connectivity which manifested itself in the movement of merchants and merchandize, and alongside them on the same ships people from different walks of life — craftsmen, priests and pilgrims being only some of them — and their cargo. This is how objects of art, designs and other types of ideas travelled, and travelled frequently.

Expanding the sources to include the material which has found itself outside the scope of this dissertation either due to the limitation of space, or due to current unavailability would

undoubtedly yield more interesting results. A close examination of coins, sculpture and 14th-century archival sources would shed additional light on the networks that both the islanders and mainlanders maintained. Furthermore, I have focused on maritime connections, and the relations to the interior of the Balkan Peninsula would open a new world of possibilities and potentially different sets of problems to overcome. In other words, this project leaves ample room for further studies. However, its premise — that of active participation of islanders in the complex scheme of Mediterranean connectivity — presents a significant step towards a reevaluation of Elaphiti Islands in particular, and small islands in general.

Figures

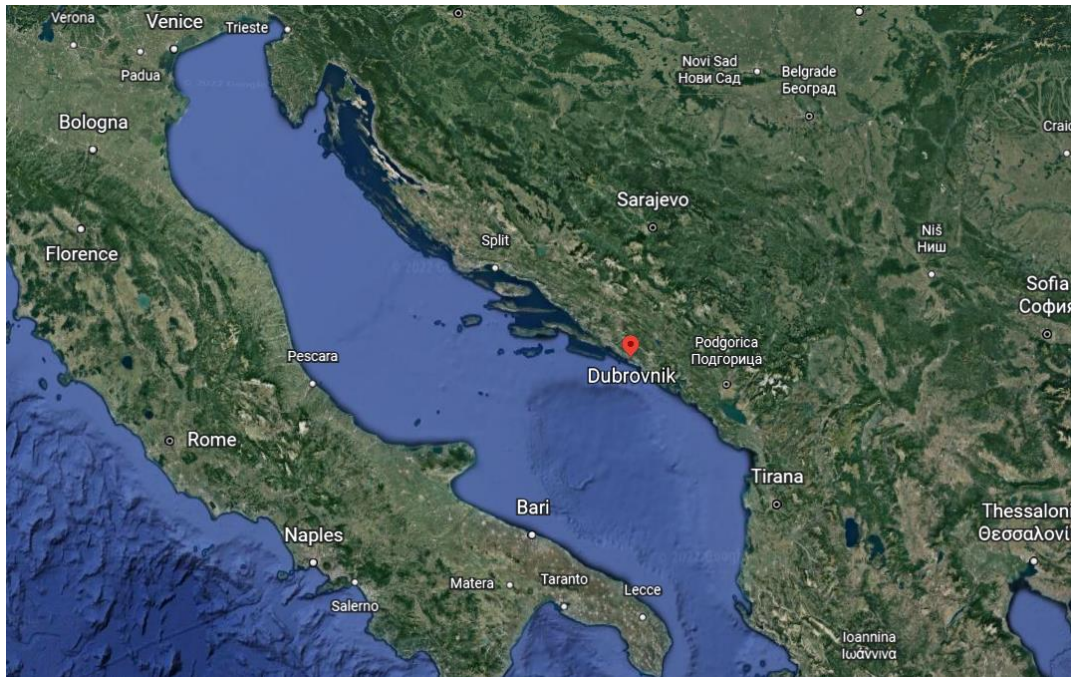


Fig. 1. Position of Ragusa in the Adriatic basin. Image retrieved from Google Earth, <https://earth.google.com/web/>, last accessed April 15, 2022.

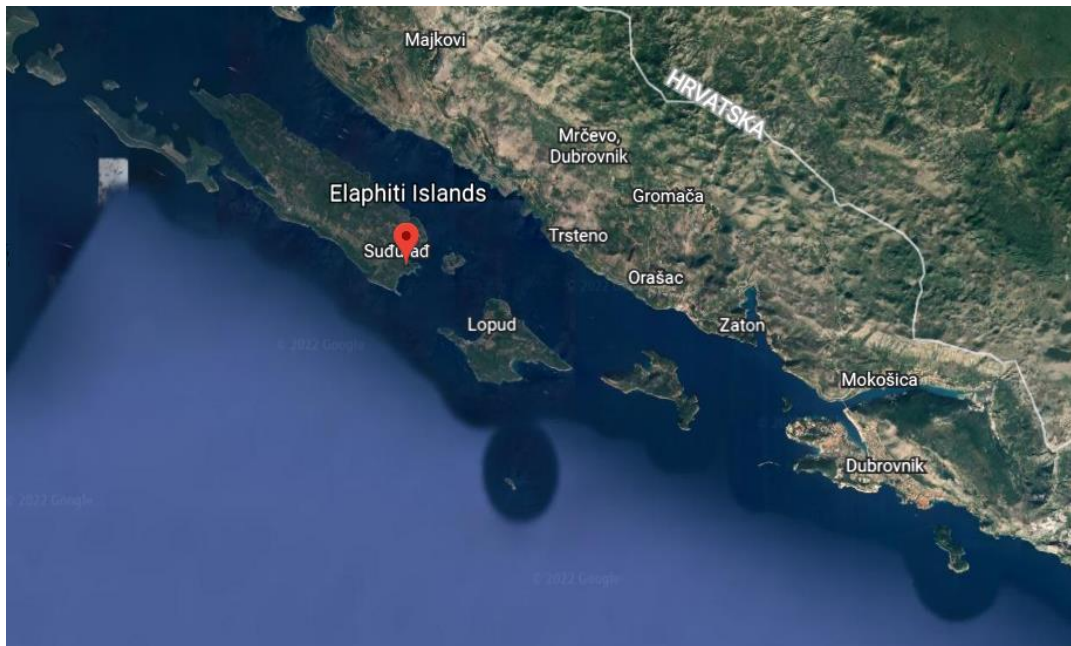


Fig. 2. Position of the Elaphiti Islands in relation to Ragusa. Image retrieved from Google Earth, <https://earth.google.com/web/>, last accessed April 15, 2022.



Fig. 3. Visitors' board on Lokrum.



Fig. 4. The Postira docks in the cove of Donje Čelo, Koločep.



Fig. 5. Lopud, view of the island shortly before entering the Cove of Lopud.



Fig. 6. The cove of Luka Šipanska.



Fig. 7. Communal road on Koločep with the church of Saint Nicholas on the cemetery.



Fig. 8. View of the church of Saint Nicholas on Lopud from the communal road.



Fig. 9. Šipan, natural spring (the so-called Šipun) in the central plain of the island.



Fig. 10. The *Comes's* Palace, Šipan.



Fig. 11. Ruin of the *Comes's* Palace, Lopud.



Fig. 12. Salome's dance, church of Saint John the Baptist in Deliana, Crete.



Fig. 13. Ruin of an early medieval house in Bige, Koločep.



Fig. 14. The Becadelli summerhouse, Šipan.



Fig. 15. The remains of Saint Michael, Koločep (to the right of the road).



Fig 16. Communal road on Lopud.



Fig. 17. Mountain of Velji Vrh, Šipan.



Fig. 18. Šipan, agricultural plain.



Fig. 19. Church of Saint Michael above the Sea, Šipan. Photo courtesy of Marija Goravica.



Fig. 20. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan.



Fig. 21. Church of Saint Barbara, Šipan.



Fig. 22. Church of Saint Peter, Šipan.



Fig 23. Church of Saint Michael on Pakljena, Šipan.



Fig. 24. Church of Saint Elijah, Lopud.



Fig. 25. Church of Saint Peter, Lopud.



Fig. 26. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Lopud.



Fig. 27. Church of Saint Nicholas, Lopud.



Fig. 28. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep.



Fig. 29. Church of Saint Sergius, Koločep.



Fig. 30. Church of Saint Barbara, Koločep.

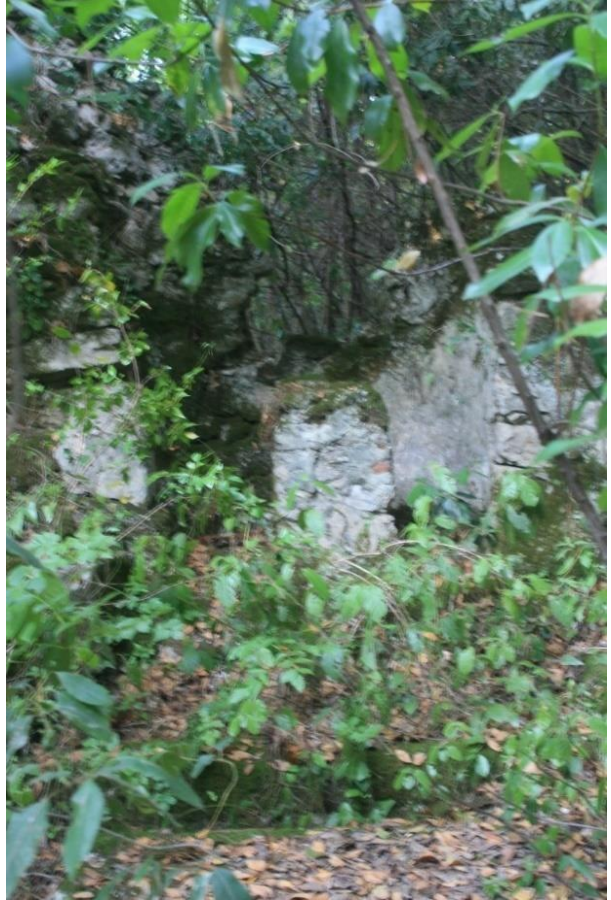


Fig.31. Church of Saint Francis, Koločep.



Fig. 32. Church of Saint Elijah, Lopud. Fragment of wall painting in apse. Unknown saint. Kept in the Parish collection of Lopud. Photograph courtesy of Ivana Tomas.



Fig. 33. Church of Saint Michael on Pakljena. View of the vault with frescoes dated to the 15th century.



Fig. 34. Architrave fragment, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century.



Fig. 35. Architrave fragments, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century



Fig. 36. Chancel screen fragment, Parish Museum of Koločep. 9th century.



Fig. 37. Saint Nicholas, Koločep. View of the dome.



Fig. 38. Reconstructed altar screen from the church of Saint Michael (?), in the Parish Museum of Koločep, 11th century.



Fig. 39. Church of Saint Michael, Koločep, 11th century. Condition after the reconstruction.



Fig. 40. Saint Nicholas, Koločep, 11th century. View to the interior and the holes in pavement that mark the place of the altar screen.



Fig. 41. Chancel slabs of the reconstructed altar screen.



Fig. 42. Fragment of a chancel slab. The Parish Museum of Koločep.



Fig. 43. North wall of the church of the Holy Trinity, Koločep. Chancel slab.



Fig. 44. Church of Saint Peter the Great, fragment of an ambo stair rail, 10th century. Photograph retrieved from Romana Menalo, *Ranosrednjovjekovna skulptura iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku/Early Medieval Sculpture from the Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Dubrovnik* (Dubrovnik: Dubrovački Muzeji, 2018), 100.



Fig. 45. Church of Saint Peter the Great, fragment of a chancel screen, 10th century. Image retrieved from Menalo, *Ranosrednjovjekovna skulptura iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku*, 39.



Fig. 46. Chancel slab from the church of Koljani close to Vrlika, 9th century. Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments, Split. Image retrieved from Carl D. Sheppard, "Pre-Romanesque Sculpture: Evidence for the Cultural Evolution of the People of the Dalmatian Coast," *Gesta* 23/1 (1984): 15.

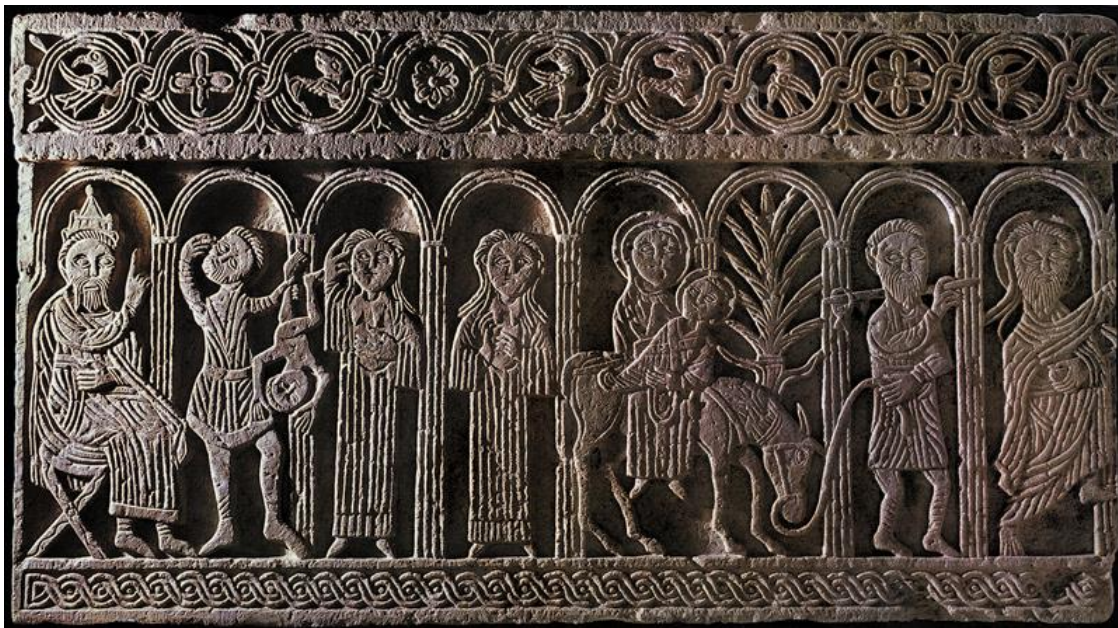


Fig. 47. Chancel slab from Sveta Nedjeljica close to Zadar, 11th century. Masacre of the Innocents and Flight into Egypt. Image retrieved from Magdalena Skoblar, *Figural Sculpture in Eleventh-Century Dalmatia and Croatia: Patronage, Architectural Context, History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 15.



Fig. 48. The relief with the representation of a Croatian King Petar Krešimir IV, 11th century. Part of a baptismal font in the Baptistery of the Cathedral Saint Domnius (Sveti Duje) in Split. Image retrieved from Tomislav Galović, “Croatia Benedictina: Hrvatsko Kraljevstvo, Petar Krešimir IV. i Ordo sancti Benedicti” [Croatia Benedictina: The Croatian Kingdom, Petar Krešimir IV and the Order of Saint Benedict], in *Abbatissa Ingenuitate Precipua: The Proceedings of the Scientific Colloquium "The 950th anniversary of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary in Zadar (1066-2016)*, ed. Pavuša Vežić and Ivan Josipović (Zadar: University of Zadar and the Monastery of Saint Mary in Zadar, 2020), 67.



Fig. 49. Rear side of the gable of the altar screen of Koločep. Re-carved sarcophagus, 3rd century.



Fig. 50. Drawing of the inscription from the altar screen on Koločep, by Nina Šimundić Bendić. Image retrieved from Vedrana Delonga, “Pisana uspomena na jednu “sestru i kraljicu” s Koločepa” [A Written Memory of a “Sister and Queen” from Koločep], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 34 (2007): 200.



Fig. 51. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse.



Figs. 52-53. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Medallions depicting bishops below the Deesis, apse.



Fig. 54. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. General view of the remaining wall painting.

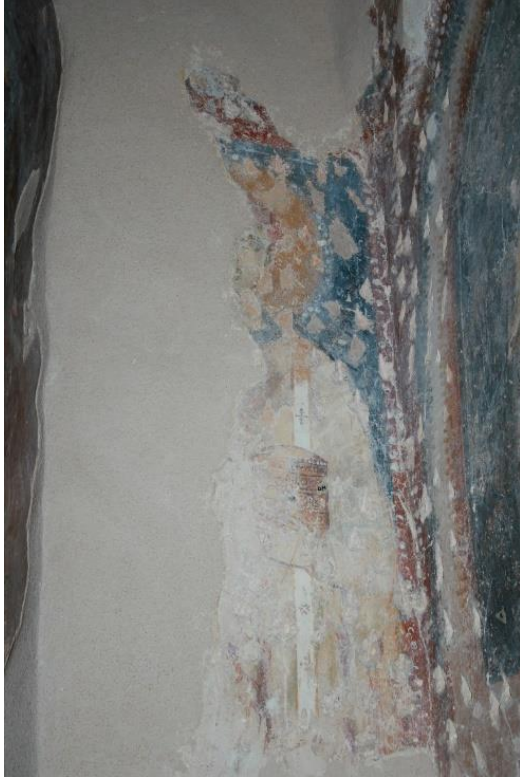


Fig. 55. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Saint Stephen.



Fig. 56. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Saint Paul (?).



Fig. 57. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Cosmatesque arches.



Fig. 58. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Archangel Michael, north wall beneath the dome.



Fig. 59. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Unidentified saint.



Fig. 60. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Christ flanked by Archangels, apse.



Fig. 61. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Michael, apse, detail.



Fig. 62. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Michael, north wall beneath the dome.



Fig. 63. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Archangel Gabriel, south wall beneath the dome.



Fig. 64. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. View to the apse with deacon saints on the triumphal arch.

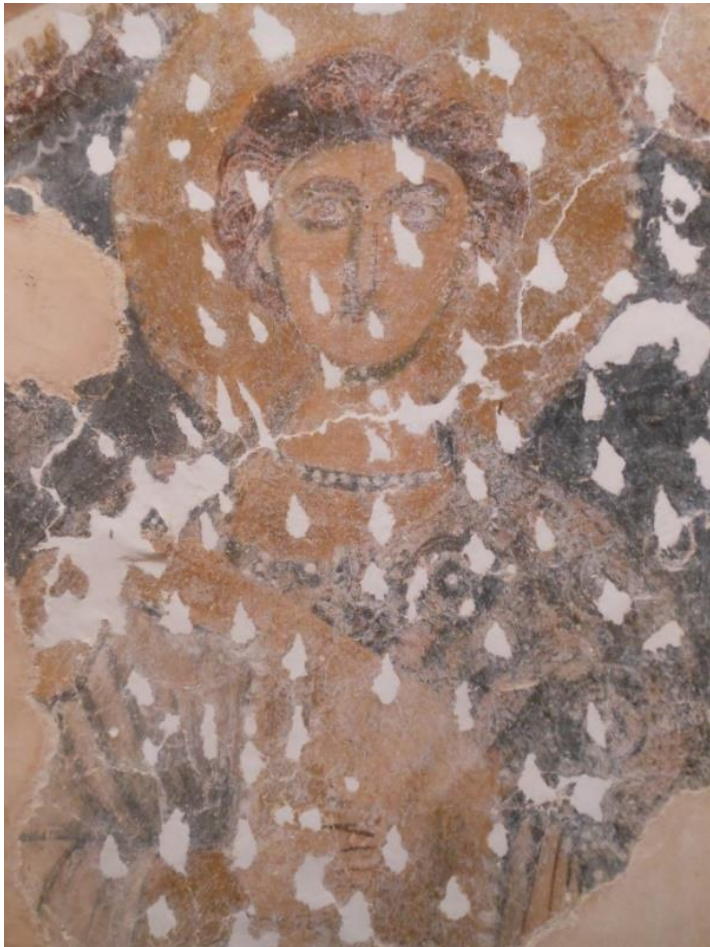


Fig. 65. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint George (?).



Fig. 66. Church of George Diasoritis, Naxos, 11th century. Saint George in the lower register of the apse, depicted receiving prayer.



Fig. 67. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplos (?), previously identified as Mauros.

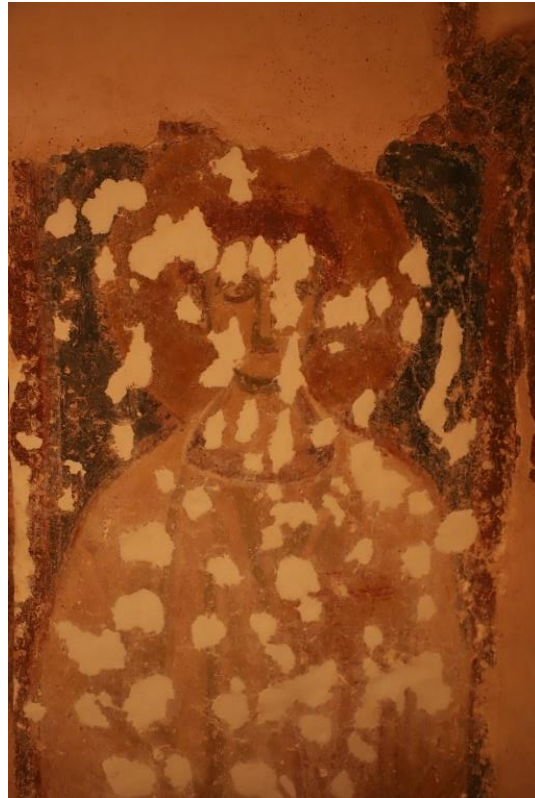


Fig 68. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Stephen.

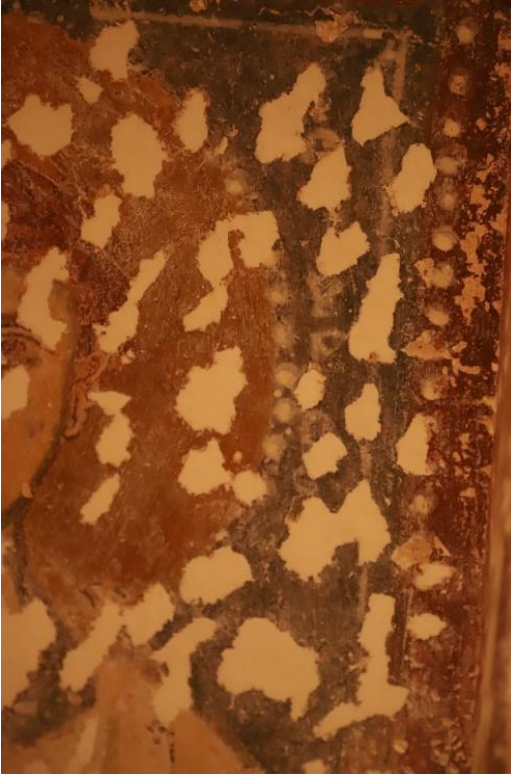


Fig. 69. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplus (?), detail of the inscription which contains the saint's name.

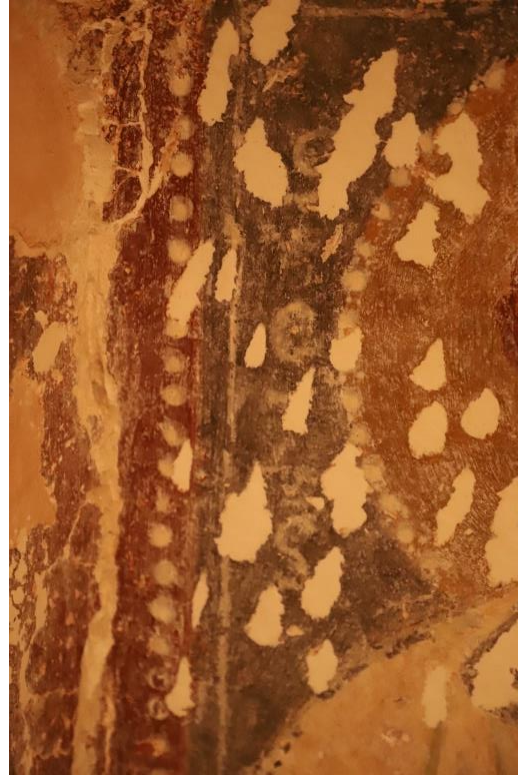


Fig. 70. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Euplus (?), detail of the inscription which contains the word SA[N]CTUS.

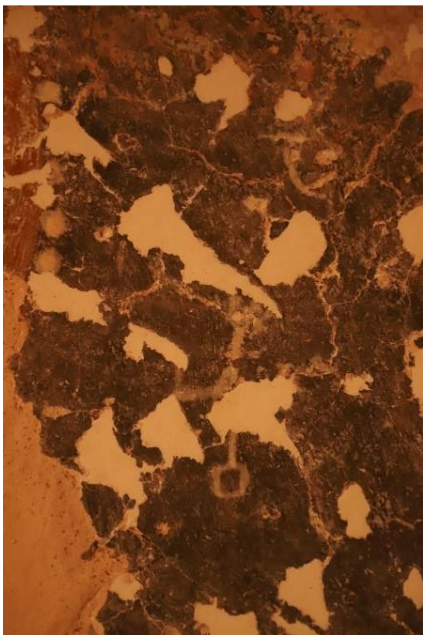


Fig. 71. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Inscription next to a saint on the north wall.



Fig. 72. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Nicholas.



Fig. 73. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint on the south wall, perhaps Saint Peter or Saint Andrew.



Fig. 74. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Western blind arch on the north wall with the ornament next to it.



Fig. 75. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Eastern blind arch on the south wall with the ornament next to it.



Fig. 76. View from the path leading to Saint Michael above the Sea, Šipan.



Fig. 77. Saint Michael on the Rock, Šipan. View of the interior.



Fig. 78. Remains of the monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, vicinity of Shkodër, Albania. Photograph courtesy of Marija M. Shipley.

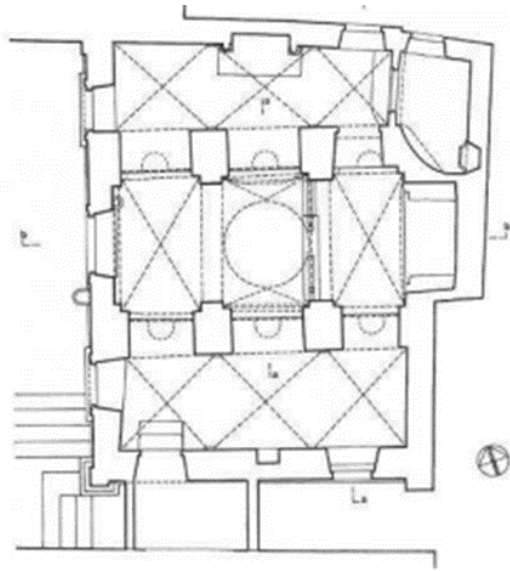


Fig. 79. Church of the Transfiguration (Sigurata), Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of existing condition. Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sigurata na Prijekom," [The Sigurata church on Prijeko], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 35/1 (1995): 256.

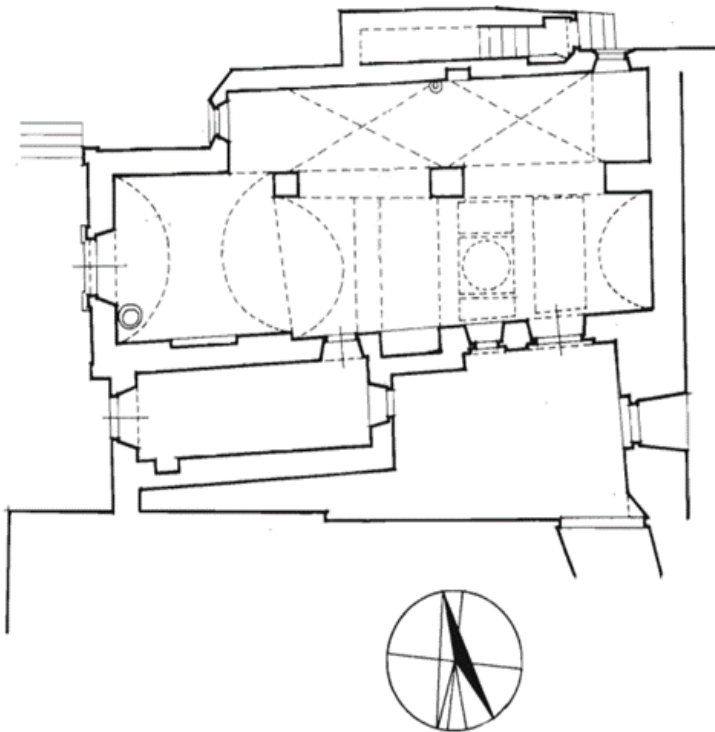


Fig. 80. Church of Saint Nicholas at Prijeko, Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of existing condition. Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sv. Nikole na Prijekom" [The Saint Nicholas Church at Prijeko], *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III-21 (1991): 162.

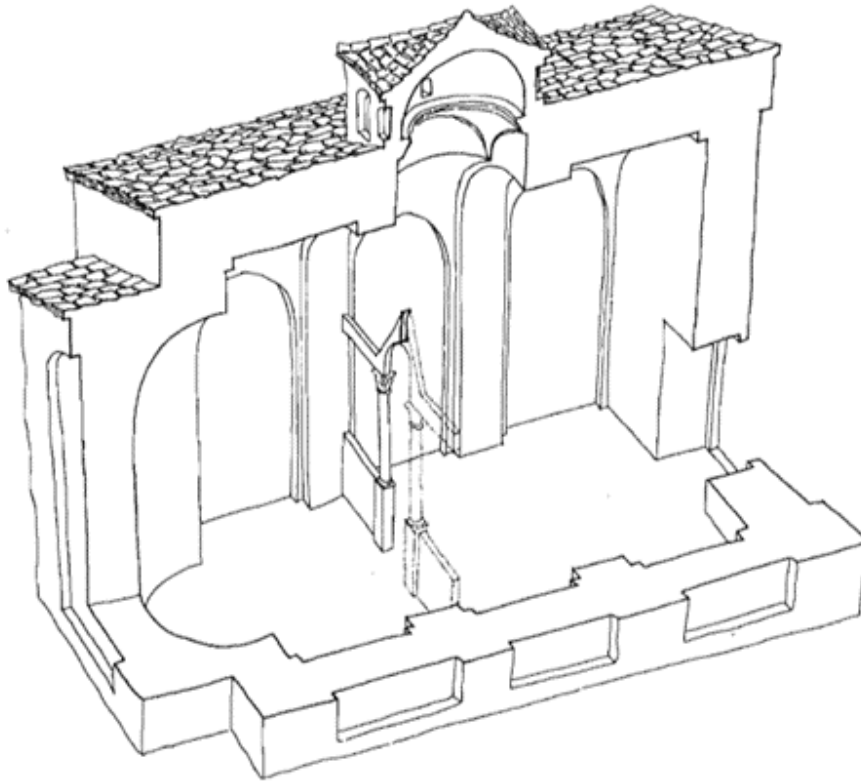


Fig. 81. Church of Saint Nicholas at Prijeko, Ragusa. Ideal reconstruction of the original state (after Željko Peković). Image retrieved from Željko Peković, "Crkva Sv. Nikole na Prijekom," 167.

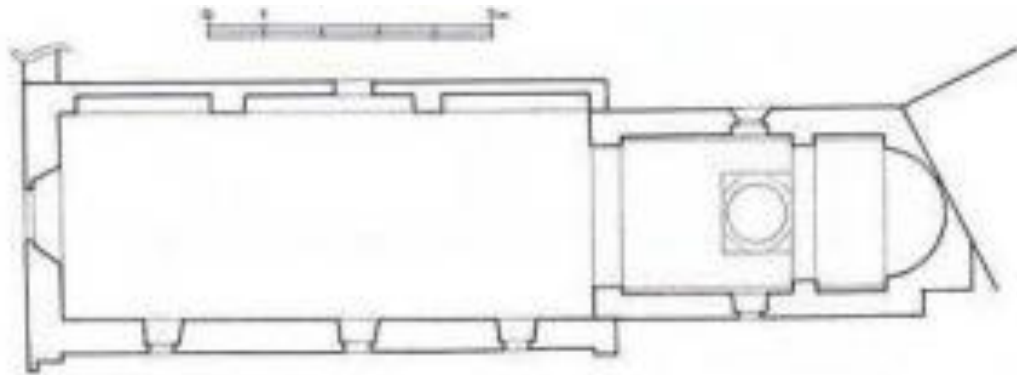


Fig. 82. Church of Saint Luke and the Annunciation, Ragusa. Ground plan drawing of the existing condition. Image retrieved from Ivana Tomas, "Srednjovjekovne jednobrodne crkve s kupolom južne Dalmacije i Boke kotorske" [Medieval single-aisle domed churches of southern Dalmatia and Boka Kotorska], PhD. diss. (University of Zagreb, 2014), t. 34.

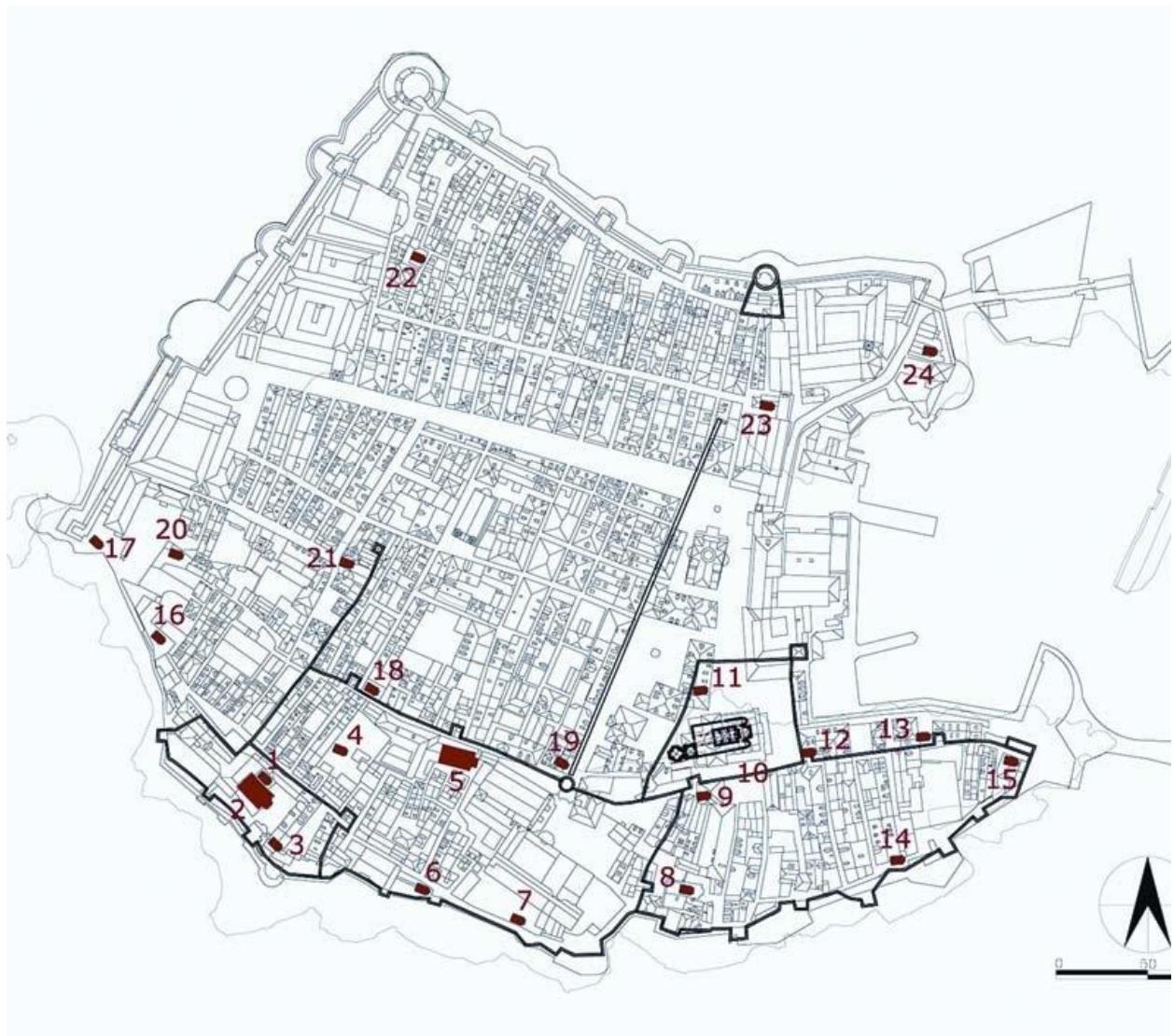


Fig. 83. Map of Ragusa with limits of the old city quarters (sexterii). Churches of the Sigurata, Saint Nicholas on Prijeko and Saint Luke are marked with numbers 22, 23 and 24, respectively. Image retrieved from Ines Krajcar Bronić, “[Radiocarbon dating of St. Stephen's in Pustijerna church in Dubrovnik, Croatia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/3125641082),” Conference paper presented at the Balkan Symposium on Archaeometry in Bukurest, October 29, 2012, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Dubrovnik-with-the-limits-of-urban-areas-sexterii-thick-lines-The-numbers_fig1_265641082. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

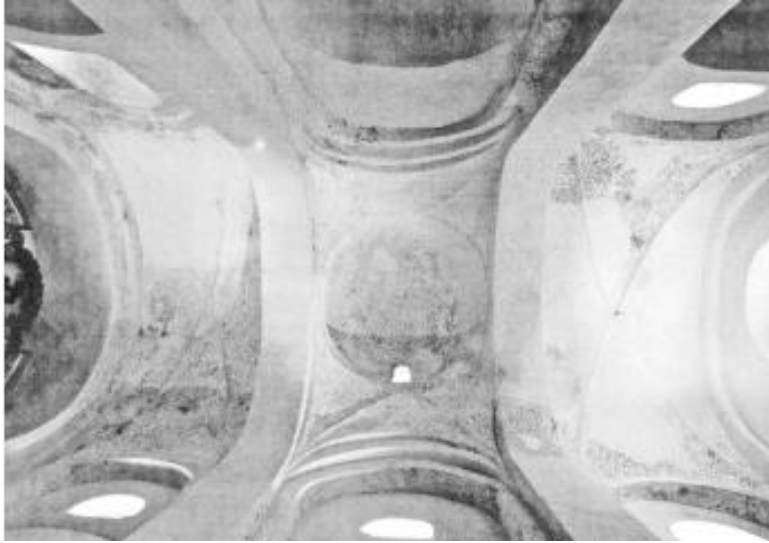


Fig. 84. Church of the Transfiguration (Sigurata), Ragusa. View of the dome. Image retrieved from Željko Peković and Ivica Žile, *Ranosrednjovjekovna crkva Sigurata na Prijekom u Dubrovniku/The Early Medieval Church of Sigurata at Prijeko in Dubrovnik* (Split: Muzej Hrvatskih Arheoloških Spomenika, 1999), 19.

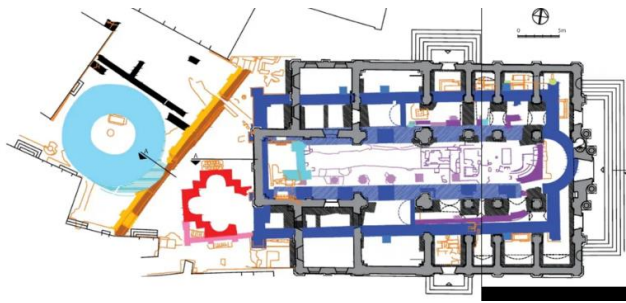


Fig. 85. Ground plan of the finds on the archaeological site beneath the present Cathedral of Ragusa and Bunićeva Poljana. Dark purple: first church, light purple: later interpolations, dark blue: Romanesque church, red: Early Christian memory, pink: a pre-Romanesque building. Photo retrieved from Danko Zelić, “Arhitektura starih katedrala” [The Architecture of the Old Cathedrals (of Ragusa)], in *Katedrala Gospe Velike u Dubrovniku* [The Cathedral of Our Great Lady in Dubrovnik], ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj (Dubrovnik - Zagreb: Gradska župa Gospe Velike and IPU, 2014), 30-31.



Fig. 86. Romanesque Cathedral in urban setting of Ragusa of mid-17th century, detail of the city panorama. Copy of the original made before the earthquake of 1667. Oil on canvas, Convent of the Friars Minor, Dubrovnik. Retrieved from Danko Zelić, "Arhitektura starih katedrala," 43.



Fig. 87. The first building beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. View to the central apse.



Fig. 88. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Bishops in the apse.



Fig. 89. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Figure on the southern wall.



Fig. 90. In-situ fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Figure on the pillar.

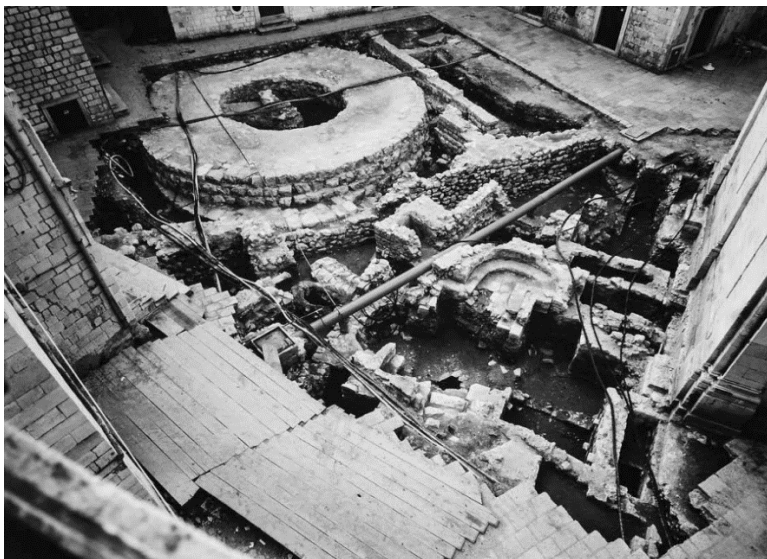


Fig. 91. In-situ finds on Bunićeva Poljana, Ragusa. Early Christian tetraconch structure and the foundations of the bell tower belonging to the Romanesque church. Photo retrieved from Danko Zelić, "Arhitektura starih katedrala," 34.



Fig. 92. Fresco from the first church beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa. Bishop in the apse, detail.



Fig. 93. Fresco from beneath the Cathedral of Ragusa, face of a saint. Assembled from the debris found during the excavation. Photo retrieved from Igor Fisković, “O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici” [On the 11th and 12th-Century Frescoes in Dubrovnik and its Area], *Radovi IPU* 33 (2009): 20.



Fig. 94. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse, detail with Saint John the Baptist.



Fig. 95. Church of Santi Stefani at Vaste, Apulia. Representation in the north apse. Christ among the Archangels. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 75.



Fig. 96. Church of Saint John, Šipan. Detail of the apse with the scroll held by the Virgin.



Fig. 97. Church of Saint John, Šipan. Detail of the apse with the scroll held by Saint John the Baptist.



Fig. 98. Church of Saint Nicholas, Koločep. Saint Nicholas carrying a scroll, detail.



Fig. 99. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Deesis in the apse, detail with the *nominum sacrum* of the Virgin.



Fig. 100. Church of Santi Stefani, Vaste, Apulia. Saint Andrew, detail. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia*, 59.



Fig. 101. Church of Santi Stefani, Vaste, Apulia. Representation in the south apse. Saint Nicholas flanked by Saints Basil and John Chrysostom. Image retrieved from Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia* (Milan: Electa, 1991), 77.



Fig. 102. Church of San Donato al Pantano at San Donato di Ninea, Calabria. Christ enthroned. Photograph courtesy of Lorenzo Riccardi.



Fig. 103. Church of Santa Maria di Cerrate, Apulia. Ascension of Christ in the apse, detail. Image retrieved from Valentino Pace, “La chiesa di Santa Maria delle Cerrate e i suoi affreschi,” in *Obraz Vizantii. Sbornik statei v cest’ O.S. Popovoi* [The Image of Byzantium: A Collection of Papers Honoring O. S. Popova], ed. Anna V. Zakharova (Moscow: Severny Palomnik, 2008), 384.



Fig. 104. Rock-cut church of Santa Marina, Muro Leccese, Apulia. Saint John Chrysostom (?), detail. Image retrieved from Valentino Pace, “Santa Marina a Muro Leccese. Una questione di metodo e una riflessione sulla pittura «bizantina» in Puglia,” in *Mélanges Catherine Jolivet-Lévy*, eds. Sulamith Brodbeck, Andréas Nicolaidès; Paule Pagès et. al. (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2016), 412.



Fig. 105. Church of unknown denomination, Llama del' Antico near Fasano, Apulia. Bishops in blind arches. Photograph courtesy of Roberto Rotondo.



Fig. 106. Rock-cut church of Madonna delle tre porte, Matera, Basilicata. Virgin enthroned, detail. Image retrieved from Ruggieri, Raffaello de Ruggieri, *Le chiese Rupestri di Matera* (Rome: De Luca Editore, 1966), 21.



Fig. 107. Church of Saints Jason and Sosipater, Corfu, bishops in the apse of the prothesis. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egretirio Bizantion tixografikon tis Ellados: Ionia Nisia* (Athens, Akadimia Athinon, 2018), 66.

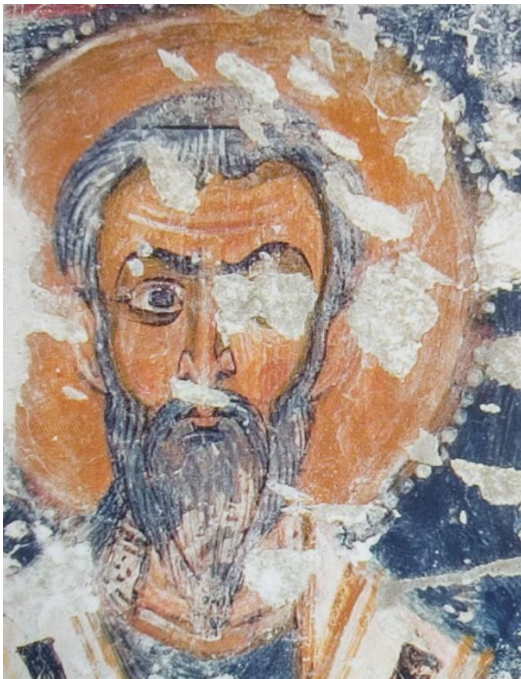


Fig. 108. Church of Saints Jason and Sosipater, Corfu. Apse of the prothesis. Saint Pancratius, detail. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egretirio Bizantion tixografikon tis Ellados*, 67.

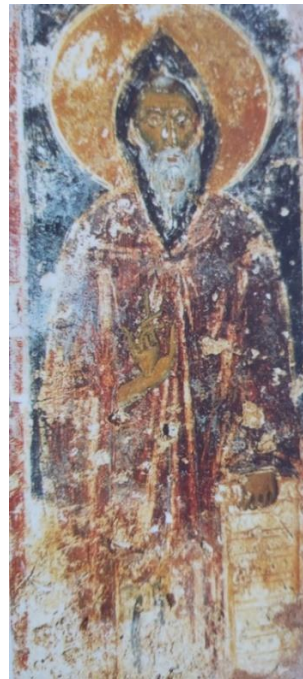


Fig. 109. Church of the Pantokrator, Hlomos, Corfu. Monk carrying a scroll on the north wall of the nave. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egretirio Bizantion tixografikon tis Ellados*, 135.



Fig. 110. Church of Agios Markos, Agios Merkurios, Corfu. Conch of the sanctuary, Prophet Elijah carrying a scroll. Image retrieved from Panagiotis L. Vocotopoulos, P. Dimitrakopoulou, D. Rigakou et. al, *Egretirio Bizantion tixografikon tis Ellados*, 76.



Fig. 111. Church of Saint Nicholas on Koločep. Space beneath the dome. Ornament.

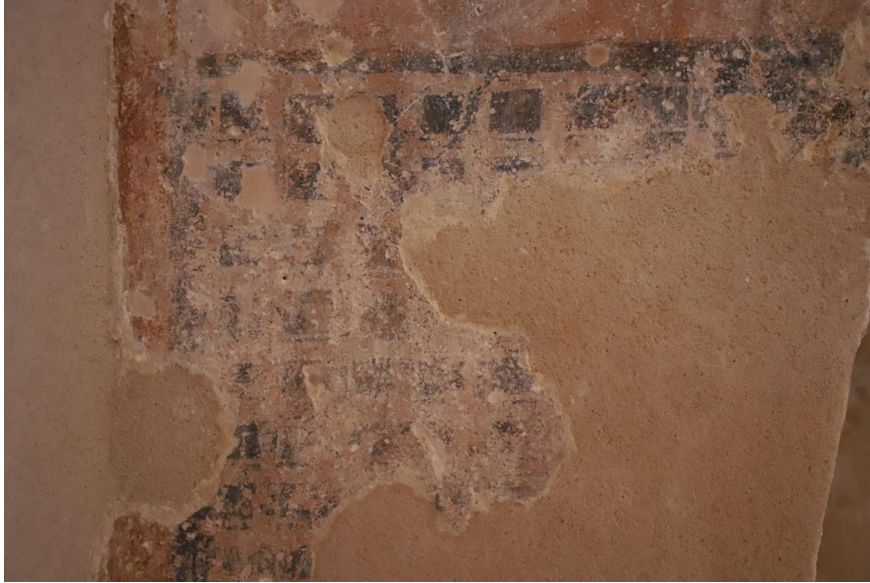


Fig. 112. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. Eastern blind arch on the south wall. Detail of the ornament.



Fig. 113. Church of Saint John the Baptist, Šipan. The labrys ornament covering the eastern vault.



Fig. 114. Saint Nicholas on Koločep. Vault with the labrys ornament. Detail.

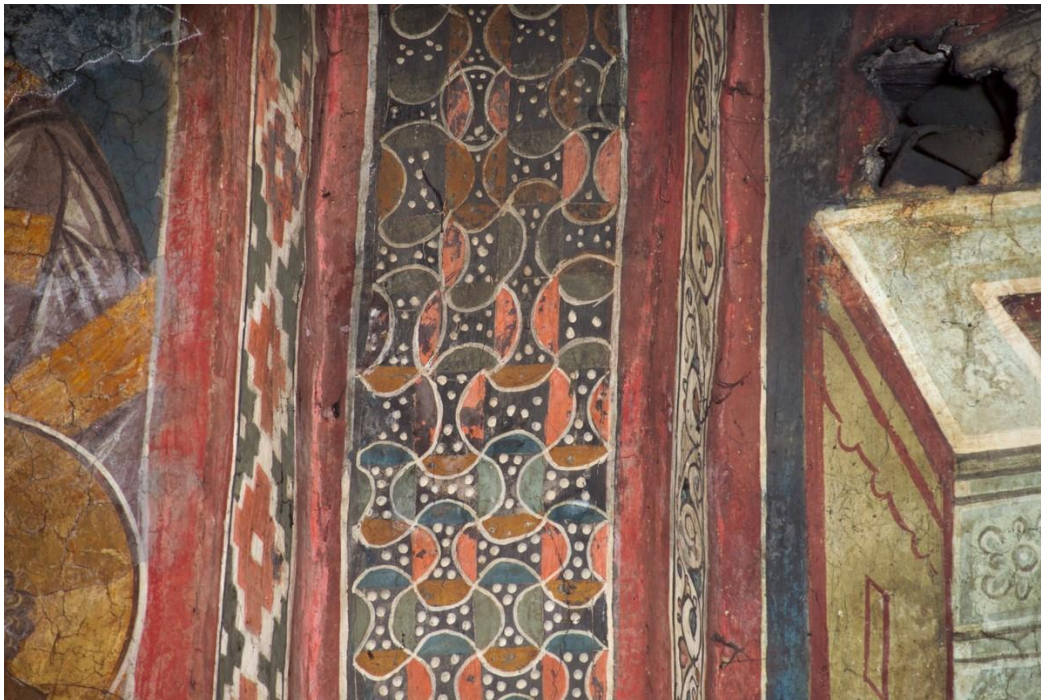


Fig 115. Church of the monastery of Visoki Dečani, Kosovo, painted in 1347 or 1348. Detail of the labrys ornament.



Fig. 116. Hagioi Anargyroi, Kastoria, Greece. View to the vault with the labrys ornament decorating the arch. Painted in ca. 1180. Photograph courtesy of Sharon Gerstel.



Fig. 117. Saint Panteleimon in Nerezi, the Republic of North Macedonia, 1164. Detail of the labrys ornament framing the window on the north wall.



Fig. 118. Panagia Kera, Kritsa, Crete. Detail of the labrys ornament in the central nave beneath the dome, 13th century.



Fig. 119. Church of the Metamorphosis tou Sotirou, Kefali. The labrys ornament, 14th century. Photograph courtesy of Nicolyna Enriquez.



Fig. 120. Church of Saint Peter, Kastania, Mani, Greece. Saints Peter and Paul, framed by a stucco arch and the frescoed labrys motif.

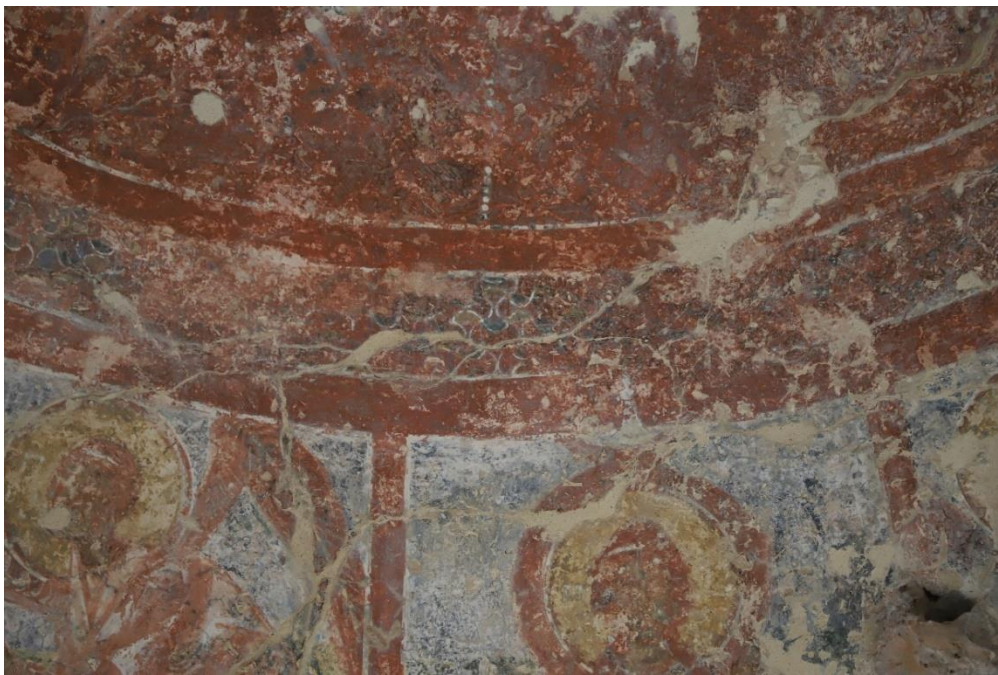


Fig. 121. Church of Hagios Strategos, Kastania, Mani, Greece. Detail of the vault with the labrys ornament.



Fig. 122. Church of the Panagia Hodegetria, Spelies, Euboea, detail with the labrys ornament, 1311. Photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni.

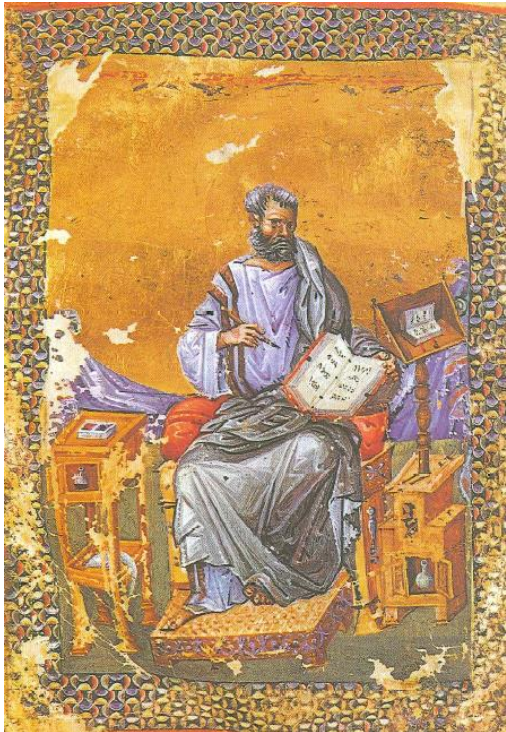


Fig. 123. Mark the Evangelist framed by the labrys ornament. Four Gospels, Iviron Cod. 5, fol. 136v, Mount Athos. Image retrieved from Athanasios A. Karakatsanis, *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki: Ministry of Culture, 1997), 214.



Fig. 124. Fragment of stucco with the labrys ornament, Depositi Museo Archeologico, Bari, Italy. Dated before the 10th century. Image retrieved from Gioia Bertelli, *Le Diocesi della Puglia Centro-Settentrionale: Aecae, Bari, Bovino, Egnathia, Herdonia, Lucera, Siponto, Trani, Vieste: Corpus della scultura altomedievale 15* (Bari: Fondazione CISAM, 2002), 162-163.



Fig. 125. Church of Saint Panteleimon, Ano Boulari, Mani. Agia Kyriaki. Detail with the ornament.

Table 1

Date settled for payment	Overall number of references in documents	Feast mentioned in contexts other than debt payment	Month of feast
Feast of St. Michael "in September"	17		September
Feast of St. Elijah	4		July
Feast of St. Martin	3		November
Feast of St. Peter "in June"	6	2	June
Feast of St. George	3	1	April/November
Feast of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus	1		November
Feast of St. Andrew	3		November
Feast of St. Blasius	2		February
Feast of Saint Barbara	1		December
Feast of St. Symeon	1		February/October
Feast of the Virgin "in August" (i.e. the Assumption)	2		August
Feast of St. Vitus	1		June
Feast of All Saints	1		November
Nativity	4		December
Lent	6		movable
Easter	4		movable
Date of payment expressed in months or years rather than feast date	8		
Name of feast illegible in document	1		

Table 1. Connection of debt settlements and holy feasts in 13th - century documents referring to the Elaphiti Islands

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