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## **ST. JOHN OF TROGIR IN THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE TROGIR REGION**

Before becoming the bishop of Trogir in the eleventh century, Saint John of Trogir was a Benedictine monk in the monastery in Osor on the island of Cres, where he met the Archbishop of Split, Lovro. These two names are recorded in important historical documents of Kings Krešimir and Zvonimir. As a bishop, Saint John was active in pastoral activities and founded a Convent of the Benedictine sisters, which continues to operate to this day as his spiritual legacy. Saint John of Trogir is recognized for promoting peace among citizens and resolving their conflicts. In 1105, he protected the city of Trogir from King Coloman, who was intent on destroying it. He performed many good deeds for Trogir, for which the people of Trogir remained grateful. He was chosen as the bishop of Trogir, and after his death, he became recognized as a saint, even though there was no formal process of beatification or canonization at that time. The people of Trogir solemnly celebrate the feast day of their heavenly patron, St. John of Trogir, on November 14th with a mass in Trogir. Another significant celebration in Trogir is „Primišćenje“, commemorating May 4, 1681, when the relics of St. John of Trogir were transferred to the newly built chapel in Trogir's cathedral.

Keywords: *St. John of Trogir, Trogir City Day, traditional culture, „Primišćenje“ (Transference), Trogir legends*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

St. John of Trogir, as a bishop, advocated for the Croatian orientation of Dalmatian towns. For this reason, he appears in the documents of Croatian kings Krešimir, Zvonimir, and Stephen II. Bishop John was a man who constantly called for peace and advocated for justice. The most famous legend speaks of St. John's journey to Šibenik. He experienced a shipwreck and then walked on the waves. Through his intercession, the sailors and all the cargo were saved. St. John founded a Benedictine monastery in Trogir. Many miracles were attributed to him, and he was highly revered by the residents of Trogir and the surrounding areas, a reverence that has endured to this day. John's tomb is located in the Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Trogir, in the chapel of St. John. St. John is the patron saint of the city of Trogir, and his feast day is celebrated on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Several legends about St. John's life have been recorded, and numerous important historical documents also include the name of St. John. This paper will provide an overview of the role of Bishop John in historical documents, i.e., his political activities, as well as his significance in Croatian literary heritage. The paper begins by discussing the life of St. John, focusing on his multifaceted activities and the circumstances in Trogir following his death. Then, details of the recorded legends related to St. John's active work will be presented. Following the legends, the specifics of the celebration of St. John of Trogir – the heavenly patron of the city of Trogir – will be discussed. In the final part of the paper, an overview of the current preservation of tradition – the feast of St. John of Trogir, i.e., the continuity of the celebration of the feast, today 913 years after his death, will be presented.

## 2. LIFE OF ST. JOHN OF TROGIR

St. John of Trogir was appointed bishop of Trogir in 1062. Due to his life of penance and the miracles attributed to him, he became renowned for his holiness and was subsequently canonized. Alongside St. Lawrence, he is the patron saint of the city of Trogir. His veneration has led to a rich literary and artistic heritage. The first latin version of the work *The Life of blessed John the confessor, Bishop of Trogir, and his miracles* (*Vita b. Iohannis confessoris episcopi Traguriensis et eius miracula*), from 1105, is the work of an anonymous author. In 1203, Treguan, the Bishop of Trogir, wrote a new Latin version, and Ivan Lučić published a new edition of this work in 1657.

Several Croatian translations of the Latin text of the *Life*<sup>1</sup> were published in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Viewed from a literary history perspective, the *Life* is one of the earliest originally preserved Latin narrative works. Its Croatian translation demonstrates the prominent position of Croatian Renaissance literary activity.<sup>2</sup> Several documents about John have been preserved, with his biography assumed to have been composed around 1150 and again in 1203. The first Croatian historian, Ivan Lučić, began researching the sources about Bishop John around 1651, spurred by the material collected in the manuscripts of Father Petar and Dominik Andreis.<sup>3</sup> The *Life of St. John of Trogir* has dual value in historical science. From the perspective of the early medieval state and church history, it is the earliest chronicle in Croatian literature. It testifies to events in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, a time of the formation of the new state entity of the Croatian-Hungarian kingdom, and a period when the supporters of the papal movement, which began to strengthen in Dalmatian episcopal cities, finally prevailed, coinciding with John's arrival in Trogir. Fundamental research on the history of the life and work of the Bishop of Trogir, John, was conducted by Ivan Lučić in his 1657 edition of the *Life*. The father of Croatian historical science, Ivan Lučić, searched for historical and literary sources and found two more copies of the printed *Life* in Zadar. The existence and activity of Bishop John are evidenced by documents from 1064 to 1111.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.1. ST. JOHN AND HIS WORK

Information about St. John's life up to 1064 is based on narrative sources, while those up to 1111 are based on documents, although some have had their authenticity questioned, as noted by the author Milan Ivanišević in 2005. John received his episcopal ordination from Archbishop Lawrence of Split, presumably around 1064. As a bishop, he began participating in the political struggles for the Croatian state during the early rule of the Hungarian kings. His involvement in the surrender of Zadar to King Coloman (1105) is confirmed in the saint's *Life*. Around 1106, he participated in the Zadar church council, a fact recorded in a document regarding the dispute of the Benedictine

<sup>1</sup> Saint John of Trogir, blessed, Croatian encyclopedia, online edition. Miroslav Krleža, Institute of lexicography, 2013–2024, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/ivan-trogirski-bl> (accessed: March 3, 2024)

<sup>2</sup> Ivanišević, Milan, *The Life of Saint John of Trogir*, Čakavska rič: Semiannual edition for studying the čakavian language, Vol. VIII. No. 2, 1978, p.141.

<sup>3</sup> Ivanišević, Milan, *Saint John, the bishop of Trogir*, Croatica Christiana periodica, Vol 4, No 5, 1980, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ivanišević, Milan, *The Life of Saint John of Trogir*, Čakavska rič: Semiannual edition for studying the čakavian language, Vol. VIII. No. 2, 1978, p. 141.

Monastery of St. Peter in Selo over lands in Poljica's Jesenice. John's name is mentioned for the last time in 1111 in Coloman's confirmation of privileges to the Rab Diocese.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding his canonization, neither the documents collected to prove John's sanctity nor the Pope's decree of canonization have been preserved. Parts of the bull regarding the life of St. John of Trogir have been preserved. Older events up to his burial were likely written around 1120 or 1150. Statements by about sixty witnesses were included in the canonization process. Cardinal Gregory de Sancto Apostolo of Santa Maria in Portico stayed in Trogir during Lent (from February 18 to Easter, April 5) in 1192. This stay was part of a pre-determined procedure. The first and most significant scholar of the life of St. John of Trogir is the historian, Trogir native Ivan Lučić.

John was an ardent supporter of the reformist Benedictine monasticism. It is not excluded that he also brought educated clergy with him to Trogir, which was to be his main strength against the counter-reformist monasticism. The city of Trogir accepted the reform movement of the Roman Church.

He was a contemporary of the last kings Dmitar Zvonimir and Stephen II, who ruled Croatia and Dalmatia. Both he and Archbishop Lawrence of Split had great influence on kings. In Šibenik, representatives of nobility and spiritual leaders elected as king the last king of the Trpimirović dynasty, Stephen II, the brother of Peter Krešimir IV, in 1089. Among the dignitaries at King Stephen II's coronation were Archbishop Lawrence of Split and Bishop John of Trogir<sup>6</sup>. Towards the end of 1090 or the beginning of 1091, the king fell ill and died.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> John of Trogir. Croatian Biographical Lexicon (1983–2023), online edition. Miroslav Krleža, Institute of lexicography 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/8594> (accessed: March 3, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Saint John of Trogir is originally from the noble Roman family of Orsini (1063–1111). During the reign of Krešimir IV, the Pope sent him to Trogir and this is where he was chosen to be bishop. He led a penitential life, distinguishing himself in peacefulness, gentleness and obedience. He resolved the conflict between the inhabitants of Zadar and King Koloman. There are several legends about him: according to one, a dove came down from the heavens during Holy Mass and landed on his head as a sign of the Holy Spirit and his peaceful ways. Another legend tells of hail once destroying vineyards, and John ordering what little grapes were left be placed into a wine press and an enormous amount of must came flowing out. According to a third legend, John was travelling to Šibenik during a big storm and he had shipwreck near cape Planka. John walked on waves and through his intercession, both the sailors and the cargo were rescued. After John's death the Venetians wanted to transfer his hand to Venice. However, on the eve of the anniversary of his death, the hand came by air and landed on the holy man's grave. (*Lexicon of Iconography, liturgy, and symbolism of western Christianity and Introduction to the Iconography of Radovan Ivančević*, prepared by Anđelko Badurina, Christian present, Zagreb, 1190, pp. 284).

<sup>7</sup> Dragić, Marko, *The reality of Croatian King Dmitar Zvonimir in the Poetry of Vladimir Na-*

### 3. CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN

After his death, the city of Trogir suffered a series of major plunders and devastations, and even his grave was covered over. It was discovered only in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century under the ruins of the cathedral during the time of the third Bishop of Trogir, Desa Maccarelli.<sup>8</sup>

In 1171, when the Venetians attacked Trogir during their campaign against Emanuel Komnen, the saint's sarcophagus was desecrated and looted, and his body defiled. The robbers, in a failed attempt to remove his ring, mutilated the saint's body by cutting off his arm at the elbow and taking it with them to Venice. On the eve of St. John's feast day, amidst an abundance of light described as „tracks of stars“, angels miraculously transported the arm and placed it on his chest in his original chapel. The legend of St. John of Trogir thus preserved the memory of the Venetian plunder of Trogir and the story of the miraculous transfer of the saint's arm, which is reflected in the depiction of the star on the city's coat of arms. It is difficult to say with certainty how much damage the city actually suffered during the great devastations and plunders of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In any case, during the tenure of the fourth bishop, Mihovil Maccarelli, the nephew of Bishop Desa, the initial work on the restoration of the cathedral began, which would continue throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

In Trogir, during Lent in 1192, Bishop Michael hosted Cardinal Gregory de Sancto Apostolo, deacon of Santa Maria in Portico, who was stopped by severe cold on his way to Hungary, where he was expected to conduct an investigation into the virtues and miracles of King Ladislav I. The cardinal used his stay in Dalmatia to conduct an investigation into the life of Bishop John. He interviewed sixty witnesses, whose testimonies were entered into official records and concluded by a handwritten signature. From that point on, according to Farlati, by will and decision of the cardinal apostolic legate, the title of saint began to be attributed to the Bishop of Trogir, John Orsini, and he was publicly honoured. The document compiled by order of Cardinal Gregory was kept in Trogir until 1411, when it was sent to Hungary at the request of the Hungarian king and emperor, Sigismund.<sup>10</sup>

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zor; Journal of Croatian Studies, Croatian Studies Review, 7, Macquarie University Sydney, Australia, Faculty of Philosophy University of Split, Croatia, Waterloo University, Canada, 2011, pp. 63–64.

<sup>8</sup> John of Trogir. Croatian Biographical Lexicon (1983–2023), online edition. Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/8594> (accessed: March 3, 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Farlati, Daniele, *The Bishops of Trogir: With additions and corrections by Jacopo Coleti*, Split: Literary circle Split, 2010, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Author Joško Belamarić, in his work *Moći sv. Ivana – trogirski paladija*, notes that at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the people of Trogir were forced to pledge the relic of their patron's hand in Zadar. The people of Trogir later decided to redeem the relic and restore it, and based on the original hand, they commissioned a new one from the Zadar goldsmith Emeric Krenjić, which he did not complete due to his death in June 1400. The original hand of St. John of Trogir, which was to be copied, was a masterpiece of Venetian goldsmithing from the 1270s. It is believed that the two gilded hands of St. John of Trogir were gifts from Queen Elizabeth Kotromanić, kept in the treasury of the Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Trogir, dating from the 1370s. The Zadar goldsmith Emeric, therefore, committed to Luke Vitturi, the representative of the Trogir cathedral church, in 1399, to craft the right hand of Blessed John of Trogir from his own gold and silver. From today's point of view, it is particularly noteworthy that the people of Trogir decided to pledge their most precious relics, the true palladium of the city. Interestingly, apart from these hands, the Trogir treasury also possessed a reliquary of the silver head of St. John. It can be assumed that it was also a late Gothic work, like the other hand, rounding out the typical collection of the saint's reliquaries, as seen in other Dalmatian cathedrals.<sup>11</sup>

Radoslav Bužančić, in his work *Stara kapela sv. Ivana Trogirskog u katedrali sv. Lovrinca*, mentions the year 1123 and the attack on Trogir, recorded by Ivan Lučić, and that the body of St. John, whose grave was lost in the ruins after the attack, was found during the episcopate of Desa Maccarelli, the renovator of the early Romanesque cathedral. Another devastation occurred in 1171 when the Venetians took the hand of St. John, and according to legend, the relics were returned by angels around 1174. The body was transferred to an oratory, the chapel of St. Ursula, later renamed the chapel of St. John. The chapel is first mentioned by Treguan, describing the miracles performed by St. John for a sick boy who spent the night in front of the door. The body of Trogir's patron, Blessed John, was transferred in 1681 from the Gothic cathedral, located in the first bay near the apse of the north aisle of the Cathedral of St. Lawrence, into the new cathedral built against the north wall of the cathedral, opposite the Regent Palace Gate. This was the most significant undertaking of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Belamarić, Joško, *The Relics of St. John – the Palladium of Trogir pledged in Zadar* (filigree in the treasuries of dalmatian cathedrals), *Contributions to the History of Art in Dalmatia*, Vol. 38 No. 1, 1999, pp. 151, 152, 169.

<sup>12</sup> Bužančić, Radoslav, *The old chapel of St. John of Trogir in the Cathedral of St. Lawrence*, *Contributions to the History of Art in Dalmatia*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2005, pp. 77–79, 107.

Additionally, it is worth noting that St. John was buried in the cathedral basilica, on the southern side, opposite the altar of the martyr saints Kuzma and Damjan, which was located in the southern apse of the church of St. Lawrence (1111). According to legend, the blind regained their sight, and the sick were healed at his grave. Trogir was then attacked and destroyed by the Saracens (1123). Later, St. John appeared to Teodor (Tudor) three times, and the grave was found under the ruins, with only Tudor being able to easily lift the heavy slab. The believers placed the body in a coffin and laid it in a marble sarcophagus in the church of St. Lawrence, beneath the image of the martyr saints Kuzma and Damjan (1150).

Image 1: don Ivan Delalle blessing the chapel erected at the site of St. John's apparition to the elder Tudor



*Image source: Trogir City Museum*

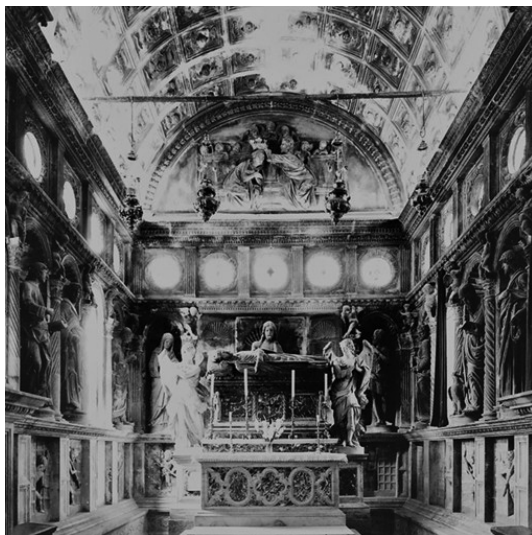
On their way to Greece, the Venetians docked in Trogir and looted the town (1171). They damaged the sarcophagus and took the casket, leaving the mutilated body on the shore and taking the hand with them (the first of a total of four openings of the casket). On their return, the Venetians suffered a shipwreck. The people of Trogir retrieved the stolen items, but the hand (fore-



arm) could not be recovered. Celebrations of St. John began, and in 1174, the saint's hand was wrapped in clean cloth and placed back inside the casket.

Due to a lack of secure space, the people of Trogir decided to move the tomb to the top of the northern nave, later the chapel of St. Blaise, and now the chapel of the Holy Cross (1348). This space became too cramped for the growing number of devotees, so in 1468, the construction of the new chapel began, which was completed in 1497. In 1671, the casket was opened for the second time to verify its contents. In 1680, the sarcophagus was once again opened for repairs (the third opening of the casket), and then the sarcophagus was transferred to the altar in the chapel of St. Jerome. In 1681, the sarcophagus was transferred to the altar in the new chapel. In 1724, the Venetians requested from the Bishop of Trogir a part of St. John's relics. The people of Trogir opened the sarcophagus and took a bone from the right thigh. The relic was part of a procession on November 14, and in 1725 it was taken with the relics to Venice, where it was placed in the treasury of St. Mark's Church and then given to the Pope, who donated the relics to the cathedral in Benevento. The selected details show that the sarcophagus of St. John was opened as many as four times.<sup>13</sup>

Image 2: Chapel of St. John of Trogir in the Cathedral of St. Lawrence



*Image source: Trogir City Museum*

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<sup>13</sup> Trogir Time Travel, project "Fourth autumn chest", downloaded: March 9, 2024., [https://issuu.com/muzejgradatrogira/docs/cetvrtijesenskiskafetinmgt#google\\_vignette](https://issuu.com/muzejgradatrogira/docs/cetvrtijesenskiskafetinmgt#google_vignette)



Author Radoslav Tomić, in his work *The painting by Agostino Ridolfi in the cathedral of Trogir*, writes that there is a large painting in the Cathedral of Trogir titled „Sv. Ivan Trogirski spašava brodolomce“ (*St. John of Trogir saves the shipwrecked*), depicting a miraculous event from the life of St. John Ursini, the protector of Trogir, at „rt Planka“ (Cape Planka). The painting was signed and dated by the lesser-known painter Agostino Ridolfi (1646–1727) from Belluno, and commissioned by the Bishop of Trogir, Stjepan Cupilli. The painting in Trogir is the only known work by Ridolfi in Dalmatia. The rich literature on the protector of Trogir invariably also mentions the journey of Bishop John to Šibenik. Setting out across the sea, he and his crew experience a shipwreck near the perilous Cape Planka. The ship capsized with both passengers and belongings. Everyone was saved by either swimming or holding onto planks, while the bishop walked on water.<sup>14</sup>

„The painting is dominated by an upright and strong bishop who, like Christ, is miraculously walking on the choppy surface of the sea. His gesture, with a raised right hand and outstretched fingers, in flowing garments and confident step on the choppy sea, dominated the entire painting, underlining the bishops saintly power with dramatic and theatrical gestures. Particularly in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, the people of Trogir were spreading the cult of their protector saint, multiplying his depictions, enriching and shaping the iconography, the saint whose remains were moved to the Renaissance chapel on May 4, 1681, when dignitaries, in full Baroque splendour, from the compact Dalmatia of that time, from Kotor to Rab, were present at the ceremony. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the people of Trogir were spreading the cult of their protector saint, multiplying his depictions, enriching and shaping the iconography. On May 4, 1681, they moved his remains to the Renaissance chapel, where, in full Baroque splendour, dignitaries from the compact Dalmatia of that time, from Kotor to Rab, were present at the ceremony.“<sup>15</sup>

Branka Purgarić-Kužić, in her work *The death of St. John of Trogir*, highlights a speech before the death of the Bishop of Trogir, John, which is found in the *The life of St. John of Trogir*, written in two parts, around 1150 by an unknown author and in 1203 by Treguan, a Florentine and the Bishop of Trogir, responsible for the beginning of the construction of the Trogir Cathedral. Subsequently, the author mentions that John was a wise and prudent man, a great orator who managed, during the time of Coloman's conquest of

<sup>14</sup> Belamarić, Joško, *The Relics of St. John – the Trogir Palladium Pledged in Zadar* (filigree in the treasuries of dalmatian cathedrals), Contributions to the History of Art in Dalmatia, Vol. 38 No. 1, 1999, pp. 151, 152, 169.

<sup>15</sup> Tomić, Radoslav, *The Painting by Agostino Ridolfi in the Trogir Cathedral*, Contributions to the History of Art in Dalmatia, Vol. 27 No. 1, 1988, pp. 293, 294, 300.

Dalmatian cities in 1105, to prevent the bloodshed of Christians. It was said that during mass in the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Šibenik, a white dove, a symbol of peace, landed on his head, and following his death, after 1111, he was declared a saint. John was a Benedictine who advocated for the founding of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Domnius, later St. Nicholas, in Trogir in 1064. He was buried opposite the altar of St. Cosmas and Damian, and later, when he appeared to the old man Theodor, he was exhumed, and his body was found incorrupt. The people first placed him in a cypress coffin and then in a marble sarcophagus, and the entire arrangement was placed in the altar of St. Cosmas and Damian. In 1171, the Venetians got a hold of his ring by cutting off his right forearm, but according to legend, angels returned the hand across the Adriatic. Today, it is in the Orsini Chapel, a work by Nikola Firentinac from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup>

Dunja Babić refers to Ivan Lucić, who in a manuscript dated to the early last decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, mentions Dolfino Dolfinio, the then city governor who ruled Trogir from 1590 to 1593. He is mentioned alongside details about the crucifix from the monastic church of the Holy Cross on Čiovo which, by merit of this governor, was supposed to be moved to a new location. At one point, the author addresses an unnamed dignitary, probably Governor Dolfinio, promising to send him a copy of the legend of Blessed John of Trogir.<sup>17</sup>

Even after the death of St. John, the memory of the saint and his contributions to the community were preserved. This role had befallen to brotherhoods, like the Brotherhood of St. John, founded as religious communities dedicated to specific saints or religious goals, who ensured his legacy lives on. They were a crucial factor in maintaining social cohesion and religious practices in Trogir. These associations – brotherhoods – provided social protection to their members but also strived for greater influence within the commune. The brotherhood played a role similar to that of a Council of Nobility, since it was ensuring the security and social status of its members.<sup>18</sup> The number

<sup>16</sup> Purgarić-Kužić, Branka, *The Death of St. John of Trogir*, Works of the Institute of Croatian History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb: Works of the Institute of Croatian History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Vol. 28 No. 1, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Babić, Dunja, *Description of Trogir and its Territory from the Late 16th Century*, Sources and Contributions for the History of Dalmatia, Vol. 24 No. 24, 2012, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>18</sup> For example, the development of the Trogir Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit is connected to several elements: the general emergence of these brotherhoods in Europe, the social and political position of the common people in Trogir in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the maintenance of the city hospital under the possible influence of the Hospitaller Order of Santo Spirito. The main source for researching the Trogir Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit in the medieval and early modern periods is the *Matrikula* (the Matricle) (Mariegola) of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit, which is kept in the Trogir Chapter Archive (currently exhibited in the Pinakothek of the Sacred Art Collection of the Cathedral of St. Lawrence).

of citizens in the brotherhood was usually not much larger than the number of members of the Council of Nobility – about a hundred. Within medieval Brotherhoods, groups of people with common interests would gather.<sup>19</sup>

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It contains lists of the brothers and the properties of the brotherhood, as well as regulations on behaviour within the brotherhood.

In Dalmatian cities, brotherhoods were the main support for the assemblies of the common people, which were later prohibited. Larger and more prestigious brotherhoods gradually acquired movable and immovable property and played an increasingly significant social and economic role. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, brotherhoods began to regain influence. To limit the power of the city nobility, the Venetian government introduced a regulation that, after decisions were made in the Council, the opinion of the common people had to be heard, and their comments, along with the Council's decisions, were sent to Venice, where the final decision was made based on all the documents. As a result, the nobility tried to make decisions in secrecy, which the Venetian authorities prevented (or prohibited). Brotherhoods in Dalmatia tried to secure the right for minor judicial proceedings among the brothers to be resolved within the brotherhoods, thus bypassing the communal authorities. According to *Matrikula* (the Matricle) of the Holy Spirit in Trogir, disputes among members were first brought before the prefect and officials, and only then before the prince. In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, Venice confirmed the gathering permissions for the Brotherhoods of the Holy Spirit and St. Michael.

In the medieval and early modern periods, the role of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit in Trogir was to gather members from various professions. In Trogir, aside from the sailors' brotherhood, there were no guild brotherhoods. One of the more important brotherhoods in the New Town in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was the Brotherhood of All Saints, founded alongside the church of the same name. It gathered a large number of members, including several craftsmen with the title of master, as well as priests. This brotherhood was allowed to hold meetings in 1443. In the New Town, a shop owned by the Brotherhood of St. Catherine is mentioned in 1435. This brotherhood had an altar in the Church of St. Dominic, and funds for construction and various decorations were bequeathed to it by women from the New Town who were its members. According to Andreis, in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, brotherhoods were also founded on the coast St. George and St. Mary, and on Čiovo, the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Sea (1552) and St. James (1452). However, many regulations indicate that brotherhoods could have potentially been socially and politically dangerous. In the Brotherhood of Our Lady at Zvirača, it was stipulated that all brothers must report to the prefect anything they heard against the Venetian authorities, the Doge, and the nobility, and the prefect was then obliged to inform the city prince under threat of expulsion. The brothers of All Saints were also required to report anything heard against the city prince, and anyone who failed to do so was banished. The statutes of the Brotherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Sea required that every brother must be loyal. Later provisions required the brothers to report to the prefect anything directed against the Venetian authorities, the Doge, and the nobility, and the prefect was required to inform the city prince. This is how the Venetian authorities protected themselves against potential rebellion. All Trogir brotherhoods, except the sailors' brotherhood, formed a community of citizens and common people, to which the entire populace of Trogir was a member. (Benyovsky Latin 2007: 25–29).

<sup>19</sup> Benyovsky Latin, Irena, *The role of the Brotherhood of the holy spirit in Trogir in the middle ages and early modern period*, Historical Contributions, Vol. 26 No. 32, 2007, pp. 25, 26, 27.

## 4. LEGENDS ABOUT ST. JOHN OF TROGIR

Saint John of Trogir grew up in the noble Roman Orsini family (11<sup>th</sup> century). The Pope sent him to Trogir during the reign of King Krešimir IV, where he was elected bishop. He was noted for his gentleness and peacefulness. He managed to resolve the dispute between the people of Zadar and King Coloman. According to one legend, a dove landed on Bishop John's head during Mass as a sign of the Holy Spirit. Another legend tells how a hailstorm destroyed the vineyards, but by John's order, the remaining grapes were put in a press, producing a large quantity of must. A third legend states that during a stormy journey to Šibenik, John experienced a shipwreck but managed to walk on the waves, saving the other sailors. After John's death, the Venetians intended to transfer his hand to Venice, but on the anniversary of his death, the hand miraculously descended to the tomb of St. John of Trogir.<sup>20</sup>

Milan Ivanišević, in his work *Iconography of St. John of Trogir*, mentions that in his „*Life*“, besides the miracle of the shipwreck, three miracles are described during his episcopate in Trogir. The oldest miracle took place in a church vineyard during a drought, where the winemakers gathered a small amount of grapes, but after the bishop's prayer, the barrels were filled with wine. The second miracle was the defence of Zadar from the Hungarian King Coloman and convincing him to make peace, which was then concluded. Then, the bishop went with the new king to Šibenik, and while he was celebrating Mass in the fortress church of St. Michael, the king saw a white dove above the bishop's head, which convinced him of the bishop's holiness. In these turbulent times, the bishop was of great help, just as he was at the beginning of his episcopate around 1064, assisting the fighters for strengthening papal authority in the Dalmatian dioceses. After the saint's death, miracles followed, three of which are confirmed by sixty witnesses, all described by Treguan in 1203.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Dragić, Marko, *Poetics and history of croatian oral literature*, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split, Split, 2008, p. 303.

<sup>21</sup> Ivanišević, Milan, *Iconography of Saint John of Trogir*, Peristil: collected papers on art history, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1978, p. 92.

#### 4. CELEBRATION OF ST. JOHN OF TROGIR – PATRON SAINT OF THE CITY OF TROGIR

The people of Trogir proudly speak of their city's patron saint and celebrate his feast day (November 14) with great joy both in and outside the church. John of Trogir was a respected citizen of Trogir, which the locals demonstrated in 1517 during the rule of Prince Nikola Michelia by minting his image on their own copper coins as the city's protector.<sup>22</sup> The people of Trogir emphasize that one must speak of Saint John with respect. On the saint's feast day, they gladly sing:

*Svet' Ivane o' Trogira  
Providi mi ti mladića,*

*Koj', ne igra šije, šete  
Koj' ne puši španjulete.*

*Koj' ne pije puno vina  
Koj' ne ide put kažina*

*Ako mi ga ne providiš,  
U crikvu me već ne vidiš.*<sup>23</sup>

*(Saint John of Trogir,  
Find me a young man,*

*One who doesn't play dice or games,  
Who doesn't smoke cigarettes.*

*One who doesn't drink much wine,  
Who doesn't walk towards the casino.*

*If you don't find him for me,  
You won't see me in church again)*

In the poem, the girl asks St. John of Trogir, the heavenly protector of the city, to send her a handsome young man. She sets some conditions and

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<sup>22</sup> Celio Cega, Fani, *Trogir*, Vjesnik, Zagreb: Turistička naklada, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Buble, Nikola, *Texts of vocal folklore songs from Trogir and Donja Kaštela from 1875 to 1975*, Čakavska rič, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, Trogir, 1991, p. 96.

expresses her desires, such as that the young man does not smoke, is not prone to drunkenness, and does not frequent the tavern. The girl emphasizes to the saint, alongside her sung desires, that if he does not send her such a young man and does not heed her prayer, she will no longer be seen in church.

In invoking the city of Trogir, its people often mentioned and addressed their loved ones, as shown in the preserved verses:

*Moj dragi, doisto.<sup>24</sup>  
Lipe jesu zelene livade,  
Pokraj mora okolo Trogira;  
Pokraj mora okolo Trogira.*

*Još su lišpje divojcice mlade  
Oko vode lalnoga Dobrića.*

*Lipa li su poja kraj Trogira,  
O' Krbani pa do Dragulina.*

*Još su lišpje cure kraj Dobrića  
Ka's mastilcem cekadu mladića.<sup>25</sup>*

*(My dear, indeed.  
The green meadows are beautiful,  
By the sea around Trogir;  
By the sea around Trogir.*

*Even more beautiful are the young                      ens,  
By the cool waters of Dobrić.*

*The fields near Trogir are lovely,  
From Krbani to Dragulin.*

*But lovelier still are the girls by Dobrić,  
Waiting for their suitors with ink in hand.)*

St. John is an important figure in the history of Trogir; he succeeded in preventing the Croatian-Hungarian King Coloman from causing serious dis-

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>25</sup> Buble, Nikola, *Texts of vocal folklore songs from Trogir and Donja Kaštela from 1875 to 1975.*, Čakavska rič, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, Trogir, 1991., str. 79.

cord in Trogir and founded a Benedictine monastery in Trogir. The people of Trogir recognized in him exceptional human and saintly qualities. His resting place is in the chapel of St. John of Trogir, one of the most beautiful Renaissance monuments in Europe.<sup>26</sup> The legends about St. John of Trogir have been passed down from generation to generation, and the locals are familiar with the life of their beloved saint, who still stands atop the northern city gate or, as the people of Trogir say, „at the gate of the wall“.<sup>27</sup>

As part of an exhibition opened to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Trogir City Museum, the special catalogue „Fešta“ (2023) highlighted what and how the people of Trogir celebrated throughout history, noting that the old citizens of Trogir celebrated their patron saint, St. John, twice a year. The main feast day, now also the Day of the City of Trogir, is celebrated on November 14, and the other significant Trogir celebration is „Primišćenje“, commemorating May 4, 1681, when the relics of St. John of Trogir were transferred to the newly built chapel in the Trogir Cathedral. The catalogue references Zrinka Novak (2006) and Irena Benyovsky Latin (2009) regarding the maintenance of knightly games on St. John's Day. A statutory provision from 1386 mentions a knightly game held under the name „palium balistrariorum“, where archers competed on horseback for the palium, a cloak awarded as a prize to the competitors. Then, the 1988 Statute of the City of Trogir talks about the offerings made by the Brotherhood of St. John in honor and respect of the Blessed John of Trogir, the lighting of candles or wax tapers with a double wick weighing 40 pounds, to be done in the evening, from the funds of the Trogir commune. The double candles or tapers must be offered as a gift and placed in the evening on and around the altar of St. John. Additionally, four gallons of wine must be purchased at the expense of the commune, with two to be delivered on the eve of the feast and the other two in the evening on the day of the celebration.<sup>28</sup>

In Catholic Dalmatia on November 27, 1882, an author under the pseudonym Sutilijski wrote about the rainy celebration of St. John's Day. In the newspaper *Il Dalmata* on November 20, 1897, an article discusses the celebration of St. John's Day, mentioning a postponed concert and a fair held with the presence of foreigners. A procession was also held, and after lunch, the National Music played in the square, though with fewer visitors. The November 22, 1902 issue of *Il Dalmata* describes a livelier celebration, foreign participation,

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<sup>26</sup> Žaja, Barbara, *Contemporary ethnography of traditional culture in the Trogir region*, Faculty of humanities and social sciences, Split, 2019, pp. 29–32.

<sup>27</sup> Teller: Mila Perkušić, born Grgin, 1930 in Trogir, recorded in 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Maljković-Zelalija, Maja, *Fešta – What They Are and How the People of Trogir Celebrated Throughout History*, Trogir City Museum, Cate Dujšin Ribar Gallery, 2023, pp. 27–30.



and a procession and solemn ceremony in the cathedral. After lunch, the National Music performed in the square, ending their program with a serenade. The weekly and daily newspaper *Dan*, launched by the Bishop of Split, Filip Frane Nakić, advocated for Catholic-social ideas and in its November 23, 1905 issue, it describes the solemn celebration of St. John's Day, noting that due to bad weather, the crowd was smaller, and the celebration was not as grand as in previous years. An author named Spectator wrote that foreigners revere St. John more than the people of Trogir, that the procession is more of a parade and rather empty. He also mentions a lack of harmony in the organization of the celebration, noting that a crowd watches the procession but does not participate, even making rude comments to those in the procession. The weekly *Dan* in its November 21, 1912 issue discusses a celebration on St. John's Day organized by the Croatian Catholic Society Ivan Lučić, benefiting the Balkan Red Cross. The celebration ended with the Croatian anthem performed by the National Music. The daily newspaper *Adriatic journal* (*Jadranski dnevnik*) in its November 10, 1936 issue states that the cattle market held on November 14 was postponed to November 21 due to municipal elections on November 15. It is a fact that Trogir was recognized as a market town. Fairs were also held in celebration of St. Anthony, on Corpus Christi, and on Pentecost.<sup>29</sup>

Since the establishment of the modern state of Croatia in 1991, the celebration of the feast of St. John of Trogir has also been the Day of the City of Trogir and is marked by several days of religious and secular festivities organized by the Parish of St. Lawrence and the City of Trogir. The feast is preceded by a three-day preparation in the cathedral, and on the feast day itself, a solemn Mass with a procession is held. In the week leading up to the feast, cultural, artistic, and sports events take place. Sports clubs, cultural societies, and educational institutions celebrate anniversaries, musical performances are held, various exhibitions are opened, and new literary titles are presented. Traditionally, during St. John's Day, a ceremonial session of the Trogir City Council is held, where the City of Trogir Awards are presented to deserving individuals, associations, and institutions.<sup>30</sup>

Marijan Čipčić in his book *Trogir between the World Wars (1918–194.)* notes that the people of Trogir, along with the usual calendar of Catholic holidays, have celebrated the feasts of St. Lawrence on August 10 and St. John on November 14 with festivities lasting seven days before and seven days after the feast day since the Middle Ages. Citizens offered flowers to the church, a tradition that continued into the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A grand celebration took place in 1681 for the transfer of St. John's relics to his chapel.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–30.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–30.

The celebration involved Dalmatian bishops, representatives of the nobility, and the populace. Ivan Delalle mentions in his guide that over 10,000 people participated in this celebration. During the 1927 celebration of St. John, the people of Trogir collected donations for the poor at the St. Lazarus Hospice. The Adriatic Post mentions that donations were collected by the Milishich paper store and the parish priest of St. Cross, Don Ante Milić. The feast was particularly grand in 1937 when the Trogir abbot Lucije Mileta celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priestly service.<sup>31</sup>

Author Fani Celio Cega in her article *A review of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the „Primišćenje“ in Trogir in 1881*, discusses the celebration of the second Day of the City of Trogir, the so-called „Primišćenje“, in Trogir in 1881. On May 4, 1681, the relics of St. John of Trogir were transferred to the newly built chapel in the Trogir Cathedral. The details of the event are known because the Italian Catholic priest and historian Filippo Riceputi recorded that this event took place 566 years after the saint's death, 530 years after the first and 333 years after the second transfer, after he rested for 233 years in the chapel of St. Cosmas and Damian<sup>32</sup>, and for another 333 years in that of St. Blaise, or St. Cross.<sup>33</sup> The anniversaries of „Primišćenje“ were celebrated ceremoniously. The city was festively adorned, and decorated tapestries, specially made for such occasions, were hung on the windows. The cathedral was adorned with flags, flowers, and greenery. The city was illuminated with torches, a

<sup>31</sup> Čipčić, Marijan, *Trogir between the World Wars (1918–1941)*, Museum of the City of Split, Split, 2021, p. 288.

<sup>32</sup> The Trogir parish of Our Lady of the Angels celebrates the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Near the parish church, along the road to the city cemetery, there is a votive chapel dedicated to these early Christian saints. Fragments from the interior indicate that it was built in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, making it one of the oldest chapels in Trogir. Its present form dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tradition holds that Saints Cosmas and Damian were twins and physicians who treated people for free. Thanks to them, many converted to Christianity. While treating people without charge, they also pointed the hopelessly ill towards heaven. During the time of Diocletian, they were martyred by beheading. (Source: Catholic Information Agency, published: September 27, 2004, retrieved: March 3, 2024, <https://ika.hkm.hr/novosti/blagdan-sv-kuzme-i-damjana-u-trogiru-2/>).

<sup>33</sup> The Church and Dominican Monastery of the Holy Cross, once the largest national shrine of the Dominican Province of Dalmatia, were a destination for many barefoot pilgrims starting from April 1, 1600. On that Holy Saturday, the wounds of Jesus bled on the large wooden crucifix located on the main altar of the church. Veneration of the miraculous crucifix continued for centuries, especially during the month of March with pilgrimages every Friday, as well as on Good Friday and the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. However, due to historical upheavals in the region, particularly after the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the arrival of Napoleonic rule, this tradition fell into obscurity. (Source: Archdiocese of Split-Makarska, Shrine of the Holy Cross, published: March 12, 2010, retrieved: March 3, 2024, <https://www.smn.hr/902-obnova-sjecanja-na-zaboravljeno-hrvatsko-svetiste-sv-kriza-na-ciovu>).

triduum was held in the cathedral, and celebrations took place in the square. The festivities were particularly grand in 1881, during the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the „Primišćenje“. On April 30, 1881, the Committee for the celebration, together with the Bishop of Trogir, the clergy, the city administration, and numerous residents, solemnly welcomed the guests, archbishops, and bishops from neighbouring dioceses, accompanied by the City Music Ensemble. In the evening, the City Music Ensemble held a small concert, followed by a promenade concert the next day. On the morning of May 1, a solemn pontifical sung Mass with a panegyric in the Croatian language was held. In the evening, the triduum began, accompanied by the choir. On the first evening, a torchlight singing event was held in honor of the high church dignitaries. On May 2, a solemn Mass with a panegyric in the Italian language was held, followed by an evening promenade concert in the square. In the days leading up to the celebration, the city was bustling with activities, with festivities for people of all classes. On the day of the „Primišćenje“ itself, the atmosphere was particularly festive. The main event of 1881 was supposed to be a morning procession, but due to bad weather, it was held in the afternoon. In the solemn procession, the silver bust of St. John was at the forefront. People from the windows of nearby houses along the procession route threw flowers. The Committee for Public Welfare distributed alms among the poor. A ceremonial lunch, scheduled after the procession, was held in the Reading room hall, accompanied by a concert by the City Music Ensemble, and was organized by the Garagnin family for select guests. The city's mayor was Antun Fanfogna-Garagnin, and medals made for the occasion were distributed to distinguished guests. One such jubilee medal is preserved in the Trogir City Museum. On the obverse, there is a depiction of St. John standing above the city, blessing it, with the inscription „hoc numine tuta“, which means: under your protection. The reverse bears an inscription stating that the medal was made on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transfer of Blessed John Orsini in Trogir, on May 4, 1881. The jubilee celebration of the „Primišćenje“ ended with fireworks, the lighting of bengal lights, and a grand dance in the Reading room.<sup>34</sup>

Zrinka Novak, in her work *The life of the Trogir commune under the protection of blessed John of Trogir and St. Lawrence*, mentions that at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a decision was made to celebrate the feast of St. John of Trogir not only on November 14 but also on May 4, in memory of „Primišćenje“ – the transfer of the body of St. John to the new Renaissance chapel. This was a significant event in the history of Trogir, with numerous delegations and

<sup>34</sup> Trogir Time Travel, „Primišćenje“, published: May 4, 2020, downloaded: March 3, 2024, <https://trogirtimetravel.blogspot.com/2020/05/danas-je-tocno-339-godina-od.html>

faithful participating. The procession included Trogir brotherhoods such as All Saints, Our Lady of the Angels, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Roch, and the Holy Spirit, carrying crosses, flags, and candles, dressed in white or light blue tunics. Solemn hymns in Croatian were sung during the procession. The city's Franciscans and Dominicans, along with the people, also participated.<sup>35</sup>

Father Ivan Delalle, a priest, art historian, archaeologist, and publicist from Trogir, writes in „Novo doba“ on November 15, 1925, that Trogir has many churches and saints, adding, along with a description of a night in November and a mention of St. John of Trogir:

„He will find his saintly protectors in heaven again tomorrow and will stand in the heavenly circle closest to the Creator, as his saints are very old and very powerful. Tonight, under this November rain, I stand before your gates, to listen, like you, to the holy sound of your church bells. The bells brighten my soul. Their silver tones rise so high as if they seek the boundless blue of the sky. The towers are dark, illuminated only, if it can be said, by the light of the serene music of the bells. The sound of the bells calls someone far away, but who hears them. It calls him to watch over the dying city's sleep. It calls with a voice of weeping, hope, and praise. Trogir prays on both knees with its small houses, without light, without voice except for the voice of the bells, in the darkness of a November night, under the rain. St. John listens to its prayers, bent with age, with a thick shepherd's staff, handing out blessings to his city today as always. The night is dark. At the city gates, in front of the statue of St. John, two lamps are burning. One is lit as a vow of tears, and the other as a vow of hope.“<sup>36</sup>

In the preface to the cultural magazine of the Croatian Heritage Foundation in Trogir, *Vartal* 2/1992, dedicated to Dr. Ivan Delalle, Croatian art historian and archaeologist Ivo Babić from Trogir wrote that the most vivid memories of Don Ivan are related to the feast of St. John of Trogir, which is celebrated on November 14, adding that it is a time of endless rains. It is also noted that the service on the eve of the feast was held at night in the Cathedral: „Before dawn, during a break between the endless divine services, we would go to the sacristy to congratulate Don Ivan on his name day.“<sup>37</sup>

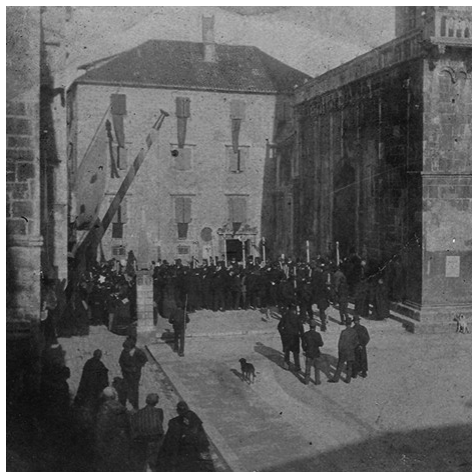
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<sup>35</sup> Novak, Zrinka, *The life of the Trogir commune under the protection of blessed John of Trogir and St. Lawrence*, Stara hrvatska svakodnevica, Kolo 4, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Trogir Time Travel, Trogir in November, published: November 23, 2020, <https://trogirtime-travel.blogspot.com/2020/11/> (downloaded: March 3, 2024).

<sup>37</sup> Trogir Time Travel, The eve of Saint Stephen's Day, published: November 23, 2020, <https://trogirtimetravel.blogspot.com/2020/11/> (downloaded: March 3, 2024).

Image 3: Procession for the celebration of the Holiday of Saint John of Trogir



*Source: Trogir City Museum*

On the day of „Primišćenje“, the city would be adorned and decorated, various festivities would be organized, and the common people and nobility would unite in the celebration of the anniversary of the saint's relics transfer. The desire of the people of Trogir for a more dignified temple for their patron began to be realized by the Bishop of Trogir, Jakov Turlon, as early as 1468. This was also the time when the construction of the Chapel of St. John of Trogir (Ursini) began, designed and built by Nikola Firentinac, Andrija Aleši, and local sculptor Ivan Duknović. The chapel is one of the most significant and beautiful Renaissance monuments in Europe, and since 1681, when the saint's bones were transferred to it from the Chapel of St. Cosmas and Damian, today the Chapel of Good Death, it has served as the guardian of the relics of St. John of Trogir. In memory of May 4, 1981, the first Sunday in May is marked with a solemn mass and an appropriate event.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Catholic Information Agency, on the eve of „Primišćenje“ the powers of Saint John of Trogir, article published: May 3, 2009, downloaded: March 31, 2024, <https://ika.hkm.hr/najave/ususret-primiscenju-mociju-sv-ivana-trogirskog/>

Image 4: Scene of a procession in Trogir, prominent citizens gathered



*Image: Courtesy of prof. Ivo Delalle in his home*

Regarding the celebration on November 14<sup>th</sup>, the feast of St. John, the teller Vinka Zulim described what it was like the day before the festivities:

„Preparations would already have been in full swing. The cathedral would have been adorned with flowers. The tradition was a procession through the city. The procession with the statue of St. John through the city streets - that was the central piece of the celebration. After the procession, there would be a mass that gathered all the faithful. I remember how after the mass, everyone would gather in the square, where traditional dances would be performed. At that time, we lived under the influence of various changes, but despite that, the tradition of celebrating St. John remained and continued with the same enthusiasm.“<sup>39</sup>

Teller Dunja Kalilić mentions that during her childhood, around 1954, citizens who attended mass in the cathedral during the feast of St. John were not looked upon favourably. For a time, there was no procession outside the

<sup>39</sup> Teller: Vinka Zulim, born 1945, Trogir, recorded January 2, 2024.



church. Teller Kalilić adds that on that day, the cathedral always celebrated with solemn masses, and she has memories as a child of those processions inside the church when the brethren, in special robes, would carry large candles, relics under a canopy, and sing.<sup>40</sup>

In his work *Trogir – The City and monuments*, Ivo Babić mentions a contemporary of these events, Pavle Andreis, who described these events in Croatian and Italian, including scenes of the procession, fireworks, city decorations, and cannon fire.<sup>41</sup>

This work discusses the life of St. John and the veneration of his name in Trogir. For instance, at the entrance to the city of Trogir, above the northern gate, stands a statue of St. John of Trogir. In the Middle Ages, Trogir had more city gates besides the current northern and southern ones: the Gate of the Holy Spirit, the Gate of St. Rocco, and the Kamerlengo Gate near St. Dominic. The southern city gate was built in Renaissance style in 1593, while the northern gate was constructed in 1656. According to Ivan Delalle, a green pine tree has been growing in a crack of the stone below the statue of St. John since 1661.<sup>42</sup>

Ivan Babić writes the following about the statue of St. John:

„The statue of St. John above the Land Gate in Trogir is depicted with his right hand raised in blessing and holding a bishop's metal staff in his hand. The bishop is dressed in a chasuble, draped over his robes (alb, dalmatic). The decorations on the garments beneath the chasuble are executed with linear, thicker indentations; the edges around the sleeve openings are especially decorated with perforated indentations. On the chasuble, there is a relief strip in the shape of a T. The collar is also adorned with plastic decorations. The mitre is decorated as well, including two rosettes. The compositional axis of the whole is somewhat rigid, with a vertical line lacking the usual Gothic tilt. The Land Gate on the northern side of Trogir was opened during the time of the provveditore Antonio Bernardo (from 1656 to 1660), as evidenced by his coat of arms. However, the city gate attained its present form much later, in 1763, through the intervention of the renowned builder Ignacije Macanović. The statue is undoubtedly older than the city gate. As is evident from the shape, it is clearly a Gothic work from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, very close in style to the works of the sculptor and builder Bonino Jakovljević from Milan, who is mentioned in Dalmatia from 1412, working from Šibenik, and Split, to Korčula and Dubrovnik in the south.“<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Teller: Dunja Kalilić, born 1947, Trogir, recorded: December 2, 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Babić, Ivo, *Trogir – The city and monuments*, Split: Literary circle: The Museum of Croatian archaeological monuments, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Delalle, Ivan, *Trogir – a guide to its history, art and life*, Zagreb: Ex libris, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Babić, Ivo, *On the statue of St. John above the Land gate in Trogir*, Vijenac 217, Matica hrvatska, 2022.



## 5. TRADITION TODAY – THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN OF TROGIR

The tradition of honouring the feast of St. John of Trogir, the heavenly patron of the city of Trogir, continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, celebrated annually in November on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The central part of the celebration is marked by a holy mass and a procession, as well as festivities featuring the Trogir Folk Music Ensemble, held at the main city square, Ivan Pavao II Square. The feast of St. John of Trogir is also known as „Stivanja“, a name derived from local dialect and customs in Dalmatia. „Stivanja“ is actually a shortened version of the name Ivan in the local dialect, where the form „Štivan“ is often used. It is important to note that Stivanja is celebrated with great ceremony today, whereas the tradition of the lavish celebration of „Primišćenje“ has gradually faded. The three-century-old significant event related to „Primišćenje“ was celebrated on May 3 and 4, 1981<sup>44</sup>, and also of interest is the celebration on May 4, 2009, when the anniversary of the transfer of their patron St. John's remains to his chapel was commemorated with holy masses and a special music program. The program on May 4, 2009, began with a mass during which 46 young confirmands received the seal of the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of confirmation was administered by Monsignor Josip Delić. In the afternoon, the musical program was opened by the Trogir Folk Music Ensemble and their guests, the City Music Ensemble of Pag, who performed a joint promenade concert through the city streets, followed by a concert in the City Loggia. After that, an evening mass was held in the cathedral, and the musical program continued at the Cemetery with performances by KUD (t.n. culture and artistic associations) Kvadrilja from Trogir, KUD Andrija Matijaš Pauk from Marina, KUD Mindula and the women's klapa Mindula from Okrug Gornji, and klapa Čiovo.<sup>45</sup>

At the celebration of St. John of Trogir held in 2019, the solemn holy mass was led by Monsignor Marin Barišić, the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Split-Makarska. The traditional procession took place, and the cathedral choir performed. Monsignor Marin Barišić called for spiritual renewal, dedicating his sermon to justice and peace. Don Vinko Sanader, the cathedral parish priest, highlighted the saintly qualities, mentioning virtue and love. He stated that St. John did not spare his love for God and the people and advocated for the Croatian orientation of Dalmatian cities. The main mass was held

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<sup>44</sup> Maljković-Zelalija, Maja, *Fešta – What and how the people of Trogir celebrated throughout History*, Museum of the City of Trogir, Cate Dujšin Ribar gallery, 2023, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Catholic Information Agency, on the eve of „Primišćenje“ the powers of Saint John of Trogir, article published: 3. 5. 2009, downloaded: 31. 3. 2024, <https://ika.hkm.hr/najave/ususret-primiscenju-mociju-sv-ivana-trogirskog/>

in the Cathedral of St. Lawrence, and the procession went „around the city“, from the cathedral, along the waterfront, past Kamerlengo tower and the northern gate, back to the cathedral, which is decorated with great care on the feast day of November 14<sup>th</sup>.

During the celebration of St. John of Trogir on November 14, 2021, Don Vinko Sanader, the dean of the Trogir Deanery and the cathedral parish priest, said that the holiday was commemorated in a traditional manner. He mentioned the low attendance due to the then current COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>46</sup> The celebration proceeded as usual:

„I would say it's like always, the same as every year. There is a three-day prayer event, with the rosary, holy mass, and sermon each evening. This year, it's all three evenings. Dr. Don Ivan Bodrožić, a professor at the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Split, is present. However, as the parish priest, I cannot be satisfied with the turnout. Now, is it because of COVID-19? Well, the authorities have limited attendance, but we do have sound systems outside. Nonetheless, I hope that the attendance will be better on the feast day itself. The new circumstances have affected people's psyche and interpersonal relationships, even within families. People live in fear. As with St. John, this year marks 910 years since his death in 1111; he served as archbishop for 47 years. The people recognized something in him, goodness and sincerity. He remained here for a long time. He brought the Benedictine nuns here in 1064. He worked on reconciling citizens. He brought peace but it wasn't easy to accept the role of bishop at the age of 32. The people wanted it, and he accepted God's will. He also had political influence. We, as a people, tend to celebrate more and follow less, but the purpose of the feast is to honour and celebrate him, and follow his ideals. It means preserving faith, the path of holiness, and the path of peace. We also have his statue at the city gate, above the northern gate; the statue has been restored, and the original is Trogir City Museum.“

The solemn holy mass on the feast of St. John of Trogir (November 14, 2021) was led by Don Marinko Vidović, who said that St. John was honoured as a man of God.

The mayor of Trogir, Ante Bilić, mentioned that, as usual, a public gathering was organized in the City Loggia after the solemn holy mass, aiming to preserve the tradition. The food offered included gnocchi with wild boar, prepared by the Rašpin Jute Association and the Trogir Hunting Association.

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<sup>46</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, was a pandemic of the new respiratory disease COVID-19. The disease first appeared in late December 2019 in the megacity of Wuhan in China's Hubei province. The first case of SARS-CoV-2 infection in Croatia was confirmed on February 25, 2020. The Government of the Republic of Croatia declared the end of the COVID-19 epidemic on May 11, 2023.

Dina Rožić, a member of the Rašpin Jute Association, emphasized that in 2020, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebration after the mass did not take place, but in 2021 the tradition continued: „Last year, there was none of this. This day means a lot to us in Trogir; St. John – a bishop we have specially celebrated since the 11th century. We must continue the tradition for future generations. There’s a variety of food, but the gnocchi with wild boar stands out.“

Toni Barada, president of the Rašpin Jute Association, also expressed satisfaction with the celebration of St. John in 2021: „It’s a great joy, offering food like goulash. This day is important to us. We celebrate St. John of Trogir, our heavenly patron.“

Ivo Delalle<sup>47</sup>, former president of the Society for the Improvement of Tourism and the Preservation of Cultural Monuments in Trogir, founder of the Trogir Tourist Board, and a prominent public and cultural figure, highlighted several organized celebrations of St. John of Trogir, the patron of the city, in St. Mark’s Church, with singing of old church songs in honour of Trogir’s patron and reflections on the life and work of St. John not only as a church figure but also as a significant figure of his time.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the presence and influence of St. John in Croatian regions, especially in the Trogir area, is without question. Delving into the biography of St. John of Trogir reveals literary and historical significance and values. The veneration of St. John, preserved to this day (the feast celebration of St. John in November in Trogir and its surroundings), has shaped a rich literary and artistic heritage. The recorded verses in this work, dedicated to St. John, are passed down through generations, proving the traditional veneration of Trogir’s heavenly patron. The celebration of the feast of St. John of Trogir is an important cultural and religious event. Every year, on November 14, the people of Trogir celebrate their patron, thereby preserving and passing on the rich cultural heritage of the city. The festivities include holy masses, processions, cultural manifestations, and social events, strengthening the community and preserving Trogir’s identity. The importance of St. John of Trogir is also reflected in his role in Croatian history, where he acted as an advocate for peace, justice, and faith. His contribution to the establishment of the Benedictine convent, participation in political events, and numerous miracles attributed to him make him a significant historical and spiritual figure. John’s canonization,

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<sup>47</sup> Teller: Ivo Dellale, born 1934, Trogir, recorded: August 30, 2022.

albeit informal under medieval conditions, further confirms his sanctity and influence. Historical records and legends about St. John of Trogir contribute to understanding medieval Dalmatia, while his veneration today plays a key role in preserving Trogir's cultural heritage. His presence in history, literature, and tradition testifies to the enduring value and impact he has had and continues to have on the life of Trogir.

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**Barbara ŽAJA**

## **SV. IVAN TROGIRSKI U TRADICIJSKOJ KULTURI TROGIRSKOGA KRAJA**

Sveti Ivan Trogirski, prije nego je postao biskup u Trogiru u jedanaestom stoljeću, bio je benediktinac u samostanu u Osoru na otoku Cresu, gdje je susreo splitskog nadbiskupa Lovru. Ta su dva imena zabilježena u važnim povijesnim dokumentima kraljeva Krešimira i Zvonimira. Kao biskup, sveti Ivan je bio aktivan u pastoralnim aktivnostima, pa je tako osnovao samostan sestara benediktinki koje djeluju i danas kao njegova duhovna ostavština. Sveti Ivan Trogirski je prepoznat po zalaganju za mir među građanima i rješavanje njihovih sukoba. 1105. godine je zaštitio grad Trogir od kralja Kolomana koji ga je htio uništiti. Učinio je brojna dobra djela za Trogir, a Trogirani su mu ostali zahvalni. Izabran je za trogirskog biskupa, a nakon smrti postaje priznat kao svetac, iako tada nije postojao formalni proces beatifikacije ili kanonizacije. Trogirani 14. studenog svečano slave svetkovinu nebeskog zaštitnika, sv. Ivana Trogirskog, misnim slavljem u Trogiru. Drugo važno trogirsko slavlje vezano je za „Primišćenje“, spomen na 4. svibnja 1681. godine kada je obavljen prijenos moći sv. Ivana Trogirskog u novosagrađenu kapelu u trogirskoj katedrali.

Ključne riječi: *sv. Ivan Trogirski, Dan grada Trogira, tradicijska kultura, Primišćenje, trogirske legende*