

Violence and the Clergy in Medieval Croatia: The Violent Death of the Spalatin Archbishop Arnir (*Rainerius*) in 1180

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I. Sources

There are several types of extant sources dealing generally with various aspects of the life of the late twelfth-century Spalatin Archbishop Arnir (lat. *Rainerius*) and particularly with his violent death which happened in 1180. The most important evidence, either contemporary or from later periods, are narrative sources, mainly of Croatian provenance. Particularly relevant is a hagiographic work entitled *The Life of St. Arnir* (*Vita sancti Rainerii*). Although Arnir's *Vita* was originally written in Latin, there is only a Croatian version from the seventeenth century preserved.¹ The analysis of the hagiographic motifs, literary structure, and content of this Croatian version implies that the text is actually a Croatian translation of a, most probably, late medieval Latin redaction of the *Vita*.² One of the most important sources for the Croatian Middle Ages, the chronicle written by the Spalatin Thomas Archdeacon in the middle of the thirteenth century entitled *Historia Salonitana*, contains an entire chapter which is dedicated to the person of Arnir after he was installed as the Spalatin archbishop. Thomas' chronicle is an equally important source as Arnir's *Vita*, particularly because it served as a model for the creation of the above mentioned lost original Latin version of the *Vita*.³ Some data concerning Arnir's private and ecclesiastical biography are also presented in the so-called *Historia Salonitana maior*, a chronicle written perhaps in the sixteenth century by some unknown author.⁴ Finally, a number of biographical data are to be found in the

¹ Vedran Gligo and Hrvoje Morović (ed.), *Legende i kronike* [Legends and Chronicles] (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1977), 123-47 (henceforth: *Legende*).

² *Legende*, 125-6.

³ *Historia Salonitana Thomae Archidiaconi. Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum*, ed. Olga Perić, Sokol Matijević, and Radoslav Mirjana-Katičić (Split: Književni krug, 2003), 108-15 (henceforth: *HS*).

⁴ See: Nada Klaić, "Historia Salonitana maior," in *Posebna izdanja SANU, Odelenje društvenih nauka*, n. CCCXCIX, book 55 (Beograd: SANU, 1967) henceforth: "HSM.". On the

work *Illyricum Sacrum* written by the eighteenth-century historian Daniele Farlati.⁵ His work is important because it offers various information concerning the life of Arnir which can neither be found in the *Vita* nor in the *Historia Salonitana*. This is because Farlati relied not only on the Latin version of Arnir's *Vita* and Thomas' *Historia* but also presented some new information which he had taken from diplomatic sources, such as papal and imperial letters. In order to strengthen Arnir's sanctity, whose cult was firmly established on the local level of the Spalatin archbishopric in the eighteenth century, Farlati also presented several lauds, poems, and hymns written by medieval and Renaissance Croatian writers, such as Marko Marulić, Ivan Lučić-Lucius, and Ivan Tomko Mrnavčić.⁶ Finally, the last group of sources valuable for the reconstruction of Arnir's life and especially the analysis of the circumstances which led to his violent death are diplomatic sources. They are published in the main Croatian source collection of medieval diplomatic charters: the *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*.⁷ All of the sources mentioned enable the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical and political circumstances which ended in Arnir's martyrdom as well as in the immediate creation and flourishing of his cult as one of the Spalatin patron saints.

II. Ecclesiastical and political circumstances in Split and its hinterland in the last decades of the twelfth century

As reported by Thomas Archdeacon, after the death of the Spalatin Archbishop Gerard (*Gerardus*) in 1175, the ecclesiastical representatives of Split requested the Roman curia appoint a new archbishop. For that purpose they sent their legates *ad pedes domini Alexandri pape*.⁸ It seems that even before the Spalatin delegation arrived at Rome, Pope Alexander III already had decided to appoint Arnir, then the bishop of Cagli in the province of Marche⁹ whom he appreciated as *eium uirum ualde habilem regimini pastorali*.¹⁰ Moreover, in his *Vita* which, as has been said, follows to a great extent Thomas' *Historia*, Arnir was regarded

Historia Salonitana maior see generally: Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* [History of the Croats in the Early Middle Ages], 2nd ed. (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1975), 26-8 (henceforth: *Povijest Hrvata*).

⁵ Daniele Farlati, *Illyricum sacrum*, vol. III (Venice: S. Coleti, 1765), esp. 194-211 (henceforth: *IS*).

⁶ Ibidem, 208-10.

⁷ Tadija Smičiklas, *Diplomatički zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije. Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1904), henceforth: *CD2*.

⁸ *Tunc miserunt* (i. e., the Spalatin clergy) *legatos suos ad curiam, sacerdotem quendam Ionium sacristam et quondam alium* (*HS*, 108).

⁹ Arnir was bishop of Cagli from 1156 to 1175. *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 8: *Ikonographie der Heiligen Meletius bis Zweiundvierzig Märtyrer*, ed. Wolfgang Braunsfels (Rome et al.: Herder, 1976), col. 254.

¹⁰ "As a man who was highly devoted to the pastoral service." *HS*, 108.

as a disciple of the Camaldolian monk St. Ubaldo and as a man graced “by great wisdom and sanctity”, particularly in regard to his leadership over the bishopric of Cagli.¹¹ However, the data recorded in his *Vita* as well as in the *Historia Salonitana maior* report that Arnir came into conflict with the local clergy in Cagli, especially regarding the property rights over certain ecclesiastical estates. The unknown author of the *Historia Salonitana maior* reported that:

*Erat autem tunc temporis magna controversia inter clericos Callenses Tuscie civitatis ex una parte et Rainerium eorum episcopum ex parte altera super (quibusdam) iuribus ecclesie ipsorum.*¹²

Similar data may be found in his *Vita* where the author states, writing in the spirit of hagiographic genre, that Arnir ruled the Church of Cagli for more than twenty years with great wisdom and sanctity; when his infernal enemy [here the author obviously meant the devil], unable to stand his virtues, caused the conflict between Arnir and the clergy subordinated to him concerning some land estates in his diocese.¹³ Unable to solve the conflict between Arnir and the local clergy already Pope Adrian IV decided to remove him from that position and to install him as the archbishop of Split. It is worthwhile to stress here that Arnir in his early years became a loyal supporter of the policy of the Roman curia, especially concerning the protection and defence of papal rights over various ecclesiastical land estates. Arnir also maintained the same policy later while obtaining the function of archbishop of Split.

All the narrative sources, chronicles as well as hagiographic works, point out that Arnir’s arrival to Split was warmly welcomed by all secular and spiritual members of the community. Thus, Thomas Archdeacon described his arrival with these words: *Cum autem peruenisset ad ciuitatem, cum magna tripudio cleri populique susceptus est.*¹⁴ The unknown author of the *Historia Salonitana maior* reported of his arrival to Split with almost the same words: *Cum autem pervenisset ad civitatem anno Domini MCLXXV cum magno tripudio cleri populique susceptus est.*¹⁵ Regrettably, D. Farlati, in his work *Illyricum sacrum*, gave no information concerning that event. Finally, Arnir’s arrival was also shortly described in his *Vita* with the following words: “He came to Split where he was welcomed with great joy and respect by the clergy, patricians and the entire Spalatin plebes (*mediocres, populares*).” It may be concluded, as far as his arrival to Split is concerned, that all three main sources – Thomas Archdeacon, the *Historia Salonitana maior*, and the *Vita* – presented almost the same descriptions of that event. Such great similarity in reporting on one and the same event confirms our hypothesis that *Historia Salonitana* and *Historia Salonitana maior* certainly served as the model for the creation of Arnir’s *Vita*.

¹¹ *Legende*, 136.

¹² “HSM,” 120.

¹³ *Legende*, 136.

¹⁴ “When he arrived at the city, he was welcomed with great joy by both clergy and laics.” *HS*, 108.

¹⁵ “HSM,” 121.

This leads to the question why Arnir was so warmly welcomed by the members of all strata of Spalatin society. Attempting to answer it, one has to bear in mind that before his arrival to Split, the metropolis was in conflict with some of the neighbouring Croatian magnates in the hinterland. The cause of the dispute was the question of the dominion over certain land estates which both sides, the Spalatin Church and Croatian magnates, considered as their own property. The Spalatin clergy and patricians were certainly aware of Arnir's previous struggle for ecclesiastical rights over land estates in Cagli. All narrative sources examined in this article clearly stated that Arnir's main task as the head of the Spalatin church was the reoccupation of the land estates which always belonged, at least in opinion of the ecclesiastical leaders of the Spalatin church, to the diocese of Split. Thus, Thomas Archdeacon in his *Historia Salonitana* and the unknown author of the *Historia Salonitana maior*, pointed out that immediately after his arrival, Arnir

*cepit autem ecclesiam multa prudentia gubernare, emendare clericos, populum instruere salubribus documentis, facultates ecclesie uigilanti studio ampliare.*¹⁶

The unknown author of Arnir's *Vita*, rather more poetic in style, underlined, that after his arrival at Split, Arnir worked on "condemning the sins, encouraging virtues" of the believers and, what is most important, he was firm and resolute "in persevering in and defending ecclesiastical rights."¹⁷ Besides that primary task, all narrative sources underline his attempts to restore the religious discipline of clergy and laypeople.

In the implementation of his ecclesiastical plans in the diocese of Split Arnir was supported by two most important political and ecclesiastical powers in the region of Dalmatia: the Roman curia and the Byzantine Empire. As reported in the narrative sources he was in intimate relation with the popes Adrian IV (1154-9) and Alexander III (1159-81).¹⁸ Both of them insisted on the legal

¹⁶ "He led wisely the Church, he corrected the behaviour of the clergy, he instructed the *plebs* with examples that lead to salvation, he took care about the improvement of the goods of the Church". *HS*, 108; "HSM," 121.

¹⁷ *Legende*, 137.

¹⁸ Arnir's intimate relationship with Pope Alexander III is described in one episode: On one occasion, in the year 1177, the pope went from Apulia to Venice in order to sign a peace agreement with Emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa. As reported by Thomas Archdeacon, during his trip over the Adriatic, the pope was invited by Arnir to visit Split but, because of some obstacles, they met on the Dalmatian island of Vis and went together to Zadar. *HS*, 110-11. Almost the same report is presented in "HSM" where the author wrote: *Per idem fere tempus dominus Alexander papa tempore scismaticorum navigavit Apuliam et venit ad insulam que dicitur Vis. Scismatic.* This sentence is referring to the schism with the emperor who appointed Anti-pope Calixt III and, for that reason, was excommunicated by Alexander III. The same author further reports: *Statim autem, ut presensit Raynerius archiepiscopus, preparatis navibus multis cum magno comitatu cleri et nobilium civitatis venit ad eum defferens ei cibaria et exenia multa.* This sentence testifies about the fact that, only two years after his arrival to Split, Arnir succeeded in achieving one of his main ecclesiastical goals, that is, to win over local patricians and the community of the clergy for his future

regulation concerning the property rights over ecclesiastical estates.¹⁹ Besides the narrative sources, there are two papal letters shedding some light on the relations between Pope Alexander III and Arnir.²⁰ Both of these letters were written in 1177, that is, two years after Arnir was elected the archbishop of Split. In the first letter, written on July 23 in Rivoalto near Venice, Alexander requested from the Spalatin archbishop and from the Tragurin bishop to take certain actions against Dalmatian pirates from the city of Šibenik who had robbed the papal legate Raymond de Capella and had taken from him all the gold, money and luxury goods.²¹ The latter was appointed by the pope as a main executor of the papal ecclesiastical policy in Dalmatia.²² Raymond's importance is confirmed in the following papal letter, also written in Rivoalto near Venice and dated August 22, 1177, in which Alexander ordered Raymond to take actions regarding the conflict between the archbishop of Split and the Zaratín archbishop Lampredius (1154-79) regarding the question of sovereignty over the bishopric of Hvar.²³ Finally, there is one letter written by Raymond de Capello from 1177 in which Raymond, following the papal orders, wrote to Lampredius, the archbishop of Zadar, to inform all of his subordinate bishops as well as all the clergy under his

plans, particularly those concerning the rights of the Spalatin church on ecclesiastical land estates in the hinterland. Finally, the same story is recorded in Arnir's *Vita* but there, regarding the difference in genre, certain hagiographic motifs were added. *Legende*, 138.

Besides that, it should be mentioned that Arnir held the title of *legatus sedis Apostolicae* which also speaks about his close relationship with Alexander as well as about the fact that he was strongly supported by the Roman curia. Farlati, *Illyricum sacrum*, vol. 3, 201. See also CD2, 144, doc. 142, and 147, doc. 144; Slavko Kovačić, "Toma Arhiđakon, promicatelj crkvene obnove i splitski nadbiskupi, osobito njegovi suvremenici," [Thomas Archdeacon, the Propagator of the Ecclesiastical Renewal and the Spalatin Archbishops, in particular his Contemporaries], in *Toma Arhiđakon i njegovo doba*, ed. Mirjana Matijević-Sokol and Olga Perić (Split: Književni Krug, 2004), 47.

¹⁹ Adrian IV particularly insisted on the better preservation and governing of the papal treasury. He even compiled the *Liber Censuum* in order "to make sure that the financial rights of papacy throughout Western Christendom would be adequately recorded and preserved forever." *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV: c. 1024-c.1198, II, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23 (henceforth: *NCMH IV*). As for Alexander III, he also belonged to the group of popes performing the "twelfth-century reform programme" of the Church emphasizing "that the person and the property of the clergy were sacrosanct". *Ibid.*, 330.

²⁰ The two letters are certainly those which Daniel Farlati mentioned in the third volume of his work *Illyricum sacrum*, stating that Alexander sent some letters to Arnir using his legate Raymond de Capella as the carrier: *Alexander Raymundum de Capella legatum in Dalmatiam cum litteris ad Raynerium mittit. IS* vol. 3, 198.

²¹ ... *rediret ad nos, pirate, qui erant in sagettia castris de Seuenico, in qua duo comites erant, Nestos videlicet et Poclai* ... The pirates took *ultra sexaginta marchas argenti et litteras etiam nostras*. CD2, 144-5, doc. 142.

²² Namely in this papal letter Raymond was called *dilectus filius Raymundus de Capella subdiaconus noster*. CD2, 144, doc. 142.

²³ Actually this letter was addressed to *venerabili fratri Spalatensi archiepiscopo apostolice sedis legato* that is, to Arnir. CD2, 147, doc. 144.

authority to gather at a regional council in Split.²⁴ What is important in the content of Raymond's letter is that he emphasised that the main question to be discussed at the council was the discipline of the Dalmatian clergy.²⁵ As testified in the narrative sources, that was exactly one of the most important issues of Arnir's ecclesiastical policy in Dalmatia. There is no doubt that, in Arnir's eyes, the improvement of clerical discipline in Dalmatia represented the starting point for his later plans regarding the reoccupation of the land estates in the hinterland of Split. Namely, in order to achieve that task, he needed unquestionable support of the local Spalatin clergy.

Besides Raymond, another person playing an important role in Arnir's ecclesiastical policy, particularly in supporting Arnir's attempts to regain certain land estates in the Croatian hinterland, was the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-80).²⁶ Thomas Archdeacon and the unknown author of the *Historia Salonitana maior* presented some information about Manuel I. Generally, they both considered him to be good, honourable and generous. Thus, the author of *Historia Salonitana maior* stated: *Ipse autem erat benignissimus circa omnes sibi subiectos: non tributorum exactor, sed divitiarum suarum liberalissimus distributor, omnes ad se venientes honorabat.*²⁷ The question is why Thomas Archdeacon, a high communal ecclesiastical official from thirteenth-century Split, as well as archbishop Arnir, were so benevolent towards the person of emperor Manuel I, particularly having in mind their faithfulness towards the pope and Roman curia; namely, as the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity had already lasted for more than hundred years, and there were no signs of a possible reunion of the two Churches. The answer proposed in the narrative sources seems to be rather simple and depended to a great extent on the geostrategic position of Dalmatia. In 1167, the city of Split was chosen by Byzantine authorities to be the centre of the Dalmatia and Croatia which were subjugated to Byzantium until 1180.²⁸ Thomas Archdeacon stated in his chronicle that *tota autem Dalmatia pene Chroatia uniuersa subiecta erat principatui eius.*²⁹ This position made the commune of Split to the political, ecclesiastical and economic centre of the entire province of Dalmatia, and such a situation and position was certainly welcomed by its communal secular and ecclesiastical elite. Moreover, the close connections between the Byzantine emperor and Split

²⁴ CD2, 148-9, doc. 145.

²⁵ *Cum dominus papa ... propter hoc destinauerit, ut pro vigili sollicitudine apostolica doctrinam et ecclesiasticam disciplinam, in quantum dominus ministraret, ibidem dilataremus ...* CD2, 148, doc. 145.

²⁶ For certain data concerning the relations between Manuel I Komnenos and Croatia and Dalmatia, see: *NCMH* IV, 274-6.

²⁷ "HSM," 121.

²⁸ Tomislav Raukar, *Studije o Dalmaciji u srednjem vijeku: odabrane studije* [Studies on Dalmatia in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies] (Split: Književni krug, 2007), 226 (henceforth: *Studije o Dalmaciji*).

²⁹ *HS*, 110-1. The same information is given in the chronicle written by the unknown author of *Historia Salonitana maior*. *HSM*, 121.

were especially important because of the Spalatin ecclesiastical policy in the Croatian hinterland where the nominal or, even better, military support of the Byzantine emperor in the attempt to regain land estates was of great value for the Spalatin church. Although Arnir was theoretically supported in exercising his plans in the Croatian hinterland by Pope Alexander III, the real military support could have been expected only from Manuel I. Daniele Farlati was the first to understand the real background and the purpose of Arnir's visit to Constantinople, explaining the departure of the Spalatin delegation by the need for the Spalatin Church to obtain the emperor's support for Arnir's planned action against the kindred of Kačići.³⁰ In his *Illyricum sacrum*, Farlati emphasised that Arnir went to Constantinople in order to gain *gratiam et auctoritatem Imperatoris ad resarcienda jura Ecclesiastica, quae violaverant et recuperandas Ecclesiae suae possessionis, quas praepotentes quidam homines occupaverant...*³¹

In such circumstances, Arnir's decision to visit Constantinople and Manuel I in 1177 seems to have been rather understandable. According to the data presented by Thomas Archdeacon and the author of the *Historia Salonitana maior*, Arnir was accompanied on his trip by *aliquot de nobilibus civitatis*, that is, by several Spalatin patricians.³² According to Thomas Archdeacon, the *Historia Salonitana maior* and Arnir's *Vita* (although more vaguely), he was honourably accepted at the emperor's court in Constantinople.³³ Moreover, he was welcomed with many precious gifts and returned to Split joyful and rich.³⁴

III. Arnir's conflict with the Croatian kindred of Kačići

After his return to Split, now having nominal support by the pope and military support by the emperor, Arnir felt strong enough to start his ecclesiastical policy regarding Croatian noblemen. Namely, in Arnir's opinion, they unjustly occupied certain land estates in the hinterland of Split which he considered as a property of the Spalatin Church. Therefore, it is no wonder that Thomas Archdeacon and the authors of the *Historia Salonitana maior* and the *Vita* wrote about Arnir, but only after his successful return from Constantinople, as a *manualde constans*

³⁰ On the kindred of Kačići see: Mato Artuković, "Kačići," in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 6, I-Kal, ed. Trpimir Macan (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2005), 699-707 (henceforth: "Kačići").

³¹ *IS*, 204.

³² "HSM," 223. Except for the data presented in *Historia Salonitana* and *Historia Salonitana maior* there are no other extant documents confirming Arnir's visit to Constantinople (*HS*, 113). However, some historians like, for instance, Eduard Peričić connect Arnir's trip to Constantinople with his attempt to solve the relationship between the dioceses of Dubrovnik and Bar. His hypothesis is based on a contemporary charter by the archbishop of Bar from between 1178-79. Eduard Peričić, *Sclavorum regnum Grgura Barskog. Ljetopis popa Dukljanina* [Sclavorum regnum by Gregory of Bar. The Cronicle of Priest Dukljanin], (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1991), 227-8.

³³ *honorifice ab imperatore susceptus est. HS*, 112.

³⁴ *Sicque ad ecclesiam suam gaudens et locuples est reuersus. HS*, 112.

et intrepidus nec patiebatur aliquid de iuribus et facultatibus ecclesie deperire (that is, as a man constant and fearless who did not allow the disruption of ecclesiastical rights and occupation of the goods belonging to the Church).³⁵

What followed after Arnir's return from Constantinople is best explained in Farlati's *Illyricum sacrum*. According to the latter, from that moment onwards, the main goal of Arnir's policy was to gain rather questionable property rights of the Spalatin Church over some land estates situated on the mountain of Mosor near Split, thus actually challenging the hereditary rights of the influential Croatian kindred of Kačići.³⁶ That being said, on the basis of which charters did Arnir claim the property rights of the Spalatin Church over the mentioned land estates on Mosor? According to Farlati, Arnir possessed some old charters by the Croatian kings and the kings of Hungary-Croatia from the eleventh and twelfth century which confirmed the rights of the Spalatin Church over these lands *ex donatione Regum Chrobatiae et Hungariae*.³⁷ The kings who issued these donation charters were the Croatian king Zvonimir (1076-89, the donator) and Kálmán, king of Hungary-Croatia (1095-1116, the corroborator). It is of great importance to underline here that these charters are considered falsifications. As it was already pointed out by Ferdo Šišić, and later by some other Croatian historians, these documents were forgeries from 1165-1166 and related to a much earlier period, that is, to the beginning of the twelfth century.³⁸ The first royal charter was supposedly issued by the Croatian and Dalmatian king Zvonimir in 1078.³⁹ In it he confirmed to the Spalatin archbishop Lawrence all the rights over several villages and land estates in *Serenine, Gothe, Tugare, Osići, Debrić, Dlanove, Vallari et Cremene, que posite sunt infra montes Massari*. The other royal charter which is considered a forgery was issued by king Kálmán in 1103.⁴⁰ After confirming all the traditional rights of the Spalatin church *quos ad presens obtinet ipsa ecclesia per Dalmatiam et Chroatium* Kálmán specifically mentioned *villam Syrenine, Gete, Tugari, Asseti, similiter*

³⁵ *HS*, 112.

³⁶ Radoslav Katičić, "Toma Arhidakon i hrvatska povijest" [Thomas Archdeacon and the Croatian history], in *HS*, 417.

³⁷ *IS*, 204.

³⁸ Ferdo Šišić, *Poviest Hrvata za kraljeva iz doba Arpadovića* [History of Croats during the reign of the Árpád dynasty], vol. I (Zagreb: Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti, 1944), 100 ((henceforth: *Poviest Hrvata*).

³⁹ King Zvonimir corroborated his decision by the reason *quod homines et villani vicini villarum ecclesie memorate molestabant et perturbabant ciues predictos et homines ac villanos ipsius archiepiscopi*. Although this charter is proven to be a forgery, it clearly testifies that the conflict between the Spalatin archbishop and the noblemen from Mosor already lasted for some time. Marko Kostrenčić, *Diplomatički zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije. Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: JAZU 1967), p. 160 (henceforth: *CD1*).

⁴⁰ *CD2*, 10-1, doc. 7.

*cum seruis et ancilis et eorum posteris...Massari cum toto monte magno Politii.*⁴¹

What is particularly important for the further development of the story regarding the violent death of Arnir is the fact that in these charters *territorium Sreninae ad radices montis Massari situm* is explicitly mentioned, that is, the land estate where Arnir would be killed on 4 August, 1180.⁴²

Having the papal and the emperor's support and armed with the mentioned charters, Arnir started his mission to regain the land estates on Mosor in March 1180, thus confronting *Gens Chacittorum* (that is, the kindred of Kačići) who were *inprimis inter familias Chrobaticas copiosa ac praepotens*.⁴³ After Arnir's complaints to the Emperor concerning the Kačići, Manuel I gave a charter in March 1180 to his Dalmatian governor Roger informing him about the conflict between Arnir and the Kačići. In this charter Manuel I wrote that he was informed

quod quidam incolarum eiusmodi regionis sed et Caciclorum aliqui non pauca eorum, que in suo priuilegio et ad suam ecclesiam pertinent (that is, to the Spalatin church) *possident in Serengene* (Srinjine) *et predicta ecclesia illius suis bonis priuetur*.⁴⁴

Therefore, Manuel I asked Roger, governor of the provinces of Dalmatia and Croatia, to intervene in the negotiations between the archbishop and the Kačići.⁴⁵ The emperor further ordered the governor to support Arnir in the reoccupation of the land estates in Srinjine.⁴⁶ Moreover, Manuel I confirmed the archbishopric's rights over land estates in Srinjina referring to the previously mentioned charters of Zvonimir and Kálmán.⁴⁷ Finally, Manuel I ordered Roger to expel the Kačići from Srinjina and to regain the land estates situated around the church of St. Bartholomew which also belonged to the Spalatin church as confirmed by *boni testes*.⁴⁸ Even more, Manuel I ordered that, if the Kačići continued to invade the land estates of the Spalatin church in *villa de Serengene*, he gave Arnir all the rights that *repellas et interdices eis*.⁴⁹

Becoming over-confident because of Manuel's support and the orders given to Roger, the archbishop started an action against the Kačići. Namely, Manuel's letter purportedly gave Arnir the impression that Roger would provide

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² IS, 204.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ CD2, 165, doc. 163. It is interesting that Thomas in his *Historia Salonitana* did not inform about the charters of Manuel I and Roger.

⁴⁵ The Emperor ordered Roger to discuss that matter in front of the archbishop, the representatives of the Kačići, and the citizens of Split. If Arnir would have any written evidence or reliable witnesses, Roger was obliged to confirm the archbishopric's rights over all land estates and the church of St. Bartholomew. "Kačići," 702.

⁴⁶ *omnia predictae ecclesiae restituat*. IS, 204.

⁴⁷ *sicut in chartula predictae ecclesie apparuerit*. CD2, 165, doc. 163.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ IS, 204.

him a strong military unit. Yet, according to a charter of 10 June, 1180, Arnir was accompanied only by two assessors (Croat. *pristavi*) who probably led a small military unit of professional soldiers. In the charter it is stated that Roger ... *dedit michi Rainerio Spalatensi archiepiscopo duos pristaldos Michaellem Dragumanum et Petrum de Sagarella*.⁵⁰ It may be also presumed that Arnir was accompanied by some ecclesiastical officials learned in the problem of land borders of the Spalatin diocese. This is also confirmed in his *Vita* where it is recorded that Arnir was accompanied by “some people being well informed in the problem of the borders of land estates”.⁵¹ Perhaps, that group was also supported by a small number of soldiers and servants but certainly not strong enough to match the forces of the Kačići and to regain the land possessions which *sint ecclesie beati Domnii in perpetuum*.⁵² It is important to mention here that neither Thomas Archdeacon in his *Historia Salonitana* nor the unknown author of the *Historia Salonitana maior* had any information concerning the correspondence between Manuel I, Roger, and Arnir.

Although the mentioned narrative sources dealing with Arnir as archbishop of Split give no information concerning these final steps of Arnir in regaining the land estates on Mosor, they all agree in characterizing members of the kindred of Kačići negatively. For example, Thomas Archdeacon, when reporting about Arnir’s unfortunate meeting with Nicholas, the head of the Kačići kindred, described Nicholas’ subjects as an angry mob and pagans.⁵³ Such description of the Kačići and their followers is understandable, not only because of the situation in which Arnir was murdered, but also because of the fact that Thomas Archdeacon as a Latin priest in the entire chronicle expressed rather negative attitudes and feelings towards the Slavs (i.e., Croats).

Since Thomas’ evaluation of the Croats has been an issue of serious scholarly disputes and polemics among medievalists for more than a century, let us make here one digression concerning this matter. During the entire twentieth century and before, Croatian historiography evaluated Thomas’ approach towards Croats negatively. Thus, for instance, Franjo Rački in one of his articles from the second half of the nineteenth century considered Thomas as “Roman, Italophile, and hater of Hungarians and Croats”.⁵⁴ More than a century later, another famous Croatian medievalist, Nada Klaić, stated that Thomas, as Roman and Latin priest, was full of antagonism and contempt towards the Croats.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ CD2, 166-7, doc. 165.

⁵¹ *Legende*, 138.

⁵² CD2, 167, doc. 165.

⁵³ Thus, after Arnir had said to them that the disputed lands belonged to the Spalatin church, the answer of the mob was the following: *Ad hanc uocem omnis multitudo Sclauorum arreptis lapidibus in eum unanimiter proicerunt tam diu dextris furrentibus debachantes*. HS, 112.

⁵⁴ Franjo Rački, “Ocjena starijih izvora za hrvatsku i srbsku poviest srednjega vieka” [The evaluation of older sources for the Croatian and Serbian history of the Middle Ages] II, *Književnik*, year I, vol. 3 (Zagreb 1864), 388.

⁵⁵ Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, 23.

However, in the last fifteen years Croatian medievalists changed to a certain extent their evaluation of Thomas Archdeacon as well as the evaluation of the data presented in his chronicle. Thus, in contrast to Nada Klaić, the Croatian historian Tomislav Raukar recently evaluated Thomas' approach towards Croats as less confronting in comparison to the evaluation presented by older Croatian historiography. He stated that the Spalatin chronicle certainly emphasises some ethno-cultural differences between the commune of Split and the Spalatin hinterland but this difference was not the main point of Thomas' ideological system. According to Raukar's opinion, Thomas was a strong opponent of every kind of political and social power that might have endangered the communal society of Split. Thus, in Thomas' eyes, the Croatian noblemen from the hinterland and other Dalmatian cities were equally dangerous enemies as far as Split was concerned.⁵⁶ Finally, a few years ago, Mirjana Matijević-Sokol proposed a new view on the relationship between Croatian magnates and the Dalmatian communes.⁵⁷ Opposing the political aspirations of magnates from the families such as Bribirski, Nelipčiči, and Kačići, the Dalmatian communes searched a governmental system which would preserve their autonomy.⁵⁸ Split was the first among the Dalmatian communes to introduce, thanks to the political efforts of Thomas Archdeacon, this new system which is known under the name *regimen latinorum*.⁵⁹ *Regimen latinorum* was a system of communal governing which demanded the election of a foreigner as a communal *podestato*, that is, a professional official skilled in administration, diplomacy and government. But what is most important is the fact that a *podestato* should be a foreigner without family, political or business ties in the commune into which he was elected in this position. The first *podestato* of Split from 1239 until 1242 was Garganus de Arscindisa from the Italian city of Ancona. Therefore, Mirjana Matijević-Sokol concludes that there was not an anti-Croat feeling which led Thomas to his writings, but rather his good knowledge of contemporary Italian political theory.⁶⁰

The author of Arnir's *Vita* is even more malicious towards the kindred of Kačići. First he called them "malevolent people".⁶¹ Even more, he called them "obscure people" which may be explained as people who neither recognise the authority of the Church nor the natural medieval order and system of values.⁶²

⁵⁶ Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje. Prostor, ljudi, ideje* [The Croatian Middle Ages: space, people, ideas] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1997), 373 (henceforth: *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*).

⁵⁷ Mirjana Matijević-Sokol, "Item iurabunt ipse potestas et sui officiales ... facere et obseruare equaliter iusticiam et specialiter ecclesiis pauperibus, orphanis, uiduis et miserabilibus personis...", in *I. Istarski povijesni biennale. Statuimus et ordinamus, quod...: Sustavi moći i mali ljudi na jadranskom prostoru* (Poreč: Državni arhiv u Pazinu et al., 2005), 268-278.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 268.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *Legende*, 139.

⁶² Ibid. It seems that the author of the *Vita* intended to place the kindred of Kačići and their followers on the margin of civil and ecclesiastical society. Even more, the author was not far

Since Arnir's *Vita* belongs to the hagiographic genre it seems that, by using the mentioned phrase, the author wanted to emphasise the great distinction between the good ones (Arnir) and the evil ones (Slavs, that is, Croats). A similar evaluation of the Kačići gives Farlati in his *Illyricum sacrum*. But, he seems to be even more negative towards them, probably being inspired by Arnir's martyrdom described in his *Vita*. Therefore, he sees them as *iniqui et sacrilegi homines per vim aut fraudem eripuerant*; they were *agrestii Slaui*, while Arnir was a *sanctissimus praesul*.⁶³ Yet, neither of these narrative sources mentioned the hidden political moment which influenced to such a great extent the animosity between the Spalatin Church, that is, Arnir, and the Kačići. Namely, already from the middle of the twelfth century, some of the Croatian magnates from the hinterland attempted to gain the position of a count of Split. The Spalatins being pleased by the dominion of the Byzantine Emperor would have never given up their communal autonomy by recognising some Croatian nobleman as the city's count, even if he was a powerful magnate. Thus, Thomas Archdeacon described one dramatic situation from the middle of the twelfth century when *quidam Chrouatorum dux nomine Reles, vir potens* tried to gain the position of the city's ruler because *Spalatensi ciuitati preesse ardentissime cupiebat* (he strongly desired to rule over the city of Split).⁶⁴ Yet, according to Thomas, he did not have the military strength to achieve his goal. There is no doubt that the magnates from the kindred of Kačići also showed similar intentions several decades later, that is, in the time of archbishop Arnir, when the political conflict between Croatian noblemen and Split even increased in comparison to the previous period because of the land estates in Mutograso on the mountain of Mosor. These were the historical circumstances in which Arnir approached his violent death.

IV. Arnir's martyrdom

All narrative and diplomatic sources underline that there was no possibility for creating any kind of peaceful compromise between the Spalatin archbishop and the Croatian noblemen. Both parties considered the disputable land estates their own property, one appealing on the falsified royal and papal charters recorded in the sixties of the twelfth century⁶⁵ and the other appealing on old Croatian traditional right. As it has already been mentioned, a similar attempt of Arnir to regain certain land estates for the Church had occurred during his office as a bishop of Cagli. It seems that, in the case of Cagli, he also used falsified charters to prove ecclesiastical rights. But, since the conflict between bishop Arnir and the citizens of Cagli occurred in a more 'civilised' environment than the case with the land estates on Mosor, the consequences for him were much less ma-

from accusing them of heresy which, as it is well known, was widespread in Bosnia at that time.

⁶³ *IS*, 204-5.

⁶⁴ Raukar, *Studije o Dalmaciji*, 226; see also: *HS*, pp. 104-5.

⁶⁵ *HS*, 113, note 13.

levolent. In this first case Arnir, unable to solve the problem, was installed by the pope as the archbishop of Split.

Arnir underestimated the military strength of Nicholas, the count of Poljica who, according to Farlati, had *multa mancipia, villicos multos, multosque agrorum lucrum colonos*.⁶⁶ Therefore, the violent conflict was inevitable. When Arnir and his military and ecclesiastical escort arrived on Mosor they were intercepted by Nicholas, his soldiers, and many armed villagers and servants. It seems, according to Thomas, that Nicholas, at first, even wanted a peaceful solution to the problem. The situation culminated when Arnir refused to withdraw regardless of the great danger he faced. As the situation worsened, Nicholas started to insult Arnir by calling him *pessimus presul et iniquus*, that is, the worst and unjust bishop.⁶⁷ Once again Arnir claimed that the land possessions situated in Srinjina belonged to the Church. Finally, Nicholas requested Arnir to retreat otherwise *hic dies uite tue ultimus erit*.⁶⁸ However, Arnir simply replied that *non uestrum est territorium, ut asseritis, sed possessio ecclesie beati Domnii*.⁶⁹ According to all narrative sources describing the violent death of St. Arnir these were his last words. After that, the mob of the Slavs stoned him to death *donec exanime corpus sub magno aceruo lapidum dimitterent et abirent*.⁷⁰ It is interesting to emphasise that Farlati, describing the last moments of Arnir's life before his stoning, underlined that Arnir's and Roger's men, being outnumbered, already escaped from the place of his martyrdom. Namely, Farlati stated that immediately after Arnir had received the death threat *a sociis desertum, quos metus in fugam averterat*.⁷¹ Once again, it seems that Farlati's description was influenced by the fact that he had read the Latin version of *Vita sancti Raynerii* and that he was well aware of the several centuries long tradition of the cult of St. Arnir among the Spalatins. It should also be stressed that, in contrast to the *Vita sancti Raynerii*, Thomas' description, being written in accordance to literary rules typical for the genre of chronicles, did not see any need to emphasise his martyrdom.

The moment of Arnir's stoning is the key motif in the later construction of his saintly cult in Split and in choosing him as a saint protector of the commune of Split, together with St. Doimus and St. Anastasius. From that moment onwards, Thomas' chronicle and the chronicle written by an unknown author differ to a great extent from the *Vita sancti Raynerii* in the description of following events. Although Thomas mentioned some miracles *post mortem* which occurred after the death of Arnir, the most important source regarding the understanding of the formation and flourishing of his cult in Split and, interestingly enough, in Dubrava, the place where he was killed, is the Latin version of his

⁶⁶ *IS*, 205.

⁶⁷ *HS*, 112-3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *IS*, 205.

life written probably in the late thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. The confirmation for this hypothesis is to be seen in the fact that already in the beginning of the *Vita* the unknown author compares Arnir with two Biblical persons sharing a similar destiny by being stoned by an angry mob, that is, with the prophet Zachariah and St. Stephen the martyr.⁷²

V. The creation of the cult of St. Arnir

With the stoning of Arnir his earthly life ended but, at the same time, also began the creation of his cult. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to present some hagiographic motifs which influenced the flourishing of his cult. The most valuable source for that purpose is his *Vita*. However, information concerning the creation of Arnir's cult can also be found in some of the other sources examined here. Therefore, we shall try to compare the data recorded in his *Vita* with the ones in the *Historia Salonitana* by Thomas Archdeacon, in the *Historia Salonitana maior*, and with information presented by D. Farlati.

The *Vita* is written in accordance to the main medieval principles of the hagiographic genre.⁷³ The author divided it into three main parts.⁷⁴ In the first part, after recording quotations from the *Bible* being to a certain extent related to the martyrdom of St. Arnir, the author presents Arnir's origin, his family background, and social status. In the second part, the author offers the basic biographical data, particularly concerning his work as a bishop. Already in these two parts of the *Vita* the author emphasised some of the well-known hagiographic motifs – in the first place the motif of his *vita evangelica et apostolica* but also the one of *imitatio Christi*. These two motifs had become a central motif of Christian morality during the eleventh and the twelfth century.⁷⁵ In the third part, the unknown author describes the miracles which occurred after Arnir's death.

A great part of the *Vita* is dedicated to the description of Arnir's great ecclesiastical capabilities as bishop of Cagli and archbishop of Split. Similar to the other sources, the *Vita* emphasised Arnir's attempt to put both clergy and laymen in order, particularly focusing on their discipline and piety. The intention of the author of the *Vita* is to present Arnir as an ideal role model within the Christian community, one who served as a practical example to his fellow clergymen and the lay inhabitants of Split.

⁷² *Legende*, 135, 139.

⁷³ On the authorship of *Vita sancti Raynerii* see: *Legende*, 125-42.

⁷⁴ On the hagiographic motifs in *Vita sancti Raynerii* see: Zoran Ladić, "O nekim hagiografskim motivima u 'Životopisu splitskog biskupa sv. Arnira'" [On some hagiographic motifs in the 'Biography of the Spalatin Bishop St. Raynerius'], *Croatica Christiana Periodica*, nr. 40/XXI (Zagreb 1997), 13-7.

⁷⁵ Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power. The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 967.

In contrast to some other Lives of Saints, in which it is rather difficult to distinguish the real historical circumstances from certain ‘mythological’ elements, the author of Arnir’s *Vita* was well aware of Arnir’s biography. The reason for this can be seen in the fact that he wrote his hagiographic work mainly on the basis of the chronicle by Thomas Archdeacon. Thus, he was well informed about the reasons that influenced the beginning of the conflict. He was also aware of the involved parties, the kindred of Kačići and their count Nicholas on one side and Arnir, the local clergy and the Byzantine officials on the other side. He also knew where the conflict took place: (Srinjine on Mosor).

As mentioned above, the author of the *Vita* emphasised the loyalty of Arnir towards the Roman Curia. On the one hand, this loyalty was expressed in the attempt of the reoccupation of ecclesiastical land estates. On the other hand, Arnir’s loyalty towards the pope and the Roman Curia can be understood, to some extent, as being the writer’s opinion of the religious environment in the hinterland of Dalmatia, particularly in Bosnia, where during the twelfth century the heretical movement of the *Bosanski krstjani* appeared. It is well known that in this period the Bosnian Christians were also successful in spreading their religious ideas among the inhabitants of Dalmatian cities. This is confirmed by Thomas Archdeacon who mentioned two *Bosanski krstjani*, the brothers Matthew and Aristodius, who lived in Zadar at the end of the twelfth and in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Even more, Thomas underlined that Zaratins were infected by that heresy and that even some of the patricians accepted and protected Bosnian heretics in their palaces.⁷⁶ There is no doubt that the author of the *Vita*, repeatedly stressing Arnir’s readiness to die for the rights of the Catholic Church in Dalmatia, bore in mind also his readiness to defend the Church from the dangerous heretical movement which spread in the hinterland of the Dalmatian cities. Obviously influenced by the data from the *Vita* and some narratives written in Arnir’s honour, also Farlati pointed out that he was beloved by Spalatins and other Dalmatians not only because of *sanctitatis vitae* but *multo magis causa mortis pro Ecclesia*.⁷⁷

Another important motif emphasised in Arnir’s *Vita* is the one of saintly forgiveness. The author of the *Vita* reports that, after being stoned by the Kačići, Arnir “fell down on his knees and, being burned out with love to God, just as St. Stephen (the martyr) did, he started to pray for the forgiveness of the Kačići’s sins.”⁷⁸ This motif of forgiveness to the murderers appeared relatively often in medieval hagiographic works. Thus, for instance, the Hungarian king St. Stephen in the last moment of his life prayed to God to forgive his murderers for the sins which they had committed.

Finally, the author finished his work by describing several supernatural miracles *post mortem* in order to improve the sanctity of Arnir. Saint’s miracles *post mortem* may be divided in two main groups according to their contents. To

⁷⁶ HS, 122-3.

⁷⁷ IS, 208.

⁷⁸ *Legende*, 139.

the first group belong the miracles done against Arnir's murderers and other persons who did not believe in his sanctity. Regarding Arnir's murderers from the kindred of Kačići, it should be underlined that their unfortunate destiny is described not only in this hagiographic work but also in Thomas' chronicle. In contrast to the *Vita*, where their destiny is succinctly described, Thomas Archdeacon gives a more detailed report. According to him, all of them were hung, were drowned or starved, "so that all of them died".⁷⁹ It is important to stress that these violent deaths were not caused by the intercession of St. Arnir but their deaths were rather, as it is explained in Thomas' chronicle, the consequence of the revenge of the Spalatins and, occasionally, the expression of God's wrath. According to Thomas Archdeacon, the Spalatins conducted an inquiry concerning the death of the archbishop. Some of the offenders were immediately found and hanged.⁸⁰ Then God's wrath followed which Thomas described with these words: "God did not leave the rest of the murderers in peace and after a while some of them died of fame, others by sword, and the last of them together with their successors died from the plague."⁸¹

To the second group of Arnir's miracles *post mortem* in his *Vita* belong those exercised on the place where he was killed. Miraculous and healing water had its source there, which cured physical and mental illnesses.⁸² It is not difficult to recognise the place as one of the *loca sanctorum*, being common in hagiographic works, where the opposite poles of Heaven and Earth meet.⁸³ Often, the local ecclesiastical propaganda influenced the creation of pilgrim shrines around such holy places; the same happened in the case of St. Arnir as well. Soon, the church of St. Arnir in the village of Dubrava became a local pilgrim centre where the believers from Split, Dalmatinska Zagora, and Poljica gathered, hoping for the miraculous intercession of St. Arnir.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Legende*, 140-1.

⁸⁰ *aliquos inuenerunt, quos statim patibulis suspenderunt. HS*, 114-5.

⁸¹ *post modicum tempus alii fame, alii gladio, alii peste cum sua posteritate consumpti sunt. HS*, 114-5.

⁸² *Legende*, 141.

⁸³ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 10.

⁸⁴ It is a bit surprising that his grave was placed in the church of St. Benedict in Split, and later replaced in the parish church in Kaštel Lukšić. They never became pilgrim shrines.

Illustrations:



Fig. 1: Juraj Dalmatinac (Georgius da Sebenico, George from Dalmatia): Renaissance altar consecrated to St. Arnir.

Parish Church of Kaštel Lukšić near Split (1444-1448)



Fig. 2: Ex-voto painting devoted to St. Arnir. Cathedral Church in Split (1688)



Fig. 3: The Mountain of Mosor near Split



Fig. 4: The Church of St. Arnir (*Rainerius*)
in the Parish of Dubrava on Mosor built prior to 1625

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Vorwort

Das vorliegende Heft von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* vermittelt neuerlich die verschiedenen Ansätze und das unterschiedliche Quellenmaterial, welche sich in den Disziplinen der historischen Wissenschaften für eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Alltag des Mittelalters sowie seiner Konstruktion und Repräsentation in der Überlieferung als relevant erweisen können. Zoran Ladić und Goran Budeč zeigen, wie im Kroatien der zweiten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts kirchliche und adelige Gebietsansprüche recht allgemeine Auseinandersetzungen, Gewalttätigkeit und Mord hervorriefen und sich ein ermordeter und heilig gesprochener Bischof zum lokalen und regionalen Kultobjekt entwickeln konnte. Madelon Köhler-Busch analysiert Muster der Rolle der Frau in der *Crône* des Heinrich von dem Türlin (c. 1220). Aušra Baniulytė weist nach, wie im 17. Jahrhundert der auf Namensähnlichkeit beruhende Konnex zwischen einer litauischen und einer florentinischen Familie auch auf legendäre mittelalterliche Verbindungen zurückgeführt wurde und dadurch mithalf, die Mitglieder der litauischen Familie zu Repräsentanten einer modernen, europäischen Elite des Barock zu machen.

Gerhard Jaritz