

## *Marulić and the laudationes urbium*<sup>1</sup>

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Praise of a city is a standard medieval and Renaissance theme; exemplary texts are the *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* (1403–4) by Leonardo Bruni and the *Urbs Noriberga illustrata carmine heroico* (1532) by Helius Eobanus Hessus. Variations on the theme may be found in over fifty Latin texts about the Eastern Adriatic coast and its cities, from Trieste to Shkodër, written between 1268 and 1608. These texts were recently gathered as *Laudationes urbium Dalmaticarum*, a part of the digital collection *Croatiae auctores Latini* (CroALa). Marko Marulić praised his hometown, Split, and its ancient neighbour Salona, in a passage of his *In epigrammata priscorum commentarius* (1503–1510). Here we introduce the *Laudationes urbium Dalmaticarum* collection and explore the relationship of Marulić's text to it.

### *Laudationes urbium Dalmaticarum*

The *Laudationes urbium Dalmaticarum* digital collection<sup>2</sup> gathers Latin texts which celebrate (or criticize) cities and regions of Eastern Adriatic: Trieste, Istra, Pula, Dalmatia, Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir, Split, Brač, Hvar, Korčula, Ston, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Shkodër. At the moment there are 57 prose texts and 40 texts in verse, written by more than 50 authors.

THE QUATTROCENTO AND EARLIER: **Thomas the Archdeacon** and **Miletius** write during the Middle Ages on Split, Zadar, and Dubrovnik. **Ciriaco Pizziccolli** (Ciriaco d'Ancona) travels through Dalmatia in 1435–36, drafts two inscriptions for public works in Dubrovnik, and later praises both Dubrovnik and Ancona in 1440; Dubrovnik is described again, and in detail, in the same year by **Filippo de Diversi**. A humanist from Trieste, **Raffaele Zovenzoni**, composes an epigram on the Palace of Diocletian in Split for the Venetian Jacopo Antonio Marcello (1464). The wild son of **Francesco Filelfo**, **Giovanni Mario**, puts together a not-quite-successful epic on Dubrovnik, the *Ragusaeis*, in 1470. **Juraj Šižgorić** describes Illyricum and Šibenik (1487). The Greek-Italian poet-soldier **Michele Marullo** authors an ode to Dubrovnik c. 1489, and a poet laureate from Dubrovnik **Ilija Crijević** paraphrases this ode, with tongue in cheek, in 1495. The philosopher **Juraj Dragišić** (**Georgius Benignus**) from Srebrenica leaves Firenze to come to Dubrovnik and praise its ruling families on the first pages of his *De natura angelica* (1499).

IN THE CINQUECENTO **Marino Barlezio** writes on Shkodër (taken by Turks in 1504) and on Dubrovnik (1508), **Palladio Fosco** on the Dalmatian coast (before 1509); **Ludovik Crijević Tuberon** criticizes Dubrovnik nobility sharply in 1520. **Vinko Pribojević** celebrates

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Additional material for this paper available at [www.ffzg.hr/klafil/dokuwiki/doku.php/z:marulic-and-laudationes-urbium](http://www.ffzg.hr/klafil/dokuwiki/doku.php/z:marulic-and-laudationes-urbium)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ffzg.hr/klafil/croala](http://www.ffzg.hr/klafil/croala). All Latin texts discussed or mentioned in this paper are freely available there.

Dubrovnik leads with 31 praise, Split follows with nine. Dalmatia is described in six texts, Istra in three.

the whole Slavic world and his home town Hvar (1525). **Ivan Bolica** describes Kotor in an epic poem in 1538, **Ludovik Paskalić** does the same before 1551. **Anton Rozanović** glorifies Korčula in his description of its successful resistance to an Ottoman fleet in 1571. **Jean Bodin** appreciates Dubrovnik as the Europe's smallest state in 1576. **Didacus Pyrrhus**, an exiled Marrano Jew, celebrates the same city and its ruling families in 1582.

### *Split and Salona as described by Marulić*

Marulić's antiquarian treatise, the *In epigrammata priscorum commentarius*, opens its chapter on inscriptions from Salona and Split with a meditation dedicated to Dmine Papalić. Marulić invites his friend to consider the ruins of Salona and the glorious past of the city as told by Strabo, Pliny, and Caesar's *Bellum civile*. The faith and virtue of citizens of Salona are exemplary: *talis fidei talisque in bello uirtutis tunc fuere Salonenses nostri!*

THE EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN is the most famous Salona-born Roman; he also provides a link of Salona to Split. The move from Salona to Split is also a move forward in time, enabling Marulić to sketch the Palace of Diocletian as it looks in his day: demolished, but still magnificent.

The description ends with a move outwards, away from this transient world: towards God.

### *Marulić and Božićević*

Frano Božićević Natalis (1469–1562) added a short description of Salona and Split to the biography (almost a hagiography) of his friend and compatriot. That somewhat pompous vignette is far from logic and precision with which Marulić organised his sketch.

BUT BOŽIĆEVIĆ COMPOSED ANOTHER, less known description of Salona, poetic and accurate at the same time, and by the meditative mood closer to Marulić's.

### *Split and antiquity*

Diocletian and the Palace were always important to the identity of Split. In the *Laudationes urbium Dalmaticarum* as a whole there are only three texts which do not stress the ancient roots of Dalmatian cities.<sup>3</sup> Even Dubrovnik, which does not have a tradition of continuity with antiquity, tries to establish one, presenting itself as a colony of Epidauros-Cavtat.

Ciriaco d'Ancona, who visited Split and Salona in 1436, brought attention to the same ancient features which Marulić and Božićević mention seventy years later: *in medio conspicitur nobile Iouis Templum, quod nomine Beati Doimi Pontificis hodie ciuies incolunt*. Raffaele

The meditation is in the vein of Cicero passing near Corinth as well as of Petrarch and Poggio visiting Rome. Cf. Gorana Stepanić, "First after Petrarch: the Reception and Perception Paths of Marulić's Collection *In epigrammata priscorum commentarius*", *Colloquia Maruliana* 16, Split: Književni krug, 2007, pp. 239–253.

**Marulić, In epigr:** *edificium eius (Diocletiani) Salonis proximum quod maiores nostri post urbis euersionem incolere coepere: nunc nostrum natale solum est, quod Spalatum appellant*

**Marulić, In epigr:** *columnae grandes e marmore Phrygio dolatae... ita ut nusquam Rome tot, tantas talesque columnas uno in loco compositas reperies*

Božićević, *Vita Marci Maruli* (after 1524)

Božićević, *Spalaeti discessum magnifici uiri Iacobi Raynerii, iusti praetoris sui, lugentis consolatio* (1497)

<sup>3</sup> The three texts are: **Ivan Lipavić** on the end of the plague in Trogir 1465; **Ivan Pridojević** on famous citizens of Trogir c. 1604; **Nascimbene Nascimbene** in the preface of his commentary to Cicero's *De inventione*, dedicated to the Dubrovnik Senate in 1564.

**Ciriacus Salonis:** *nobilissima uidimus moenia, sed undique iam solo antiquitate collapsa. Vidimusque amphitheatrum in medio ciuitatis ingens, atque mirabiles aquaeductus egregiae architecturae conspicuos, statuasque arte decoras, et immanes columnas undique per agros dirutas, atque conuulsas immensis ruinis.*

Zovenzoni tells in 1464 Jacopo Antonio Marcello that all the architectural miracles of the world subside in comparison to the Palace of Diocletian: *cedunt cuncta sacello / Quod tenet Aspalatum delitiisque fovet*.

OUTSIDE OF THIS TRADITION, HOWEVER, stand two topographies of Dalmatia where Split is mentioned. The first one is by Juraj Šižgorić (1487), the other by Palladio Fosco (before 1509). The *auctores* cited by Šižgorić are Roman poets Vergil, Lucan, Statius and Martial (Šižgorić quotes Strabo on Salona as *civitas olim... celeberrima Dalmatarum et emporium*, but does not identify his source), adding summarily *Hodie quidem multa praeclarae antiquitatis vestigia ibi reperiuntur*, leaving Diocletian out altogether, offering instead an etymology: *Aspalatrum deinde, coloniam Salonarum, dictum ab herba, ut autumo, sui nominis*. Palladio Fosco praises more the modern Split than its antiquity.

Vinko Pribojević, between 1522 and 1525, innovates. His Split is *natale Marci Maruli solum* (an echo of Marulić himself here),<sup>4</sup> *a Dioclitiano in agro Salonitano exstructum*. For Pribojević, as for Marulić, Split is notable for its *amoenitas*, confirmed by Diocletian's preferences. But Pribojević does not dwell on the ancient remains of Salona or on the Palace.<sup>5</sup>

### Conclusion

Marulić composed his description of Salona and Split carefully and logically, around *virtutes* and *ruinae*. For him, a special landmark of antiquity are the columns: those of Split are comparable to those of Rome itself (and, implicitly, better than e. g. those of the Basilica San Marco in Venice). *Amoenitas* is also important for the identity of Split. It has its own tradition, still living on in the exclamation of "ko to more platit",<sup>6</sup> as the citizens of Split express how they feel about their city.

**Palladio Fosco:** Spalatum oppidum nobilitate et virtute incolarum admodum celebre... quum Salona a Gothis eversa foret, nobilissimus quisque civitatis huc migravit... quum locus tot hominum capax non esset, producto muro, constructisque aedificiis tantundem pene spacii ab occasu adiectum est.

<sup>4</sup> Marulić, on the other hand, noticed this phrase most likely in Ovid, *Pont.* 1, 3, 35: *Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos / ducit et inmemores non sinit esse sui*.

<sup>5</sup> Pribojević saves rhetorical amplification for his own home town, Hvar.

<sup>6</sup> Croatian for: "Who can pay for all this" (i. e. beauty)?