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John S. Ott
and
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Zagreb, September 19, 2012

On the feast day of Remigius of Rheims

Abbreviations

Apart from the following, most frequently used titles, all works are cited in full at the first reference and subsequently in short-title form in each paper. Well-known sources (such as the Bible or the Church Fathers) are cited in their commonly accepted abbreviated forms. Other, more specific abbreviations (used by a single author), are given in the footnotes of the particular text.

<i>AASS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , Antwerp – Brussels.
<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> , Brussels.
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> , Brussels.
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , Brussels.
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> , Turnhout.
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Vienna.
<i>MGH AA</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi</i> , Berlin.
<i>MGH EP</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistolae</i> , Berlin.
<i>MGH SS</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptorum</i> , Hanover.
<i>MGH SRM</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum</i> , Hanover.
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca</i> , Paris.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina</i> , Paris.

WHERE HE IS, THITHER WILL THE EAGLES BE GATHERED TOGETHER: THE METROPOLITAN STATUS OF THE BISHOP OF SPALATO FROM THE DECLINE OF SALONA UNTIL THE COUNCILS OF SPALATO IN 925 AND 928

Vadim Prozorov

In Late Antiquity, when the Church of Salona started to play the role of the metropolis of Dalmatia (at least since the beginning of the sixth century) and St. Domnius was widely acclaimed as its holy protector, there emerged a tradition of the apostolic foundation of this Church.¹ In the ecclesiastical tradition, St. Domnius, victim of Diocletian's persecution, was transferred from the late third or early fourth centuries to the first century and assigned with the mission as the disciple of St. Peter the Apostle, the apostle to Dalmatia and the first bishop of Salona. Barbarian incursions in the first half of the seventh century led to the decay of Salona and the decline of Dalmatian Church organization.² However, it soon revived. The inhabitants of Salona first fled to the islands by the coast, but soon some of

¹ Vadim B. Prozorov, "The Passion of St. Domnius: the Tradition of Apostolic Succession in Dalmatia," *Scrinium. Revue de patrologie, d'hagiographie critique et d'histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 2, *Universum Hagiographicum. Mémorial R. P. Michel van Esbroeck, SJ (1934-2003)* (2006): 219-239.

² Frane Bulić, "Sull'anno della distruzione di Salona," *Bullettino di archeologia e storia dalmata* (hereafter *BASD*) 29 (1906): 268-304; Lovre Katić, "Vjerodostojnost Tome Arcidakona i posljednji dani Solina" [Thomas the Archdeacon's Reliability and Salona's Last Days], *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* (hereafter *VAHD*) 53 (1952): 99-119; Ivan Marović, "Reflexions about the Year of the Destruction of Salona," *VAHD* 77 (1984): 293-314; Nikola Jakšić, "Constantine Porphyrogenitus as the Source for the Destruction of Salona," *VAHD* 77 (1984): 315-326; Mate Suić, "Nova post vetera – ponovni pad Salone," *Mogućnosti* 36/3-4 (1988): 329-336; Željko Rapanić, *Od carske palače do srednjovjekovne općine* [From the Imperial Palace to the Medieval Commune] (Split: Književni krug, 2007), 137-170. Recent scholarship tends to accept a view of slow "dying out" of urban centers on the Adriatic coast. See e.g. Danijel Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 155-161. However, even the partisans of this new paradigm admit that Salona was highly vulnerable to the barbarian attacks, though they were not crucial in the process of the "natural" decline of the city, which was especially intense in the mid-seventh century. See Ivo Goldstein, *Bizant na Jadransku od Justinijana I. do Bazilija I.* [Byzantium in the Adriatic from Justinian I to Basil I] (Zagreb: Latina et Graeca, 1992), 89-95.

them returned and settled in Diocletian's palace near the desolated city. This place was called *Spalatum* (Spalato, present-day Split).

The thirteenth-century historian Thomas the Archdeacon of Spalato tells the story of the restoration of the archiepiscopal status of Salona by John of Ravenna, sent by the pope³ soon after the destruction of the Dalmatian metropolis by the barbarians, which was described in detail by Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Thomas himself.⁴ This may have happened in the middle of the seventh century, although some scholars doubt the reliability of this account, especially the foundation of the archbishopric in Spalato.⁵ Thomas states that it was John of Ravenna's initiative to renew the archbishopric of Salona on a new site.⁶ The pope consecrated him and transferred all privileges of Salona to the Church of Spalato.⁷ As the metropolitan of Dalmatia (including the Slavic lands), Archbishop John "restored churches, appointed bishops, established parishes," and started the missionary work in the territories of Dalmatia.⁸

³ According to *Historia Salonitana maior*, it was John IV (640-642). See *Historia Salonitana Maior*, ed. Nada Klaić (hereafter *HSM*) (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1967), 95.

⁴ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik and trans. Romilly J. H. Jenkins (hereafter *DAI*) (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), 122-125, ch. 29 and 140-143, ch. 30; Thomas Spalatensis, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (hereafter *HS*), ed. Damir Karbić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol, and James Ross Sweeney (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006), 32-43, ch. 7.

⁵ Nada Klaić, having accumulated these doubts, argues that this story is a legend, that there was no metropolitan organization in Dalmatia until the first council of Spalato (925), and that the idea of its establishment belongs to Pope John VIII (872-882). She identifies John of Ravenna with Archbishop John of Spalato, who presided over the councils of Spalato. See Nada Klaić, "Ivan Ravenjanin i osnutak splitske nadbiskupije" [John of Ravenna and the Foundation of the Metropolis of Spalato], *VAHD* 65-67 (1971): 209-249. Radoslav Katičić has tried to prove that Thomas' story is based on old documents and advanced new arguments in favor of the authenticity of Severus the Great involved in the restoration of the metropolis by John of Ravenna. See Radoslav Katičić, "Vetustiores Ecclesiae Spalatensis Memoriae," in idem, *Uz početke hrvatskih početaka. Filološke studije o našem najranijem srednjovjekovlju* [About the Beginning of Croatian Beginnings. Philological Studies on Our Earliest Middle Ages] (Split: Književni krug, 1993), 99-130.

⁶ On the time of the destruction of Salona, see Marović, "Reflexions," 293-314.

⁷ *HS*, 54-55, ch. 11: "It was granted to him [John of Ravenna] by the Apostolic See that the church of Spalato would have all the privileges and honors that Salona had formerly enjoyed."

⁸ *HS*, 54-55, ch. 11: "he went about Dalmatia and Slavonia, restoring churches, ordaining bishops and setting up parishes, and little by little he drew the ignorant people to knowledge of the Catholic faith." In the catalogue of the archbishops in *HS*, 58-59, ch. 13, Archdeacon Thomas writes: "The archbishops of the church of Spalato were many, and to them all bishops of both Upper and Lower Dalmatia were obedient, according to the right of privilege of the church of Salona, inasmuch as they had been suffragans from ancient times." Certainly we should remember that Thomas, composing his work, had the aim to show the antiquity and priority of the metropolitan church of Spalato over all the bishops of Dalmatia and Croatia. The very word *suffraganeus* was being introduced from the end of the

In this paper, despite the skepticism expressed in the current literature, I will try to demonstrate that the transfer of the see, along with the relics of its holy protector and the first bishop St. Domnius, to the new site did not necessarily lead to the loss of the metropolitan status of the church.⁹ Quite the contrary, the deposition of St. Domnius' body in Spalato signified the transfer of metropolitan authority to the bishop of Spalato.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio* informs us that "Emperor Herakleios sent and brought priests from Rome, and made of them an archbishop and a bishop and elders and deacons, and baptized the Croats." This information can be regarded as a confirmation of Thomas' account about the activity of John of Ravenna.¹⁰ Thomas narrates that the Salonitans who had returned to Spalato requested protection against the barbarians from the "emperors in Constantinople" and were given the special "sacred rescript of the noble rulers," and a corresponding "command (*jussio*) was sent to the chiefs" of the barbarians.¹¹

One of the components of John's program, according to Thomas, was a translation of the bodies of the holy martyrs Domnius, the first bishop of Salona, and Anastasius of Aquileia from Salona to the Spalato church of the Virgin Mary, the former mausoleum of Emperor Diocletian. Thus the legitimacy of the bishopric of Spalato as a successor to the archbishopric of Salona was definitely established through the intercession

eighth century; see Friedrich Kempf, ed., *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, trans. Anselm Biggs, vol. 3 of *History of the Church*, ed. Hubert Jedin (Kent: Burns and Oates, 1991), 288.

⁹ Mirjana Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon i njegovo djelo. Rano doba brvatske povijesti* [Thomas the Archdeacon and His Work. The Early Period of Croatian History] (Jastrebarsko: Naklada Slap, 2002), 75-110; Ivan Basić, "Venerabilis presul Iohannes. Historijski Ivan Ravenjanin i začetci crkvene organizacije u Splitu u VII. stoljeću" [*Venerabilis presul Iohannes. The Historical John of Ravenna and the Beginning of Church Organization in Split in the Seventh Century*], *Povijesni prilozi* 29 (2005): 7-28; *HS*, 51, n. 1 and 2.

¹⁰ *DAI*, 148.

¹¹ Katičić, "Vetustiores," in idem, *Uz početke*, 119-120, shows that this information on the rescript and the command was derived from an old and reliable source, and complied with the Byzantine diplomatic usage. He refers to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. Johann Jacob Reiske (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1829), 1:691. In the seventh century, there were two cases of co-ruling the Empire: between 638 and 25 May 641 and between 655 and 681 (cf. Ernst Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum* [Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1930], 162-165). The first period corresponds to John IV's pontificate (640-642). Stjepan Gunjača narrows this period to three months – March-May 641 – when Constantine III and Heraklonas were real co-emperors after their father Herakleios' death. Stjepan Gunjača, *Ispravci i dopune starijoj brvatskoj historiji*, vol. 1 [Corrections and Additions to Early Croatian History] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1973), 193-198. John of Ravenna's consecration could have been performed by Pope John IV either in December 640 or in December 641. *Liber pontificalis*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, *MGH Gesta pontificum Romanorum* 1 (hereafter *LP*) (Berlin: Weidmann, 1898), 177.

of holy protectors.¹² Thomas highlighted the continuity of ecclesiastical organization when he pointed out that, despite their residence in Spalato (since the time of John of Ravenna), “archbishops, indeed, were not styled archbishops of Spalato, but archbishops of Salona.”¹³ Obviously, this relatively short period of transition in the seventh century was the time when the Church needed the tradition of its holy protector most. The bishopric on the new site was going to reinforce the metropolitan rights of the Church of Salona based on its apostolic foundation.

Pope John IV's biography in the *Book of Pontiffs* compiled under Pope Conon (686-687)¹⁴ narrates that the Dalmatian-born pope John sent abbot Martin to Dalmatia to ransom Christian captives from the pagans and to collect relics of the local saints, in whose memory the chapel of St. Venantius was erected near the Lateran baptistery in Rome. The relics brought to Rome from Dalmatia and Istria were deposited there,¹⁵ with the holy martyrs depicted in mosaic.¹⁶ The representation of St. Domnius “with his *pallium* and other episcopal vestments”¹⁷ in the chapel, to the right of Christ just after St. Peter and John the Baptist, suggests the outstanding importance of this holy bishop and the prominent status of the Church of Salona, perhaps as the ecclesiastical metropolis. Thomas of Spalato refers to the relics brought to Rome as *reliquiae*, i.e. remnants of the holy bodies, while the bodies of St. Domnius and St. Anastasius translated by John of Ravenna in Spalato are called *corpora*.¹⁸ When in 1962-1964 the reliquaries in Rome were opened, it became evident that only some fragments of the bodies of Dalmatian and Istrian saints had been deposited in the chapel.¹⁹

Scholars have found a contradiction in the *Book of Pontiffs* and Thomas of Spalato's accounts of the translation of the relics of St. Domnius

¹² *HS*, 56-57, ch. 12: “The translation of Saint Domnius and Saint Anastasius.”

¹³ *HS*, 58-59, ch. 13.

¹⁴ *LP* 1, XIII-XIV.

¹⁵ *LP* 1, 177. Thomas of Spalato repeats this account in *HS*, 44-47, ch. 8.

¹⁶ See Fabijan Veraja, “Kapela sv. Venancija u Rimu i kult solinskih mučenika” [The Chapel of St. Venantius in Rome and the Cult of the Salonitan Martyrs], in *Zbornik u čast sv. Nikole Tavelića* (Rome: Postulatura bl. Nikole Tavelića, 1970), 165-187; Giuseppe Bovini, “I mosaici dell'oratorio di S. Venanzo a Roma,” *Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 18 (1971): 141-154; Gillian Vallance Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 212-230.

¹⁷ *HS*, 46-47.

¹⁸ *HS*, 56-57, ch. 12.

¹⁹ Makso Pelozo, “Rekognicija relikvija dalmatinskih i istarskih mučenika u oratoriju sv. Venancija kod baptisterija Lateranske bazilike u Rimu 1962-1964. godine” [Recognition of the Relics of Dalmatian and Istrian Martyrs in the Chapel of St. Venantius near the Baptistery of the Lateran Basilica in Rome in 1962-1964], *VAHD* 63-64 (1961-1962): 163-180.

and St. Anastasius to Rome and to Spalato. However, the *Book of Pontiffs* does not indicate that the remains of St. Domnius were among the relics of other Dalmatian saints transferred to Rome. It only confirms that St. Domnius was depicted in gold mosaic, which still exists in the Lateran.

According to Thomas of Spalato, John of Ravenna transferred the bodies of St. Domnius and St. Anastasius from the episcopal basilica of Salona, although in fact they had been venerated at the cemeteries outside the city – in Manastirine and in Marusinac, respectively.²⁰ In order to explain this apparent contradiction, we may assume that during the barbarian attacks on Salona its citizens may have brought the relics of their holy protectors inside the city and then, evacuating it in haste, abandoned the holy bodies in the basilica.²¹ This assumption certainly works if we insist on the catastrophic paradigm of the end of Salona.

The history of the following centuries is obscure due to the lack of information. It was a period of accommodation of various Slavic and non-Slavic peoples in the Balkans and attempts of the Byzantine administration to secure the remains of its authority, at least on the Adriatic coast, and its links with the exarchate of Ravenna via Dalmatia.²² Scholarly opinions differ as to which patriarchate – Rome or Constantinople – established its jurisdiction over the Dalmatian ecclesiastical province in the eighth and ninth centuries.²³ When about the middle of the eighth century the

²⁰ *Forschungen in Salona*, vol. 2, *Der altchristliche Friedhof Manastirine*, ed. Rudolf Egger (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1926); *Forschungen in Salona*, vol. 3, *Der altchristliche Friedhof Marusinac*, ed. Ejnar Dyggve and Rudolf Egger (Vienna: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1939).

²¹ Frane Bulić and Josip Bervaldi, *Kronotaksa solinskih biskupa uz dodatka Kronotaksa spljetskih nadbiskupa (od razorenja Solina do polovice XI. v.)* [Catalogue of the Bishops of Salona with the Catalogue of the Archbishops of Spalato (from the destruction of Salona until the mid-eleventh century)] (Zagreb: Tiskara Hrvatskog katoličkog tiskovnog društva, 1912), 124-125.

²² Jadran Ferluga, *L'amministrazione bizantina in Dalmazia* (Venice: Deputazione di storia patrie per le Venezie, 1978); Goldstein, *Bizant na Jadranu*, 125-150; Džino, *Becoming Slav*, 92-175. Tibor Živković, "Taktikon Uspenskog i tema Dalmacija" [The *Taktikon Uspenskij* and the Theme of Dalmatia], *Istorijski časopis* 48 (2001): 9-44. He has challenged the traditional date of compilation of the *Taktikon* and moved the date of restoration of the *archontia* to 812 and the organization of the theme of Dalmatia to 817.

²³ Viktor Novak, "Pitanje pripadnosti splitske nadbiskupije u vrijeme njezine organizacije" [The Question of Subordination of the Archbishopric of Spalato in the Time of its Organization], *VAHD* 46 (1923): 57-77; Antun Dabinović, "Kada je Dalmacija pala pod jurisdikciju carigradske patrijaršije?" [When did Dalmatia Fall under the Jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate?], *Rad JAZU* 239 (1930): 242; Miho Barada, "Episcopus Chroatensis," *Croatia sacra* 1 (1931): 166; Vladimir Koščak, "Pripadnost istočne obale Jadrana do splitskih sabora 925-928" [The Sway Over the Eastern Adriatic Coast up to the Time of the Split Synods in 925 and 928], *Historijski zbornik* 33-34 (1980-1981): 291-355; Goldstein, *Bizant na Jadranu*, 112-126.

iconoclastic emperors withdrew eastern Illyricum from the authority of Rome and placed it under the jurisdiction of Constantinople, Dalmatia, although not included in this province, could still have been subordinated to the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. At least, Bishop John of Salona and some other Dalmatian bishops appear among the eastern prelates of archiepiscopal rank in the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.²⁴ Radoslav Katičić considered that all the former western bishoprics alienated from the Roman Church by the iconoclastic emperors received the honorary archiepiscopal title within the Constantinopolitan patriarchate.²⁵

After the conclusion of the treaty between Byzantium and the Franks in 812, Dalmatian towns remained under the eastern empire while the Croats were loyal allies of the Carolingians. In the first half of the ninth century, the Byzantines organized an *archontia* in Dalmatia with its center in Iader (present-day Zadar).²⁶ In this time, the earliest charter of a Croatian ruler, Duke Trpimir, granted certain rights to the Church of Salona over lands and the tithe in the territories of the Croats.²⁷ The archbishop is named “of the Church of Salona,”²⁸ identified as “the metropolis up to the bank of the Danube and through almost all the kingdom of the Croats.”²⁹ We can suppose that the Church of Salona

²⁴ Jean Darrouzès, “Listes épiscopales du concile de Nicée (787),” *Revue des études byzantines* 33 (1975): 5-76, at 24-26, 59-60.

²⁵ Radoslav Katičić, “Imena dalmatinskih biskupija i njihovih biskupa u aktima ekumenskoga koncila u Niceji godine 787” [The Names of Dalmatian Bishoprics and their Bishops in the Acts of the Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (787)], in idem, *Uz početke*, 25-35.

²⁶ For the first time the *archontia* of Dalmatia is mentioned in the *Taktikon of Uspenskij*; Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 49-54.

²⁷ Miho Barada maintains the authenticity of the charters of Trpimir and Muncimir and states that they were models for the charters of the successors of these Croatian rulers. See Miho Barada, “Dvije naše vladarske isprave: diplomatsko-paleografska studija” [Two Charters of Our Rulers: Diplomatic and Palaeographic Study], *Croatia sacra* 13-14 (1937): 1-96. Nada Klaić has challenged the authenticity of these documents. She argues that their form of a private document does not correspond to the pattern of a royal charter in Europe. She states that all the charters of Croatian rulers were composed in the second half of the twelfth century, although the content of the charters can reflect the earlier circumstances. See Nada Klaić, “O Trpimirovoj darovnici kao diplomatskom i historijskom dokumentu” [On the Donation of Trpimir as Diplomatic and Historical Document], *VAHD* 62 (1960): 105-155. Olga Perić shows that the donation of Trpimir consists of several linguistic layers, i.e. the authentic charter of Trpimir may have been recast. See Olga Perić, “Jezični slojevi Trpimirove isprave” [Linguistic Layers of the Charter of Trpimir], *Živa antika* 34 (1-2) (1984): 165-170.

²⁸ *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, ed. Marko Kostrenčić, vol. 1 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1967): 5, no. 3 (4 March 852) (hereafter CD 1): *Petrus, Salonitanæ ecclesie archiepiscopus*.

²⁹ CD 1, 5, no. 3: *metropolis usque ripam Danubii et pene per totum regnum Chroatorum*.

mentioned here means in fact the Church of Spalato, and the holy martyr Domnius, the first bishop and the holy protector of Salona, along with St. Anastasius, St. Cosmas, and St. Damian, is obviously associated with this Church.³⁰

Even though the previously quoted passage is obscure, it is most probable that the Church of Spalato sought to be the ecclesiastical metropolis for the huge territory. The territory identified in the charter seems to have been an exaggeration, for it is hard to imagine that the jurisdiction of Salona-Spalato spread up to the Danube. However, it can be explained as a claim of the archbishop of Spalato supported by the Croatian Duke Trpimir, who called Archbishop Peter of Salona his “dear godfather” (*dilectus compater*). Moreover, the same attitude of the predecessor of Trpimir, Mislav, to the Church of Salona-Spalato is assumed from the fact that he granted to it the tithe from his possessions in Klis, one of the residences of the Trpimirovići.

In 879, Pope John VIII received letters from Duke Branimir of Croatia, who confirmed the spiritual loyalty of the Croats to the Roman Church.³¹ The predecessor of Branimir, Duke Zdeslav, the son of Trpimir, came to rule over Croatia with considerable help from the Byzantine emperor.³² Only a few mentions of Zdeslav survive and thus we can only speculate that he tried to orient the Croatian Church towards the East.³³ Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ story about the Christianization of the heathen Croats under Emperor Basil I (867-886) is probably related, at

³⁰ CD 1, 5, no. 3: *Si quis vero de superscriptis quicquid deo inspirante amore sanctorum inflammati ... optulimus, concessimus et in posterum inconuulsa, firmata manere censuimus, in cenobium sanctorum martirum Domnii, Anastasii, Cosme et Damiani, ut, si quis diripere uel subtrahere aut per uim opponere tentauerit ... uinculo insolubili anathemate maranatha denodetur...* According to Barada, “Dvije naše,” 32, this row of saints associated with the church of Spalato confirms the authenticity of the charter. He refers to the copy of the *Psalter* compiled under archbishop Paul of Spalato (1015-1030) in honor of “Holy Martyrs Domnius, Anastasius and also Saints Cosmas and Damian.”

³¹ CD 1, 13, no. 10; CD 1, 14, no. 11: *tuę nobilitati dignas ualde gratias his nostri apostolatus literis agimus paternoque amore, utpote karissimum filium, ad gremium sanctę sedis apostolicę matris tuę, de cuius uidelicet purissimo fonte patres tui melliflua sanctę predicationis potauerere fluentia redeuntem suscipimus....*

³² *Documenta historiae Chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, ed. Franjo Rački (Zagreb: Sumptibus Academiae scientiarum et artium, 1877), 373, no. 185: *His diebus Sedesclauus, Tibimiri ex progenie, imperiali fultus praesidio Constantinopolim ueniens, Sclavorum ducatum arripuit....*

³³ The letter of Pope John VIII (early 879; CD 1, 12, no. 9) *dilecto filio Sedesclauo, glorioso comiti Sclauorum*, shows that the relations between Rome and Croatia were not interrupted. At the beginning of the letter, the pope named St. Peter and St. Paul the protectors of Zdeslav; however, it may have been merely a rhetorical device.

least to a certain extent, to Zdeslav's pro-Byzantine policy and Basil I's attempts to gain the loyalty of Croatia for Constantinople.³⁴

After the overthrow and death of Zdeslav,³⁵ it seemed necessary for Branimir to confirm his fidelity to Rome, which may have been questioned in the preceding years. From this we can conclude that under Zdeslav the aggressive Byzantine policy in the Balkans had won over the Croatian prince and Church to Constantinople. Now, under Branimir, they returned to the spiritual guidance of Rome.³⁶ The pope welcomed this act and blessed the Croats in several letters.³⁷

The bishopric of Nona (present-day Nin), the head of which appears as the bishop of the Croats in the acts of the first council in Spalato, was founded sometime in the mid-ninth century – as it is usually considered.³⁸ However, the first bishop of Nona who is known to historians

³⁴ *DAI*, 68-78.

³⁵ Rački, *Documenta*, 374, no. 187.

³⁶ However, there could be another explanation. Branimir overthrew Zdeslav, Trpimir's son, the legal heir, and thus appeared as a usurper of power, and that is why he hurried to assure Rome of his and his people's fidelity, trying to legitimate his position.

³⁷ *CD* 1, 13-15, 18-19, nos. 10, 11, and 14.

³⁸ There are many different opinions in Croatian historiography concerning the foundation and subordination of the bishopric of Nona. Most authors have dated the establishment of the bishopric of Nin to the ninth century: 1) Ferdo Šišić, *Priručnik izvora hrvatske historije* [A Reference Book of the Sources on Croatian History] (Zagreb: Naklada Kraljevina Hrvatske-Slavonije-Dalmacije zemaljske vlade, 1914), 190-191, and Josip Srebrnić, "Odnosaji pape Ivana X. prema Bizantu i Slavenima na Balkanu" [Attitudes of Pope John X towards Byzantium and the Slavs in the Balkans], in *Zbornik kralja Tomislava u spomen tisućugodišnjice Hrvatskoga kraljevstva* [A Collection of King Tomislav in Memory of the Millennium of the Croatian Kingdom] (Zagreb: JAZU, 1925), 134: the early ninth century, a suffragan of Split; 2) Franjo Rački, *Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske prije XII. stoljeća* [The Situation in Croatia until the Twelfth Century], *Rad JAZU* 116 (1894): 41-42, and Svetozar Ritig, *Povijest i pravo slovenštine u crkvenom bogoslužju*, vol. 1 [History and Right of the Slavonic Language in Liturgy] (Zagreb: C. Albrecht, 1910), 131, 149: under Pope Nicholas I (858-867), a suffragan of Split; 3) Marko Perojević, "Ninski biskup Teodozije" [Bishop Theodosius of Nin], *Prilog VAHD* 1 (1922): 1-37, assumed that the bishop of the Croats who had been chorbishop received the title of bishop in the mid-ninth century and was subordinated to the patriarch of Aquileia; 4) Miho Barada, "Episcopus Chroatensis," *Croatia sacra* 1 (1931): 161-215, wrote that the bishopric of Nin was founded between 864 and 867 under Prince Domagoj, when Dalmatian cities supported Patriarch Photius, whereas the Croats remained loyal to Rome. The bishop of the Croats was subordinated to the pope, since Dalmatian cities were not under the jurisdiction of Rome, and, although the bishop of Spalato bore the title of archbishop, he was not the metropolitan of Dalmatia; 5) Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* [A History of the Croats in the Early Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1971), 232-239, posed the hypothesis according to which the bishopric of Nona was founded under Duke Trpimir, somewhere in the mid-ninth century, and supervised by the patriarchate of Aquileia; 6) Neven Budak, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* [The First Centuries of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatska Sveučilišna naklada, 1994), 92-96, refers to the fact that the church of Nin continued to exist from Late Antiquity, pointing out that the archpriest of

is Theodosius. We can infer that he had predecessors only from the letter of Pope John VIII on 7 June 879.³⁹ It can be also presumed from the letter of Pope Nicholas I (858-867) that the bishopric of Nona had been established under this pope, but initially without his consent. This is the famous fragment included in the *Decretum Gratiani* (p. III *de consecratione, dist. I, c. 8*). The pope laid the following question before the clergy and people of the Church of Nona: how can the Church as a congregation of catholics (*catholicorum collectio*) be established without the pope's consent if even a new basilica cannot be built without his decision?⁴⁰

The significant act of papal policy at that time in Dalmatia was the consecration of Bishop Theodosius of Nona in Rome.⁴¹ We can infer from the letters of Pope John VIII that Theodosius visited Rome soon after the pope's invitation.⁴² The Roman pontiff referred to the fact that Theodosius' predecessors had been consecrated in Rome. It seems improbable to assume that this is a mere expression of the pope's wish or a rhetorical device instead of the reality. The bishopric of Nona had been constituted recently and probably before Theodosius' very eyes. Six or seven years later, when Stephen V (VI) (885-891) occupied the see of Rome, the same Theodosius became archbishop of Salona, i.e. metropolitan of Dalmatia.

Pope John VIII sent a letter to Dalmatia along with the above-mentioned letters to Croatia.⁴³ He urged the Dalmatian bishops to return to the Roman Church, highlighting the fact that it was the tradition of their predecessors to follow the spiritual guidance of Rome and receive the *pallium* there.⁴⁴ In the ninth century, the *pallium* was conferred by the pope on all metropolitan bishops who had addressed a corresponding request to Rome, and it became a sign and sanction of their jurisdiction over their provinces. The metropolitans had to apply to Rome for the *pallium* and

Nona may have been under the jurisdiction of Zadar. According to him, the bishopric of Nona was founded by the clergy of Nona without the pope's consent. However, it was subordinated to the Roman church.

³⁹ CD 1, 16, no. 12.

⁴⁰ CD 1, 8, no. 4. Regarding the construction of a new basilica, Nicholas I refers to the decree of Pope Gelasius I in: *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae*, ed. Andreas Thiel, vol. 1 (Braunsberg: Eduard Peter, 1868), *Ep.* 14.4, 364.

⁴¹ CD 1, 16, no. 12: *Sed toto corde totaque voluntate ad gremium sedis apostolice, unde antecessores tui diuine legis dogmata melliflua cum sacre institutionis forma summique sacerdotii honorem sumpserunt, redeas, quatenus et ipse ab apostolica sede, que caput et magistra est omnium ecclesiarum dei, episcopalem consecrationem per nostre manus impositionem [sic] Christo annuente percipias.*

⁴² CD 1, 18-19, no. 14.

⁴³ CD 1, 16, no. 13.

⁴⁴ CD 1, 17, no. 13.

then submit their profession of faith, usually in person.⁴⁵ Pope John VIII's words from his letter to Dalmatia presumably mean that the Dalmatian archbishop, who had "the honor of the highest priesthood" in Dalmatia, received the consecration not from the Roman Church, from which his predecessor had accepted "the apostolic doctrine," but from another center, which may have been Constantinople. It is significant in this sense that the pope offered his "powerful support" to the Dalmatian bishops if they "hesitated to revert to us, or receive the consecration and the *pallium* because of any considerations concerning the Greeks or the Slavs."⁴⁶ He ordered the Dalmatian bishops and people to elect an archbishop who would accept consecration (*gratiam episcopalis consecrationis*) and the *pallium* from the pope "according to the ancient tradition."⁴⁷ The pope stressed in his letter that there was a tradition of papal spiritual guidance and institutional subordination of the Dalmatian ecclesiastical province to the Roman Church, but it had been broken by Dalmatia's turn to Constantinople. We do not know whether he succeeded in his intention, but he seems to have seen in the bishop of Salona-Spalato the metropolitan of Dalmatia.

The letter was addressed "to the bishops Vitalis of Zadar, Dominic of Osor, and other Dalmatian bishops, as well as Archpriest John of the Holy see of Salona," and "to all the population of Spalato, as well as Zadar and all the other cities." We can presume that "the Holy see" of Salona-Spalato was vacant when the pope wrote his letter, and that the bishop of Zadar appeared in the first place in the intitulation as the senior Dalmatian bishop. Nevertheless, in the reference to the "Archpriest John of the Holy see of Salona," there is a hint at the exceptional rights of the Church of Salona. The name of "the Holy see of Salona" (*Sancta sedis Salonitana*) is suggestive. Moreover, the designation of the population of Spalato over that of Zadar suggests that the former was more important in an ecclesiastical sense than the latter.

The Dalmatian bishops elected a new archbishop of Salona-Spalato, the evidence for which can be found in the *HS*. Thomas of Spalato writes that "Marinus was archbishop in the time of King Charles and Duke

⁴⁵ Steven A. Schoenig, *The Papacy and the Use and Understanding of the Pallium from the Carolingians to the Early Twelfth Century* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2009), 31-77, 184-201.

⁴⁶ *CD* 1, 17, no. 13.

⁴⁷ *CD* 1, 17, no. 13: *Quapropter uos ... hortamur, ut ... electus a uobis canonice archiepiscopus una cum uestro omnium consensu et uoluntate ad nos ueniens gratiam episcopalis consecrationis sanctumque pallium a nobis more pristino incunctanter percipiat*. This means that the pope consecrated the archbishop of Salona by himself, probably according to the tradition continuing from the consecration of John of Ravenna.

Branimir of Slavonia.”⁴⁸ His name also appears in the letter of Pope Stephen V (VI).⁴⁹

After Marinus’ death, Bishop Theodosius of Nona had the ambition to occupy the see of Salona-Spalato.⁵⁰ Presumably, Theodosius appealed to the patriarch of Aquileia, the closest metropolitan center in the territories of the Franks, who were the senior allies of the Croats. Patriarch Walpertus consecrated him as the bishop of Spalato.⁵¹ Stephen V (VI) reproached the former for intruding into another’s province, namely Salona, which was not under his jurisdiction.⁵² In his letter to Theodosius, the pope reproved him for having received consecration from Aquileia when he should have accepted it from Rome. Moreover, Bishop Theodosius violated the rule according to which a bishop was not allowed to exchange one see for another.⁵³ It is not clear whether Theodosius occupied two sees at the same time, which seems rather improbable. The pope says it, however, as he compares the exchange of a see to the exchange of a wife.⁵⁴ It is likely that he meant that this change of see would be regarded as having two wives, since no one may cancel his first consecration, just as no one may divorce a wife or a husband.

In the next letter to Theodosius in 887/888, Pope Stephen V (VI) greeted his zeal in restoring churches all over the province with these significant words: “We wish very much that the church of Salona which, as you say, has been restored, should return to its previous standing.”⁵⁵ He

⁴⁸ *HS*, 58-59, ch. 13. Charles the Fat was Louis the German’s youngest son, king of Alemannia (Swabia) from 876, king of Italy from 880, and crowned emperor in 881; he died in 888.

⁴⁹ *CD* 1, 21, no. 17.

⁵⁰ *CD* 1, 15-16, no. 12; 1, 18-19, no. 14.

⁵¹ It can be presumed from the letter of Stephen V to Theodosius (*CD* 1, 21, no. 17).

⁵² *CD* 1, 20, no. 16: *transgressis terminis tibi commissis in ecclesia Salonensi episcopum ad indecentiam sedis apostolicae praesumpstisti.*

⁵³ *CD* 1, 21, no. 17: *Desine iam tali tabescere ignavia et discere paternis obedire regulis, ne inveniaris statutos a partibus terminos transgredi vel per ambitionem de maiori ad maiorem transire ecclesiam, quod tentantem laica etiam communionem sacri privant canones.* This prohibition was confirmed by various conciliar decisions with some minor modifications but with its essence intact. In the collection of Dionysius Exiguus *Codex canonum ecclesiasticorum*: Chalcedon (451), Canon 5 (*PL* 67, 172D); Carthage (419), Canon 71 (*PL* 67, 205B). The council of Serdica based it on the principle that a cleric should not seek any profit from leaving his perhaps smaller and poorer church for another larger and richer one: Serdica (343), Canons 1 and 2 in the collection of Dionysius Exiguus (*PL* 67, 176D-177B); Hamilton Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 162-178.

⁵⁴ The situation was traditionally regarded in the Church as a break of matrimonial relations, a mystical union between the clergyman and the church where he had been consecrated. Cf. Hess, *Early Development*, 162-163.

⁵⁵ *CD* 1, 22, no. 18: *Salonitana ecclesia, quam deo auxiliante restitutam asseris, ut {ad} pristinum gradum redeat, inbianter cupimus.*

also mentioned the erection of new churches. As Theodosius wanted to obtain the *pallium* from the pope, Stephen promised to confer it on him upon arrival in Rome. If Theodosius visited Rome, he probably received the *pallium*, the pope's confirmation of the archbishop's metropolitan rights.

In 892, the Croatian ruler Muncimir confirmed the donation of his father Trpimir, for the first time calling the church of Spalato *Spalatensis ecclesia* and its head Peter *Spalatensis archiepiscopus*. It is expressive that, although Peter of Spalato is called archbishop, his opponent, who bears the German name of Aldefredus and was the most probable successor of Theodosius in the see of Nona, is cautiously named the head of the church of Nona (*Nonensis praesul*). Presumably, we should seek the reasons for the future claim of Bishop Gregory of Nona to the primacy in Dalmatia in that precedent, that is, when the bishop of Nona became the archbishop of Salona.

Muncimir's charter raises several questions. Firstly, it reflects the arguments of the churches of Salona-Spalato and Nona concerning Trpimir's donation to the former. Both churches submitted claims to this donation, but there is no evidence that the possessions in question were ever obtained by the church of Nona. Meanwhile they were definitely donated to the archbishopric of Salona–Split according to Trpimir's charter.

Secondly, the argument of Aldefredus of Nona was as follows: "it [the church of St. George] is not the possession of the church of Spalato, but pertains to the dominion of our church and should not be the possession of the church of St. Domnius and St. Anastasius since it had been given for temporary use to the head of this church."⁵⁶ To be fair, Trpimir prohibited in his donation that the church of St. Domnius and St. Anastasius, i.e. Salona-Spalato, should be deprived of the property donated by him "in the future" (*in posterum*).⁵⁷

Finally, could the change of the title of archbishop of Salona to that of Spalato reflect the situation when the bishop of Spalato, then under the jurisdiction of Constantinople, lost his metropolitan rights in Dalmatia in favor of the bishop of Nona, who had kept his loyalty to Rome? In any case, the Croatian ruler seems to have taken sides with Archbishop Peter of Spalato against Bishop Aldefredus of Nona, and confirmed the donation by his predecessor to the former church.

⁵⁶ CD 1, 23, no. 20: *Non ita habetur, sed nostre potius ecclesiae dominio detinetur, quoniam non in ecclesia sanctorum Domnii et Anastasii, ut dicitis, possidenda, sed ipsius praesuli fruenda ad tempus tradita est.*

⁵⁷ CD 1, 5, no. 3.

Archbishop John of Salona-Spalato appears for the first time in the catalogue of archbishops in Thomas' *HS*, where it is written: "John was archbishop in the year of Our Lord 914, in the time of Duke Tomislav."⁵⁸ The name of his closest predecessor emerges in Duke Muncimir's confirmation of the donation of Duke Trpimir to the church of Salona in 892: Archbishop Peter of Spalato, the first archbishop whose title was "archbishop of Spalato" rather than "archbishop of Salona."⁵⁹ Meanwhile, in the catalogue of archbishops in the *HS*, Archbishop Marinus, whose name belongs to the time of the Carolingian King Charles the Fat (King of Italy from 880, Emperor 881-888), precedes Archbishop John. Archbishop Martinus – "in the time of Emperor Theodosius" – is called the nearest successor of John in the catalogue, so a gap of fifty-six years separates the mention of John and Martinus in the catalogue.⁶⁰

Although the precise date and circumstances of the consecration of Archbishop John remain unknown, he was already archbishop in 914 according to Thomas of Spalato. All that is certain is that he disappeared before 925, when Dalmatian bishops led by Archbishop John, King (and above-mentioned Duke)⁶¹ Tomislav of Croatia, and Duke Michael of Zahumlje, along with the aristocracy, appealed to Pope John X asking him to send legates with an "admonition containing the teaching of the Christian religion" (*monitorium christiane religionis dogma continentem*). The pope dispatched his legates, bishops John of Ancona and Leo of Palestrina, with a letter concerning the use of the Slavonic language in the metropolis of Salona.⁶² In the papal letter, John is called Archbishop of Salona (*Salonitane ecclesie archiepiscopus*), but he still has not received the *pallium* from the pope.

⁵⁸ *HS*, 60-61, ch. 13.

⁵⁹ *CD* 1, 22-24, no. 20.

⁶⁰ *HS*, 60-61, ch. 13. Archbishop Martinus is also mentioned in the documents from 994 and 1000 (*CD* 1, 47, no. 32; 1, 51, no. 35). The mention of Emperor Theodosius in the previously cited passage is considered Archdeacon Thomas' mistake. John Tzimiskes (969-976) was emperor in 970. The probable explanation for this mistake is suggested by Katičić, *Uz početke*, 110-111.

⁶¹ Ivo Goldstein is of the opinion that the available sources cannot provide precise information concerning the titles of Croatian rulers until King Zvonimir, and that therefore we cannot be consistent in their use. He proposes to follow the Croatian historiographic tradition and to call them rulers. See Ivo Goldstein, "O latinskim i hrvatskim naslovima hrvatskih vladara do početka 12. stoljeća" [On the Latin and Croatian Titles of the Croatian Rulers until the Early Twelfth Century], *Historijski zbornik* 36 (1983): 141-164.

⁶² *CD* 1, 32, no. 23. The same pattern was followed when Pope John X sent his legate Bishop Peter of Orte to the synod in Hohenaltheim (916): *praefatus sancti Petri et domini Iobannis pape missus proferens cartam apostolicis litteris inscriptam, qua monebatur, arguebatur et instruebatur de omnibus ad veram religionem christiane fidei pertinentibus* (MGH Concilia 6/1, 19-20).

At the beginning of the aforementioned letter, the pope reproaches Archbishop John for not having visited Rome in a long time.⁶³ Moreover, it seems that he did not visit Rome at all, since he did not have the *pallium* as the pope's confirmation of his archiepiscopal dignity.⁶⁴ At that time, not every metropolitan was granted the right to wear the *pallium* and the title of archbishop. In the Carolingian period, in addition to the institutional prerogatives, conferring the *pallium* suggested special relations between the see and the papacy. In the case of Salona, we should bear in mind the fact that in 879 Pope John VIII wrote that the archbishop of Salona had to be honored by the *pallium* after his consecration in Rome, i.e. that his consecration should be performed in Rome.⁶⁵ Pope Stephen V (VI) also referred to this tradition, which probably goes back to the consecration of John of Ravenna by the pope.⁶⁶

When the papal legates arrived in Dalmatia, the council was called. The ecclesiastical organization of Dalmatia and Croatia was the main issue on the agenda of the council of Spalato in 925.⁶⁷ Scholars debate the question of the political subordination of these areas in the ninth and tenth centuries.⁶⁸ The council of 925 confirmed the rights of the church of Spalato to the legacy of ancient Salona. It also confirmed the primacy of the church of Spalato, where the body of the holy Dalmatian protector St.

⁶³ CD 1, 29, no. 22.

⁶⁴ Leo VI granted him the *pallium* after the council in Spalato in 928 (CD 1, 39, no. 27).

⁶⁵ CD 1, 17, no. 13.

⁶⁶ HS, 54-55, ch. 11.

⁶⁷ Canons 1, 2, 3; Canons 8, 9, 11, and 12 deal with the cases of individual bishoprics, although the two last canons have great importance for the ecclesiastical organization of Dalmatia and Croatia in general.

⁶⁸ Stjepan Antoljak, "Zadar za vrijeme hrvatskih narodnih vladara" [Zadar at the Time of the Croatian National Rulers], *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru* 14-15 (1976): 23-24. Antoljak follows the traditional opinion of Croatian historiography (up to the mid-twentieth century) that the Croatian king Tomislav was honored with the title of consul by the Byzantine emperor and delegated power over Dalmatia. Meanwhile, Jadran Ferluga, Nada Klaić, and Lujo Margetić have argued that Dalmatia was under the jurisdiction of Byzantium at the beginning of the tenth century. See Nada Klaić, "U povodu priloga Lj. Karamana, O nekim pitanjima hrvatske povijesti do XIII stoljeća" [On the Article by Lj. Karaman 'On Some Questions of Croatian History until the Thirteenth Century'], *Historijski Zbornik* 17 (1964): 414; Ferluga, *L'amministrazione bizantina in Dalmazia*, 186; Lujo Margetić, "Marginalije uz rad V. Koščaka 'Pripadnost istočne obale (...)' [Marginal Notes on the Work of V. Koščak 'The Sway Over the Eastern (...)'], *Historijski Zbornik* 32-34 (1980-1981): 277-283. Mladen Ančić concludes that Byzantium lost control of the eastern Adriatic coast after the overthrow of Duke Zdeslav in 879. See his, "Imperij na zalasku. Nestanak bizantske vlasti na istočnoj obali Jadrana u 9. stoljeću" [The End of Empire: Disappearance of Byzantine Power on the Eastern Adriatic Coast in the Ninth Century], *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 41 (1999): 1-20.

Domnius was buried, in Dalmatia as well as in Croatia. The text of Canon 1 runs:

Since long ago Blessed Domnius was sent by Peter the Apostle to preach in Salona, he has established that this church and city, where his holy remains rest, shall have primacy among all the Churches of this province and shall legitimately obtain the name of metropolis over all the dioceses, therefore by the order of its bishops, who by divine grace retain this see, the synod and the consecration of the bishops shall be celebrated, because the Lord says, "Where he is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."⁶⁹

Since the metropolitan prerogatives of the bishop of Salona–Spalato were challenged by the bishop of Nona, the fathers of the council had to maintain local customs. Thus, the right of the bishopric of Spalato as a successor to the archbishopric of Salona to convoke councils and to consecrate suffragan bishops was confirmed by the authority of the holy protector of Salona–Spalato, St. Domnius himself.

The tradition of attributing the foundation of episcopal, especially metropolitan, sees to disciples of the Apostles, and claiming primatial rights on the grounds of apostolic succession, spread across Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries. The idea was suggested by the forged preface to the Acts of the Council of Nicaea, included in the ninth-century *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*.⁷⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that at the close of the ninth century the church of Spalato should attribute its foundation and its metropolitan competence to the disciple of St. Peter, St. Domnius.

Canons 11 and 12 of the first council in Spalato confirm the subordination of "the bishop of the Croats" (*episcopus Croatorum*), i.e. the bishop of Nona, to the archbishop of Spalato. The status of the bishop of Nona before the first council of Spalato is unknown. It can be assumed

⁶⁹ CD 1, 31, no. 23: *Quoniam antiquitus beatus Domnius ab apostolo Petro predicare Salonam missus est constituitque, ut ecclesia ipsa et civitas ubi sancta eius membra requiescunt inter omnes ecclesias provincie huius primatis habeat et metropolis nomine super omnes episcopatus legitime sortiatur, ita dumtaxat, ut ad eius iussionem episcopi, qui per divinam gratiam cathedram ipsam retinuerint, et sinodus celebretur et consecratio episcoporum; quia dicente domino, 'ubi fuerit illuc congregabuntur et aquile' (Luke 17:37).*

⁷⁰ *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni*, ed. Paul Hinschius (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1863), 255. *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, ed. Kempf, 292. The chapter devoted to the ecclesiastical organization from the ninth to the eleventh century was written by Friedrich Kempf. He refers particularly to the cases of Trier and Cologne, which fought over primacy in the tenth century. See in detail: Eugen Ewig, "Kaiserliche und apostolische Tradition in mittelalterlichen Trier," *Trierer Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* 24-26 (1956-1958): 147-186; *Das Bistum Köln von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Wilhelm Neuss and Friedrich W. Oediger, vol. 1 of *Geschichte des Erzbistums Köln*, ed. Eduard Hegel (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1964), 97-111.

that he was considered one of the bishops of Dalmatia,⁷¹ and subordinated to the metropolitan of Salona–Split, as Canon 11 implies: “Let the bishop of the Croats admit that he is, as we all are, subordinated to our metropolitan Church.”⁷²

Canon 12 determines that “if the Croatian king or nobles venture to subdue all the bishoprics of our metropolitan province to their own pontiff, then no bishop of our province will baptize, or consecrate churches or priests in the territory of their province.”⁷³ King Tomislav and Duke Michael appear marginally in the documents. Their participation in the councils is questionable, although they, together with the Dalmatian bishops, called upon the pope to send his representatives to Dalmatia. This canon implies that the king of Croatia and his aristocracy supported the claim of the bishop of the Croats.

⁷¹ CD 1, 32, no. 23. The preamble of the first council of Spalato lists Bishop Gregory of Nona among the Dalmatian ecclesiastical hierarchy: *dictus Croatorum rex et Michaele cum suis proceribus simulque episcopis Dalmatiarum, idem Ioannes archiepiscopus primas Spaleto, Forminus, Gregorius ceterisque episcopis consulenter poposcerunt dictum uenerabilem papam....*

⁷² The fact that Bishop Theodosius was consecrated in Rome means that the bishopric of Nona had had a certain independent status in Dalmatia under Pope John VIII. When Theodosius became the archbishop of Salona, the bishopric of Nona may have been subordinated to the metropolis of Dalmatia. There was an analogous case in the late tenth century when Bishop Giselher of Merseburg (971-981) became the archbishop of Magdeburg (981-1004). In order to legitimate Giselher’s transfer from a smaller and poorer church to another, larger and richer one, the bishopric of Merseburg, Otto the Great’s foundation, was regarded as nonexistent on the grounds of its uncanonical foundation and *de facto* dissolved. Its territories were partly given to the archiepiscopal see, although it did not last. See Karl Uhlirz, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Otto II. und Otto III.*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1902), 158-159; Siegfried Hirsch, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Heinrich II.*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1862), 274.

⁷³ CD 1, 32, no. 23: *Quod si rex et proceres Croatorum omnes dioceseos episcoporum infra limites nostre metropolitane suo cupiunt vindicare pontifici, nullus ex nostris per omnem provinciam eorum neque regenerationes faciat, neque ecclesias vel presbiteros consecret; tam(en) in suis sedibus commorantibus pro misericordie opus quisquis ad nos accesserit consecrari, regenerari, crismam sibi dari poposcerit, absque scropulo omni per totam provinciam ipsa tribuant. De cetero autem ipsi, cum suo pontifice, deo reddant rationem de his omnibus, que in eis chrystiane religionis dogma defuerit; nostra coram deo conscientia est absoluta.* The distinction between “our metropolis” and “their province” is not clear. There is probably a mixture of the ecclesiastical and political notions. “Our metropolis” was certainly an ecclesiastical unit, which must have comprised not only coastal Dalmatia, but also Croatian territories, since *episcopus Croatorum* was proclaimed a suffragan of the metropolitan Church. “Their province” can be perceived as a political unit. At the beginning of the acts of the councils, it is said that these events took place *tempore Iobannis pape sanctissimo (!), consulato peragente in prouintia Croatorum et Dalmatiarum finibus Tamisclao et Michaele (!) in suis finibus presidente duce, beatissimo igitur Ioanne Romane ecclesie presidente cathedra.* Thus “the province of the Croats” was definitely differentiated from the *Dalmatiarum fines*, that is, the territories of the Dalmatian cities (*Dalmatiarum ciuitates*). See CD 1, 33, no. 23.

The acts of the first council of Spalato were submitted to the pope through his legates and Presbyter Peter of Spalato. As the short introduction to the papal answer reveals, the council's decisions met with the open disagreement of Bishop Gregory of Nona, "the bishop of the Croats," who "wishing to acquire the primacy over Dalmatian bishops, which he had not executed before, directed his unjust objections against the decision of the synod to apostolic ears."⁷⁴ All these facts lead to the conclusion that "the bishop of the Croats," namely of Nona, aspired to the metropolitan rights over Dalmatia and Croatia. His pretension was probably based on the success of Theodosius in the second half of the ninth century. Nonetheless, there is no evidence to the legality of Gregory's claim, and, as it is clear from the previously cited passage, the anonymous composer of the texts, who called Bishop Gregory "our brother" (*frater noster*), asserted that the bishop of Nona never had primacy in Dalmatia.

In his reply, sent through Presbyter Peter, the pope confirmed the canons of the council, except for the disputable ones.⁷⁵ It can be supposed that they were those relating to the question of primacy in Dalmatia and Croatia (Canons 1, 12), subordination of the Croatian bishop (Canons 2, 11), and the boundaries of Dalmatian dioceses. John X, who personally wished to hear the arguments of both sides, proposed that Archbishop John of Spalato or his representative should visit Rome together with Bishop Gregory of Nona.

Nothing is known about the results of their argument. However, in 928, another council was held. The papal legate (*apocrisarius*), Madalbertus, on his way to Rome from Bulgaria, where he had moderated peace negotiations between Bulgaria and Croatia, summoned the second council of Spalato, which was attended by bishops John, Forminus, and Gregory, as well as the Croatian prince (presumably Tomislav) and aristocracy. Madalbertus, as the papal legate, confirmed all the boundaries of ancient Dalmatian dioceses under the rule of the archbishop of Spalato,⁷⁶ as well as "all episcopal privileges according to the ancient decrees for all

⁷⁴ CD 1, 35, no. 25: *Sed cum terminare cuncta legitime antiquo more prestolaremur ... fuit fratris nostri episcopi nonensis, qui sibi vindicare cupiens primatum Dalmatarum episcoporum, hoc quod non expediebat, contra dictam sinodum an auribus apostolicis iniustum iniecit certamen.*

⁷⁵ CD 1, 35-36, no. 25. This is the last mention of the title of the archbishop of Salona in the documents.

⁷⁶ CD 1, 37, no. 26: *tam Jadaritana quam cetera Dalmatarum, Arbenis, Velclensis, Absaranensis, que sunt in occiduae parte posite; ecclesie uero alie, que in oriente habentur, id est Stagnensis, Ragusitana et Catharitana....*

churches.”⁷⁷ The metropolitan rights of Salona were fixed forever for “the Church of St. Domnius,” that is, Spalato as the successor to Salona.

As far as the bishopric of Nona is concerned, it was completely abolished, because according to the conciliar decision, “the Church of Nona had no bishop since ancient times, but only an archpriest under the supervision of the bishop.”⁷⁸ The second council applied Canon 2 of the first one to the case of the bishopric of Nona. It decreed that the only sees that could preserve the status of bishoprics were those which had had a bishop for a long time, as well as enough clergy and people. As far as minor ecclesiastical communities in small towns and villages were concerned, the canon prescribed that, according to the “decrees of the Fathers,” such churches could not have their own bishops, for thus “the very title of bishop would be devalued.”⁷⁹ This canon alludes to Canon 6 of the council in Serdica (342 or 343), which says that a bishop should not be ordained in a village or small town, since a priest could take care of it.⁸⁰ As it is said in the acts of the second council, the Church of Nona had been taken care of by the “archpriest under the supervision of the bishop.” The bishop very often entrusted the supervision over baptismal churches to rural archpriests.⁸¹ Their parishes consisted of a baptistery and some

⁷⁷ CD 1, 37, no. 26. As a European parallel to the Salonian Canon, one can regard Canon 10 of the synod in Hohenaltheim, which also confirmed privileges of all churches: *Privilegia ecclesiarum et sacerdotum sancti apostoli iussu salvatoris intemerata et inviolata omnibus decreverunt manere temporibus* (MGH Concilia 6/1, 23). It follows canon 15 of the decree of Pseudo-Anacletus, *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae*, ed. Hinschius, 73, 21-22.

⁷⁸ CD 1, 37, no. 26: *Nomensis vero ecclesia non episcopum antiquitus, sed archipresbiterum sub dictione episcopi habuisse cognoscitur.*

⁷⁹ CD 1, 31, no. 23: *Ut in cunctis ecclesiis, in quibus supra recolitur episcopos habitasse, nunc autem clero, ordine et populis sufficiens adest infra dioceseos limites, episcopus habeatur; quia iuxta decreta patrum non licet in modicis civitatibus uel villis episcopos statui, ne nomen episcopi uilescat, et ut episcopus uacans uacantem diocesim cum consilio metropolitani et ceterorum episcoporum commune accipiat.*

⁸⁰ In the collection of Dionysius Exiguus (PL 67, 178A-B): *Licentia vero danda non est ordinandi episcopum aut in vico aliquo, aut in modica civitate, cui sufficit unus presbyter, quia non est necesse ibi episcopum fieri, ne uilescat nomen episcopi et auctoritas. Non debent in his civitatibus quae episcopos habuerunt, aut si qua talis, aut tam populosa civitas, quae meretur habere episcopum.* See also Hess, *Early Development*, 157-161.

⁸¹ The synod of Pavia in 850 decreed that every bishop had to supervise archpriests in rural parishes, as well as *in singulis urbium vicis et suburbanis et per municipalium* (MGH Capitularia 2, 118, ch. 6). The capitulary of Verneuil, issued by Carloman, king of the Western Franks (882-884), prescribes that *in vicis autem et villis longe a civitate remotis unusquisque episcopus reverendos et cantos atque prudentia morem temperatos presbyteros ... ad quos alii presbyteri minores et minus cauti suam causam referant* (MGH Capitularia 2, 373-374 [March 884]). There is a chapter in the capitulary of Ravenna, issued by Lambert II (of Spoleto, emperor 892-898) in 898: *Ut singulae plebes archipresbyterum habeant* (MGH Capitularia 2, 110, ch. 12). It is highly probable that the acts of the councils in Spalato refer to this archpriest supervising such a parish as *plebania*.

chapels.⁸² Unfortunately, it is not said which bishop supervised the archpriest of Nona. We can only suppose that this refers to one of the bishops whose sees were offered to Gregory of Nona by the council in exchange for his bishopric. The council proposed that Bishop Gregory should choose the see of one of three dioceses: *Scardonitana*, *Sisciana*, or *Delminiensis*. Since Siscia (present-day Sisak) and Delminium were too far away from Nona, the most appropriate ecclesiastical center for the diocese of Nona would have been Scardona (present-day Skradin). The church of Nona *de facto* extended its jurisdiction, challenged by the councils at Spalato, over the territory of the Croats, which included the former dioceses of Scardona, Siscia, and Delminium. Therefore, the fathers of the council corrected the situation under which the bishop of Nona had controlled all three vacant sees, whose bishops had been unmentioned since the sixth century.⁸³

Bishop Madalbert took the acts of the council to Rome, where the deposed and killed John X had been replaced by Leo VI (May/June–December 928). Leo VI confirmed the decrees of the second council of Spalato and in his letter to bishops Forminus of Zadar, Gregory of Nona, and all the Dalmatian bishops, urged them to obey their metropolitan, the archbishop of Spalato, and not to intrude in another's diocese. He approved that the archbishop of Spalato should have his parish in the land of the Croats, because the Church of Salona had had it and “the parish could not [be] only inside the walls of the city, but [should stretch] throughout the lands in the countryside, to villages, landlords' homesteads, and churches as well as among the people, [who had been] assigned to it since ancient times.”⁸⁴ The pope suggested that Gregory of Nona should occupy the see of Scardona without any attempt to claim other sees, under the threat of excommunication. The pope sent the *pallium* to Archbishop John of Spalato. From that time, the metropolitans of Dalmatia and Croatia were called not of Salona, but of Spalato.⁸⁵

⁸² Alain Amanieu, “Archiprêtre,” in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, vol. 1, ed. Raoul Naz (Paris: Letouzey and Ané, 1935), 1004–1026. Such archpriests were first mentioned at the sixth-century councils in Gaul. In the mid-ninth century, the Gallic terminology was applied to the similar institution in Lombard Italy (e.g. in the previously quoted capitulary of Pavia issued in 850).

⁸³ *CD* 1, 37, no. 26. The existence of the diocese of Delminium is questionable, although the acts of the council of Spalato in 928 confirms it. See counterarguments posed by Ante Škegro, “Tobožnja Delminijska biskupija” [The Alleged Diocese of Delminium], *Opuscula Archaeologica Radovi Arheološkog zavoda* 31 (2008): 283–302.

⁸⁴ *CD* 1, 38–39, no. 27.

⁸⁵ *CD* 1, 39, no. 27 (928–929): *Ioanni, sancte Spalatensis ecclesie archiepiscopo*; *CD* 1, 47, no. 32 (9 February 994): *Martini, archiepiscopi Spalatensis*; *CD* 1, 101, no. 72 (1066): *Laurentio, sancte sedis Spalatine archiepiscopo*, etc.

In the present-day historiography, there prevails an opinion that before 925 the church of Spalato had no metropolitan rights in Dalmatia.⁸⁶ It found its clearest expression in Mirjana Matijević Sokol's book. Discussing Thomas' narrative about John of Ravenna, and concluding that his information on the early history of the metropolitan church of Spalato lacks precision and does not deserve to be believed, the author clearly postulates that the first canon of the council of Spalato in 925 presents firm evidence of the elevation of the see of Spalato to metropolitan status in the tenth century.⁸⁷

I have argued that if we do not overcriticize the available sources and their evidence, presented in this paper and mostly well-known in Croatian historiography since Ivan Lučić's times, it must be admitted that the see of Spalato claimed metropolitan privileges over the see of Salona and obtained them before the tenth-century councils of Spalato, and that the provision of the first canon of the council of Spalato in 925 did not implement, but rather confirmed them against the Bishop of Nona's lawless pretension.

⁸⁶ Toma Arhiđakon, *Povijest salonitanskih i splitskih prvosvećenika* [Historia Salonitanorum atque spalatinorum pontificum], ed. Olga Perić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol, and Radoslav Katičić (Split: Književni krug, 2003), 49 n. 1; 408; *HS*, 58 n. 3; 88 n. 1.

⁸⁷ Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhiđakon*, 91: "Meanwhile it is well-known that the metropolitan rights of the archbishops of Salona, i.e. of Spalato, were settled in 925 at the first council of Spalato, when all the bishops of Upper and Lower Dalmatia, including the bishop of the Croats, were subjected to the first archbishop John as their metropolitan." Further in the text, she argues that Pope John VIII was the first to suggest to the Dalmatian churches that they should restore the metropolitan province, although this project was realized more than forty years later.