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Devotion in Migration: The Employment of Religious Poetry in Thirteenth-Century Zadar and Split

Abstract

This short study looks into three examples of poetry-to-object migrations in the thirteenth-century Adriatic. By analysing the verse inscriptions on two Romanesque crucifixes from Zadar and Leo Cacete's epitaph from Split, the primary concern of the paper is to situate these objects into the frame of migrations in visual and devotional culture of the later Middle Ages. To that end, the paper will tackle the issues of extraction, display and usage of devotional verse inscriptions etched on the objects in question.

Key words: *Romanesque crucifixes, devotional objects, Hildebert of Lavardin, Pseudo-Bernard of Clairveaux, medieval devotional practices, religious poetry, medieval Zadar, medieval Split*

In numerous cases poetry has had considerable resonance in the visual arts, in medieval and modern times alike. Among recent contributions to the topic, Maximos Constas has examined the twelfth-century incorporation of Joseph the Hymnographer's writings into the major decorative programs and panel painting of the Middle Byzantine period. Constas concludes that artists and their high-status patrons were "studying and absorbing poetic themes and images, and increasingly visualizing them in painting and other visual media."[1] These artworks, one can say, are a product of migrations from poetry to painting, and were generated by their well-educated commissioners.

The migration I propose to examine in this essay is more explicit – the themes from poetry were not transposed into the pictorial medium, but, rather, the verses were directly applied onto the artworks. More precisely, the portions of text from the twelfth-century ecclesiastical poems were extracted from their original, i.e. textual, context and then displayed on two

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1   Fr. M. Constas, Poetry and Painting in the Middle Byzantine Period: A Bilateral Icon from Kastoria and the Stavrotheotokia of Joseph the Hymnographer, in: *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, ed. S. E. J. Gerstel, Turnhout 2016, 13-31.

monumental crosses from Zadar and an epitaph from Split. These verses cannot be used as historical sources in the narrow sense of the word since they do not exhibit dating formula or the name of the master/commissioner, and, as such, have played little to no part in the existing scholarship on these objects. Moving beyond traditional trajectories of art historical analysis by placing verses in the centre of attention, it is my aim to examine how they partake in the inexhaustible phenomenon of migrations in both visual and devotional culture of the later Middle Ages.

The Zadar Crucifixes and their Verse Inscriptions

Much has been written about the style and the Byzantine-driven shallow relief of the mid-thirteenth-century Saint Michael's crucifix from Zadar (fig. 1).[2] Since no convincing stylistic and typological parallel has been found, this object remains an "unsolved mystery", as Igor Fisković has defined it together with other Romanesque crucifixes from Zadar.[3] More importantly for the present discussion, under the arms of the Suffering Christ, a double-rimmed verse written in golden capital letters in English translation runs as: + *The King dies, she cries, the beloved one grieves, the impious one prays*.[4]

This verse can rightfully be defined as 'migrating' since it was widely disseminated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For instance, it is crowning the relief of the Deposition from the Cross in the cloister of the Santo Domingo abbey in Silos, Spain (fig. 2).[5] Nearly two thousand kilometres air distance from Silos lies Ribe, the medieval Danish city known for its cathedral, whose main portal as well presents the scene of Deposition from the Cross and exhibits the very same "Rex obit" verse (fig. 3). The list of objects displaying this inscription continues, and a dozen manuscripts scattered all over Europe attest to considerable

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2   For the most recent account on the crucifix, including bibliography, see E. Hilje, R. Tomić, *Slikarstvo: umjetnička baština Zadarske nadbiskupije,* Zadar 2006, 98-99 (*Cat. No. 17 Zadarski majstor (?). Slikano raspelo, XIII. stoljeće*).

3   I. Fisković, Painting, in: *Croatia in the Early Middle Ages: A Cultural Survey*, ed. I. Supčić, London 1999, 508. Fisković was referring to the so-called Franciscan crucifix, but his remark most certainly holds true for the Saint Michael crucifix as well. Bearing in mind the fact that the text displayed on the cross has not yet been properly studied, Fisković's remark is even more appropriate.

4   M. M. Marušić, Verses of Faith and Devotion. Seeing, Reading and Touching Monumental Crucifixes with Inscription (12th–13th Century), *Studia Ceranea* 6 (2016), 397-421.

5   + REX OBIT HEC PLORAT CARVUS DOLET IMPIVS ORAT; P. S. Brown, The Verse Inscription from the Deposition Relief at Santo Domingo de Silos: Word, Image, and Act in Medieval Art, *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 1 (2009), 87-111.

dissemination of this verse – in different geographical areas and in different original settings.[6]

The common denominator of all these disparate artefacts is the verse they display. What connects the listed examples is the initial line of religious poem nicknamed *Copenhagen octave*, most probably produced in Liège, and usually ascribed to Hildebert of Lavardin (ca. 1055–1133).[7] The final line reveals its probable reading on the occasion of the celebration of the Virgin's feast. Furthermore, the word 'sumite', the plural imperative of verb 'sumo', clearly addresses the congregation at the mass. The Latin poem reads as follows:

> *Rex obit, hec plorat, carus dolet, impius orat,*
> *sol fugit, astra tremunt, pavet hostis, corpora surgunt.*
> *In cruce Christus obit, sepelitur et inde resurgit,*
> *corpus in hoc magni sanguis sanccitur et agni,*
> *per carnis culpam mortem gustaverat Adam,*
> *per panis speciem passuram sumite carnem*
> *Iste sapor vivi fluxit de vulnere Christi.*
> *Unaquaque die celebremus festa Marie.*[8]

While discussing the migration and dissemination of this verse, however, it is important to stress how the initial verse on the above mentioned objects was not necessarily extracted from this specific liturgical text. As a matter of fact, medieval poetry had circulated in various forms as well as under different names, while the verses were often changed or rewritten relying upon the 'original'. Besides variability and instability of medieval literature, false attributions to Church fathers or celebrated poets is another commonplace of poetry production, in the first place devotional.[9] The "Rex obit" verse is a case in point since it has circulated separately from Hildebert's supposed original. It was occasionally followed by the

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6   Besides the understated objects, the list includes: twelfth-century manuscript now treasured at Zürich, but probably produced in Paris, twelfth-century French copy of *De laude sanctae Mariae* by Guilbert de Nogent (today in the Vatican library), early-twelfth century sacramentary now in Florence's Biblioteca Riccardiana, in the later, twelfth-century, additions to tenth-century manuscript of Anglo-Norman liturgical miscellanea, today in Rouen (Bibliothèque municipale), manuscript of miscellanea now in Lucca (Biblioteca Statale), but produced in Paris, and the list of known examples concludes with early-thirteenth century manuscript in the Madrid's Biblioteca National. For detailed information on these examples see, P. S. Brown, The Verse Inscription, 88-89.

7   The poem is known from the late-twelfth century manuscript today treasured in Copenhagen, but originally belonging to the Benedictine monastery in Liesborn, Westphalia; ibid., 88.

8   Ibid., 95.

9   T. H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, Philadelphia 1996, 12-14.

second verse of the poem in form of a distich, and, as such can be traced to the later twelfth-century collections of devotional poetry.[10] Therefore, the source from which this particular verse was extracted, and applied onto the Zadar crucifix, seem impossible to verify.

Maybe an even more captivating example of the poetry-to-object transfer can be found on the now-lost crucifix from Zadar, treasured in the Benedictine Nunnery of Saint Mary up until its destruction in the Second World War.[11] Probably dating from the middle of the thirteenth century, the crucifix carried two verse inscriptions (fig. 4). The origin of the lower one (+ *The sun is hiding, the world is trembling, the cliff is shaking, this one dies*) still remains to be examined.[12] However, the motifs in the verse are to some extent comparable to those from the second line of the *Copenhagen octave*. As has already been noted, this verse was occasionally combined with the "Rex obit" line fused in a distich, and, as such, has witnessed a considerable diffusion.

Above the arms of the Living Christ, the thirteenth and the fourteenth verse from the Pseudo-Bernard of Clairveaux's "Hortatory poem to Rainald" (*Carmen paraeneticum ad Rainaldum*) were displayed: *Whoever loves Christ does not love this world, but scorns its love as it scorns a stench*.[13] Observing the inscriptions more closely, it is important to highlight the different epigraphy of the lower and upper inscription. Given the fact that the upper inscription exhibits the fourteenth-century letter forms and numerous ligatures, it seems as if Pseudo-Bernard's lines have been incised onto the object after the execution of the crucifix in the middle of the previous century, and display of the lower verse in capital lettering.[14] Therefore, the Benedictine cross most probably has two layers of inscriptions, as well as two different stages of their display.

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10   R. Favreau, Sources des inscriptions médiévales, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 153/4 (2009), 1295-1296. Moreover, the *Rex obit* verse was occasionally combined with the verse *Derogat his, gemit hec, obit is, dolet hic, rogat iste*, thus forming a different distich; R. Favreau, Sources, 1295. Furthermore, different alternations, as for instance on the book cover of a Gospel Book from Hildesheim, now in Trier, or the small enamel plaque showing the Crucifixion in the Paris' Musée de Cluny, both dating from ca. 1170; P. Lasko, *Ars Sacra 800-1200²*, London 1994, 210-211.

11   I. Petricioli, Umjetnička baština samostana sv. Marije u Zadru, in: *Kulturna baština samostana svete Marije u Zadru*, ed. G. Novak, V. Maštrović, Zadar 1968, 86.

12   + SOL LATET, ORIBISQVE TREMIT, SAXVM CREPITAT, ISTE CEDIT. Translation according to G. Gamulin, *The Painted Crucifixes in Croatia*, Zagreb 1983, 50.

13   QVISQVIS AMAT CHRISTVM MVNVDVM NON DILIGIT ISTVM / SED QVASI FETORES SPERNET ILIVS AMORE. Translation according to G. Gamulin, *The Painted Crucifixes*, 50.

14   It seems, therefore, that the Benedictine cross originally had only one verse inscription, as is case with the Saint Michael cross, as well as the Franciscan cross, both from Zadar; M. M. Marušić, Verses of Faith and Devotion.

Religious Verses as Epitaph Inscriptions

The third example stands out from the previous two. At issue here is not a lavishly decorated devotional object but a rather simple gravestone, now walled in the cloister of the Saint Francis friary in Split (fig. 5). The epitaph marked the burial place of Leo Cacete, his son Stephen and their heirs.[15] As recorded in the text, Leo died in 1296 and the text for his resting place was most certainly composed around that time. Although the funerary inscription had been previously known,[16] only recently has the provenance of the verses been taken into further consideration. Bratislav Lučin has explained that the epitaph is actually a puzzle-poem brought together by combining various lines from Pseudo-Bernard's *Carmen*, the same poem employed on the Benedictine cross in Zadar.[17]

The six inscribed verses were extracted from the original poem in which they did not follow one another. Set together forming a patchwork displayed on the epitaph, certain verses were displayed on Leo's gravestone. Lučin's transcription of the epitaph, combined with his enumeration of verses from the original poem, faithfully copied or rewrote (in brackets), reveals how the poem was composed:

> *Quam miser est et erit qui gaudia mundi querit,* (187)
> *Nam sua dulcedo delabitur ordine fedo:* (96)
> *Prebet sub mellis dulcedine pocula fellis.* (87)
> *Cuncta relinquentur nec plus hic invenientur.* (81)
> *Nonne vides mundum miserum et in omnibus nudum* (34)
> *Omnibus hoc Leo dico ne se dent inimico,* (93)
> *Nam sic viventes facit et miseros et egentes.* (164)
> *Cordis in aure repone me moriente Leone* (6)
> *Abiectoque foris ceno carnalis amoris.*[18]

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15 Practically nothing in known on Leo Cacete (reading of the name according to Bratislav Lučin), and his background. See Alberti, Lav (Leo de Albertis?), *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. I, ed. N. Kolumbić, Zagreb 1983, 61-62.

16 A. Duplančić, Nekadašnje groblje kod splitskih konventualaca, *Kulturna baština* 16 (1985), 45-56, 50.

17 B. Lučin, *Još jedan splitski srednjovjekovni epitaf*, blog entry at the *MARVLVS ET AL.*, URL: http://marcusmarulus.blogspot.hr/2011/06/jos-jedan-splitski-srednjovjekovni.html (7. 11. 2016.). The poem is included in the electronical collection *Croatiae auctores latini* (CroALa): Anonymus (fl. 1296) [1296], *Epitaphium Leonis Spalatensis, versio electronica* (Split), 9 versus, verborum 97, ed. B. Lučin, URL: http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/klafil/croala/cgi-bin/getobject.pl?c.20:1.croala.3503 (7. 11. 2016).

18 The end of the epitaph reads: *Dominus Leo Cacete istum elegit locum sue quietis pro se et suo filio Stephano ac suis omnibus heredibus, in quo loco et quiescit sepultus. Anno Domini MCCXCVI, mense Decembri, die XX.* Lučin, Još jedan splitski srednjovjekovni epitaf.

It can be presumed that in all three cases the extracted verses were particularly important to their commissioners and users. This is particularly clear in the case from Split since many medieval epitaphs exhibit poetry, either composed for that purpose, or compiled from other sources.[19] The same phenomenon can be traced in other types of contemporary texts as well. Joško Belamarić has recently analysed the proem of the Split Statute from 1312, and therefore slightly posterior to Leo's epitaph. The author of the proem, Perceval of Fermo, is the actual composer of the last two lines, while others rely upon a wide range of sources, Classical and contemporary (medieval) alike.[20]

To that extent the "reuse and repackaging" of verses was a commonplace of medieval written culture. When it comes to devotional literature, on the other hand, the choice of particular verses from larger poems should be understood as extraction of portions of text, particularly important to their users. Indeed, repeatedly read religious literature was used selectively, that is, not being read from the first to the last line, and returning to certain verses in order to meditate upon the passion of Christ was indeed encouraged.[21] At the same time, new prayers were regularly added both to personal prayer books and liturgical books, out of which the verses displayed on objects in question were most probably extracted.[22]

Devotional Transfer and its Response

Still, bearing in mind that Pseudo-Bernard's verses were inscribed on the Benedictine cross sometime later than its manufacturing, this act requires further scrutiny. The physical trace left on the object of devotion can be observed through the lens of graffiti in the form of acclamations and short prayers engraved on effigies of saints and walls of sacred spaces since early Christian times.[23] Ann Marie Yasin's insight, although the focus of her study

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19   See R. Katičić, *Litterarum studia. Književnost i naobrazba ranog hrvatskog srednjovjekovlja*², Zagreb 2007, 538-559.

20   J. Belamarić, Proemij splitskog statuta, in: *Splitski statut iz 1312. godine: Povijest i pravo, povodom 700. obljetnice. Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa održanog od 24. do 25. rujna 2012. godine u Splitu*, ed. Ž. Radić, M. Trogrlić, M. Meccarelli, L. Steindorff, Split 2015, 509-526. Belamarić underlines the importance of collections of proverbs, poetry and religious literature in general, in circulation among upper classes of medieval urban laity, see ibid., 512.

21   F. Holy, *The Devout Belief on the Imagination. The Paris Meditationes Vitae Christi and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy*, Turnhout 2009, 84-85.

22   K. M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces. How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts*, Cambridge 2016, 88-98.

23   See L. Miglio, C. Tedeschi, Per lo studio dei graffiti medievali. Caratteri, categorie, esempi, in: *Storie di cultura scritta. Studi per Francesco Magistrale*, ed. P. Fioretti, Spoleto 2012, 605-628.

were graffiti up to the seventh century, seems particularly useful. Apart from material manifestations of devotional practices, engravings of this type were communicated to subsequent viewers, and were, Yasin explains, transforming the landscape of a sacred space.[24] What is more, they existed as concretized presence of the audience. Composed primarily in the form of written personal names, acclamations, and short prayers, they were signalising the specific site within the devotional topography of the church interiors.[25]

The case of devotional verse on the Benedictine crucifix is different because this act was far more delicate. Both the lettering and the layout of inscriptions point to a professional hand rather than to any worshiper. The fact that someone had a right to inscribe two verses on a devotional object inclines me to think of its patron as the most probable individual to perform the act.[26] If this is correct, the usage of verses from the same devotional poem by imprinting them on the epitaph and crucifix is comparable since the choice of religious poetry was determined by devotion of those who wanted to display them, and were privileged to do so.

On a more general level, borrowing Matthew Champion's title of his recent book on medieval graffiti, these verses can also be perceived as the "lost voices."[27] Although our knowledge of how the intended audience might have responded to objects in question is still insufficient, the pious formulas etched on them can be recognised as graffiti-voices of celebrated poets such as Hildebert or Pseudo-Bernard and their widely-known verses. To that extent, these verses are similar to epigrams on icons in the Byzantine world. As in the cases here discussed, many epigrams were composed as independent poems, and were only later (sometimes even a century later) displayed on images.[28]

The full-scale insight into the very process of original usage of verses in texts and their employment on objects still awaits future examination. While dealing with more or less analogous cases from the East, Henry Maguire

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24   A. M. Yasin, Prayers on Site: The Materiality of Devotional Graffiti and the Production of Early Christian Sacred Space, in: *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. A. Eastmond, New York 2015, 36-60, 40.

25   Ibid., 44.

26   Indeed, there are examples of lay individuals or religious groups that claimed patronage over monumental crucifixes, as is, for example, attested in the eleventh-century Naples, see S. D'Ovidio, Spazio liturgico e rappresentazione del sacro: crocifissi monumentali d'età romanica a Napoli e in Campania, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 20/2 (2014), 756-757.

27   M. Champion, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches*, London 2015.

28   H. Maguire, Art and Text, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds. E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon and R. Cormack, Oxford 2008, 724.

tends to see acts of "inscribing a particular poem on a particular work of art" as an "act of viewer response."[29] Relying upon Maguire's observation, a distinction between originally displayed verses and those subsequently added should be underlined. While it can be argued that in both cases the commissioners had chosen the text displayed on objects, seeing inscriptions as graffiti enables us to perceive the additional verses as a physical interaction not only with images, but with the 'migrating' text, as well.

Devotion to Crosses and Inscriptions

From what has so far been set forth, the question arises as to how inscriptions worked in their devotional and spatial context. Were the verses applied onto the objects read and contemplated upon as a part of image-driven devotion to crucifixes,[30] or was their very presence enhancing the spiritual experience? Inscriptions, we can speculate, did not serve solely as an additional feature on these objects that accompanied the imposing figure of the Crucified. Their versification is a strong argument for their oral performance, as well as for their accessibility in sacred spaces.[31] The vocalised style of reading, moreover, helped in deciphering a written text for only marginally lettered laymen, especially when reading simple (i.e. short) devotional texts.[32]

Furthermore, it is important to underline the highly probable interaction between the Zadar crucifixes and their users. Inscriptions in these cases were not framing a certain depiction (as on Silos or Ribe reliefs), but, being cut by the figure of Christ in two, were merged with the imagery. In this light, moreover, we cannot overlook the yellowish golden-like rendition of letters which gave them a special aura of sacredness by infusing the written word with divine presence.[33] At the same time, it is also true that verses

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29   Ibid., 724.

30   On the issue of late-medieval crucifixes in sacred spaces, see D. Cooper, Projecting Presence: The Monumental Cross in the Italian Church Interior, in: *Presence: The Inherence of Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, ed. R. Maniura, R. Shepherd, Aldershot 2006, 47-70; M. Bacci, *Shaping the Sacred: Painted Crosses and Shrines in Thirteenth-Century Pisa, in: Mittelalterliche Tafelkreuze. La Croce dipinta nel Medioevo. Akten des Studientags der Bibliotheca Hertziana am 3. und 4. November 2005. = Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 38, ed. K. Ch. Schüppel, Münich 2010, 113-129.

31   H. L. Kessler, Inscriptions on Painted Crosses and the Spaces of Personal and Communal Meditation, in: *Inscriptions in Liturgical Spaces = Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 24, ed. K. B. Aavitsland, T. Kalsen Seim, Rome 2011, 161-84.

32   D. C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia 2006, 12-14.

33   E. Thunø, Inscription and Divine Presence: Golden Letters in the Early Medieval Apse Mosaic, *Word & Image* 27/3 (2011), 279, 281.

did not actually have to be read in order to be perceived as a distinguished feature on these objects.[34] The wider perspective of inscriptions in sacred spaces reveals that they were visual, rather than linguistic phenomena: seeing them was equally as important as reading them.[35]

Further evidence can be drawn from a number of medieval depictions showing beholders before crucifixes, of crucial interest for the present discussion being the fresco in the 'vaults' of the Prato cathedral (fig. 6). It depicts a devotee in prayerful state, kneeling down with his hands upraised in prayer and eyes fixed on the crucifix. On the altar table there is an open book with the initial verse of the Psalm Fifty.[36] Not surprisingly, the passages from the Holy Scripture and various liturgical texts were commonly used in devotional performance, while certain verses were also occasionally applied on church buildings.[37]

The closest example to Zadar crosses is the silver crucifix from Vercelli. Dated around 1000, it bears an inscription beneath the arms of the Living Christ, an elaboration of the passage from the Gospel of John (19:26) (fig. 7).[38] Chronologically closer is the mid-twelfth century Rosano Cross (fig. 8), which displays a number of verses of different origin, including the commentary of Biblical scenes, as well as verses possibly authored by poets such as Hildebrand of Lavardin or Fulcoius of Beauvais.[39]

Eastern Adriatic objects discussed here partake in the same phenomena or employment of sacred and religious texts. The difference, however, lies in the nature of the texts inscribed: they were not elaborations of the Biblical passages, but direct quotations from medieval poetry that enjoyed great popularity at the time. From books fashioned for personal devotion, the verses in question were transferred onto objects of

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34   J. F. Hamburger, *Script as Image*, Paris 2014, 1-2, 52.

35   Bente Kiilerich, Visual and Functional Aspects of Inscriptions in Early Church Floors, in: *Inscriptions in Liturgical Spaces = Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 24, ed. K. B. Aavitsland, T. Karlsen Seim, Rome 2011, 61.

36   The inscription reads: MISERERE MEI DEVS SECVNDVM MISERICORDIAM TVAM; V. M. Schmidt, *Painted Piety. Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany*, Florence 2005, 83, 85.

37   See, for instance, C. Tedeschi, Preghiere incise nella pietra. Tre iscrizioni liturgiche a Bominaco, in: *Segni per Armando Petrucci*, ed. L. Miglio, P. Supino, Roma 2002, 265-281.

38   The inscription reads: MVLIER ECCE FILIVS TVVS E AD DISCIPVLUM AVTEM ECCE MATER TVA; A. Peroni, Effigi di culto in oreficeria: precedenti e paralleli delle croci dipinte, in: *La pittura su tavola del secolo XII. Riconsiderazioni e nuove acquisizioni a seguito del restauro della croce di Rosano*, ed. C. Frosinini, G. Wolf, A. Monciatti, Firenze 2012, 91-106.

39   S. Riccioni, La Croce di Rosano oltre il Lazio e la Toscana. Riflessi 'europei' della 'riforma Gregoriana', in: *La pittura su tavola del secolo XII. Riconsiderazioni e nuove acquisizioni a seguito del restauro della Croce di Rosano*, ed. C. Frosinini, G. Wolf, A. Monciatti, Florence 2012, 119-132.

collective devotion in the public realm of sacred space, thus reaching a much wider audience.

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In all these examples, what can initially be defined as the use or reuse of the popular and widely-circulating religious texts on the newly commissioned objects of devotion, outlines what Peter Scott Brown has called the "pan-European frontier" of devotional culture and text-image studies of the medieval Continent.[40] While Silos relief, Ribe portal and Zadar crucifix are rooted in the medieval artistic production of the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia and the Eastern Adriatic respectively, they are all endowed with the same pious formula in form of the "Rex obit" inscription. The geographical distance was bridged by way of circulation of liturgical manuals and collections of ecclesiastical poetry so that the verse(s) composed in the twelfth century northern Europe could have easily been read and applied onto an object in the late thirteenth-century Adriatic. Therefore, while the study of the formal characteristics of Zadar crucifixes is rightfully limited to the Adriatic region,[41] the perspective of their verses is necessarily much broader.

Having stated that, it is my hope that the questions outlined in this essay propose exciting possibilities for future research on medieval devotional and book cultures. For the later middle ages archival sources such as the last wills or inventories of goods enable scholars to encapsulate the bulk of religious literature, which has been read in certain cities.[42] For the earlier centuries, on the other hand, only secondary sources such as the verses on objects here discussed can help us better understand the interplay of poetry and objects in medieval devotional practices. As a result, the Zadar crucifixes are not only impressive examples of religious images, but along with the Split epitaph, they are an illuminating window into the religious book culture in the Adriatic and beyond.

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40 P. S. Brown, The Verse Inscription, 89.

41 Cf. I. Fisković, Dva drvena plastička raspela iz romaničkog doba u Istri, *Peristil* 35-36 (1993), 33-45; L. Mor, Per una geografia artistica della scultura lignea monumentale nell'Alto Adriatico: alcuni Crocifissi tardo-romanici tra l'Istria e l'isola di Sansego, in: *Medioevo adriatico: circolazione di modelli, opere, maestri*, ed. F. Toniolo, G. Valenzano, Rome 2010, 87-112; I. Fisković, Slikano raspelo Sv. Franje iz 13. stoljeća u Splitu, *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 36 (2012), 97-112; Ž. Matulić Bilač, Christus triumphans – Slikano raspelo iz crkve Sv. Andrije na Čiovu, *Portal* 4 (2013), 73-103.

42 Among latest archival-based research on the topic, see G. Budeč, Kultura čitanja u kasnosrednjovjekovnom Šibeniku, *Zbornik Odsjeka povijesnih znanosti Zavoda povijesnih i društvenih znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 32 (2014), 79-98.

Fig. 1: Saint Michael cross, ca. 1250, Saint Michael, Zadar (© Krešimir Tadić; Gamulin, Painted crucifixes in Croatia)

Fig. 2: Deposition from the Cross, twelfth century, Santo Domingo abbey, Silos (source: http://www.lib-art.com/imgpainting/4/1/37714-descent-from-the-cross-romanesque-sculptor-spanish.jpg, accessed 19 May 2017)
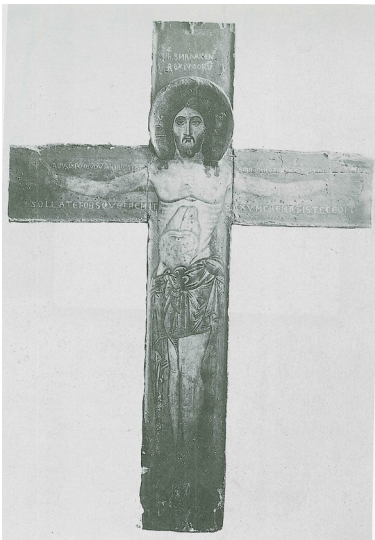

Fig. 4: Benedictine cross (destroyed), ca. 1250, Saint Mary, Zadar (© Gamulin, Painted crucifixes in Croatia)

Fig. 3: Deposition from the Cross, late twelfth century, The Cat's Head portal (Katzenkopfportal), Our Lady Maria Cathedral, Ribe (© Malene Thyssen)
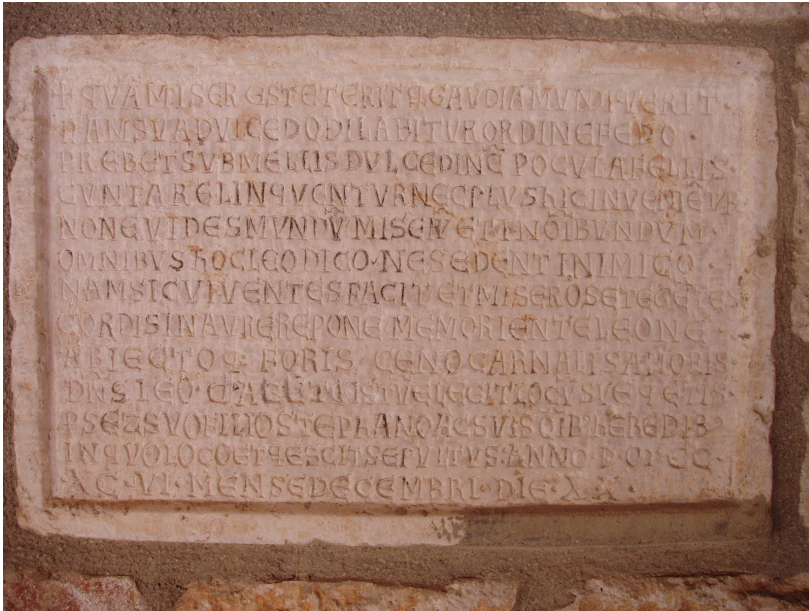
Fig. 5: Epitaph of Leo Cacete, 1298, Saint Francis friary, Split (© Branko Jozić, Marulianum, Split, http://marcusmarulus.blogspot.hr/2011/06/jos-jedan-splits-ki-srednjovjekovni.html)

Fig. 6: Antonio di Miniato, Sepoltura del canonico Filippo di Domenico, 1417, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo – "Volte" della Cattedrale, Prato (© courtesy of Fototeca Ufficio Beni Culturali Diocesi di Prato)

Fig. 7: Lombard workshop, Crocifisso del vescovo Leone, ca. 1000–1020, Sant'Eusebio Cathedral, Vercelli (© courtesy of Curia Arcivescovile di Vercelli, Ufficio Beni Culturali)

Fig. 8: The Rosano Cross, ca. 1130–1150, Saint Mary's Monastery, Rosano (© courtesy of the Ministero per le beni e attività culturali – Opificio delle Pietre Dure di Firenze, Archivio dei restauri e fotografico)