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DESCRIPTIONS OF THE EAST COAST OF THE ADRIATIC SEA IN CROATIAN LATINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY: GENRE PATTERN AND CHARACTERISTICS

Abstract. – Because of the long tradition of existence of settlements on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea, Dalmatia with its towns and islands has always been a subject of economic, political and cultural interest. Descriptions of the Adriatic and its coast thus found place in literature, often as a topic of various prose and poetry works by Croatian authors, some of them writing in Latin. A particular focus of this paper are the descriptions of the Adriatic coast and its cities found in the prose works of three Croatian Latinists — Juraj Šižgorić (*Georgius Sisgoreus*, 1445–1509), Ivan Tomko Mrnavić (*Joannes Tomco Marnavitus*, 1580–1637), both from Šibenik, and Vinko Pribrojević (*Vincentius Priboevius*, mid-15th century – after 1532) from Hvar. After a detailed analysis of these descriptions, we define their function in the early modern historiographic discourse: the works exploit a broad “Illyric” topic, using Illyrians and Illyricum (the east coast of the Adriatic and the Province of Dalmatia being a part of) with the aim of proving that the Slavs are fully justified successors of the ancient Romans. In addition, we establish the pattern according to which these descriptions were composed, as well as their common genre characteristics (catalogue of towns, ancient roots and *locus amoenus*).

The entire east coast of the Adriatic Sea (from the north, all the way to the far south) was well populated already in the early Neolithic, with some Croatian islands having traces of mesolithic, even paleolithic settlements.¹ In the beginning of the Iron Age (late 12th and early 11th centuries BCE), ethnically related tribes, collectively labelled as the Illyrians, moved to the west of the Balkan Peninsula. Ancient Greeks, too, started showing interest in this region from an early age; in the beginning of the 4th century BCE, the oldest and biggest Greek colony on the Adriatic – *Issa* on the Island of Vis – was founded, followed by *Pharos* on the Island of Hvar soon after. The Romans

¹ Novak 1966: 3.

gradually conquered the east coast of the Adriatic (in the 3rd century BCE, the Roman protectorate of Illyricum was established over the Greek colonies in the Eastern Adriatic), with the Illyrians definitely defeated in the 1st century AD and Illyricum divided into two provinces: *Pannonia superior* and *Provincia Illyricum* (the coastal part with its hinterland, later called *Dalmatia*). In the beginning of the 4th century AD, Emperor Diocletian's reform made Illyricum one of four prefectures of the Roman Empire; within that prefecture, the territory of the former province of Illyricum was divided into three smaller provinces: *Dalmatia*, *Praevalitana* and *Epirus nova*. The names *Illyrians* and *Illyricum*, however, were preserved in oral history even after the settlement of Slavic tribes in the Balkan Peninsula.²

Taking into consideration the long history of settlement, the east coast with its cities and islands has always been subject to various economic, political and cultural interests. Descriptions of the Adriatic and its coast thus found place in literature, often as a topic of prose and poetry works of Croatian authors, some of them writing in Latin. A part of this paper is dedicated precisely to the descriptions of the Adriatic coast and cities found in prose historiography of three Croatian Latinists – Juraj Šižgorić (*Georgius Sisgoreus*) (ca. 1445–1509) and Ivan Tomko Mrnavić (*Joannes Tomco Marnavitus*, 1580–1637), both from Šibenik and Vinko Pribojević (*Vincentius Priboevius*, mid-15th century – after 1532) from Hvar. Their works belong to the *corpus* of the so-called “Illyrian” thematic, in which the history of Roman provinces (including the east Adriatic coast with its islands) was combined into a single history of Illyria populated by Slavs in order to counterbalance the history of Roman and German nations. The idea of a continuity of nations – called by different names, but having the same predecessors – always prevailed on this territory.

With Renaissance Humanism, the patriotic feelings of some individuals transformed into collective visions of Slavism, built on the desire to emphasize ancestry and a sense of belonging to a nation. In the 17th century, the concept of Slavism is credited as Croatian, hence “the idea that the Slavs from the east coast of the Adriatic, i.e. the Croats, were the parents of a big and strong contemporary Slavism, came to life in Croatian literature”.³

The descriptions of the east coast of the Adriatic have a very important role in historiographical works with an “Illyrian” theme. After we analyse these descriptions in detail, we will determine their function in early modern historiographic discourse; this will help establish whether there is an existing pattern, according to which the descriptions were composed, as well as their common genre characteristics.

² Hrvatska enciklopedija (HE) 2021: s. v. Ilirik; s. v. Iliri..

³ Bogišić 1997: 163.

1. Juraj Šižgorić and *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici*

In 1487, Juraj Šižgorić from Šibenik (*Georgius Sisgoreus Sibenensis*, 1445–1509) wrote a short geographical, cultural and historical document with the title *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici* (*On the Location of Illyria and the City of Šibenik*), consisting of 17 chapters.⁴ In the initial chapters, Šižgorić develops a thesis statement on the origin of the name of Illyria, its inhabitants and borders. After a general description of Illyria, in Chapter 6 Šižgorić goes on to describe the location of Dalmatia and mentions the Adriatic Sea (*mare Hadriaticum*), noting that its right (east) coast is indented, while the left (west) is not: *Unde Hadriaticum mare sinus longissimus et a dextris intrantibus portuosus, a sinistris infoelix*. Dalmatia is situated on the right coast, a part of Illyria facing the Adriatic Sea, also the most distinguished among the Illyrian provinces (*Provinciarum Illyriae Dalmatia habetur nobilissima. Quae pars, ut Plinius dicit, ad mare Hadriaticum spectat.*). Then he defines the borders of Dalmatia: Curetia, nowadays called Croatia, in the north (*a septentrione habet Curetiam, quae hodie dicitur Croatia*); Liburnia in the west (*ad occasum vero habet Liburniam*); Epirus in the east (*ab ortu autem habet Epyrrhum*); Hadria, an Apulian town, in the south (*a meridie quidem habet Hadriam, Apuliae civitatem*).

Next, Šižgorić mentions the Dalmatian towns, limiting himself to only the five he believes are most worthy of mentioning: *Verum inter caeteras Dalmatiae civitates memoratu dignissimas quinque tantum in medium afferre placuit*. These are Dubrovnik (*Ragusium*), Solin (*Salonae*), Split (*Aspalatrum*), Trogir (*Tragurium*) and Šibenik (*Sibenicum*).

He goes on to state that Dubrovnik was called *Lagusium* (*antiquitus Lagusium dicebatur*) in the old times, that it was a colony of Epidaurus (*colonia Epydauri*), a famous and rich town, very benevolent towards foreigners (*civitas nobilis et opulenta et hospitibus admodum benigna*). He concludes by personifying Dubrovnik and adorning it with the epithets “eloquent and very artful” (*loquax et solertissima*), that obviously relate to the inhabitants of the town. The next town is Solin (*Salona*): Šižgorić states that it used to be the most famous among the Dalmatae (*olim erat celeberrima Dalmatarum*) and a trading centre on the coast (*emporium ad littus*). In addition to Solin, he mentions Split (*Aspalatrum*), named after a plant (*dictum ab herba sui nominis*),⁵ as a colony of Salona (*colonia Salonarum*) and a capital of Dalmatia and a number of settlements in Liburnia and Curetia (meaning Croatia) (*metropolis Dalmatiae et quorundam locorum Liburniae et Curetiae*). After Split, he mentions Trogir (*Tragurium*); he begins

⁴ Šižgorić 1981: the text and translation of the original.

⁵ Jovanović 2011: 149.

by explaining the etymology of its name, stating that Trogir was named either by the word *tugurium* (hut) or by the expression *trinum augurium* (triple omen). He also mentions that it is an excellent (noble) town (*civitas generosa*), known for its nearby field⁶ and the Island of Čiovo (*agro proximo et Bubo insula admodum conspicua*). Explaining the etymology of the name Šibenik, he mentions an often quoted passage of Pliny the Elder, stating that Trogir is famous for its marble (*Tragurium ... marmore notum*).⁷ Finally, due west there is, naturally, Šibenik, the birthplace of Šižgorić (*Sibenicum denique ad occasum a Ragusio vergens*), that he calls his homeland (*patria mea*) and a town full of wisdom, with citizens that are sharper when they are younger, although little by little they move away from the excellence of their ancestors (*civitas impense provida, in qua cives, quanto iuniores, tanto perspicaciores, sed a maiorum bonitate paulisper degenerantes*). On the town's name, he states that Ptolemy and other older authors call it *Siccum*, while younger authors and the folk call it Šibenik (*Apud Ptolomeum et alios antiquos Siccum appellatur, apud iuniores et vulgares Sibenicum*). He proceeds by explaining the etymologies of the Latin and Croatian names of the town, arguing in favour of the Latin name with the help of ancient sources and his own interpretation of Pliny, also quoting him when mentioning that the divine Claudius sent veterans to the place (*In quem locum, ut dicit Plinius, divus Claudius veteranos misit*).⁸ In addition to these five towns, he mentions the names of several Epirote towns: Drač, formerly called Epidamno, and Skadar (*civitates Epyrrhi – Dyrrachium, prius Epydamnos dicta et Scodra*), then Liburnian towns: Zadar and Nin or Enona (*Liburniae civitates – Hyadera et Ninja seu Enona*). After listing the settlements, Šižgorić gives a detailed account of his native Šibenik and its surroundings, the cultural and historical sights, as well as the customs of its citizens.

Humanist historiographers traditionally support their claims by quoting and restating ancient authors – not only historians, but poets, too. When describing Salona, Šižgorić mentions several poets. First he quotes a verse (or rather a part of a verse) of Lucan's *Pharsalia* (Luc. IV, 404): *qua maris Hadriaci longas ferit unda Salonas*,⁹ and then states that it was written about by Virgil in his eclogue dedicated to Pollio (*de qua cecinit et Virgilius in Pollionis Egloga*), and by Horace (whom he calls the poet from Venusia – *poeta Venusinus*) in the first ode of the second volume (*secundi voluminis oda prima*). He does not quote Virgil's verses, but it is clear that he speaks of the 3rd and the

⁶ Probably Malo polje: cf. Babić 2012: 20.

⁷ Plin. *HN* III, 58.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Salonae longae* - extended Salona is a term used for the specific, elongated shape of the city.

4th eclogue, dedicated to the Roman politician and soldier Gaius Asinius Pollio, appointed Consul after conquering Salona. Šižgorić quotes Horace's verses, mentioning Pollio's triumph after conquering Salona: *et consulenti, Pollio, curiae, / cui laurus aeternos honores / Delmatico peperit triumpho.* (To the Senate at counsel, Pollio, for which you acquired a laurel wreath, eternal glory by Dalmatian triumph). (Hor. *Carm.* II, 2 14–16). He finishes by concluding that Pollio named his son Saloninus, because he was born in Salona (*Unde et suum filium eo, quod natus ibi erat, Saloninum appellavit.*).

In the text that follows, Šižgorić continues to praise the beauties of entire Dalmatia using authorities from Antiquity: he quotes from the poetry collection *Silvae* (Stat. *Silv.* I, 2, 153) by Papinius Statius as an argument that Dalmatia was once gold-bearing (*aurifera*), saying that “oak wood glinted because of Dalmatian ore”: *robora Dalmatico lucent satiata metallo*, continues by mentioning Martial and one of his epigrams from Book X (but not stating concrete verses). He obviously has in mind epigram X, 78, with Martial addressing his friend Macer (probably the imperial legate of the Province of Dalmatia from 92 to 100 AD), who was leaving for Salona on the sea coast (*litoreae Salonae*) in the land rich with gold (*terra aurifera*).

It is obvious that in the work of Šižgorić, the description of the east side of the Adriatic coast only comes down to a short geographic determination of Dalmatia and praise of its wealth, with a relatively short list of Dalmatian towns lined from south to north and a special focus on Šibenik and its landmarks, as the birthplace of Šižgorić.

2. Vinko Pribojević and *De origine successibusque Slavorum*

Vinko Pribojević (*Vincentius Priboevius*), a Dominican from Hvar, gave a speech named *De origine successibusque Slavorum* (*On the Origin and Adventures of the Slavs*) to his fellow countrymen in 1525; the speech was published several years later (1532) in Venice.¹⁰ This speech consists of two parts: the first part addresses the origin and customs of Slavs, while the second part contains a description of Dalmatia and Hvar. Just like Šižgorić, Pribojević too emphasizes the indented geography of the east side of the Adriatic Sea (which he calls both Adriatic and Illyric) and goes on to compare the Adriatic isles (numbering more than a thousand) to big ships on a wide open sea, because of the natural shallows and low coasts separated by narrow straits. (*Maritima enim Dalmatiae pars /ut Plinio placet/ mille amplius insulis frequentatur natura vadosi maris aestiariisque tenui alveo intercursantibus speciem magne classis per late patientia aequora per se ferentibus.*) Pribojević also defines the borders of Dalmatia: Istria

¹⁰ Pribojević 1991: the text and translation of the original.

to the west (*Dalmatia enim /.../ Histriam ab occidente habens*), Epirus and Macedonia to the east (*Epyro et Macedonia ob oriente*), Bosnia and Croatia to the north (*Bosnaeque ac Chroatiae a septentrione subiacens*), and the Adriatic Sea to the south (*salo, quod Adriaticum dicitur, ab australi parte abluta*). Referring to Strabo, he boasts about its favourable position and the fertility of the soil (*regio, ut Strabo inquit, aprica, similiter frugifera bonisque feracissima fructibus*), pointing out the beauty of its olive orchards and vineyards (*olivetis vinetisque speciosa*), absent in the karst area, which is suitable for cattle grazing (*nisi sicubi aspera rupis iacet, quae tamen pascendo gregi est aptissima*). The climate, too, is favourable, so he concludes that Dalmatia is always green and extremely pleasing to the eye (*semper viret aspectuque est mirum immodum delectabilis*). In addition, the climate is very healthy, which is why it is very densely populated in times of peace (*pace comite hominum frequentia refertissima*). Pribojević, too, mentions “gold-bearing Dalmatia”: after asking his audience a rhetorical question referring to Pliny’s mention of an abundance of gold in Dalmatia during Nero’s rule (according to Pliny, by panning one could earn 50 pounds of gold per day),¹¹ he goes on to quote the verses of Statius and Martial (the very same ones mentioned by Šižgorić).

Quid autem opus est, ut profusas diversorum metallorum venas huius soli commemorem, cum (sicut Plinius auctor est) sub Nerone principe quinquagenas libras auri singulis diebus arena lota in Dalmatia fuderit. Hinc Martialis ad amicum:

*Ibis litoreas, Macer, Salonas,
Felix auriferae colone terrae, Et Statius:
Robora Dalmatico fulgent satiata metallo.*

After describing the natural beauties of Dalmatia, Pribojević moves on to the inhabitants – the Dalmatians, using superlatives to outline their physical appearance and their spirit, concluding with a list of famous people from Dalmatia, both contemporary and people from the recent and more distant past.

Pribojević offers another description – a catalogue of towns, fairly expanded in comparison to the one in Šižgorić: ... *nobilissimeque fuerunt praepotentesque civitates in ea aedificate. Ex quibus potiores commemorare me non piget, ut noveris Dalmatas etiam antiquis temporibus politicis moribus studuisse*. First he mentions Delmin or Dalmium, after which the Dalmatians were named (*Delmin vel Dalmium ... civitas a qua cognomen gens Dalmatarum usurpat*), and

¹¹ Plin. *NH*, XXXIII, 23: *Aurum qui quaerunt, ante omnia segutum tollunt; ita vocatur indicium. alveus hic est harenae, quae lavatur; atque ex eo, quod resedit, conjectura capitur. invenitur aliquando in summa tellure protinus rara felicitate, ut nuper in Delmatia principatu Neronis singulis diebus etiam quinquagenas libras fundens.*

then Salona, using basically the same words as Šižgorić.¹² Referring to Strabo, he mentions that Salona is the trading centre of Dalmatia (*emporium totius Dalmatiae ut Strabo tradit*), also referring to antiquity and the triumph of Gaius Asinius Pollio, after which his son was named Salonius (*Qua devicta Polio genitum a se filium Salonium vocavit ...*). He uses Virgil's verses as an argument, quoting him, unlike Šižgorić:

e quo Maro in Bucolicis cecinit:
Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo,
Iam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto. (Verg. *Ecl.* IV, 5–7)

He proceeds by listing his native Hvar (*Pharum*), Narona (*Nerenta etiam a Plinio Narona dicta*), Zadar (*Iadera*), the town of *Moeum*¹³ on the Island of Vis (*in insula Issa*), Skradin (*Scardona*), Larissa (*Larissa*),¹⁴ Epidaur (*Epidaurus*) and Risan (*Rixo etaim alias Rixanum*). He goes on to mention Trogir (*Tragurium*), Dubrovnik (*Ragusium*) and Split (*Spalatum vel /ut quidam dicunt/ Spaletum*). Referring to Trogir, he asserts that, according to Strabo, it was founded by settlers from Isa (*ab Iseis conditum*); that according to Pliny it was known for its marble (*olim marmore notum*), while during his time it is famous for the glory of its learned people (*nostra autem tempestate peritorum gloria virorum clarum*). With regard to the learned people, he mentions some of the well-known citizens of Trogir, such as Korio-lan Cipiko (*Coriolanus Cippicus*), Ivan Stafilić/ Statilić (*Ioannes Statileo*) and Trankvil Andreis (*Tranquillus Andronicus*). Speaking of Trogir in previous chapters and referring to Strabo once again, he states that, along Hvar, Trogir is among the most widely known Dalmatian. He moves on to Dubrovnik, a town known for its richness, fleet and liberty (*divitiis ac navibus et libertate conspicuum*), for which the credits go to the inhabitants of Dubrovnik, as they bring important decisions through the Senate (*quam Ragusini tenuerunt summam omnium negotiorum per senatum decernendo*). Split is known as the birth place of Marko Marulić (*natale Marci Maruli solum*) and, according to Pribojević, the town was built in the Salonian field by Diocletian (*a Dioclitiano in agro Salonian exstructum*). In order to highlight the natural beauties of this area, Pribojević relates an anecdote about Diocletian, who enjoyed growing his own cabbage so much that he

¹² We find that Šižgorić, too, mentions Delminium in the same context – however, not in the catalogue of towns, but in the part dedicated to the etymology of the name Dalmatia: *Dalmatia namque a Delminio civitate primaria nomen accepit teste Appiano et Plinio De viris illustribus.*

¹³ Perhaps a misreading of the manuscript – *Moeum* instead *earum*: cf. Pribojević 1991: 191.

¹⁴ Probably a mistake: Larissa is a city in Thessaly, Greece.

had refused (*non aliter quam tetram pestem* – same as being offered a terrible pestilence) to rule as emperor once again. Split is followed by *Ascrivium*, i.e. Kotor (*Ascrivium quod nunc Catharum dicitur*) and Šibenik. He too calls Šibenik *Sicum* (*Sicumque, a nostris Sibenicum dictum*), disclosing that it is a pleasant place with various fish species and natural resources (*vario piscium genere et rerum oppulentia delitiosum*), a place where (according to Pliny) veterans were sent by Emperor Claudius (*in quem locum Claudius Augustus veteranos misit*). He goes on to list Korčula (*Coreyra Nigra, his temporibus Corcula appellata*), the settlements of Colentum and Rab on the Island of Sardona (*Colentum et Arba in insula Sardona*),¹⁵ then Pag – known for the salt (*Pagum praecipua salis facilitate praeciosum*), Krk – a prominent place of wool production (*Coricta quoque lanificio potens*) and lastly Senj – known for its trade (*Segnia etiam a mercatoribus frequentata*).

The catalogue of Pribojević is considerably longer than the one provided by Šižgorić, with some of the towns described much more extensively and in more detail. In the remaining sections of the second part, Pribojević describes his native Hvar, both the island and the town. Hvar for Pribojević – just as Šibenik for Šižgorić – operates as a *locus amoenus*. The sources he quotes mostly come from Antiquity and partly correspond with those of Šižgorić. Pribojević provides the beginnings of modern quoting, as the *loci* in ancient authors that Pribojević refers to in the text are noted on the margins, so the data can be verified.

3. Ivan Tomko Mrnavić and *De Illyrico caesaribusque Illyricis*

Ivan Tomko Mrnavić (*Joannes Tomco Marnavitius*) from Šibenik wrote poetic, historical and theological texts. His description of the Province of Dalmatia and the eastern coast of the Adriatic with the towns is a part of a larger geographic-historical work, *De Illyrico caesaribusque Illyricis* (*On Illyricum and the Emperors of Illyric Origin*). Mrnavić's first work, composed of seven books and created (by his own words) from 1603 to 1607, remained in manuscript form until this day.¹⁶ The first three books include the description of Illyricum and its provinces, with the remaining four relating to the Roman emperors whom he thought were of Illyric origin. In the third book, Mrnavić provides a description of the Province of Dalmatia and its towns. The beginning of the description of Dalmatia was lost in the transcripts; fortunately, the remaining text contains a rather large catalogue of

¹⁵ This mistake is transferred from Ptolemy (II, 16, 13): καὶ Σκαρδῶνα νῆσος ἐν Ἰπόλεις δύο Ἀρβα καὶ Κόλλεντον. *Colentum* is the Latin name for the island of Murter.

¹⁶ The manuscript of *De Illyrico Caesaribusque Illyricis* is preserved at the National and University Library in Zagreb (R7915).

towns that Mrnavić lists in two sequences: the towns on the Adriatic coast, followed by those on the Adriatic islands. He starts with the towns farthest north, within the area once inhabited by Liburnians, which was incorporated into the Roman Province of Dalmatia. He mentions the Kvarner Gulf first (*sinus Flanicus sive sinus Carnarius*) with the towns Labin (*Albona*) and Plomin (*Flamona*), followed by Rijeka (*Flumen*), mentioning *oppidum Sancti Viti* and *oppidulum Tarsatica*: Rijeka of today was built on the site of the pre-classical settlement *Liburna Tarsatica*, with a military fortress built next to it in Roman times; medieval Rijeka was named Rika svetoga Vida after its patron Saint Vitus (*Terra Fluminis sancti Viti*). Mrnavić includes a lengthy legend on the transport of the ancestral house of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Nazareth to Trsat. Rijeka is followed by Senj (*Senia*); the etymology of its name is mentioned, followed by facts about its citizens, once known as good traders (basically, what Pribojević wrote on them), and these days as good soldiers (*Huius incolae sicut pridem commerciis /.../ celeberrimi, sic nunc militari disciplina*). Then follows Nin (*Ennona*), the first seat of the Croatian kings (*Croaticorum regibus potentia primarium Regni membrum*), Zadar (*Iader/Iadera*), once a Roman colony (*olim Romanae nobilitatis colonia*) and centre of Liburnia (*princeps Liburniae*), as well as various settlements in its surroundings: Biograd (*Alba quae longo tempore Dalmaticorum regum primaria civitas fuit*), Karin (*Corinium in intimo recessu sinus maris*) and Novigrad (*Castrum novum*). He uses Novigrad to retell the legend of the Queen Consort Elizabeth of Bosnia (Elizabeta Kotromanić), wife of King Louis I the Great (of Hungary) and their daughter Mary; he then goes on to list the settlements at the bottom of Velebit: Starigrad Paklenica (*Argiruntum*), Karlobag (*Vegium*) and Stinica (*Ortopla*).

This is followed by descriptions of towns already referred to by both Šižgorić and Pribojević, first of all Šibenik – the birthplace of Mrnavić: mentioning Šibenik, Mrnavić includes a poem in 42 elegiac couplets praising the natural beauties of Šibenik and its surroundings, as well as some customs related to that area.¹⁷ After Šibenik, he mentions Trogir (*Tragurium, vernaculo sermone Trogir*), founded (according to Pliny) by settlers from Isa (*hanc ab Isseis conditam testatur Plinius*) and rich in marble in the Roman times (*nobilis Romanorum tempore tum marmorum abundantia Plinio teste*). He provides data on the history of Trogir from the work of Thomas the Archdeacon, also retelling the unsuccessful Tatar siege of Trogir in 1242, during the rule of Béla IV of Hungary. He mentions the bishop of Transilvania Ivan Statilić, the writer and diplomat Fran Frankvil Andreis, as well as the bishop of Zagreb Augustin Kažotić as famous people from Trogir (Pribojević also mentions Andreis and Statilić).

¹⁷ Analysis and transcription of the poem in: Tvrković 2018: 319–331.

After Trogir, Mrnavić mentions Salona (*ultra Tragurium squal-[l]ent hodie rudera Salonarum urbis*). He says that Salona was once well-known by its size, a centre of Dalmatia and a birthplace of many famous people, among them of Pope Caius and Emperor Diocletian (*adeo olim inclytae et urbis amplitudine et Dalmatiae primatu et maximorum virorum praesertim Caui summi pontificis et Diocletiani Principis natalibus*). Diocletian's Palace, built in the vicinity of Salona, is also mentioned, as well as Klis, an ancient fort the Romans called *Andetrium, Ardula* or *Ardua*, standing out on a miraculous rock (*eminet saxa mirabili antiqua arx Romanis Andetrium, Ardula et Ardua dicta*). In the part dedicated to Salona, Mrnavić quotes verses by Martial and Statius (the same ones quoted by Šižgorić and Pribojević) in order to support his claims on the abundance of Dalmatia. The description continues with Narona (*Narona* or *Narbona*, on the location of today's Vid near Metković), Epidaur (*Epidauros*, on the location of today's Cavtat), as well as Budva (*Butva*), Ulcinj (*Olchinium*), Lješ (*Lissus*, Lezhë in Albanian) and Risan (*Risinum*). In addition to Epidaur, located 100,000 paces from Narona, he mentions Dubrovnik (*Ragusina urbs*), that took over the supremacy after Epidaur was destroyed (*Centum millibus passuum distare Epidaurum nobilem coloniam scribit Plinius, qua olim eversa tota maiestas in Ragusinam urbem translata est ut diximus*). Next, Mrnavić introduces a lengthy excursion on Stridon, the birth place of Saint Jerome (*Stridonium, patria telus doctoris nostri*).

After describing the coastal towns, he goes on to illustrate the islands (*Et sicut pleraque urbes littoris Dalmatici et Liburnici nomina prisca retinere vidimus, et loco suo stare, ita quoque insularum maioris notae eadem nomina perseverant*). First he mentions the islands of Cres and Lošinj (*Crexa et Absorus*), once a single island, before being divided by a canal (*coherentes antea, nunc modica fossa disiunctae insulae*). He praises the renowned resident of Cres, Frane Petrić (*Franciscus Patricius*), a philosopher and a polymath. (*Edidit Crexana civitas aetate nostra praestantissimum virum politicarum litterarum et Platonicae doctrinae in Europa facile principem*). Describing Krk as an island of admirable fertility and beauty (*insula mirae fertilitatis et amoenitatis*), he states that Italians call it Veglia (*Itali Vegliam vocant*), the locals call it Krk (*indigenae tamen antiquam servantes nomenclaturam, Carch dicunt*), while Ptolemy uses the name *Curicta*. Then he lists the islands of Rab (*Arba*), Murter (*Colentum* or *Mortarium*), Pag (*Pagus*) known for its salt (*nota ubertate salis*), then Kornati (*Celadussae*), Žirje (*Surium*), Brač (*Brattia*) praised for its goats (*laudata capris*), Hvar, (*Pharos/Lesina*), Vis (*Issa*), Šolta (*Solta*) and Korčula (*Corcira*). Mrnavić ends the paragraph by paraphrasing Pliny's dictum about the Illyric coast with a thousand islands, made use of by his predecessors: *Illyricam oram mille amplius insulis fre-*

quentatam, scribit Plinius, nec immerito ab Histria enim usque ad Ragusinae Urbis portum per trecenta circiter millia passuum, perpetuo mari insulae sparsae cer/n/untur.

The catalogue of towns provided by Mrnavić, by its scope and contents, is much more expansive and includes considerably more towns than the descriptions of his predecessors. Also, Mrnavić often introduces historical excursions on events or legends related to some towns and settlements. He exploits numerous sources, both ancient and modern, as well as sources produced by his direct predecessors or contemporaries.

4. Determination of Genre

4.1 Form

All three works belong to historiographic prose – at the time still a part of literature, not scholarship, with only slight indications of a scientific apparatus and critical verification of sources. The quotes often consist of retold or paraphrased passages, partly taken out of a wider context with the aim of backing up a certain claim. Within the thus determined genre, each of the writers selects the scope and form of his work. The shortest, the one written by Šižgorić, is often called a treatise, but may rather be branded an essay.¹⁸ The work of Pribojević is actually a speech (*oratio*), hence its structure follows the rules of oratory established in ancient times. Mrnavić calls his work a dialogue: the first part is indeed written in the form of dialogue (three books containing descriptions of Illyric provinces). Inherited from ancient times, this form was taken over from philosophical discussions, brought to perfection by Plato. In Hellenistic times, the dialogue also becomes a separate form, e.g. in Lucian of Samosata and Roman expert documents. Mrnavić refers to Cicero as a role model for the form of the dialogue.¹⁹ In the beginning of his text, he mentions three participants in a dialogue: Kristofor Lučić (*Christophorus Gliucius*), a member of an old patrician family from Šibenik; Nikola Rankolin (*Nicolaus Rancolinus*), a judge from Šibenik; and Marko Tomko Mrnavić (*Marcus Tomco Marnavics*), the author's father.

4.2 Contents

All three works describe a particular geographic area (in this case, the Province of Dalmatia) and the towns therein. Following the criteria of modern classification, we might include them in the category of travel books: a literary-scientific genre, providing a description of

¹⁸ Solar 2005: 224.

¹⁹ *Tullium autem in dialogi inventione ordineque mihi imitandum proposui*, cf. Mrnavić, ms.: p. 3.

an area and often coming close to an essay.²⁰ As early as ancient times there were precursors of travel books, basically containing a description of an area. At first, *chorography* (χωρογραφία) was a pictorial description of a country; later, this term also covered written descriptions of areas, with authors combining topographical descriptions, summaries of historical sources and local knowledge and stories into a unique narration. A *periegesis* (περιήγησις) is a description of countries and towns with their landmarks, resembling a modern tourist guide. A *periplous* (περίπλους) is a description of the seaways, offering data on the sea and the coastal areas. These three ancient genres practically correspond with each other without being exclusive. Therefore, one can argue that actual historiographic descriptions are a part of each one of these genres by their characteristics, and that each of them contains elements of all three genres. Since all descriptions include a panegyric of one of the toponyms (the towns of Šibenik and Hvar), what we are dealing with would arguably be a thematic group of *laudationes urbium*, written praises of towns, that can be considered a subgenre or a thematic group within various genre types.²¹

4.3 *Loci communes*

Although of various scope and form, we have seen that these texts have common representative elements:

a) Catalogue of Towns

Essentially, all descriptions contain lists – catalogues of towns; primarily a characteristic of epic poetry, relating to a detailed list and description of individual elements of a set (one of the most widely known catalogues is the catalogue of ships from Book 2 of the *Iliad*). The reasons for including of catalogues into written works can vary: in epic poetry, their function is to slow down the action and expand narration, but catalogues also have the role of emphasizing the authors' knowledge of specific topics and thus establishing authority among their audience. At the same time, such lists are used in order to expand the knowledge of the audience and bring in certain data into individual, and subsequently collective, memory. The form of catalogue spread from epic poetry to prose genres, and then on to historiography. The catalogues of towns in the analysed texts represent the towns that are a component of the "Illyric" national geography and have been considered centres and seats of culture and civilization since ancient times. The authors indicate that these settlements were foun-

²⁰ "Travel literature can simply be a contribution to Geography or Ethnography, but it also represents a separate genre of literature with travelling and description of travelled regions or countries as a cause for wider artistic creation..." Solar 2005: 225.

²¹ About *laudationes urbium* cf. Jovanović 2011: 149.

ded in Antiquity by quoting ancient works; on one side, the authors show their level of education by being acquainted with ancient authors; on the other side, they give legitimacy to their own country by assigning to it participation in ancient events, that is, by identification with former Illyrians and Illyricum.

b) Ancient roots and ancient Sources

As we have seen above, towns with ancient traditions enter into the catalogue: even if they do not actually have one, the authors try to somehow create it, often by unfounded arguments and claims, and find proof in ancient literary sources.²² The fact that these towns were established in ancient times is proved not only by ancient quotes about a particular town, but also by its material remains: hence the essays about the glorious past of a certain town often begin with the author walking across the town ruins with one of his friends.²³ This element is absent in the works of Šižgorić and Pribrojević. Mrnavić, however, has the participants of his dialogue, Nikola Rankolin and Marko, the father of Mrnavić, walk through Zlarin and meet Kristofor Lučić, then find fragments of stone monuments among the stones and roof tiles that remained after the decoration of Lučić's summer house; this inspires them to a discussion on the history of the island, Dalmatia and entire Illyricum. Epigraphic inscriptions are another proof of the antiquity of the town and appear as a motif in works with a similar scope.²⁴

It is an ancient tradition to state what each of the towns is known for. In addition to the towns, the entire Province of Dalmatia is famous as well; its natural beauties and wealth are also well-known since Antiquity. All three authors mention Dalmatia as “gold-bearing” and “abundant in gold”, quoting various authors. Ancient authors are often not quoted literally, but paraphrased or mentioned from memory. The authors are selected by the principle “the older, the better”, and their work is more important, the more quoted it is.

As seen from the descriptions above, the most frequently quoted or paraphrased prose authors are Pliny the Elder, Strabo and Ptolemy; Statius, Martial and Lucan are among the most quoted poets. In many cases, the same quotes are used in order to provide argumentation for certain claims. All three authors have the description of Dalmatia as “gold-bearing” and use it almost always in the same way, next to the quotes of Martial and Statius. When describing towns, all three of them say that Trogir was founded by settlers from Isa and that the set-

²² E.g. Mrnavić for Šibenik.

²³ Thus Petrarca wanders across the ruins of the Diocletian's thermae in Rome with Giovanni Colonna, Poggio with Antonio Loschia, Marulić walks in the remains of Salona with Dmive Papalić. Cf. Stepanić 2007: 246–247.

²⁴ Stepanić 2007: 249.

tlement is well-known for its marble, referring to Strabo and Pliny. Obviously, the historiography of the period was characterized by general places (*topoi*), transferred from one author to another, thus becoming a part of a common, collective knowledge.

c) *Locus amoenus*

All three authors consider Dalmatia a land worthy of praise, unrivalled among all other provinces. In the beginning of his description of Dalmatia, Pribojević defines it as follows: “Esteemed people, there are three things, I think, you are well aware of, that are important for praising a country – namely, its position and fertility, the intrinsic qualities and inclinations of its inhabitants, and the laws and customs of people they live in it.” (*Tribus ex causis unamquaque regionem maxime comedandi vobis, viri praestantissimi, satis compertum esse existimo, videlicet ex situ cum fertilitate ac ex naturalibus incolarum bonis conditionibus nec non ex ipso populorum in ea degentium studio, legibus et consuetudinibus.*). Naturally, Dalmatia can pride itself with all of them. Šižgorić and Pribojević describe their home towns of Šibenik and Hvar in a particularly detailed manner, with a laudatory tone. In addition to mentioning his native Šibenik, Mrnavić includes an entire panegyric – though not written by himself – in honour of Šibenik, and places the dialogue on the Island of Zlarin, at the time a favourite summer country destination for the citizens of Šibenik, just like the islands Prvić and Žirje.²⁵ Mrnavić describes Zlarin as *Sicensis maris insula amoenissima*;²⁶ Šižgorić, too, mentions Zlarin in chapter *De insulis Sibenici*. He calls it the *Aurea insula* (*Golden Island*), stating that it is fertile and rich in almond groves, vineyards and olive orchards (*fertilis quidem amigdoletisque et vinetis et olivetis abundans*), as well as in fish (*insula piscosa*). Šižgorić ends the part on the Island of Zlarin by stating: “This island often gave me shelter in times of illness. After the Holy Mass, here, amid mountain rocks and in the shadow of trees, I surrendered myself to the most pleasant Muses /sc. literary work/.” (*Haec insula saepius mihi tribuit domicilium morbi tempestate in qua post rei divinae operam inter scopulos montium et arborum umbras suavissimas Musas colere solebam*). Obviously, Zlarin sheltered the citizens of Šibenik when they wanted to move away from the everyday life of the town and look for rest and/or stimulation for intellectual work in Arcadian surroundings. When describing Hvar and his monastery, Pribojević uses the term *amoenitas: nostri tamen*

²⁵ Marković 2001: 151–158.

²⁶ It is possible that Mrnavić himself had a summer house on the island Zlarin. Cf. Stošić 1941: 174.

*caenobii ex opposito episcopalis aedis in littore maris (...) siti amoenitatem non praetermittam.*²⁷

Locus amoenus is a literary topos that relates to some idealized, wonderful, lovely place, mainly with considerable natural beauties; *locus amoenus* is very often the birth place of humanist historiographers, idealized due to various reasons and becoming a part of their personal memory as an ideal place and safe shelter.²⁸

5. Historiographic Pattern and Function

Regardless of the differences that these three works show concerning the descriptions of the east coast of the Adriatic and Dalmatia, it is obvious that all three of them contain descriptions created following a common pattern. The works are structured in a manner that presents the beauties of their homeland in three levels. The most general level is the one concerning Illyricum/Illyria, that serves as framework for Dalmatia to find its place alongside other Illyrian provinces. The authors praise Dalmatia, rich in natural beauties and resources, a pleasant place to live in, with beautiful, brave and clever people. The description of Dalmatia leads to the third, most intimate level, the *locus amoenus* for each of the authors. In his work, Šižgorić moves from Illyria, across Dalmatia, dedicating most of his time to his native Šibenik and its surroundings. Pribrojević, too, starts from Illyricum, then goes across Dalmatia and reaches Hvar, his native island, where he gives a speech to his fellow townsmen. Mrnavić begins with Zlarin, then describes all provinces that are part of Illyricum, including Dalmatia. All descriptions contain a catalogue of towns, smaller and bigger, with repetitions found in all the authors. Sources are repeated, same passages are paraphrased or quoted; Mrnavić respectfully includes his older predecessors Šižgorić and Pribrojević in his work.

We have also seen that these historiographic texts, according to the custom of the times they were written in, are also to be read as literary works, without paying too much attention to the credibility of data presented. Their authors try to follow in full the model of ancient works (both with regard to content and language), quoting and/or paraphrasing a great number of ancient authors. All three works are works of “Illyric” matter, meaning that the authors link the history of the Slavs to history of Illyricum (within its borders at the time) and identify themselves with the Illyrians in their desire to establish a historical connection with the Roman Empire in any possible way and thus acquire legitimacy by putting Antiquity to use. Their intention is

²⁷ “Loveliness is, again, a characteristic of a place – a very important place, indeed, because praise of Hvar is the climax of the entire speech – yet, also suggesting ‘renunciation of the world’, here, as being in the monastery.” Jovanović 2011: 152.

²⁸ *Locus amoenus* also connotes hermitic, lonely life. Cf. Jovanović 2011: 150–151.

to use the Illyrians and Illyricum as confirmation that the Slavs are rightful descendants of the ancient Romans, just as the Germanic peoples are via the Holy Roman Empire, and the Romans are as direct descendants of the ancient Romans. The basic intention of their work is similar: the authors aim to create a counterbalance to the historical image of the European countries (primarily Italy) with their works on the history of Slavs and to present their world as equally old and valuable (if not older and more valuable) than the traditional world they enter.

Dalmatia and the Adriatic Sea, with a coast and islands abundant in Greek and Roman settlements mentioned in many ancient works, had a great role in the creation of the historical image of Slavism. This is the reason these praises abound in the descriptions, and Dalmatia and its towns are depicted almost exclusively in positive tones. In addition to that, each of the authors describes his shelter, his *locus amoenus* with an intimate personal meaning, hence the panegyrical expression in these cases is further increased.

The manner in which the historiographers compile and present the facts to their audience, as well as the form they decide to write their works in, indicate an interpretation of history specific for every one of them. However, there is an obvious historiographic pattern according to which the descriptions are composed, consisting of common traits reiterated by all the authors. This pattern is necessary, in order to recognize the work as a part of the “Illyric topic”, so that the authors can participate in the creation of a collective, national identity by including common, general places in the pattern.

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