

# Observant Reform and the Cults of New Dominican Saints in the Southeastern Adriatic

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## Introduction

The research on the historical currents of the Observant reform, its diffusion in the earliest stages, as well as its periodical local and global revivals throughout the following two centuries, is inextricably linked to the study of the promotion of cults of saints. Building on the types of sainthood preferred by and partially formed in Mendicant circles (notably living saints, but also local saints), the Observant friars supported veneration of their contemporaries, creating thus an array of local *beati* whose cults frequently gained wider recognition.<sup>1</sup> This paper is examining the appearance and diffusion of saints' cults among the reformed Dominican order in the southeastern Adriatic, that is, in the territory of Dubrovnik and Kotor from the first reformist attempts at the end of the fourteenth century to the Observant efforts united with the post-Tridentine ambience in the later sixteenth century. In addition to crucial texts by Serafino Razzi (who also described devotional objects and images), the analysis is mainly conducted

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1 On the late-medieval turn in the models for sainthood see: André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1981).

with recourse to visual sources that bear witness to the local introduction of new Observant cults.<sup>2</sup>

The region between Dubrovnik and Durrës, encompassing the cities of Kotor and Ulcinj, was leading in the Observant movement in the eastern Adriatic, while in Dalmatia to the north the introduction of reforms was belated and geographically limited (Čiovo, Stari Grad - Hvar).<sup>3</sup> Following the chronology of local developments in friaries pertaining to the southern part of the Dominican province of Dalmatia, which eventually seceded to form an independent Observant group (later Congregation), the appearance of Observant cults will be contextualised in relation to the wider reformist networks spreading from Venice and Florence, but also from Buda, and indirectly from Naples. Leaving aside the question of local Observant promotions of universal cults, such as St Nicholas and the Holy Cross – marked nevertheless by a strong Dominican tradition – this article focuses on the cults of major Dominican figures strongly promoted by the Observant reform (Caterina of Siena and Vincent Ferrer), as well as on the cults of Observant Dominicans of a rather local significance (Marcolino of Forlì, Guido of Naples and the local *santa viva* Osanna from Kotor).

### **The first wave of the reform and the cults of Dominici's circle**

The first steps of Dominican Observant reform in the Eastern Adriatic took place in Dubrovnik. As early as 1397 the Senate of the Republic of Dubrovnik wrote both to the Dominican general chapter held in Frankfurt and to Giovanni Dominici as the vicar of the Lombard province of reformed friaries with the request to send several Observant friars to Dubrovnik to introduce the reform.<sup>4</sup> The answers are not known, but it seems that Dominici – seen his already developed network involving friars of the southeastern Adriatic provenance – reacted to the request and

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2 A particularly important study of the relation between visual arts and the Dominican reform is Denise Zaru, *Art and Observance in Renaissance Venice. The Dominicans and Their Artists (1391 - ca. 1545)* (Rome: Viella, 2014).

3 On the Dominican communities in the eastern Adriatic see: Stjepan Krasić, *Dominikanci: povijest Reda u hrvatskim krajevima*, (Zagreb: Hrvatska dominikanska provincija/Nakladni zavod Globus, 1997). On the Dominican Observance in Dubrovnik see: Stjepan Krasić, *Congregatio Ragusina Ord. Praed. (1487-1550)* (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1972).

4 Krasić, *Dominikanci*, 23-24. The friary was founded in 1225 and is the earliest attested Dominican friary in the eastern Adriatic.

instigated a short-term reformist spark in the Ragusa friary. In fact, among Dominici's closest friars-collaborators in two Venetian communities (San Zanipolo and San Domenico) formed in the early 1390s, there were two friars from the southeastern Adriatic: Hieronymus of Dulcinium (Ulcinj) and Johannes of Durachium (Durrës). Whereas Hieronymus died in 1397 with no documented ties to his native region, the sources for Johannes are abundant yet contradictory, referring to him both as the bishop of Kotor (1375-1397) and as the provincial of Dalmatia (sporadically from 1392 to 1397).<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the slight historiographic confusion, Johannes was definitely active in the region during the events that led to the Ragusan government's plea to Dominici, and it is plausible that he represented the long arm of Dominici's reformist movement in the southeastern Adriatic. It should be underlined that Dominici was appointed archbishop of Dubrovnik in 1408,<sup>6</sup> but it seems that he never visited his diocese, and that his connections to Dubrovnik and the surrounding region were always mediated through his collaborators.

As stated above, the diffusion of the Observant reform was closely linked to the promotion of new saints, and thus one can find the traces of Dominici's circle in Dubrovnik also in the form of devotion to new cults of *beati* closely related to the new ideal of sanctity promoted by the great reformer. Two of them, Marcolino of Forlì (died 1396) and Guido Maramaldi of Naples (died c. 1391), were frequently referred to as the founders of the Ragusan friary in the older literature. Serafino Razzi, a learned friar from the convent of San Marco in Florence and one of the most prolific Dominican authors with an insider's familiarity with the Dominican past in Dubrovnik and Kotor, was first among the Dominican authors to report this legend in the late sixteenth century in his *Storia di Raugia*. In the detailed description of the architecture, artworks and devotional objects in the Ragusan friary, Razzi mentions (nowadays lost) depictions of the

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5 On the episcopate of Johannes of Durachium see: Daniele Farlati, *Illyrici sacri*, VI: *Ecclesia Ragusina cum suffraganeis, et ecclesia Rhiziniensis et Catharensis* (Venice: Sebastiano Coleti, 1800), 453; Lenka Blehova Čelebić, *Hrišćanstvo u Boki (1200-1500)* (Podgorica Cetinje: Pobjeda - Narodni muzej Crne Gore - Istorijski institut Crne Gore, 2006), 53; on the provincialate see: Stjepan Krasić, 'Regesti pisama generala dominikanskog reda poslanih u Hrvatsku (1392-1600)', *Arhivski vjesnik* 17:1 (1975), 162-163, 165-166.

6 Stjepan Krasić and Serafino Razzi, *Povijest Dubrovačke metropolije i dubrovačkih nadbiskupa (X. - XVI. stoljeća)* (Dubrovnik: Biskupski ordinarijat, 1999), 125.

two friars high up on the pillars surrounding the high altar.<sup>7</sup> Marcolino, a modest friar whose early cult was strongly supported by Dominici, and Guido, a famous preacher with a clear reformist profile, were both active in the period of the early diffusion of the reform, and thus the origins of their cults in Dubrovnik should be related to the initial period of Observance, that is, around the year 1400.<sup>8</sup> As the Ragusan friary was founded in the early thirteenth century, the two friars certainly could not have been its founders, but considering that they were related to the efforts for its reform, that fact was possibly later interpreted as its (re)foundation. Such an assumption is supported by the mention that Guido actually preached in Dubrovnik before becoming the general inquisitor for the Kingdom, and conforms to the framework of generally strong connections between Naples and Dubrovnik.

The placement of depictions of the two friars in the centre of the friary's church presbytery, as well as the creation of the local founding legend, suggest that the initial Observant reformist momentum influenced artistic commissions in the Dubrovnik church, and that the memory of the associates of Giovanni Dominici was woven into that process. It is interesting that Razzi believed that there was some confusion about the Neapolitan *beato*, and suggested that Guido of Naples was mistaken for another *beato* from Dominici's circle, that is, Roberto of Naples, who likewise was a reformist friar sent by the Dominican master general Raymund of Capua to Venice with Dominici, and who fitted extremely well into the

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7 'Fondatori di questo convento narrano, che furono il beato Guido da Napoli & il beato Marcolino da Forlì. Onde amendue sono dipinti ne i pilastri della Cappella maggiore, su ad alto. Ma io credo, che habbiano iscambiato da Ruberto à Guido. Impero chè non ritrovo tra i beati nostri questo Guido, ma si bene il beato Ruberto da Napoli, che fù contemporaneo del beato Marcolino, e venne à predicare in queste bande.' See: Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa: scritta nuovamente in tre libri preceduta dagli appunti biografico-critici del Pr. Lodovico Ferretti, O.P.; con introduzione, note e appendice cronologica del Prof. G. Gelcich* (Dubrovnik: Editrice Tipografia Serbo-Ragusea A. Pasarić, 1903), 206-207; Ana Marinković, 'Kultovi dominikanskih svetaca i njihova ikonografija do Tridentskog sabora', in: *Dominikanci u Hrvatskoj*. Exhibition catalogue, ed. I. Fisković (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2011), 169; Igor Fisković, 'Prilozi poznavanju gotičkoga graditeljstva u Dubrovniku', *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 35 (2011), 28.

8 On Marcolino see: Serafino Razzi, *Vita dei santi e beati del sacro ordine de frati predicatori, così huomini, come donne. Con aggiunta di molte vite, che nella prima impressione non erano* (Florence: Giacinto Passaro, 1672), 484-486. Early Dominican authors had no information on Guido's life, whose popularity spread only after papal confirmation of the cult in 1612.

picture Razzi was trying to delineate.<sup>9</sup> Further research could help discern the identity of the Neapolitan Dominican friar depicted in the Ragusan church, though both possibilities equally attest to the importance of the lost wall painting in the context of an early presence of Observant reform in Dubrovnik. Razzi's suggestion that it was plausibly Roberto who was depicted together with Marcolino, is indicative of Razzi's reformist agenda in Dubrovnik, relying on the memory of Giovanni Dominici.

Razzi had an exceptionally significant role in the diffusion of the Observant and post-Tridentine reforms to Dubrovnik and Kotor in the period from 1587 to 1589, when he held the office of vicar of the Ragusan Congregation of Observant friaries, as well as vicar of the Ragusan archdiocese during a period of *sedis vacantia*.<sup>10</sup> Among his strategies of promoting and strengthening the reform, which included preaching (he was invited to preach during Lent of 1589 in Kotor) and active institutional involvement (consolidation of the Ragusan Congregation), Razzi strongly focused on the production of hagiographical texts. He not only wrote *vitae* of many early modern holy men and women of the Dominican order, but also included in his hagiographical compendium short biographical notes on many early Observant *beati*, including Marcolino and Roberto.<sup>11</sup>

Marcolino's life and cult represent an important source for the later Observance in more than one way, as can be gauged from important essays by Daniel Bornstein, which accentuate the significance of Marcolino's saintly figure for the lay devotion.<sup>12</sup> Marcolino was born circa 1317 and died in 1397 in the Dominican convent of San Giacomo in Forlì. Some 50 miraculous healings are attributed to him *post mortem*. As a very

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9 'Il beato Ruberto Napoletano, essendo stato uno de'primi restauratori della vita regolare in Italia; finalmente pieno d'anni, e di meriti passò à miglior vita nel convento di San Domenico di Vinezia, essendo all'hora Priore di Chioggia, l'anno di nostra salute 1393 [...]', Razzi, *Vita dei santi e beati*, 231.

10 On Razzi's sojourn in Dubrovnik and Kotor, see: Lodovico Ferreti, 'Appunti biografici-critici', in: Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa*, 6-52; Idem, 'Fra Serafino Razzi', *Memorie Domenicane* 20 (1903), 168-173, 211-216, 310-318, 361-366, 421-432, 456-464.

11 'Il Beato Marcolino da Forlì [...] la cui vita scrisse il beato Giovandomenico Cardinale, in una sua lettera à Raimondo Capuano generale dell'ordine, fu huomo semplice, retto, casto, & humile [...]', Razzi, *Vite dei santi e beati*, 231.

12 Daniel Bornstein, 'Dominican Friar, Lay Saint: The Case of Marcolino of Forlì', *Church History* 66:2 (Jun. 1997), 252-267; Idem, 'Marcolino da Forlì: taumaturgo locale e modello universale', in: *Vita religiosa e identità politiche. Universalità e particolarismi nell'Europa del tardo medioevo*, ed. S. Gensini (Pisa: Ospedaletto, 1998), 263-286.

modest friar who spent all his life in the Dominican convent in Forlì, he dedicated his life to charity and prayer. After his death, he was acclaimed a saint by the people of Forlì, and Giovanni Dominici sent a commission in Forlì to investigate the case of his local veneration. On the basis of the commission report, Dominici informed master general Raimondo of Capua of the opinions surrounding Marcolino's death and miracles. Dominici likewise wrote a *Vita del Beato Marcolino da Forlì* according to an Observant model of sanctity. As per this model, Marcolino's *umiltà* had a special value. Bornstein concluded that Dominici's narrative was directed towards laymen and the Dominican order of Tertiaries, as a special concern of Tommaso di Antonio Caffarini, who included Dominici's letter to Raimondo about the veneration of Marcolino in his *Historia disciplinae regularis instauratae in coenobiis Venetis Ordinis praedicatorum*.<sup>13</sup> The interest that the core of the Dominican Observant movement in Venice showed for this local friar is not surprising, considering that Marcolino, without being an active member of the mobile Observant network, embodied the most important virtues of the reformed order from the very start of its diffusion.<sup>14</sup>

After this short but apparently intensive episode of Observant efforts in Dubrovnik had run its course, the first long-term results of the reform in the eastern Adriatic can be traced in the 1430s, when new reformed convents started to be established. The first of these was the Dalmatian Observant Dominican friary dedicated to the Holy Cross, which was founded on the island of Čiovo in 1432 by Fra Nikola Milinović from Trogir, who had studied in Venice and decided to introduce Observant reforms in his homeland.<sup>15</sup> The friary of Čiovo was soon followed by the Dominican

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13 Vincenzo Folli, 'Il Beato Marcolino da Forlì in una lettera del B. Giovanni Dominici', *Memorie Domenicane* 39 (1922), 20-27; Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident*, 470-472; Elio Montanari, 'Il dossier agiografico sul beato Marcolino da Forlì', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 65 (1995), 315-509; Bornstein, 'Dominican friar, lay saint', 261.

14 The nineteenth-century Dominican author Vincenzo Marchese reported that many friars had responded to Raymund of Capua's call for reform, enumerating Marcolino among the most important ones: 'dall'Italia, il Padre Tommaso di Siena, il Padre Tommaso Aiatamicristo di Pisa, il Padre Girolamo da Foligno, il Beato Marcolino da Forlì, e altri assai, ma innanzi a tutti il Beato Giovanni Dominici fiorentino, religioso del convento di Santa Maria Novella,' Vincenzo Marchese, *Scritti vari*, 2nd Ed., 2 Vols. (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1860) I, 55.

15 Stjepan Kراسić, 'Dominikanski samostan Sv. Križa na otoku Čiovu (1432.-1852.)', *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 31:1 (1991), 79-85; Haude Morvan, 'Arte medievale in Dalmazia: notizie dall'Archivio generale dei frati predicatori', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome-Moyen Âge* 128:1 (2016), 1-20.

Observant friary founded in 1437 in Dubrovnik's suburb of Gruž. In the context of saintly patronage, it should be mentioned that the friars planned to dedicate the church in Gruž to St Nicholas, but after experiencing a revelation in a dream, the donor of the land for the new friary suggested to dedicate it to the Holy Cross instead, similarly to the Čiovo friary.<sup>16</sup>

Following the founding of the reformed friary in Gruž, where the friars inclining to the Observance gathered, it took another three decades for the remaining friars of the main Dubrovnik friary to accept Observant reforms. The process was initiated by the Ragusan Senate in 1459, eager to reform the friary with a clear political motivation. The goal of the Republic was to form a group of reformed Dominican houses that would be exempt from the authority of the Dalmatian Dominican provincial, and eventually to detach these houses from any authority related to the Venetian territories.<sup>17</sup> In those efforts, the Senate was supported by two extremely well-connected friars from Dubrovnik: Serafino de Bona and Tommaso de Basilio. Initially, the reformed group covered the territory of the whole Dalmatian Province, and thus in 1474 Serafino was appointed *vicarius conventuum reformatorum Dalmatie*, whereas in 1475 Tommaso became *vicarius generalis conventuum reformatorum Sancti Dominici de Ragusio, Sancte Crucis de Gravosio, Sancti Nicolai de Catharo et super monasterio Sancti Michaelis de Ragusio*.<sup>18</sup> The group of Observant friaries, now limited to the southern part of the coast, included three houses in Dubrovnik (two male and one female) and one in Kotor. Although the first reference to the friary of Kotor as Observant dates to 1475, it can be presumed that the reform took place earlier, most probably around 1460, in the same wave with Dubrovnik and Durrës, considering that the Dominican friars from the three cities had extremely strong ties.

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16 Stjepan Krasić, 'Dominikanski samostan sv. Križa u Gružu (1437-1987). Povijesni pregled', *Croatica Christiana periodica* 11:20 (1987), 185-186.

17 Krasić, *Congregatio Ragusina*, 83-90; Idem, 'Hrvatska dominikanska kongregacija (1508-1587)', *Bogoslovska smotra* 41:2-3 (1971), 294-297; Ana Marinković, 'La diffusione dei culti ungheresi tra i domenicani di Dubrovnik (Ragusa) nel tempo di Mattia Corvino', *Nuova Corvina* 20 (2008), 169-178.

18 Krasić, 'Regesti pisama', 177. On the friary of St Nicholas in Kotor, founded in 1266, see Stjepan Krasić, 'Nekadašnji dominikanski samostan Sv. Nikole u Kotoru (1266-1807)', *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 28:1 (1989), 129-141.

## Universal Observant cults in the second wave of the reform

During this period of renewal of the Dominican Observant network in the cities of the southeastern Adriatic, several new cults propagated by the reformed Friars Preachers appeared in Dubrovnik and Kotor: in the first place St Caterina of Siena and St Vincent Ferrer, whose cults were eagerly propagated by the Observants. The appearance of the cult of Caterina of Siena in Kotor can be interpreted in two contexts: the protection against plague epidemics, as well as the promotion of the Observant reform. The fresco painting in St Anna's church,<sup>19</sup> which unfortunately has not survived unscathed, was most probably completed after the plague outbreak of 1467.<sup>20</sup> St. Caterina is represented in full figure on the eastern wall next to the main apse, and she is turned in a slight half-profile towards the main altar and towards Christ, who appears on the top-right corner of the fresco (**fig. 1**). Caterina is shown with golden stigmata, today visible only as golden flames on her black shoes. Although the cult of *la mantellata senese* is linked to the Observant Dominicans in Kotor, in the church of St Anna the fresco originated from a private votive commission, as confirmed by the inscription in the vernacular: S[VET]A KATAR[INA] MOLI SA R[A] BU T[VOIU] [KA]TAR[INU] (*St Caterina, pray for your servant Katari-na*).<sup>21</sup> In Dubrovnik, St Caterina is represented in the vault medallion of the eastern cloister wing, built in the 1460s, next to the medallion repre-

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19 During its history, the church changed its dedication several times – first it was dedicated to St Martin, and at the end of fifteenth century to St Veneranda. On a wooden inscription in the church wall from 1853 it is called *ecclesia S. Anne*, see: Milka Čanak-Medić, *Arhitektura Nemanjinog doba II. Crkve u Polimlju i na Primorju* (Belgrade: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture SR Srbije i Arheološki institut, 1989), 177-200; Jovan J. Martinović, 'Oko ubikacije i dedikacije crkve Svetog Martina u Kotoru', *Godišnjak Pomorskog muzeja u Kotoru* 50 (2002), 427-436.

20 On plague epidemics in Kotor, see: Vladimir Bazala, 'Calendarium pestis I', *Acta historica medicinae pharmaciae veterariae* 1 (1962), 51-61.; Miloš Milošević, 'Zdravstvena kultura u Boki Kotorskoj za vrijeme mletačke vladavine', in: *Pomorski trgovci, ratnici i meceni. Studije o Boki Kotorskoj XV-XIX stoljeća*, ed. Miloš Milošević (Belgrade: Podgorica, 2003), 248-261. According to fresco inscriptions denoting Caterina of Siena as a saint, the terminus *post quem* of the fresco would be 1461, when Caterina was canonized, see: Valentina Živković, 'Freske iz XV veka u kotorskoj crkvi Svete Ane. Ikonografska analiza', *Zograf* 28 (2000-2001), 133-138.

21 On a variety of complex visual and textual messages in the church of St Anna, see: Valentina Živković, 'The Healing Power of Images and Words: Venetian Influence on the Veneration of Saints in Fifteenth-Century Kotor', in: *Saints, Miracles and the Image Healing Saints and Miraculous Images in the Renaissance*, ed. S. Cardarelli and L. Fenelli (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 131-145.



sending St Catherine of Alexandria. As she is not represented in the scene of her stigmatization, but as a Dominican nun with a lily, her identification relies on the pairing of two homonym saints (**fig. 2**). As shall be argued below, three Ragusan depictions of a Dominican nun either in a stigmatization scene or adoring the Crucifix refer to Blessed Margaret of Hungary, with whom Dubrovnik had special ties. The above-mentioned two St Caterina representations in Kotor and Dubrovnik are the sole preserved fifteenth-century images of the saint in the respective cities. Nonetheless, they attest to the appearance of her cult immediately after the reform of local Dominican communities, and also shortly after her canonization in 1461.

Although Vincent Ferrer himself did not join a reformed Dominican branch, due to his strong sense of humility and repentance, he became very popular among the Observant friars. The beginnings of the promotion of the cult of Vincent Ferrer in the southeastern Adriatic are connected to the missionary activities of another Dominican Observant friar, blessed Giovanni of Pistoia, who acquired an aura of exclusivity in promoting the cult of Ferrer from the very start of his missionary endeavors in the mid fifteenth century. He spread the glory of Ferrer 'ovunque si distesero i confini delle sue Pellegrinazioni; cioè per tutta l'Italia, e specialmente nella Toscana, ne' fioritissimi Regni di Napoli, e di Sicilia, e fino nella Dalmazia'.<sup>22</sup> Giovanni's dedication to his great predecessor was such, that in Sicily he preached that all male newborns should be named Vincenzo, and all girls Vincenza. The materials used for the preparation of this sermon were sent to him in 1463 by Pietro Ranzano (1426/27–1492/93), a Dominican friar from Palermo, who wrote the *Vita* of Ferrer for the preparation of his canonization in 1455.<sup>23</sup> A step forward in creating Fra Giovanni of Pistoia's

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22 Fr. Antonino Teoli, *Storia della vita, e del culto di S. Vincenzo Ferrerio dell'ordine de'predicatori* (Rome: Giovanni Battista de Caporali, 1735), 537.

23 *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis, collecta, digesta, illustrata a Godefrido Henschenio et Daniele Papebrochio e Societate Iesu*, Tomus I, *quo priores x dies continentur*, ed. J. Carnandet (Paris-Rome: Victor Palme, 1865), 477-529. On Pietro Ranzano, see Ferdinando Attilio Termini, *Pietro Ranzano, umanista palermitano del sec. XV* (Palermo: Libreria editrice Ant. Trimarchi, 1915); Idem 'Ricostruzione cronologica della biografia di Pietro Ransano', *Archivio storico siciliano* n.s. 41 (1916), 81-104; Antonio Barilaro, 'Pietro Ranzano, vescovo di Lucerà, umanista domenicano di Palermo', *Memorie domenicane* n.s. 8:9 (1977), 1-197; Bruno Figliuolo, *La cultura a Napoli nel secondo Quattrocento. Ritratti di protagonista* (Udine: Forum, 1997), 87-276 (at 100-101);

unique role as promoter of the Ferrer cult was the creation of a legend, according to which Giovanni was identified with the miraculously resuscitated child from the *post mortem* version of Ferrer's most famous and most intriguing miracle.<sup>24</sup>

The exact year of Giovanni of Pistoia's arrival in Kotor is unknown, but it undoubtedly occurred during the period of plague epidemics in the second half of the fifteenth century. In his *Vita del beato Giovanni da Pistoia*, Razzi described the mission of his predecessor who had come to Kotor to preach: 'As the plague caused the great massacre in Kotor in Dalmatia, where this blessed man preached outside the city gates in an open place and with a license, he, moved to compassion by such a great mortality, ordered that supplications be made for three days, and on the third day, due to his merits and the devout prayers of the people, the pestilence subsided'.<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that the eighteenth-century scholar Daniele Farlati, author of the extensive eight-volume *Illyricum sacrum*, inserted the activity of Giovanni of Pistoia in Kotor in the narratives of conversion of the Orthodox population (*schismaticorum conversio*) in the village of Bogdašići near Kotor in 1455.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to discern Farlati's sources for stating that Giovanni arrived to Kotor at the exact moment of conclusion of Ferrer's canonization process. If we, however, decide to trust Farlati's sources, then we should ascribe also the early appearance of numerous references to Ferrer in Dubrovnik in the 1460s to the local diffusion of the cult instigated by fra Giovanni's preaching.

In Dubrovnik's friary, there was a booming period for St Vincent's cult after the Observant reform of 1460: the saint is represented on the pulpit relief in the church created shortly thereafter (**fig. 3**),<sup>27</sup> and a private altar

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Nadia Zeldes, 'The Last Multi-Cultural Encounter in Medieval Sicily: A Dominican Scholar, an Arabic Inscription and a Jewish Legend', in: *Conflict and Religious Conversation in Latin Christendom: Studies in Honour of Ora Limor*, ed. I. J. Yuval and R. Ben-Shalom (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 191-220.

24 Laura Ackerman Smoller, *The Saint and the Chopped-Up Baby: The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

25 'Facendo la grandissima strage la peste, in Catara terra di Dalmazia, dove questo beato predicava fuori delle porte della città, in un luogo aperto, e patente, mosso a compassione di tanta mortalità, ordinò, che per tre giorni si facessero le supplicazioni, e il terzo giorno per i meriti suoi, e le devote orazioni di quel popolo, cessò la pestilenza', Razzi, *Vite dei santi*, 280-281.

26 Farlati, *Illyrici Sacri VI*, 467-468.

27 On the complex issue of dating the pulpit with reference to the representation of Vincent as a saint with a halo, and Margaret as *beata* with rays, see: Marinković, 'La diffusione dei culti ungheresi', 170.

with a polyptych altarpiece in the sacristy was dedicated to him by the Catalan consul in 1470 (unfortunately lost). Moreover, he was represented as well on the semi-capital in the ladies' gallery inserted between the Dominican church and the church of St Sebastian, built after the plague of 1466. (**fig. 4**) The latter example is also an indication of the manifold nature of the cult of St Vincent: in addition to symbolising the reform of discipline promoted by the Observant branch of the Dominican order, the saint was also venerated as a special intercessor in times of plague. This role of St Vincent is especially accentuated in Venice, but prominent also in Dubrovnik and Kotor.

Around 1484 another private altar dedicated to St Vincent Ferrer was constructed in the Ragusan Dominican church by Nikola Bakrović, father of the Dominican friar Vinko (Vincent). The altar was erected as a votive offering for the saint's alleged role in ending the epidemic of 1481-83. The same votive acknowledgment was repeated just a few years later, after the severe plague of 1486-87, when the new altarpiece for the High altar was dedicated to St Vincent. The commission reflects once again the double nature of the cult: it can be interpreted as a votive commission related to the severe plague epidemic of 1486/7, but also as a symbolic celebration of the official confirmation of the new Observant Congregation with the new patron saint.<sup>28</sup> The polyptych – as an exception to contemporary iconographic practice in Dubrovnik – featured the figure of St Vincent (and not the Virgin) in the central field, and the contract also mentions *hystorie*, that is, miracle scenes in the predella. In addition, a large wooden statue of St Vincent has been preserved and kept in the Dubrovnik Dominican church until the present day (**fig. 5**). In 1490 the Friars Preachers of Kotor commissioned a similar wooden statue of the saint, whereas in 1495 they contracted the leading Ragusan painter Božidar Vlatković to paint an altarpiece dedicated to St Vincent Ferrer (**fig. 6**).<sup>29</sup> It should be underlined

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28 For the detailed contract for the altarpiece, see: Jorjo Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj školi u Dubrovniku XIII-XVI*, 2 Vols. (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1952) I, 303; see also: Marinković, 'Kultovi dominikanskih svetaca', 165.

29 The contract with Vlatković is published in: Tadić, *Grada* I, 332-333. On the statue see: Kruno Prijatelj, 'Kotorski kip sv. Vinka', *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 3 (1967), 201-203; Valentina Živković, 'San Vincenzo Ferrer. Qualche nota sul culto del predicatore domenicano apocalittico che salva dall'eresie e dalla peste', in: *Immagini della predicazione tra Quattrocento e Settecento*. Crivelli, Lotto, Guercino, ed. G. Capriotti and F. Coltrinari (Milano: Silvana editoriale, 2017), 47-55.

that the friars of Kotor specifically asked that their new altarpiece should be made on the model of the new Ragusan polyptych. None of the two altarpieces have survived, but the similarity of the two wooden sculptures is indicative of the coordinated commissions related to the cult of the great preacher.

The Dominicans of Kotor and Dubrovnik had a somewhat different fate after 1487, when the latter finally managed to establish the Observant Congregation and secede from the Dalmatian province, uniting the three reformed houses in the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik: St Dominic in Dubrovnik, the Holy Cross in Gruž, and the newly established St Nicholas friary on the island of Lopud (1482). Ragusan friars (and the government) received strong support from the Hungarian court, which encouraged the Dominican Observant reform in Dubrovnik and the separation of the Ragusan Congregation from the province covering the territory of Venetian Dalmatia. Hungarian interest was surely politically motivated, considering that the Republic of Dubrovnik nominally obeyed the Crown of St Stephen between the mid fourteenth to the early sixteenth century. The support to the Ragusan Observant friars was also reflected in the veneration of several Hungarian dynastic saints in the Dominican friary in Dubrovnik. Among them, the depiction of the stigmatization of Blessed Margaret of Hungary on the pulpit in the Ragusan church dates from the period immediately after the Observant reform of 1460. The image of the Dominican nun adoring the Crucifix on the vault medaillon of the matroneum built after 1466 plausibly reflects the iconographical program of the pulpit, accompanied with the mentioned image of St Vincent Ferrer on the console capital (**fig. 7**). Finally, the medallion with the image of a Dominican nun praying in front of the Crucifix in the northern wing of the cloister, built in 1479-1482/3, can directly be related to the return of the friars Serafino and Tommaso in 1479, after consolidating the Dominican *studium generale* in Buda, and identified as the Hungarian nun (**fig. 8**).<sup>30</sup>

Even though the friary of Kotor was not included in the newly established Ragusan Observant Congregation, the cult of St Vincent Ferrer that flourished in both cities remained a strong connection between the communities in Dubrovnik and Kotor. The role of Serafino Razzi in

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30 Marinković, 'La diffusione dei culti ungheresi', 171.

documenting, refreshing and promoting the cult of Ferrer at the end of the sixteenth century is crucial. A special devotion of Serafino Razzi to the Valencian preacher is revealed in his two works *Storia di Raugia* and *Vita di Osanna*. In his *Storia di Raugia* the Florentine Dominican dedicated a long passage to the statue of St Vincent, where he explained how the friars kept the statue covered and locked in a closet, only unveiling it during the holiest church holidays, when it could be seen covered with silver ex-voto offerings. Razzi added that in 1588 he himself had placed around the neck of Ferrer's statue a chain with a cross (made in the Dominican convent of San Paolo in Orvieto) containing several relics, including one of Thomas Aquinas and a fragment of the *lignum crucis*.<sup>31</sup>

The roots of Serafino Razzi's devotion to the Ferrer cult are to be found in his youth, around the time that he decided to dedicate his life to the Dominican order. An important event related to the cult of Ferrer occurred in 1551 when young Serafino, still a Dominican novice, was sent from the Florentine convent of San Marco to the convent of San Vincenzo in Prato. The reason for this journey was the feast day of the titular of the Prato monastery. There he attended the mystical ecstasy of Caterina de' Ricci, *la sposa di Giesù Christo nell'estasi della Passione*, which left such a strong impression on him that he asked to be taken as her spiritual son (*di prenderlo per figliuolo spirituale*).<sup>32</sup> This event is believed to have confirmed his commitment to the Dominican order, as well as his desire to write and edit hagiographies of famous Dominicans.<sup>33</sup>

Razzi's attempts to strengthen both the cult of Ferrer and that of a local Observant *beata* are made manifest in his hagiographic endeavors on behalf of Osanna from Kotor (1493-1565), the Dominican tertiary and anchoress who converted from Greek-Orthodoxy to Catholicism. In his *Vita della reverenda serva di Dio la madre suor Ossanna da Cattaro, dell'ordine di*

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31 'La tengono quei padri coperta, e serrata dentro un'armario, e si scopre nelle principali feste, e si vede tutta da capo a' piedi, coperta di voti d'argento, a i quali aggiunse l'autore di quest'opera, l'anno 1588. e gli pose al collo una bellissima Croce, lavorata in San Paolo d'Orvieto in Toscana, dentro di cui sono alcune sacre reliquie, e specialmente una di san Tommaso d'Aquino, & un poco di legno della Croce di nostro Signore', Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa*, 142.

32 Serafino Razzi, *La vita della reverenda serva di dio, La madre Suor Caterina de' Ricci, Monaca de Venerabile Monastero di S. Vincenzio di Prato* (Lucca: Per Vincentio Busdraghi, 1594), 27.

33 On Razzi and Caterina de' Ricci see: Anna Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo. Mistica e comunità nei Ratti di Caterina de' Ricci. Con il testo inedito del XVI secolo* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2013).

*San Domenico*, published in 1592, Razzi presents Osanna as an *umile serva di Dio* and *santa viva*. Her ascetic penitence, visions, mystical experiences and prophecies were the stages of her spiritual ascension.<sup>34</sup> In her hagiography, Razzi assigned a significant role to the cult of Vincent Ferrer and emphasized his role as a personal protector to whom Osanna addressed her prayers, but also as a special protector of the entire city, together with the traditional patron saint of Kotor, St Tryphon.

## Conclusion

In the Dominican order, in which reforms ultimately did not lead to unbridgable divisions, Observant and non-Observant factions by and large venerated the same saints, and this is especially true of Caterina of Siena and Vincent Ferrer. Nevertheless, the dedication of churches and altars, as well as the iconography of liturgical and devotional objects and architectural decoration, when put in the context of local efforts regarding the reform of particular communities, represent a clear indication of support for Observant reforms through the promotion of specific cult of saints. Concrete connections, such as the local presence of Dominici's network, the activity of itinerant Observant preachers (Giovanni of Pistoia, Serafino Razzi), or foreign support for the reformed friaries (from the courts of Hungary and Naples) delineate more precisely the channels of spreading both the new cults and the reform. Following the 'institutional' commissions introducing the new saints, however, there were several private commissions that attest to the wider spread of the Observant cults at an early stage. Unlike the discussed local occurrences of cults whose Observant context is clearly detectable, it is difficult to grasp the Observant background of the unique pre-Baroque appearance of St Antonino in the region in an altarpiece from the Dominican church of St Nicholas in Kotor. St Antonino Pierozzi (1389-1459), Dominici's disciple and later archbishop of Florence and vicar general of the Observant Dominicans, was depicted in the altarpiece most

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34 Serafino Razzi, *Vita della reverenda serva di Dio la madre suor Osanna da Cattaro, dell'ordine di San Domenico. Scritta da Serafino Razzi dell'istesso Ordine, e Provincia Romana* (Florence: Nella Stamperia del Sermartelli, 1592). On Osanna as a *santa viva* see Valentina Živković, 'Non possedè cosa che del mondo fusse. Suor Osanna, la santa viva di Cattaro', in: *Sante vive in Europa (secoli XV-XVI)/Santas vivas en Europa (siglos XV-XVI), Saggi per Gabriella Zarri*, ed. A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Archivio italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 33 (2020), 235-254.

probably commissioned by the confraternity of the leathermakers around 1545 (**fig. 9**).<sup>35</sup> The saint is depicted flanking (paired with the locally popular St George) the central figure of St Bartholomew, the obvious patron of the confraternity, while the reasons for the unconventional choice of a locally less known reformist saint remain unknown.

The role of Serafino Razzi in propagating Observant cults, not only as a preacher, but primarily as the author of hagiographies and other texts, was as substantial in the southeastern Adriatic as it was in Italy. His reinvention and promotion of Observant figures such as Marcolino and Guido, Vincent and Osanna was carried out locally and vigourously, making Razzi's works not only the most important source for Observant cults but also the apex of devotion to Observant saints in Dubrovnik and Kotor. It is important to note that among the mentioned cults, only that of Osanna concerned a local person, whereas the other ones had either only indirect relations to the local community (Marcolino and Guido in Dubrovnik) or no specific relation at all, except for the personal link of their propagators (Vincent in Kotor and possibly in Dubrovnik, Margaret in Dubrovnik). The appearance of the cult of Margaret of Hungary accurately reflects the double background of the Observant devotion in the Ragusan community: that of reformist efforts to set a model for religious discipline and that of political priorities to institutionally distance the houses from Venetian influence. Notwithstanding the local political exigencies and expected particularities, the appearance and diffusion of new cults in the Observant communities of the southeastern Adriatic corresponded to the general framework of reformist devotional practice and thus were an integral yet distinctive part of the wider reformist network.

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35 Valentina Živković, 'The Sixteenth-century Altar Painting of the Cattaran (Kotor) Fraternity of Leather-makers', *Balkanica* 40 (2010), 75-84.

## Illustrations



Fig. 1: St Caterina of Siena, wall painting, church of St Anna in Kotor, after 1467 (photo Dejan Palibrk).





Fig. 2: St Caterina of Siena, medallion in the cloister vault, Dominican friary in Dubrovnik, 1460s (photo Tomislav Turković).



Fig. 3: Pulpit in the church of St Dominic in Dubrovnik, after 1460 (photo Tomislav Turković).



Fig. 4: St Vincent Ferrer, semi-capital in the matroneum in the church of St Dominic in Dubrovnik, after 1466 (photo Antun Baće).



Fig. 5: Wooden statue of St Vincent Ferrer, church of St Dominic in Dubrovnik, ca. 1487 (photo Tomislav Turković).



Fig. 6: Wooden statue of St Vincent Ferrer, from the Dominican church of St Nicholas in Kotor (presently in the cathedral treasury), 1490 (photo Stevan Kordić).



Fig. 7: Blessed Margaret of Hungary (?), medallion in the matroneum vault, church of St Dominic in Dubrovnik, after 1466 (photo Antun Baće).



Fig. 8: Blessed Margaret of Hungary, medallion in the cloister vault, Dominican friary in Dubrovnik, 1479-1482/3 (photo Tomislav Turković).



Fig. 9: Altarpiece from the church of St Nicholas in Kotor (presently in the cathedral) depicting St Antonino Pierozzi, ca. 1545 (photo Zorica Čubrović).