

# THE DALMATIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN BENEVENTAN SCRIPT AND THE NOTION OF “ADRIATIC PERIPHERY” . NOTES FOR A NEW RESEARCH SETTING\*

Emanuela Elba

E. Elba  
Independent scholar  
E-mail: emelba76@hotmail.com

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*The analysis of the corpus of manuscripts in Beneventan script from Dalmatia (2011) makes it possible to identify some specific features that characterize the book production in the region over time. The conclusion is that the manuscripts of Dalmatia should not be considered simply as “provincial” products, i.e. lacking the qualitative elements of the artistic production of the major centres, but are instead the result of a complex process of reception, adaptation, reworking of the models, which did not come to an end within a few decades, but lasted until the 13th century. The article aims to take stock of the issue, defining the critical parameters useful to frame the Dalmatian book production through a different interpretative system and a new historiographical approach that finds an effective “theoretical” support in the paradigm of so-called “peripheral art” developed by Lj. Karaman in 1963.*

**Key words:** *Dalmatian Manuscripts, Dalmatian Miniature painting, Beneventan Script, Southern Italy, Dalmatia, Apulia, Middle Age, Beneventan Zone, E. A. Loew, Adriatic Sea, Adriatic Periphery, Peripheral Art, Provincial Art, Lj. Karaman*

This paper was inspired by a topic that Elias Avery Loew started in his work on the Beneventan Script in Southern Italy, which has recently celebrated a publication centenary.<sup>1</sup> In his monographic study the palaeographer circumscribed the boundaries of the area that used the Beneventan script, and included Dalmatia, a territory closely linked to Southern Italy by continuous political, economic and religious relations in the Middle Ages, especially in the 11th century. From this starting point Loew elaborated the idea of a “Beneventan zone”, which included the territories across the Adriatic Sea, and was understood as a geographical and territorial area essentially dominated by Latin culture and featuring a common regional script, Beneventan (Fig.1).

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\* This article re-examines and further develops the paper presented at the 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of Western Michigan, Kalamazoo, 2015 May 14-17. The topic fits this collection, since the topic of the decoration of the Dalmatian manuscripts in Beneventan script marks my appreciation for Prof. Nikola Jakšić. To him, after twenty years, goes my deep gratitude for having contributed with his writings to lead me to discover the richness of the historical and artistic heritage of Croatia, but above all for having enriched my book *Miniatura in Dalmazia* (2011) with his precious intervention “from across the Adriatic”. A sincere thank you also goes to my friend and colleague Jasenka Gudelj, with whom I share my interest in the topic of Adriatic artistic relations; our exchange of ideas on Ljubo Karaman and peripheral art one afternoon in Zagreb a few years ago proved very useful for this work. Finally, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Richard Gyug for reviewing the English version of this paper and offering his precious suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> E. A. LOEW, *The Beneventan Script: A History of the South Italian Minuscule*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1914; E. A. LOEW, *Scriptura beneventana: Facsimiles of South Italian and Dalmatian Manuscripts from the Sixth to the Fourteenth Century*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1929.

The importance of the Adriatic for transportation and contact helped to explain the spread of Latin writing and culture, including the production of books in Beneventan script, beyond the regions included in the Benevento duchy to territories such as Apulia and Dalmatia, marked for over two centuries by the strong impact of Byzantine culture. Loew noted some clear affinities in writ-



Fig. 1. Loew's Beneventan Zone (from E. A. LOEW, op. cit. (n. 1, 1914)

ing and decoration between the manuscripts produced in Dalmatia and the contemporary examples produced in Apulia. These affinities, together with the use of a common script, which he himself identified as “Bari-type”, to distinguish it from the “Montecassino-type”, showed that the Beneventan script and Beneventan miniature painting crossed the Adriatic Sea mainly through Apulia and that its spread was promoted by the numerous Benedictine monasteries built between the 9th and 11th century along the Balkan coast and islands.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of Loew’s “Beneventan Zone” therefore reflected, albeit indirectly, that historiographical paradigm, typical of the European artistic research of the time, which based the cultural development on the dual opposition centre/province, province/periphery. This dichotomous logic of confrontation and at the same time opposition ended up influencing all subsequent studies of Dalmatian miniature painting in Beneventan script, which has therefore long been frozen in a restrictive idea of “provincial” art and considered no more than an Adriatic “extension” of South-Italian book production, especially from Apulia.<sup>3</sup>

The systematic study of the catalogue (*corpus*) of the manuscripts in Dalmatian Beneventan script has led to a new critical reading of the Beneventan miniature painting from Dalmatia,<sup>4</sup> in particular through a comparative analysis of the principal manuscripts, all dated to the second half of the 11th century. Most of these were produced in Zadar for the monastery of Saint Chrysogonus – home, as it is known, of an important *scriptorium* and a library<sup>5</sup> – or for the female convent of Saint Mary, linked to the most prestigious manuscripts of the Croatian miniature painting.

By extending the analysis of the relations between the two Adriatic coasts from a one-way perspective to a two-way perspective, and focusing on the peculiarities of the Adriatic manuscript illumination, it was possible to establish how Dalmatian manuscripts related to southern Italian manuscripts, and to concentrate on both the type of reception and the methods of reworking the models themselves. On these new methodological bases, it is evident that the link

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of this subject, see I. OSTOJIĆ, *Benediktinci u Hrvatskoj i ostalim našim krajevima*, I-III, Split, 1963-1965; the work remains valid, albeit dated. On the role of the Benedictines as the means of spreading of Latin writing tradition in Dalmatia, see also: V. DELONGA, Il patrimonio epigrafico latino nei territori croati in età carolingia, in: *Bizantini, Croati, Carolingi. Alba e tramonto di regni e imperi*, (ed.) Carlo Bertelli et alii, Milano, 2001, pp. 199-229.

<sup>3</sup> This “downgrading” of the Dalmatian phenomenon to a marginal and provincial phenomenon, together with the difficulty of being able to conduct an autoptic analysis of the surviving book heritage, scattered among various European and Croatian institutions, are the main factors that have long held back the possibility of studying the subject. Not by chance, especially in Italy, the first studies focused on a single case, that of the manuscript kept in the Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library (= BAV), Vat. Borg. lat. 339, quoted on several occasions by G. OROFINO, *Gli Evangelieri in beneventana di Bisceglie e Bitonto e la produzione miniaturistica in Puglia nel XII secolo*, in: *I codici liturgici di Puglia*, (ed.) Gerardo Cioffari, Giuseppe Di Benedetto, Bari, 1986, p. 213; G. OROFINO, *La prima fase della miniatura desideriana (1058-1071)*, in: *Letà dell’abate Desiderio. La decorazione libraria, II: Atti della tavola rotonda*, (ed.) Giuglielmo Cavallo [*Miscellanea cassinese*, 60], Montecassino, 1989, p. 53; and by V. PACE, *Studi sulla decorazione libraria in area grafica beneventana*, in: *Letà dell’abate Desiderio. La decorazione libraria, II: Atti della tavola rotonda*, (ed.) Giuglielmo Cavallo [*Miscellanea cassinese*, 60], Montecassino, 1989, p. 83. Both classified the manuscript as an eccentric and “provincial” product, the result of a remote reworking of the models.

<sup>4</sup> E. ELBA, *La decorazione dei codici in beneventana della Dalmazia tra XI e XIII secolo*, *Segno e testo*, 4, Cassino, 2006, pp. 107-147; E. ELBA, *Miniatura in Dalmazia: I codici in beneventana (XI-XIII secolo)*, Galatina, 2011. Another valid comprehensive study on the same subject is R. VOJVODA, *Dalmatian Illuminated Manuscripts Written in Beneventan Script and Benedictine Scriptoria in Zadar, Dubrovnik and Trogir (doctoral thesis)*, Central European University, Budapest, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> G. PRAGA, *Lo scriptorium dell’abbazia benedettina di san Crisogono in Zara*, *Archivio storico per la Dalmazia*, VII: fasc. 39 (pp. 127-146), fasc. 40 (pp. 177-190), fasc. 42 (pp. 279-298); VIII: fasc. 43 (pp. 314-325), fasc. 45 (pp. 438-453), fasc. 46 (pp. 481-494), fasc. 47 (pp. 542-562); IX: fasc. 49 (pp. 144-149), Roma, 1929-1940. Further reference in E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), p. 55.

to book production of the Bari-type is not exclusive – as often assumed – but the interchange encompasses the entire area from Montecassino to Benevento, Capua and Bari.<sup>6</sup>

This is a considerable shift in understanding, which now lays the foundations for a critical review of the conceptual setting of Loew's "Beneventan Zone".

Such a review first requires identifying the existence or non-existence of a Dalmatian Beneventan script, arriving at a thesis that takes into account the graphic forms attested in manuscripts from Dalmatia, which may result from reliance on multiple models, rather than creating a further different type.<sup>7</sup> Only this important step can help solve the question of the origin of some manuscripts and fragments, currently attributed in a generic way to Apulia or Dalmatia because of their graphic characteristics.

## 1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT: "ENDOGENOUS" AND "EXOGENOUS" FACTORS

Two specific elements define the degree of uniqueness of the Dalmatian phenomenon. Firstly, the local artistic tradition reflects the coexistence of different cultural components settled on a classical and late antique substrate,<sup>8</sup> and secondly, there are specific historical factors, the most important of which is the Gregorian Reform, a topic that has been examined extensively in recent historical contributions on Dalmatia.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Among the contributions which followed the publication of the *corpus* and contributed to increasing the considerations supporting this new vision, see E. ELBA, *Oltreadriatico: modelli figurativi e temi iconografici della Riforma Gregoriana in Dalmazia*, in: *Art History – the Future is Now. Studies in Honor of Professor Vladimir P. Goss*, (ed.) Maja Cepetić et alii, Rijeka, 2012, pp. 314-328; E. ELBA, *I messali "votivi" in beneventana: funzione, struttura, decorazione*, in: *Libri e testi: lavori in corso a Cassino*, (ed.) Roberta Casavecchia et alii, Atti del Seminario internazionale (Cassino, 30-31 gennaio 2012), *Studi e ricerche del Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia*, 7, Università di Cassino. Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia, Cassino, 2013, pp. 261-301. For a bibliographic update, see A. J. M. IRVING, (Not) Identifying a Desiderian Evangelistary Fragment: BAV Vat. lat. 10644, f. 28r-31v, *Scriptorium*, 66, n.1, 2012, pp. 109-155; R. F. GYUG, *Early Medieval Bibles, Biblical Books, and the Monastic Liturgy in the Beneventan Region*, in: *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, (ed.) Susan Boyton, Diane J. Reilly, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011, pp. 34-60; R. F. GYUG, *Liturgy and law in a Dalmatian city: The Bishop's Book of Kotor (Sankt-Peterburg, Bran, F. n. 200)*, *Monumenta Liturgica Beneventana*, 7, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> The palaeographers on the Beneventan script of Dalmatia differ in a problematic way on the question of the relationships with the Bari-type which, as in the case of the miniature painting, does not seem to be always exclusive or at least is not always direct. Loew assimilated the Dalmatian Beneventan script to the Bari-type, but only a few years later the palaeographer Viktor Novak affirmed the need to keep distinct the two graphic forms, the Dalmatian one and the Bari one, since the first shows a specific character based on some peculiarities. Cf. V. NOVAK, *Scriptura beneventana, s osobitím obzirom na tip dalmatinske beneventane*, Zagreb, 1920. The starting point for Novak was that the Dalmatian centres knew in fact two forms of script, one "angular" – the Montecassino-type – and one "round", close to the Bari-type but not completely similar to it. Similarly, G. CAVALLO, *Struttura e articolazione della minuscola beneventana libraria tra i secoli X-XII*, *Studi medievali*, XI fasc.1, 1970, pp. 343-368, considers the Dalmatian Beneventan script as the result of a mixture of scripts. He therefore compares its "ambiguities" to the "atypical" characters of the script used in the centres of northern Apulia, an area where we see the confluence and subsistence of all the scripts of the major centres (Montecassino, Bari, Benevento). Thus, in Capitanata as well as in Dalmatia, the script models of the main centres merge to reach new and original syntheses. The late Professor Franco Magistrale, overcoming Loew's vision and following Cavallo's line of thought, also suggested defining the Dalmatian Beneventan script as "close to the Bari-type", rather than completely of Bari-type.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the Byzantine component, Carolingian artistic culture, which is manifest in the first monumental testimonies linked to the Benedictine sphere, should not be overlooked. See V. DELONGA, *op. cit.* (n. 2).

<sup>9</sup> See S. GIOANNI, *La Vita Domnii d'Adam de Paris (XIe siècle). La construction d'un lien hagiographique entre l'Eglise de Split et le siège de Rome*, *Hagiographica*, 19, pp. 83-120 and especially S. GIOANNI, *Les cours croate set la Réforme de l'Église dalmate (IX<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècle). Structures, hommes, doctrines*, in: *Le corti nell'alto medioevo*, LXII Settimane di Studio della fondazione CISAM, (Spoleto, 24-29 aprile 2014), Spoleto, 2015, pp. 341 f.

The centrality of links between the church of Rome, Montecassino, southern Italy and the Reform on the one hand, and the monastery of Saint Chrysogonus, the main monastery of Dalmatia in the 11th century, on the other, clarifies the role of Zadar as the hub of book circulation in the region and the principal locus of Dalmatian book phenomenon. An instrumental role was played by those who were involved with the monastery: the papal delegates, sent to the East to eradicate unorthodox customs, and the highest local ecclesiastical figures, bishops and abbots, all the Benedictine monks, leading figures in the process of consolidating the Latin cultural identity of the region. It was probably these men, intellectually more active than other ecclesiastical groups and participants in the Reform, who favoured the circulation of books, promoted their transfer from Italy and encouraged local production.

Another significant circumstance has emerged from recent studies. The third quarter of the 11th century, i.e. the period of intensification of the relations between the monasteries of the two Adriatic shores and during which the oldest manuscripts in Beneventan script were copied in Dalmatia, coincides with the moment in which the Abbey of Montecassino was governed by Desiderius. This aspect is not a coincidence, since Desiderius was one of the main supporters of Pope Gregory VII, and above all a great lover of books and a decisive figure in the development of the *scriptorium* of Montecassino as a centre of book production.

## 2. IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Characteristics which we could define as “eccentric”, if compared to those conveyed by South-Italian models, helps classify Dalmatian book production as independent of southern Italian models or types. In the light of this, it is essential to consider the manuscript as a complex manufacture, which needs to be studied through a multidisciplinary analysis and a multifocal vision.

### *a. Codicological, textual and figurative aspects*

An important topic for discussion concerns the codicological, textual and figurative aspects of Dalmatian “evangelaries”, or “evangelistaries”, a manuscript genre which was more widespread in Dalmatia and forms a larger portion of the corpus. As it is well known, they are books that contained the collection of evangelical pericopes organized according to the liturgical feasts. This category of books includes seven out of the twenty-one pieces of evidence of the *corpus*, made up of manuscripts and fragments.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, three of those books are among the sizeable group of manuscripts dating to between the second half of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th century: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Lat. 61; Vatican City, BAV, Borg. Lat. 339; and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Theol. Lat. qu. 278.

These manuscripts form a consistent subset because they contain the *Exultet*, which is not generally included in Beneventan evangelaries from southern Italy.<sup>11</sup> This characteristic could derive from

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<sup>10</sup> The complete list of evangelaries of Dalmatia is: Vatican City, BAV, Vat. Borg. Lat. 339; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Lat. 61; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Lat. qu. 278; Trogir, Kapotolski Arhiv, (two manuscripts *s.n.*); Rab, Nadžupski Arhiv, *s.n.*; Sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu, R4106. For a comprehensive description of these evangelaries, see: E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011). For an updated bibliography, see *Bibliografia dei manoscritti in scrittura beneventana* (= BMB), <http://edu.let.unicas.it/bmb/>.

<sup>11</sup> For a full list of evangelaries in Beneventan script, see V. BROWN, *I libri della Bibbia nell'Italia meridionale longobarda*, in: *Forme e modelli della tradizione manoscritta della Bibbia*, (ed.) Paolo Cherubini, Scuola Vaticana di Paleografia, Diplomatica e Archivistica, Vatican City, 2005, pp. 290-291; R. F. GYUG, *op. cit.* (n. 6, 2011), p. 55. For a preliminary comparative study, see A. J. M. IRVING, *op. cit.* (n. 6). The evangelary Vat. Borg. Lat. 339 is an exceptional manuscript compared to the other surviving evangelaries of southern Italy also for the presence of Lucan neumed Genealogy of Christ, attested only in two other evangelaries of southern Italy, but almost certainly realized later. For setting of Lucan genealogy to chant see R. F. GYUG, *Innovation, Adaptation and Preservation: the Genealogies of Christ in the Liturgy of Medieval Dalmatia*, in: *Zagreb and Music 1094-1994. Zagreb and Croatian Lands as a Bridge between Central-European and Mediterranean Musical Cultures. Proceedings of the International Musicological Symposium (Zagreb, September 28 - October 1, 1994)*, (ed.) Stanislav Tuksar, Zagreb, 1998, pp. 35-55.

a practical choice, since both the Gospel and the *Exultet* were read and sung by the deacon. However, it could also be explained in a codicological way, as linked to the specific liturgical context in which it was conceived and adopted. This particular codicological solution may be the result of the specific role that the evangeliary had at the time of the Gregorian Reform in Dalmatia, as the main means of diffusion of liturgical practices and Reform ideas.<sup>12</sup> This could explain the adoption of a combined form in which the Evangeliary, being the main book of the Mass, also included the *Exultet*, which is related to the most and solemn liturgical ceremonies, that of the Easter Vigil,<sup>13</sup> a spectacular mixture of images, lights, colours and melodies that, especially at the time of the Reform, should have been particularly appealing to the faithful and appropriate to communicate the idea of the triumphant Church of Rome.<sup>14</sup>

The presence of the *Exultet* denotes a singularity also on the figurative level. The MS Vat. Borg. Lat. 339, better known as the “Osor Evangeliary”, is the oldest evangeliary from Dalmatia and can be considered closest to the



Fig. 2. BAV, Vat. Lat. 339, *Evangeliary*, 11th century, c. 53r (*Exultet*), (Copyright Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)

hypothetical archetype derived from an South-Italian model, if not the archetype itself.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript contains at c. 53r (Fig. 2) an unusual picture which illustrates the text of the *Exultet* and which is derived from the union of several figurative elements typical of the illustration of *Exultet* rolls (*Vere quia dignum*, *Maestas Domini*, *E* which stands for *Exultet*) and some types of manuscripts, in particular

<sup>12</sup> From the point of view of territorial location, it is worth noting that all the surviving Dalmatian evangeliaries are linked to cathedrals or basilicas located in particularly important and strategic locations, e.g., the Zadar Evangeliary, Oxford, Bodl. Canon. Lat. 61, whose realization should be probably related, as it has been hypothesized, to the completion of the new basilica of Saint Mary; see: E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), p. 84; and the Rab Evangeliary, now reduced to fragments and linked to the local cathedral, as well as the later Trogir Evangeliary, whose extraordinary decorative program, characterized also by some illustrated pages, suggests the important liturgical function which it must have had in the context of the renewed cathedral; see: E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), pp. 101 f.

<sup>13</sup> On this issue, I share the view of T. F. KELLY, *The Exultet in southern Italy*, Oxford-New York, 1996, p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> *Exultet. Rotoli liturgici dell'Italia meridionale*, (ed.) Giuglielmo Cavallo, Giulia Orofino, Roma, 1994; *Exultet, testo e immagine nei rotoli liturgici dell'Italia Meridionale*, (ed.) Giulia Orofino, CD-Rom, Cassino, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> I provide new insight on the origin of the manuscript Vat. Borg. Lat. 339 at the Colloque d'étude “Saint-Pierre d'Osor (île de Cres) et le monachisme bénédictin dans l'espace adriatique”, Osor, June 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, whose proceedings, edited by the École Française de Rome, are being printed.

votive missals.<sup>16</sup> Although the individual parts of the miniature find comparisons in different examples from Southern Italy, there is no other image, taken as a whole, similar (or at least close) to it, *i.e.*, which derives from a similar synthesis of the various figurative units of an *Exultet* roll. We cannot know if this particular combination was copied directly from a Southern-Italian archetype. Neither can we exclude the possibility that the picture was created as the original idea of a local illuminator. In this case, as this process of adaptation of the image to the Dalmatian evangelistary requires the use of models, we should accept the idea that BAV, Vat. Borg. Lat. 339 constitutes the oldest testimony of the arrival in Dalmatia not only of an archetypical evangelistary but also of rolls containing the *Exultet* and codices, probably missals, containing the *Prefatio* illuminated with *Majestas Domini*.<sup>17</sup>

*b. Stylistic evidence and iconographic choices*

As for decorative repertoire of the manuscripts, there is clearly a general recurrence of the syntax and ornamental vocabulary of the South-Italian Beneventan miniature painting, especially from Apulia, that in some cases produces effects of extraordinary overlaps between Dalmatian and southern Italian manuscripts.<sup>18</sup> However, these common features are, in hindsight, limited only to a few specimens, while looking at it with a broader perspective, some iconographic choices mark a notable differentiation between Dalmatian and southern-Italian or Apulian manuscripts. One common element in all the manuscripts of the eleventh century is the beloved iconographic motif of a “beardless Christ”, which we find, apart from the previously mentioned evangelistaries, also in the two Books of Hours, Budapest, Magyar Tudomány Akadémia, K 394 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Lit. 277.<sup>19</sup> This motif, which is rarely found in the decorative South-Italian and Apulian repertoire, is much more widespread in Dalmatia.

Another unusual iconographic choice, a result of autonomous elaboration, is the importance given to peacocks in Dalmatian manuscripts compared to the traditional animal repertoire of Apulia, as we can see in the beautiful peacocks that crowd the pages of the Evangelistary and Oxford Book of Hours of Oxford Bodleian Library. These two codices share some stylistic affinities, whose extraordinary beauty compared to the rest of the contemporary regional production can be explained by the commission of the noblewoman Vekenega. The moment when she became abbess of Saint Mary’s convent marks the highest moment in Zadar’s cultural history, in part because of her close link with the court of King Koloman.<sup>20</sup> The peacock decorative motif is widespread in Dalmatia, especially in

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<sup>16</sup> For a fuller treatment of this image, see E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), pp. 79-80. On the decoration of votive missals in Beneventan script, see E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 6, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> As for the *Exultet* rolls in Dalmatia, it is known that one of these could be identified with the “*carta longa continens Exultet iam angelica turba*”, mentioned in the inventory of 1425 of Split Cathedral; J. BELAMARIĆ, Cenni per un profilo della storia e dell’arte medievale e rinascimentale della città di Traù (Trogir), in: *Tesori della Croazia. Restaurati dal Venetian Heritage Inc.*, Venezia (Chiesa di San Barnaba, 9 giugno-4 novembre 2001), Venezia, 2001, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> In Dalmatian miniature painting, a notable feature in common with southern Italian and Apulian miniatures is the recurrence, already highlighted by Loew and previously by other art historians such as F. von Baldass, É. Bertaux, J. A. Hesbert, of the motif of human heads in profile with or without conical headgear; E. ELBA, *Lungo le rotte adriatiche: il Libro d’ore in beneventana di Budapest e la miniatura pugliese dell’XI secolo*, *Rivista di Storia della miniature*, 12, Firenze, 2008, pp. 45-55. Note in particular the comparison between the human heads in profile of the initial letter “b” at c. 43r of Budapest, Magyar Tudomány Akadémia, K 394; and “P” at c. 31r of Vatican City, BAV, Vat. Lat. 3327, considered by Loew as one of the main witnesses of Bari production. Both images are reproduced in E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2006), table 6a-6b.

<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive description of the Book of Hours, Budapest, Magyar Tudomány Akadémia, K 394; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Lit. 277, see E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011). For an updated bibliography on the manuscript, see BMB, *op. cit.* (n. 10).

<sup>20</sup> E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), pp. 82-90. On the nun Vekenega and her relationships with the royal family, see M. ANČIĆ, Vekenega i kralj Koloman, in: *Laude nitens multa. Zbornik radova s kolokvija u povodu 900. obljetnice Vekenegina epitafa*, (ed.) Pavuša Vežić, Ivan Josipović, Zadar, 2018.



Fig. 3. Trogir, riznica Katedrale, Evangelary, 13th century, c. 82r (photo: E. Elba)



Fig. 4. Trogir, riznica Katedrale, Evangelary, 13th century, c. 20v (photo: E. Elba)

early medieval sculpture and is characteristic of the miniature painting of Byzantium in that period. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that in the manuscripts from Zadar the peacock is not just a decorative motif, but is also used as the symbol of John, who is elsewhere represented by an eagle. Since it is so common in the region, we cannot consider this choice to use the peacock simply as a mistake made by the painter. Moreover, as we know that it is not attested in South-Italian and Apulian manuscripts, it certainly indicates a hallmark of the artist who made the two manuscripts of Zadar, and particularly the evangelistary.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the fact that both the peacock and the “beardless Christ” refer to early Christian art is certainly a specific artistic direction of Dalmatian Beneventan miniature painting, which may be explained by the “renouveau paleochrétien” mentioned by Héléne Toubert which had so much impor-

<sup>21</sup> For an example see extensive plates online through the Bodleian Library (Digital Bodleian), in particular plate of c. 10r, 55v, 62v, 64v, 142v, 144r. The origin and motivation behind this particular iconographic choice is still an open question. A few years ago, while visiting the Zadar convent of Saint Mary, I found it somewhat strange that peacocks with multicoloured tails freely circulated in the cloister. This represents some anecdotal picturesque evidence, without historical value. It is worth noting, though, that the same circumstance attracted my attention when I visited the Lokrum archaeological area near Dubrovnik, occupied by a prolific colony of the same birds. In this last case, however, the presence of the peacocks is explained, according to popular tradition, by the transformation of the Benedictine monastery and of the adjoining garden into summer residence by Maximilian of Habsburg.

tance in South-Italian art at the time of the Gregorian Reform.<sup>22</sup> This topic opens up the interesting research proposal which has not yet been fully investigated, on the relationship between medieval Croatian art of the 11th century and classical models.<sup>23</sup>

*c. Persistence and reiteration*

A final feature of Dalmatian book production concerns the duration of the phenomenon, which lasts until the 13th century. The Beneventan manuscripts of the Trogir cathedral date to this period, especially the richly illuminated evangelistary, probably copied from an older manuscript, in turn derived from South-Italian models (Figg. 2-3).<sup>24</sup> An interesting aspect is that the manuscript was not produced in a Benedictine environment, as some critics believe,<sup>25</sup> but probably in a Franciscan one, as shown by some textual and decorative features, which relate it to the book production of the convent of Saint Francis in Zadar.<sup>26</sup>

The question of the centre of production of the evangelistary and its destination certainly remains an open problem, which needs to be further explored.<sup>27</sup> At the moment, however, another finding proves to be more important: the deliberate choice to follow a precise book model after a long time, *i.e.*, to produce an evangelistary in Beneventan script at a time when it was no longer the only or principal genre and script in use. This means that that model was not only perceived as a marker of cultural identity, but underlined a precise ideological link with the past.<sup>28</sup> To put it another way, the evangelistary prototype, taken as a model for the newer manuscript, is not considered a model that is outdated and therefore inadequate, but rather, on a functional level, capable of transmitting those same “liturgical” values of the original, albeit through an updated artistic language, *i.e.*, a more modern style.

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<sup>22</sup> See H. TOUBERT, *Un'arte orientata: riforma gregoriana e iconografia*, Milano, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> There are other elements that highlight the bond of the Dalmatian evangeliaries with the Reform period on a decorative level, *i.e.*, the preference accorded to the figurative motif of the *Agnus Dei* in the picture of *Vere dignum* in the *Exultet* in Oxford, Bodl. Canon. Lat. 61. This reflects the intentional choice of deviating in a sacramental sense from the expressive function generally associated with the monogram, and instead explicitly inserting the image in the Easter liturgical context. See E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 6, 2012). Another explicit reference to the Eucharistic theme was hidden, again in the Oxford Evangeliary, in the iconography of the Last Supper at c. 106r, as a result of the doctrinal debate that opposed Westerners and Byzantines in the mid-11th century. See E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2006), pp. 126-128.

<sup>24</sup> E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2006), pp. 135-139, 145-147. Further insights in E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), pp. 100 f., 183-194. For an updated bibliography on the manuscript, see BMB, *op. cit.* (n. 10).

<sup>25</sup> N. JAKŠIĆ, *Prvih pet stoljeća hrvatske umjetnosti / The First Five Centuries of Croatian Art*, (ed.) Biserka Rauter Plančić, Zagreb, 2006, pp. 280-284 (Rozana Vojvoda, cat. n. 69: Trogirski evanđelistar / Trogir Evangeliary); R. VOJVODA., *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), pp. 186 f.

<sup>26</sup> On the Zadar Franciscan book production and on its link with the Venetian and Paduan miniature painting of the late 12th and 13th centuries, see A. BADURINA, *Illuminated manuscripts in Croatia*, Zagreb, 1995, pp. 100-101, n. 192-196; see also especially F. TONIOLO, *Liturgia in figura: le miniature dei corali di san Francesco a Zara*, in: *Medioevo adriatico. Circolazione di modelli, opere, maestri*, (ed.) Federica Toniolo, Giovanna Valenzano, Viella, Rome, 2010, pp. 113-132. During the 13th century, the Franciscans were gradually replacing the Benedictines in the religious life of the region, and assuming what had been their function in terms of cultural and artistic promotion. It is not a coincidence that friars begin to emerge in local artistic and book history. For an example, see the recent considerations about the bishop of Osor, Michael, mentioned in the prayer transcribed on the “Osor Evangeliary”, BAV, Vat. Borg. Lat. 339 (E. ELBA, 2019, forthcoming).

<sup>27</sup> The hypothesis I advanced is that the manuscript, although intended for the local cathedral, was not produced in the same city but in Zadar which, still in the 13th century, was the centre of the Dalmatian book production, as demonstrated by the activities of the Franciscan scriptorium. Vojvoda holds a different view, as she considers the manuscript to have been made in the local Benedictine monastery of St. John the Baptist of Trogir.

<sup>28</sup> Whether this phenomenon, together with its ideological meaning, is limited to Dalmatia or finds significant examples in South Italy too, is another interesting research proposal.

It follows that the “persistence” of the models represents the last step of a succession of stages of comparison with the models themselves. This persistence does not correspond to a process of occasional repetition, but rather is a process of conscious affirmation of a precise liturgical and cultural tradition.<sup>29</sup>

This evaluation reinforces the idea that Dalmatian book production is not the consequence of a simple irradiation of the Montecassino and/or Apulian graphic and decorative forms, but a separate piece in the history of the Beneventan miniature painting.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS: “PERIPHERY” AS A VALUE

What emerges from the data on the palaeographic, codicological and above all decorative aspects is that the phenomenon of the manuscript production in Beneventan script in Dalmatia is a complex one, which must be studied from multiple points of view. It is significant that the analysis of these aspects is leading to a revision of knowledge in the field of South-Italian library production and promoting discussion around old and new issues.<sup>30</sup>

As for the Dalmatian Beneventan miniature painting itself, it is clear that it cannot be described as a regional artistic phenomenon, nor can it be associated with the notion of “provincial art”, *i.e.*, an art which straggled in receiving models and which was characterized by poor execution, as it was originally labelled by scholars. It better matches the notion of “peripheral art”, that Ljubo Karaman worked out to describe the art of those territories such as Dalmatia where the greater distance from the hegemonic centres does not affect the reception of the models, which come numerous and from different directions, but rather grants the artists a larger margin of “freedom”.<sup>31</sup> The artistic expression of peripheral art is not reduced to the pure and simple acceptance of imported forms but, in some cases means an individual and original interpretation.

It is revealing that Karaman and his innovative proposal for an artistic geographical system, based on the three categories of provincial (or provincialized) art, boundary art and peripheral art, ended up being considered itself in a “marginal” way in European historiography, as evidenced by the late recognition of his work abroad.<sup>32</sup> As far as Italy is concerned, even the two fundamental contri-

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<sup>29</sup> For an in-depth examination of this interpretative hypothesis, see E. ELBA, *op. cit.* (n. 4, 2011), p. 109. It is worth noting, however, in this regard that the evangeliary, like the other codex of the same type kept in the Trogir Cathedral, does not contain the text of the Exultet, unlike the oldest Dalmatian evangeliaries (*i.e.* Osor and Zadar evangeliaries). This aspect opens an interesting question that remains unanswered: was the Trogir Evangeliary copied from an archetype (from Southern Italy) that did not include the *Exultet* text, or, more likely, was the *Exultet* not introduced because in the 13th century the liturgy of the Easter Vigil had lost its link with the South-Italian liturgical practice?

<sup>30</sup> An interesting field of my ongoing research focuses on the specific decorative features of the manuscripts in Bari-type, and more generally their relationship with the book production from Apulia and Montecassino, especially during the Desiderian period.

<sup>31</sup> LJ. KARAMAN, *Problemi periferijske umjetnosti. O djelovanju domaće sredine u umjetnosti hrvatskih krajeva*, (ed.) Radovan Ivančević, Zagreb, 2001 (1<sup>st</sup>ed. 1963).

<sup>32</sup> The first take of Karaman’s theory is by R. IVANČEVIĆ, Ljubo Karaman e la nozione dell’arte provinciale, dell’arte di frontiera e dell’arte periferica, in: “*La scuola viennese di storia dell’arte*”, (ed.) Marco Pozzetto, Atti del XX Convegno dell’Istituto per gli Incontri Culturali Mitteleuropei (Gorizia, Palazzo Attems, 25-28 settembre 1986), Gorizia, 1996, p. 183-193; and out of Croatia by Jan Białostocki, Some Values of Artistic Periphery, in: *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity*, I, (ed.) Irving Lavin, Act of the XXVI<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the History of Art (Washington D.C. 1986), University Park (PA), 1989, pp. 49-58. For further insights on this subject of study concerning Karaman’s theory, see more recently J. GUDELJ, Ljubo Karaman e i problemi dell’arte periferica, in: *Arte e architettura: le cornici della storia*, (ed.) Flaminia Bardati, Anna Rossellini, Milano, 2008, pp. 216-272. An interesting example of applying the concept of “peripheral art” in Dalmatia heritage is offered by P. MARKOVIĆ, Experiment in construction – Innovation in the form. The cathedral of St. James in Šibenik and “Freedom of creation in a peripheral milieu”, in: *Periferie dinamiche territoriali e produzioni artistica*, (ed.) Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari, *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the value of Cultural Heritage*, X, 2014, pp. 157-175. (<http://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/cap-cult>)

butions on the topic of central/peripheral art elaborated by Enrico Castelnuovo,<sup>33</sup> do not mention the categorical system of Karaman. However, Castelnuovo calls for a similar change of approach as Karaman had in the need to replace the notion of “province” with that of “periphery”, because less characterized by evaluative implications.<sup>34</sup> In this way Castelnuovo takes into account not only new positions in the field of social geography and the German historiographical debate on artistic geography, but above all the multiplication of historical and artistic research on the Italian territory,<sup>35</sup> a field of research that he defines as a “laboratorio privilegiato” because of the complexity of the factors that interact with each other.<sup>36</sup>

The failure to receive the model proposed by Karaman, now re-evaluated in the context of a general different approach to studies on cultural and artistic phenomena,<sup>37</sup> does not in any way result from the evaluation of the effectiveness of that model.<sup>38</sup> If anything, it may be that Karaman’s early approach to the topic of peripheral art was almost “visionary”, and offers today the opportunity to reinterpret artistic phenomena through the perspective of a geo-cultural system that we could define as “global”.<sup>39</sup> In this context, once the binary centre/periphery has been definitively overcome, the peripheries become an autonomous object of study, acquiring the value of fundamental pieces for the study of the historical study of cultural identity.

On this basis, if the Beneventan miniature painting of Dalmatia is no longer configured as a simple Adriatic reflection of the Bari type, the entire “Beneventan Zone”, in the multiplicity of its expressions, can no longer be understood as an area characterized by major centres and minor centres, but rather as an extra-regional and polycentric territory, marked by deep and adaptive cultural interchange.

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<sup>33</sup> E. CASTELNUOVO - C. GINZBURG, Centro e periferia, in: *Storia dell’arte italiana*, I, Questioni e Metodi, (ed.) Giovanni Previtali, Torino, 1979, also online; E. CASTELNUOVO, La frontiera nella storia dell’arte, in: *Periferie dinamiche territoriali e produzioni artistica*, (ed.) Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari, *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the value of Cultural Heritage*, X, 2014, pp. 985-1008.

<sup>34</sup> E. CASTELNUOVO - C. GINZBURG, *op. cit.* (n. 33, 1979), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> E. CASTELNUOVO - C. GINZBURG, *op. cit.* (n. 33, 1979) n. 3 and 4.

<sup>36</sup> E. CASTELNUOVO - C. GINZBURG, *op. cit.* (n. 33, 1979), pp. 6 f.

<sup>37</sup> For the debate on artistic geography, see also: *Borders in art: revisiting “Kunstgeographie”*. *Proceedings of the Fourth Joint Conference of Polish and English Art Historians*, (ed.) Stefan Muthesius et alii, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 1998, Warsaw, 2000; and L. PUPPI, Centro e periferia nella storia dell’arte: un falso problema o un problema mal posto? Approssimazioni a un’introduzione metodologica allo studio della cultura artistica friulana, in: *La Galleria d’Arte Antica dei Civici Musei di Udine. I. Dipinti dal XIV alla metà del XVII secolo*, (ed.) Giacomo Bergamini, Vicenza - Udine, 2002, pp. 23-33. For a general overview on studies on the historiographic notion “centre/periphery”, see also the dossier: Centri e periferie. Forme e modelli attraverso la storia, *Storicamente*, 2, 2006, [https://storicamente.org/02\\_dossier01](https://storicamente.org/02_dossier01).

<sup>38</sup> Castelnuovo’s model cannot be considered as effective as Karaman’s, as stated by J. GUDELJ, *op. cit.* (n. 32), p. 272 who rightly considers the first model not easily applicable due to the complexity and richness of the phenomena covered.

<sup>39</sup> On the notion of “geoculture”, see M. WALLERSTEIN, *Geopolitica e geocultura. Saggi sull’evoluzione del sistema-mondo*, Trieste, 1999. The reference to Wallerstein’s theory and its possible implications for the complex theme of artistic geography and especially the notion of “peripheral art” is the starting point for future analysis.

**Dalmatinski beneventanski rukopisi i  
ideja "jadranske periferije".  
Prijedlog za uspostavu novog istraživanja**

Analiza ukupnoga korpusa beneventanskih rukopisa Dalmacije (2011.) omogućava raspoznavanje nekih specifičnih odlika koje karakteriziraju knjižnu produkciju te regije kroz vrijeme. Zaključak je da dalmatinske rukopise ne bi trebalo smatrati isključivo „provincijskim” proizvodima, jer bi to onda značilo da ne pokazuju elemente kvalitetne umjetničke produkcije karakteristične za razvijena središta. Oni su, naprotiv, rezultat složenog procesa preuzimanja, prilagodbe i prerade stanovitih modela koji nisu obilježili tek nekoliko desetljeća, već su trajali do 13. stoljeća. Nakana je člankom pomnije objasniti one parametre kojima bi se dao zaokružen pogled na knjižnu produkciju Dalmacije, ali uz drugačije interpretativne modele i nov historiografski pristup koji omogućuje uspostavljanje učinkovite „teorijske” osnove u paradigmi takozvane „periferijske umjetnosti” koju je razvio Ljubo Karaman 1963. godine.

**Ključne riječi:** *dalmatinski rukopisi, dalmatinsko minijaturno slikarstvo, beneventansko pismo, južna Italija, Dalmacija, Apulija, srednji vijek, beneventanska zona, Elias Avery Loew (Lowe), Jadransko more, jadranska periferija, periferijska umjetnost, provincijska umjetnost, Ljubo Karaman*

*Prijevod s engleskog: Nikola Zmijarević*