

**OLD MANUSCRIPTS IN ZADAR
A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION
INTO THE PRESENT STATE AND DOUBTS
RELATED TO THE MODES
OF PUBLISHING**

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ABSTRACT

In the introduction, explained are the historical circumstances of the appearance of old manuscripts in Zadar and enumerated the institutions in Zadar where these manuscripts are stored. Presented is the classification of old manuscripts and the role of persons ordering and producing them.

Basic parts of each notary document are described on the example of the note by Petar Parenčan, notary from Zadar from the second half of the 14th century. Finally, a question of transcription of notary documents was tackled, especially the challenges whether to explain the abbreviations and mediaeval style of writing, like diphthongs, double vowels, letter *h*, some inserted phonemes, possible mistakes.

KEY WORDS:

manuscripts, notary documents, Zadar

Introduction

Since I do not have detailed knowledge of the presentations of other lecturers, and I do not know the majority of listeners and their background knowledge of the subject, it might be possible that this lecture will overlap with another one or that somebody knows the subject matter already. I apologize for possible repetitions. I hope that everybody will find at least something new in this presentation.

Origin of old manuscripts in Zadar

Already in the Byzantine times, somewhere around the 9th century, Zadar was the capital of Dalmatia and the focus of the early mediaeval

Croatian state, the well known triangle of Nin, Knin and Solin, was in its hinterland. For this reason many official documents originated in, or were sent to Zadar. For instance, the major part of deeds of gift by one of the greatest Croatian kings, Petar Krešimir IV are stored here, although some of them in later transcripts, but they are none the less valuable for the cognizance of early Croatian past.¹ The Zadar seafront where the university is located was named after King Petar Krešimir IV.

Where are the manuscripts kept

Although there are several church archives (e.g. in the Benedictine nunnery of Saint Mary in the Zadar Archdiocese), the majority of the materials is kept in the Zadar State Archives.

Classification of old manuscripts

The materials are classified into six groups. The first five follow the historical periods of authority from the Venetian Republic, two Austrian and French rules in the meantime, up to Italian rule in the first half of the 20th century. The sixth group consists of the oldest and thus the most valuable collection of the Zadar State Archives, including the manuscripts from dissolved monasteries and church documents. The seventh group consists of the old archives of Dalmatian towns, from Pag in the north, via Šibenik, Trogir and Split to Korčula in the south, to mention only the biggest. The Zadar State Archives is the biggest one of the group. Its oldest part belongs to the notaries of Zadar and covers the period from the end of the 13th to the middle of the 19th century. It contains about five hundred items.² Here we shall pause a while.

Who were public notaries

Notaries were the “points of public trust”, an institution set up by the appropriate authorities, where all the legal documents were written. One copy remained with the notary, and the customer received another

1 The documents were published in: *Diplomatički zbornik kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije*. Sv. 1 : Listine godina 743-1100. / uredio Marko Kostrenčić ; sakupili i obradili Jakov Stipišić i Miljen Šamšalović [edited by Marko Kostrenčić, collected and interpreted by Jakov Stipišić and Miljen Šamšalović]. Zagreb : Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1967.

2 According to: Usmiani, Ante. *Arhivska građa za srednjodalmatinsko područje u Historijskom arhivu u Zadru. // Građa i prilozi za povijest Dalmacije* 11(1990), 83-93.

one. In case of fraudulent conduct the notary was banned from practicing his skills for the rest of his life. Thus, they obviously enjoyed the total trust of the public.³

What did they record

Judging by the type and quantity of the preserved documents, it seems that the scope of the work of the notary public was greater than today, and that there also existed a greater need or simply greater culture of concluding deals in a literate manner. Recorded was and accordingly, notarised every deal involving money or material goods above a certain value (land, houses, boats, goods, works), for instance: buying, selling, credit, lease, dowry contract, testament, gift, tenure, exchange, power of attorney, auction...

Who is interested in the documents today

The Archives is definitely most frequented by our colleagues historians and art historians. Notary work reflects everyday economic life of the town and its surroundings in the late mediaeval and early centuries of the modern era. Although the documents are largely similar to one another, thus monotonous and dull in expressions, each one of them has something special that forces the reader to proceed, to see what happened, who were those people, where from...⁴

The special value lies in the fact that the documents were systematically created for centuries, so that their longevity could also be followed.

To the language specialists, first of all those specialising in Roman and Slavic languages, but also for the Latinists, the documents provide an opportunity to follow the tracks and development of the language from their own point of view, because of the language in which all the mediaeval and the better part of later documents were written.

It is interesting that our ancestors at the Department of Classical Languages, in the half century that it has existed, never dealt with the documents from the Zadar Archives, although there was a course

3 The work of notaries was regulated by the rules of the Statutes of Zadar. The modern edition: *Zadarski statut : sa svim reformacijama, odnosno, novim uredbama donesenima do godine 1563. / sada ponovno izdali, kritičkim aparatom opskrbili te kazalom osoba, mjesta i stvari obogatili i na hrvatski jezik preveli Josip Kolanović i Mate Križman* [was now reissued, critically interpreted, accompanied by an index of persons, places and subjects, and translated into Croatian by Josip Kolanović and Mate Križman]. Zadar : Matica hrvatska, ogranak : Hrvatski državni arhiv, 1997. On notary service: pp. 207-219.

4 For me for instance, it was especially interesting that today a very rare name Cvitko (my son's name) occurred quite frequently in the 14th century documents.

on mediaeval Latin. Prompted by frequent queries for help to read the documents from the colleagues from other departments and by the awareness of the huge wealth that lies inaccessible in the Archives, we decided to direct some of our younger colleagues to that field. Today, three colleagues are specialising in mediaeval Latin. Moreover, just over two years ago we were granted the project to publish the manuscript of Petar Perenčan, the notary from Zadar from the second half of the 14th century and this lecture is based on that moderate experience.

What do we need to read the documents

Naturally, it is necessary to know Latin for Latin documents. (Finally some use of all those studies!) It is interesting that the texts are searched by professionals with meagre knowledge of Latin, and they are quite successful; which should be a boost for those who have not tried yet. Since it is the case of manuscripts, it is necessary to become familiar with palaeography, but soon enough one gets used to the reading itself. When necessary, one can always consult the manual.⁵ For better understanding of the contents, it is recommendable to have some knowledge of the period and area in question.

What does the document consist of

In the left margin, at the same level with the beginning of the text there is a “title” or brief definition of contents, in one or two words the nature of the legal business and the main participants are described. Below that one regularly, but not always, finds the word *facta*, meaning that the business was really finished and concluded. The name of the judge – authenticator is regularly recorded in the third place, but sometimes the document lacks it which means that it was not publicly authenticated. The document itself always begins with invocation or calling of God’s name and date, first chronological, and after that according to secular and spiritual authority; then follows a description of the legal business with the envisaged penalty in case the stipulations are violated, and it ends with quotation of the place where the business was performed and names of two witnesses.

5 Summarised in: Stipišić, Jakov. Pomoćne povijesne znanosti u teoriji i praksi. 2. dopunjeno izd. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1985. Pp. 99-125; very clearly at: Paleographic fonts for Latin script. Version 2.00, September 2008 [cited: 2010-04-14]. Available at: <http://guindo.pntic.mec.es/jmag0042/palefont.html>; in detail by: Novak, Viktor. Latinska paleografija. 2. izd. Beograd : Naučna knjiga, 1980. Pp. 231-256.

What does the document look like

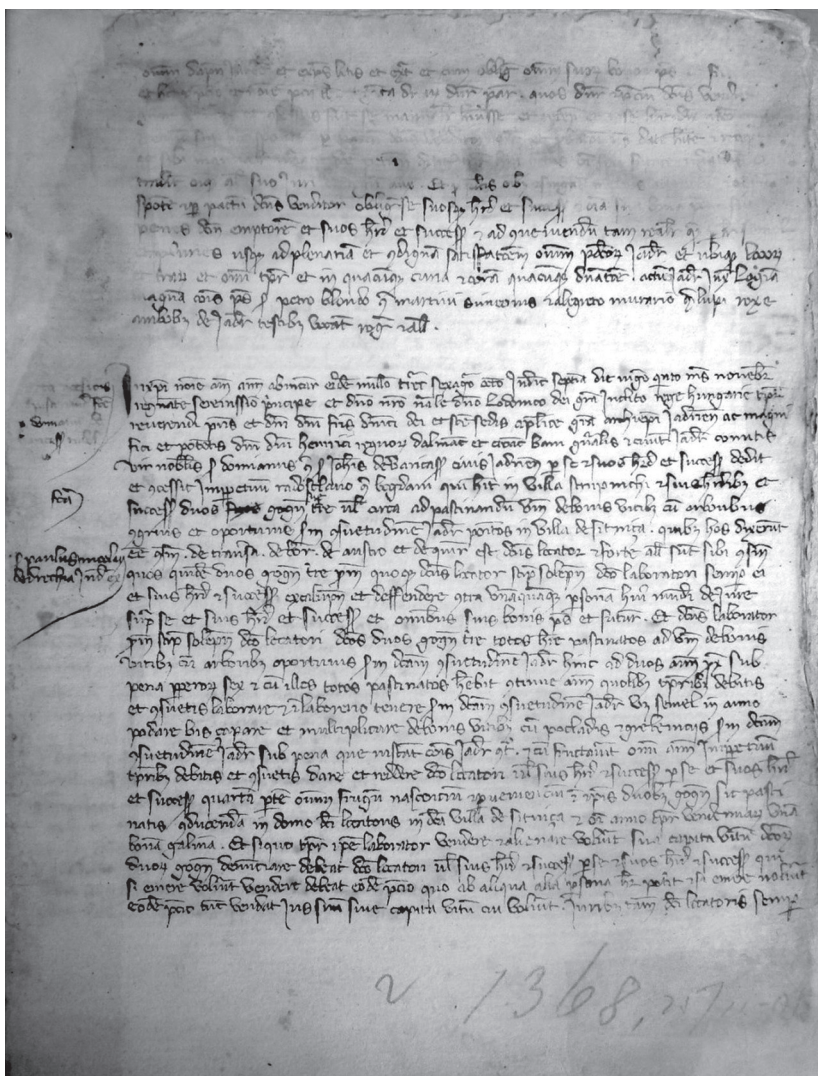


FIGURE 1.
Photography of the note of Petar Perenčan, vol. 10, 2r, Photo by Linda Mijić.

What and how was the document written

The new document begins and runs approximately on the second third of the page. Below is the transcript of the first nine lines of the document on

leasing a piece of land to plant a vineyard, the text from the left margin was put in the title.

[Ca]rta *concesionis* // *ad pastinandum facte* // *per Damianum de*
// *Varicassis* [...]

Facta.

Ser Paulus Nicolay // de Drechia iudex examinador.

1	In Xpisti nomine, amen. Anno ab incarnatione eiusdem millesimo tre-
2	centesimo sexagesimo octauo, indictione septima, die
3	vigesimo quinto mensis nouembris,
4	regnante serenissimo principe et domino nostro naturale, domino Lo-
5	douico, Dei gratia inclito rege Hungarie, tempore
6	reuerendi patris et domini, domini fratris Dominici, Dei et Sancte Se-
7	dis Apostolice gratia archiepiscopi Iadriensis ac magni-
8	fici et potentis domini, domini Hemrici, regnorum Dalmacie et Croa-
9	cie bani generalis et civitatis Iadre comitis,
10	vir nobilis ser Domianus <i>condam ser Iohannis de Varicassis</i> , civis
11	Iadriensis, per se et suos heredes et successores, dedit
12	et concessit imperpetuum Radostlao <i>condam Bogdani</i> , qui <i>habitat</i> in
13	villa Strupnichi, et suis heredibus et
14	successoribus duos suos <i>gognaos</i> <sue> terre uel circa ad pastinandum
15	vineam de bonis vitibus cum arboribus
16	congruis et oportunis, <i>secundum consuetudinem Iadre</i> , positos in villa
	de Sitniça, quibus hos dixerunt
	esse confines: de trauersa, de borea, de austro et de quirina est dictus
	locator et forte alii sunt sibi
	confines...

Definitely the most conspicuous characteristic of the text is that the words were abbreviated. The already mentioned manuals by Stipišić and Novak can be of help, but by far the most complete is Cappelli's *Lexicon abbreviatarum*.⁶ The abbreviation system was such that it regularly gave a clear enough context to interpret the abbreviated words or the abbreviation symbol was unequivocal; for instance *millo* is easily deciphered as *millesimo* in the context of dating, and the case ending *-o* is the key for the next word *trec-* that should be in the same case *trecentesimo*. The word *eiusden* is written in the form *eide*, but an abbreviation symbol is placed over *ei* in the shape of semicircle that always replaces *us*.

6 Cappelli, Adriano. *Lexicon abbreviatarum* : dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane. 6a ed. Milano : Ulrico Hoepli, [s. a.]

The greatest problems present the names of people and places. They cannot be found in dictionaries, they are of different etymologies (Croatian, Romanic, Germanic ...), and all the handwritten letters are not unambiguous. It is practically impossible to differentiate between *m, n, u, i...* if one does not recognize the word. Thus the indexes of the already published notaries' documents and Internet sources are of avail to determine whether the presumed form of the name is present anywhere. This gives at least some certainty that we are on the right track.

Should notary documents be published

In addition to the fact that the communication with manuscripts is an impossible mission, there is no doubt that they will be much more accessible if they are transcribed and published either on paper or in a digital form. Only seven were published up to now,⁷ which is perhaps two percent of the total. It is encouraging that an ever greater number of professionals take interest in this work.

How to transcribe

The question is to what extent one should remain faithful to the original, and to what extent should the text be adapted to the modern reader. In principle, we tend to remain as close to the original as possible. The greatest quandary is whether to mark the abbreviated words in some way. If we decide to mark them, in what way should they be marked: in brackets, italics (as in the above example), bold? Perhaps we should

- 7 Spisi zadarskih bilježnika = Notarilia Jadertina. Zadar : Državni arhiv u Zadru, 1959-
- 1 : Spisi zadarskih bilježnika Henrika i Creste Tarallo : 1279-1308. = Notarium Jadrensum Henrici et Creste Tarallo acta quae supersunt : 1279-1308. / prepisao i indeks sastavio = transcripsit et indices digessit Mirko Zjačić. 1959.
 - 2 : Spisi zadarskih bilježnika Ivana Qualis, Nikole pok. Ivana Gerarda iz Padove : 1296 ... 1337. = Notarium Jadrensum Johannis Qualis Nicolai quondam Johannis Gerardi di Padua acta quae supersunt : 1296 ... 1337. / prepisali i indekse sastavili = transcripserunt et indices digesserunt Mirko Zjačić i Jakov Stipišić. 1969.
 - 3 : Spisi zadarskog bilježnika Franje Manfreda de Surdis iz Piacenze : 1349-1350 = Notarii Jadrensis Francisci ser Manfredi de Surdis de Placentia acta quae supersunt : 1349-1350 / prepisao i indekse sastavio = transcripsit et indices digessit Jakov Stipišić. 1977.
 - 4 : Andrija pok. Petra iz Cantua = bilježnički zapisi = Andreas condam Petri de Canturio : quaterni imbreviaturarum
- Sv. 1 : 1353. - 1355. / prepisao latinski tekst te izradio hrvatske sažetke i kazala Robert Leljak ; s izvornikom sravnio, izvršio redakciju teksta i kazala te izradio kritički aparat i bilješke Josip Kolanović [Latin text transcribed and Croatian summaries by Robert Leljak; compared with the original, editing of text and indexes, and critical apparatus and comments by Josip Kolanović]. 2001.
- Sv. 2 : 1355-1356. / za tisak priredili Josip Kolanović i Robert Leljak [prepared for printing by Josip Kolanović and Robert Leljak]. 2003.

prepare such an edition only in digital form and the printed edition should be published without distinguishing the abbreviations, as it was customary in the already published editions in Croatia?

There are big differences in the presentation of capitals and punctuation. The text might be overburdened if it contained the original way of writing, although that can be interesting to somebody as well. In that case it will be necessary to consult the original.

The same goes for some other orthographic issues, i. e. the difference between antique and mediaeval style of writing, like diphthongs, double vowels, letter *h*, some inserted phonemes, possible mistakes. In this matter, we tend to stick to what was written, without “correcting” notary’s forms.

The result of marking the abbreviations

Although the reader would get a more correct insight into the way the notary wrote, there are cases, albeit rare, where we are not certain how to interpret the abbreviation. In such a situation everybody could find a solution himself/herself, having an insight into the way the notary registered words. We are wondering whether it is worth it, because graphical marking of abbreviations slows down the work twice, the letter types should be changed several times. For instance, the notary writes the word *nomine* as *noie* with an abbreviation mark above it. Accordingly, one should first write *no*, then switch back to italics (or bold, or open a parenthesis) and write *m*, then switch back to normal type and write *i*, again switch to italic for *n* and finally switch back to normal type for the last letter *e*: *nomine*. And the text is full of such words. Thus no final decision was made.

Post scriptum

However, after the reaction of listeners to the question, we are convinced that any kind of abbreviation marking would only slow down the reading. Thus we lean towards not marking them at all, and the rare difficult parts will be explained in footnotes.

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Biographical sketch

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STARI RUKOPISI U ZADRU
VRLO KRATAK UVOD U STANJE I U NEDOUMICE OKO
NAČINA OBJAVLJIVANJA

Sažetak

U uvodnom dijelu članka objašnjene su povijesne okolnosti pojave starih rukopisa u Zadru te nabrojane zadarske institucije u kojima se ti rukopisi nalaze. Nadalje je opisan način razvrstavanja rukopisa te uloga osoba koje su ih naručivale i stvarale. Opisani su i osnovni dijelovi svakog notarskog zapisa koji su prikazani na primjeru zapisa Petra Perenčana, zadarskog bilježnika iz druge polovice 14. stoljeća. Zaključno je otvoreno pitanje transkripcije latinskih notarskih zapisa, osobito problem (ne)razrješivanja kratica, razlike između antičkog i srednjovjekovnog načina pisanja, kao što je pisanje diftonga, dvostrukih suglasnika, slova *h*, nekih umetnutih glasova ili eventualnih pogrešaka.

Ključne riječi: rukopisi, notarski zapisi, Zadar