

ŠEPURINA

ŽUPA UZNESENJA MARIJINA - PRVIĆ ŠEPURINA

PJEVANA BAŠTINA

KNJIGA 2
BOOK 2



PJEVANA BAŠTINA

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PUČKO CRKVENO PJEVANJE U ŠIBENSKOJ BISKUPIJI

ŽUPA UZNESENJA MARIJINA - PRVIĆ ŠEPURINA

A HERITAGE OF SONG

TRADITIONAL CHURCH SINGING IN THE

DIOCESE OF ŠIBENIK

PARISH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

IN PRVIĆ ŠEPURINA

Hrvatska kulturna udruga Pjevana baština Šibenik, 2008.

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A HERITAGE OF SONG

Multimedia box "Traditional church singing in the Assumption of Mary parish in Prvić Šepurina" is second in the series of projects by our cultural association "A Heritage of Song".

The entire project, as well as the founding of the association bearing the same name, was initiated in order to cherish the Croatian traditional singing heritage, especially the traditional church singing in the Šibenik diocese. Through different segments of life, the people of this area have been building their local diversity and recognizability in traditional customs, costumes, visual arts, literature, drama and music, especially singing. Listening to chants of this folk, a man has a feeling all his essence and reality, all of the everyday life, can be read and experienced in the song and voice.

It has to be noted that traditional church singing in south Croatia (often referred to as glagolitic singing), based on a centuries-old singing practice in the native tongue, represents a unique religious and cultural-historical heritage, which is recognized and esteemed by the Croatian and international cultural elites. With audio and visual recordings we want to preserve and present today rarely performed and almost forgotten ancient songs, animating new generations to renew and revive traditional church singing.

The projects are being realized in cooperation with parishes and priests from the Šibenik diocese, with the support and contribu-

tion of the Šibenik Bishop, and with Croatian Radio-Television, record label Orfej, workers of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research, as well as other scientific and cultural institutions and individuals.

Life on the rocks, characters of our ancestors carved in stone by Georgius Mathei Dalmaticus at the Šibenik cathedral, the power of patron saint of the Šibenik diocese St. Michael, entwined with specific visual symbols of the Assumption of Mary parish in Prvić Šepurina blend into a whole on the cover page. This way the past, present and future together form the man's substance and existence, which make him what he is.

Multimedia box "Prvić Šepurina" contains: four CDs with contemporary recordings of traditional church singing in the Prvić Šepurina parish; one DVD with a documentary film and the holy mass recorded in April 2008 in Prvić Šepurina as well as documentary film of the Seventh Festival of Christ's Tomb Guards that was held in Šepurina in March 2008; booklet with introduction by the editor, bishop and parish priest, texts about the work on project, about the history of the place and the parish and about church singing, several music transcriptions of the peculiar traditional church songs, and picturesque old and new photos of the parish and the village life.

We wish to thank many people for this project, from our closest associates to everyone else who participated in any way. Their number and contribution are by no means negligible. Special thanks for the realization of the multimedia box "Prvić Šepurina" go to Mr. Neven Skroza, who has been cherishing and fostering traditional church singing in his parish for the past decades, with trust in God and love for his home island. Through him, we also wish to thank all those who have been praising God in this parish through folk singing.

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This proves that Croats recognize and appreciate the cultural value, cherish and take pride in their heritage; they believe in God and His guidance. They also use singing for relaying culture, enlivening their heritage and identity, and gratefully praising God. If song is the voice of God, it is also the man's yearning for integrity, for his roots, for appeasement, and finally the yearning for God. Let it remain like that and be passed from father to son, to the gratitude, pride and encouragement to many.

Dragan Nimac







SAVE YOUR PEOPLE. OH LORD AND BLESS OUR SINGERS

I am really looking forward to the publishing of "A Heritage of Song", which will certainly be to the benefit of church traditional singing, and consequently to the general progress of Prvić Šepurina. Beauty, peace and kindness of Prvić Šepurina fill the hearts of everyone who ever touched it. Peace and joy that meet and touch everywhere in the same way: on the sea and on the island, on a boat and under an olive and fig tree, in the morning and in the evening, they permeate everyone's heart and soul. As soon as you land your foot on the quayside, you feel all the depth and width of the time past, which brings freshness to your heart. Although you can meet someone, wherever you look everything speaks with the richness of the God's gift and heritage of hard work.

We have our neighboring Island of Tijat and the Cross on top of it, which invites us to renewal of everything, most of all to have fathers and mothers with children in their arms return here, to revive our coves and lanes, to hear the children cry through this beauty. Everything is entwined with the Holy Spirit and nothing can be separated: faith, song, culture, a piece of bread, land, sea and sky. The secret of Šepurina is best kept by those who go with it to sleep and wake up with it. The life on our island was created from faith and Your mercy. This treasure has always been rocking on the wave of the time. The long history has left its marks, on the sea, hills and lives of people and this cannot be erased by anything. There were ups, but there were also downs. Today in helplessness of our beauty we praise our Lord to protect His children, his treasure and our hopes. Save your people, oh Lord, and stop our

extinction! For centuries has our faith flourished and even today, when there are only a few of us left, our hope in a better tomorrow grows stronger, because Your love is calling us. We are preserving the wealth of faith of our grandfathers, to spread it among our children with the same fervor.

With the song we express the sacraments of faith, all our joys and sorrows. The traditional church song is the heart and soul of our place, it is heard in every occasion, especially on holidays, during the blessing of homes, at weddings, births, and funerals. Save your people, Oh Lord, and bless our singers! Distinctive traditional church singing preserves the authenticity of faith, customs and culture. Each year at the traditional church singing festival in Zaton the Šepurina singers present their uniqueness. Song feeds on faith and life, on things that happened and those that await us. One can feel that the song is born in the hearts of new generations, not to remain just a memory, but also a spring of new creations. We are pleading to our Servant of God Father Ante Antić, who is watching us from Heaven, to pledge a cry: "Save your people, Oh Lord, and bless our singers!" Amen.

We wish to thank everyone who in any way helped releasing the publication about traditional church singing of the Assumption of Mary parish in Prvić Šepurina.

Božo Škember, Parish priest



SINGERS OF ŠEPURINA: AN UNIQUE FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

Although I have never set a foot on the Island of Prvić and visited its villages of Šepurina and Luka, I still feel as if I had been there on a long and a very special ethnomusicological fieldwork of a very modern type. Newer theoretical works brought about a harsh critique of the classical approaches to the ethnomusicological subject, space and character of research for being mostly distanced from the researched people, considering them often as "the other" and/or "exotic". However, today we have a deeper sense that the small communities and their musical worlds are generally very close to us, not distanced, especially if we live in the same country and share similar cultural background. In my case, this closeness is even greater because the Island of Prvić and my hometown of Dubrovnik belong to the same region of Dalmatia.

I became acquainted with the traditional singers of Šepurina and their very unique style of singing through Šime Ukić, one of the youngest amongst them, in the year 2000. As a student, he sang together with me in the amateur mixed choir INA in Zagreb. As a choir singer, Šime distinguished himself with his peculiar musical style which he has been acquiring from childhood by oral transmission exclusively. Among amateur singers of Zagreb, Šime was ahead of the group not only by his interest in the history and music of his home island but also in the history of traditional and popular music of Dalmatia as a whole. As an illustration of that, I will tell the following story. One evening, several nights before Christmas of 2005, Sime, myself and two other klapa singers, all coming from different parts of Dalmatia, met in one Zagreb restaurant and began drinking and singing. It was late in the night, the waiters have closed down the place and were waiting for us to finish, but we kept on going. In fact, we were trying to compete and prove

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which one of us remembered more strophes of the popular Dalmatian Christmas carol "U sve vrime godišća" ("In This Holy Time"). We sang more than 15 strophes, and the waiters were stunned!

My first formal contact with the traditional singers of Šepurina happened during their appearances at the festivals in Metković and Zagreb in 2003 and 2004. However, I spent two unforgettable days with them during the "marathon" recording sessions of the complete church repertoire for the project "A Heritage of Song" that happened in Vodice on October 28th. 2006 and in Zaton on June 17th. 2007. The result of this very exhausting music-making are four compact discs where we have recorded almost all of the liturgical and paraliturgical repertoire that used to be performed in Šepurina before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and which is still being performed in present times. This really is a true rarity not only in the Šibenik diocese but also within the context of the total contemporary "Glagolitic singing" of the Croatian Adriatic coast. The singers of Šepurina who come from a very small and depopulated island of



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the Sibenik archipelago have succeeded in preserving their complete repertoire and the old style of performing done only by male singers and in the antiphonic form (in two choirs).

This, however, has not happened just by chance! The highest credit for preserving Sepurina's church singing tradition goes to Mr. Neven Skroza, the man I could describe as a true believer and a "folk expert" in the liturgics and church singing. In the past two years, I have exchanged with him a lot of professional knowledge and experience either by phone or E-mail. I have been learning from him at my utmost pleasure about local tradition and this has helped complete my knowledge about liturgics and popular piety. He, on the other hand, has provided me with very broad and precise answers to my professional questions while remembering all the important details from the past and comparing them always with the present situation. The result of this mutual work is his text in this publication where he very ardently describes context of customs related to the traditional church singing. I've done some corrections and editing to the text while keeping in mind all the time to preserve to the very core all of Neven's thoughts, formulations and numerous dialectal words and phrases. During my collaboration with him, I felt as if I was traveling back to the very beginnings of the Croatian ethnology, to the times when Antun Radić used to, in a similar way, cooperate with the gifted people in the field. I have a small anecdote to tell about Neven. Monseigneur Ante Ivas, the bishop of the Sibenik diocese and a great promoter of the traditional church singing, has recently given the acknowledgment to Neven's knowledge and great work in the Sibenik cathedral in a rather humorous tone. During the concert performed by the traditional church singers from the parish of Jezera, Neven, who was sitting next to the bishop, said in a low voice that he liked their singing very much, whereupon the bishop shouted at the end of the performance: "When Skroza tells you it is good, then it is GOOD!"

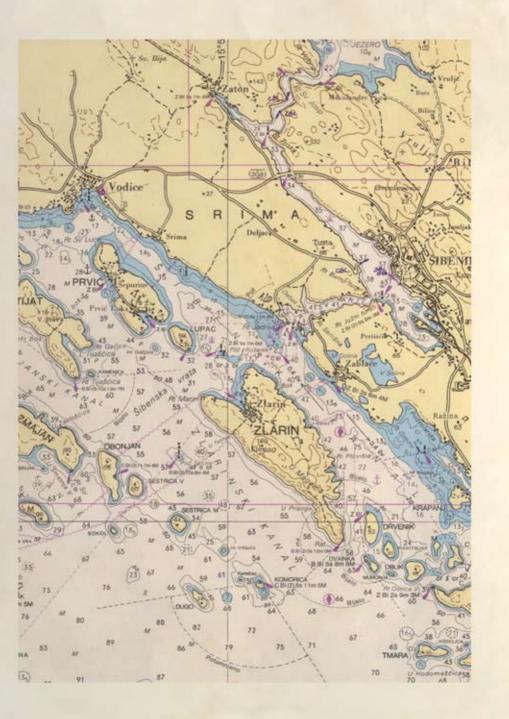
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I don't intend to bring up here the basic data regarding musical fea-

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tures, changes or the aesthetics of the church singing in Šepurina. I simply want to warn the listeners to pay attention to the occurrence of diverse leading and soloist parts as well as duets which reflect individual singer's styles by which the different voice timbres may be recognized, as well as their musical ideas and the ways of expressing their spiritual feelings. It might be important also to mention some adventures from the time I spent with the singers. I should mention that it was rather hard to bring them all together to both of the recording sessions because many of them live now on the mainland and only on certain occasions come to Šepurina to sing in the church. The older persons have well endured through the lengthy recording process, after which we have enjoyed rich marendas (meals), followed by traditional multipart Dalmatian klapa singing. Most of the songs that were performed were from traditional secular repertoire of Šepurina, which dates back into the 19th century and goes on to 1960s. The people joked and laughed. Grgo Ukić was the best joke-teller. On the other side, the singers also talked about the hardships of the islanders earlier and nowadays. Grgo told me his emotional story about his emigrant life in Australia and about his return to the home island of Prvić. Nedjeljko Grubelić talked about his life as a sailor and Nikica Skroza about the problems that trouble the islanders today, like selling off of the land to the foreigners or having problems with the illegal hunting grounds of the moufflons on the island of Tijat, which is the property of the people from Šepurina. In the end, I must mention that Ljubomir Antić, who was also my professor at the University, wrote a text about the history of Šepurina,. Through various phases of this project, Šime Ukić was the contact person between the singers and myself. He has also become my neighbor in Novi Zagreb recently. Is it possible, then, that all my human, musical and scholar experience with the people from Šepurina is only a mere coincidence? It is rather hard for me to accept it!

Jakša Primorac



PRVIĆ ŠEPURINA

About the History of Prvić Šepurina

Šepurina is located on the Island of Prvić, near Šibenik, 900 meters from mainland. Its surface is 2.37 square kilometers, with the coastline of approximately nine kilometer. Its mildness and fertility was noticed by a number of travel writers. For example, in his famous work "Journey through Dalmatia" Alberto Fortis writes:

"Prvić is a small island, but a very fertile one. All the fruits grow perfectly; those that the shallow land can sustain - wine, oil, mulberries and other fruits. This little island is visually appealing already from afar, while the appearance of other neighboring islands does not please the eye because of too high, karst and barren hills."

However, this island is not the only thing that pleases the eye. The view from it is just as impressive. Because of an exceptional position, from its seven little hills – with tops from 13 to 79 meters high – you can, if weather allows it, see: the Island of Vis, the Šibenik archipelago, the Kornati national park, the mountains of Velebit and Dinara.

It is therefore not surprising that such a living environment has been attracting people since ancient times, making it one of the most densely populated islands on the Croatian coast in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century.

The Croatian trails on Prvić are traced back to 9th or 10th century. We find them in early medieval Croatian interlacing-ribbon pattern and earrings, discovered at the site today occupied by the Šepurina cemetery.

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Since Šepurina's history has not yet been systematically studied, it is difficult to say with any amount of certaintv who had been the first to inhabit it and which of the buildings had been built the first. Is it one of the buildings the remains of which are here today, or the first foundations of Šepurina had been lost forever in ancient history? Historiography does not yet provide the answer to the question whether the Benedictine monastery "Santa Maris della Insule". which is according to the historian Ivan Lučić mentioned in the year of 1267, had been located on Prvić. Until that happens, some sites in Šepurina, such as Pomirišće and Ančicina mirina (in Trstevica), will leave this possibilitv alive.

The fact remains that despite the island's appeal, permanent settlements had been developing very slowly on Prvić. The first houses probably served only as summer villas for the wealthier families in Šibenik. They also served as shelter

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during wars or epidemics of that time. Juraj Šižgorić wrote about that already in 1487: "The Island of Prvić is the settlement of the Šibenik noblemen, especially in the time of plague that roamed the city. There are well groomed gardens, beautiful vineyards, fertile olives and beautiful seamen's houses there." The remnants of these buildings are still dispersed across the island. These are mirinas (derelict buildings) in different stages of preservation or certain fragments of former buildings incorporated into the walls of some old stone houses in Šepurina.

Fortunately, the most significant such building, the Draganić-Vrančić family castle in Šepurina, was preserved to this day. The estate was probably purchased by the distinguished Šibenik citizen Mihovil Vrančić (1507- 1571) with the money sent to him by his brother Antun Vrančić (1504-1573), cardinal, diplomat and writer. Looking at this castle today, and especially looking through pergolas of the main entrance, one cannot help but agree with Mihovil when he had written to his brother Antun to Hungary (where he had been performing complex diplomatic tasks): "Oh, happy me with the blaze from our fireplace, oh, sad you with ember beneath your feet!" It is therefore not surprising that Mihovil's son Faust Vrančić (1551-1617), polyhistor, constructor, philosopher, historian, writer and lexicographer - one of the most important Croats of his time, had chosen Island of Prvić as his burial ground. Instead of in Venice, where had died, in his testament he ordered himself to be buried in Prvić Luka, in the church of St. Mary's (the other name of the church is Our Lady of Mercy).

Notable noblemen of Šibenik, the Tavelić Family, also had their estate on Prvić, so we can suppose that the first Croatian saint, Nikola Tavelić (1340-1391) had spent some time here, at least as a little boy. A site on the north-east side of the island, with one of the best preserved mirinas, is still called Tavelićevo.



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Šepurina was most likely formed as a permanent settlement by people who fled the Turks and settled at the estates of the Šibenik noblemen. Although the Turks conquered the old village Srima in the neigboring mainland and settlements in the Vodice hinterland, and they attacked Vodice as well, it is not known whether they ever set foot on the Island Prvić. Apart from the sea channel, it is likely that the tower on the northern side of the island also discouraged them. It is mentioned in some sources, but its remnants were not preserved, so it is difficult to locate today. On the other hand, some records say that residents of the island helped Vodice during the siege of 1646.

It is not yet determined when and how Šepurina got its present name. The only meaning of the word "šepurina" in Croatian is a corncob. Since it is unlikely that the early people of Šepurina had been growing corn, this interpretation is hardly plausible. It is more likely that its origins are in the word "sipurina", which is the name for the mixture of fresh and salt water in some places in Dalmatia. This is substantiated by the fact that well water in the center of Šepurina, which exists today although not in use, has always been called "voda šepurina". Most likely it also gave the name to the central square - "Šepurina" — as brackish water flows to the sea beneath it. It is very unusual that the central square has the same name as the settlement. The same can be said for the fact that the northern part of Šepurina is called "Prvić" — so, it carries the same name as the island on which the settlement is located.

Up until the World War I, Šepurina had stable demographics. Still, when reconstructing the growth for the first centuries, Venetian and French censuses pose a problem, because they provide only the total number of residents for the entire island.

The 19th century presents the most dynamic period in the history

of the place. At that time it gained the basic contours that characterize it today. For decades it had been in an ever more dynamic rise: in population, economy, urbanization... The census conducted by the French administration in the year 1810 showed that the island already had 1,256 residents. In the year 1829, the island had 1,534 and in 1832 it had 1,621 people. In the 1849 census for the first time there were separate data for settlements Luka and Šepurina, which had 751 residents that year. The first census in Dalmatia done by the statistics rules, from 1857, showed a significant rise in the number of people in Šepurina. That year, there were 971 people living in 146 houses. According to this census. Šepurina was for the first time bigger than Prvić Luka. which had 793 people in 1857. In the next 43 years the number of people in Šepurina nearly doubled, to 1,576 people living in 371 houses. This was the time when Šepurina was given the form we know today. The number of residents continued to grow in the early 20th century. According to the first census in the century, in the year 1910, Šepurina had 1,699 residents. This was also the highest number recorded in a census in the entire history of the settlement. The population probably continued to grow for some time, but further censuses show negative trends: in 1931 - 1,413 people; in 1951 - 1,242; in 1953 - 1,175; 1961 - 955: 1971 **–** 623.

We will not go into details of this negative trend, because its causes and consequences are mostly well known. Let us only mention that the emigration from Šepurina to oversea countries started in the early 20th century. At start, the people of Šepurina mostly emigrated to the USA and later to Australia. By "chain emigration" they grouped in Perth, West Australia. According to some estimates there are more Šepurina natives and their offspring living there than in the place itself. After the World War II, during the process of the "escape from the countryside", the people of Šepurina dispersed all over former Yugoslavia. A signifi-

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cant part still stayed near the island, building houses on their old properties in the neighboring mainland.

What was the basis for Šepurina's growth? Primarily the wine production. Since there was not enough arable land on the island, the people cleared the land on the mainland across the island and planted vines. It is impressive that the cleared land in Šepurina spreads in continuity across the "four districts": Tisno, Vodice, Šibenik, and Zlarin. The view of this area, which is still dappled with drystone heaps and walls and ribbed with narrow paths, leaves an unforgettable impression. From this scanty land, to which they had been arriving by sea, the people of Šepurina, were "extracting" up to 300 wagons of wine. To give you some perspective, this is the yield of the famous llok vineyards in the most north-eastern part of Croatia today! Apart from wine, other products included oil and various fruit (mostly figs) and vegetables, mostly for the own use, but also – however impossible it may seem when looking at the quantity of fertile soil - grains.

The golden age of the Šepurina vine growing was in the 70's and 80's of the 19th century. It was stopped by phylloxera, the vine disease, which culminated in the year 1905. Šepurina's vine growing, and Šepurina itself, would never fully recover from it.

In this period, the stone houses were built and upgraded, in a characteristic folk Mediterranean style. They mostly have several stories, up to four, and are equipped with luxurious chimneys and different stone decorations. They are positioned in an amphitheater form around the harbor and the central square and together with the paved roads that lead from it they form a unique urban unit in Dalmatia. The impression that the place emerges from the sea lies on an actual fact: the first line of houses (about fifty of them) had been built on embankments that were made in order to protect fertile gardens from the sea.

The spiritual prosperity followed the material one. The literacy movement started in the 19th century and the first public school was opened in Šepurina in 1877. There are some indications that it had been established even earlier. About twenty years later, even older folk got the chance for education, in the "Sunday-saint school" in which they acquired basic knowledge of vine growing. In late 1870's, a group of local farmers joined in the "St. Jerome Society", and a number of them were subscribed to different magazines and newspapers. Since 1876, the correspondent of Zadar-based newspaper "Narodni list" had been regularly reporting from Šepurina, and other Dalmatian newspapers also had their correspondents.

The old Šepurina community had been incredibly homogenous for a long time. Its members had the same social status, they belonged to the same religion, spoke the same language... Literally all people in Šepurina had been Croats, Catholics, farmers... and lived off their work. They respected and valued each other. Possible difference in the size of the estates was hardly noticed in everyday life. There were few professional fishermen in Šepurina, but even those who fished also continued to farm the land. The same goes for merchants, butchers etc.

This harmony was impaired by political divisions. Therefore, the competition between the supporters of Dalmatian autonomy ("autonomists") and unitarian political option ("Croats"), represented by "people's party", which marked the politics of 1870's until the World War I, can only be explained by outside influences. These came from some prominent families from the Island of Zlarin and a long-standing parish priest Toni Šurija. Under their pressure, the Zlarin District was one of the last in Dalmatia to become politically "Croatized"—only in the year 1912. The outcome of the previous local elections tells us that nonetheless Šepurina had not been the strongest link in the "autonomist" chain. This is also indi-

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cated by the fact that the Croatian flag was first raised on the district building in 1912, upon the proposal of the Šepurina councilor Ante Antić-Poluš. Due to the given circumstances, the "Croatian reading room" (i.e. library) was established in Šepurina with a slight delay – only in the year 1914. The competition between political "autonomists" and "Croats" also had some interesting non-political effects. In order to display their belonging to the Croatian nation, the people's party members for example painted doors and blinds (some even thresholds!) in "their" blue color. This original color was preserved until this day in some places!

Between the two wars, the political scene was dominated by the Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS), while a rather strong group of communists was also active and due to their people's orientation, they were accepted in the community. They lead a massive resistance against occupation in the World War II. This war took a heavy toll on the people of Šepurina: over one hundred died either as soldiers or falling victim to the fascist terror.

Such a natural and social ambient created a series of persons who rose much above the local level, through their work in the public area. Let us mention only a few. Romano Vlahov (1838-1895) is a world renowned liqueur producer. Makarijo Skroza (1889-1976) also accomplished international success in liqueur production. Jakov Cukrov (1838-1902) established the first bell foundry in Dalmatia. Franciscan friar Ante Antić (1893-1965) had the life of a saint and the process of his beatification is under way; Šime Vlahov Kurilo wrote several notable travelogues, while Vicko Mišurac and Tome Cukrov published poems. Doctor Antun (Dragulo) Antulov Fantulin (1895-1928) was a prominent Croatian Peasants' Party member, and Franciscan friar Ambroz Vlahov (1895-1977) was a well-known member of the Croatian catholic movement. Šepurina also gave a number of scientists, politicians, university professors, academic painters, theologists,

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doctors, sea captains, businessmen, media workers...

With its roughly 300 residents, Šepurina today lives its specific life, which is hard to evaluate by the usual standards. While the depopulation was formally not yet stopped, the place emits certain dynamics. It relies on the longer and more frequent visits by non-permanent residents to the place. There are construction yards all over Šepurina. Much is being invested in the reconstruction of old houses, with a significant care paid to the preservation of the building heritage. A group of enthusiasts founded the Agricultural Cooperative, which has been refining oil in their modern oil mill since 2007. This tells us that olive groves are being recultivated and new olive trees planted. An Environmen-



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tal Association takes care of environment protection. The klapa singing continues to be cherished. Books on Šepurina's history are being published. The place is relatively well-connected to the mainland. Šepurina has a post office, four-grade elementary school, satisfactory supply of goods and healthcare. There are several small private hotels and appartments, restaurants and bars for different tastes.

The youth in Šepurina as well as guests can learn about the Šepurina's past in "Mirina", a multipurpose facility which hosts an ethnographic collection. Since the year 2007 it also includes a library with a reading room.

Ljubomir Antić



About the history of Prvić Šepurina parish

There are two parishes on the Island Prvić, Prvić Šepurina and Prvić Luka. In the period between the 16th and 19th century, Prvić Luka was a bigger settlement. The Franciscan Third Order Regular monastery was located there, so it was the seat of the parish, while Prvić Šepurina was the filial church of the Prvić Luka parish. In the early 19th century the population in Prvić Šepurina rose. In the year 1830 the process of founding an independent parish began and it was finally completed in the year 1859, when Prvić Šepurina became parish.

The first inhabitants of Šepurina probably attended church service in the St. Rocco chapel, of which only the western wall is left today. Today the place has two churches: "the old one", the church of Discovery of the Holy Cross, i.e. Saint Helen (sveta Jelina), which had been consecrated back in 1620, and "the new" church of Assumption of Mary, consecrated in the year 1878. The neo-Romanic belfry was erected beside "the old church" in 1804, which has, considering its central position, become the symbol of the place. In the vicinity of the "new church", parishioners built the new parish house in the 1950s.

The most valuable artwork in the churches is the wooden baroque altar in the "old church". It originates from some of the Venetian workshops from the late 16th or early 17th century. By its decorative elements it is similar to the wooden gilded frame in the hall of the Great Council in the Ducal Palace in Venice. In the year 1994 the altar was restored in the Croatian Restoration Institute. In his capital work "Baroque in Croatia" academician Kruno Prijatelj writes that "it especially stands out as a unique and richly decorated altar inside the group of the 17th century altars".

The patron saint of the place is St. Rocco, whose holiday has

been especially festively celebrated since the old days. As an illustration, in the late 19th century, the Zadar-based newspaper "Narodni list" published a detailed fireworks program for the eve of the holiday.

The old folk of Šepurina had built chapels to saints at visible locations. Two of them have been restored lately, the chapels of St. Francis and St. Lucy. The iron cross placed on the highest point of the neighboring unpopulated Island Tijat, "Velika glava", to the memory of the Holy Year 1933 also looks impressive. While digging the foundations, an ancient Croatian grave was allegedly discovered at that place. Island Tijat is owned by Šepurina inhabitants.

In the churches of Šepurina the Glagolitic script and Old Slavonic and Old Croatian languages were used in liturgy for centuries, until 1859, and later since 1910 till the liturgy reform after the Second Vatican Council. Until 1986 each parish on the island had its own parish priest, and now the service in both parishes is performed by one parish priest, living in the monastery in Prvić Luka, while the parish house in Šepurina remains vacant. Since the late 19th century until the year 1975 the parish had been managed by diocesan priests, between 1975 and 2005 it was under the Salesian friars, and in 2005 it again returned to diocesan priests.

Ljubomir Antić and Neven Skroza



ABOUT TRADITIONAL CHURCH SINGING AND CUSTOMS IN ŠEPURINA, ISLAND OF PRVIĆ

About history and way of singing in general

The traditional church singing has been cherished since the very beginnings of the religious life in Šepurina. Singing has always been performed in two choirs, male only. It is the same today. There are five to six singers - "kantaduri" - in each choir. Often same families provided many singers through generations. In the old times the singing was mostly two-part, but often it was also one-part, and behind the choir there were always those who sang in bass, baritone or any other voice, mostly unintelligibly because not everyone knew the lyrics by heart and they did not have churchbooks in their hands. The melodies were carried from ear to ear, they were not transcribed, nor did the singers ever know the musical notation. The complete service had been performed by singing by the priest in the Old Slavonic (i.e. Church Slavonic) language, while the singers replied in living Croatian language. Today the singing is threeand four-part. The differences in singing before and after the Second Vatican Council are not great.

Each side sings one strophe of a psalm or a song. In the old times one of the singers from each choir would start the first verse in the psalm or song, and later each strophe was started by all singers. Today usually the first part in each strophe belongs to the soloist. This way the lead singers were a little braver, slightly more vocal and sometimes even a bit more literate, so they would impose themselves as those who "conducted" each choir with their singing. The soloist was considered the lead singer, but did not have a specific name. He was singing the upper voice, but he was often

joined by few singers, while the others were singing in the second voice. Often the singing was also in single voice. There were several soloists in each choir. In case one would be absent, another one would replace him and during the solemn Matins and hagiographies, when there were many readings (which were all sung in that time), several soloists from each choir would sing solo parts.

Since singing did not follow any musical notation, each lead singer would bring something of his own in the singing "by ear", so the singing tradition gradually changed. Of course the change was never big, but in some finesses. This is best seen when soloists sing different readings, since the same readings are interpreted noticeably in a diverse way by two different soloists.

The basic books were the ones by Dominican friar Petar Vlašić ("Hrvatski Bogoslužbenik" [Croatian Divine Office] from 1923, "Obredi Velike sedmice" [Services of the Holy Week] from 1924 and "Oficij za mrtve" [Office of the Dead] from 1951), and it is still the same today. Many songs came from manuscripts, just like the hagiographies of the saints. In the 19th and in early 20th century many Matins and Vespers were also in manuscripts.

Women participated in the singing of Christmas, Easter and Marian songs, especially in the May and October devotions dedicated to Virgin Mary, the June devotions dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in Lent devotions. They were always singing from the church's nave, never from the choir loft.

About the traditional worship

In the old times various types of Masses were sung – "common" Mass, "festive" Mass, Advent & Lent Mass and Requiem Mass, but also Vespers and Matins, as well as funerary rites. Also, hagiographies and different benedictions and litanies were sung. After the

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Second Vatican Council the number and volume of Vespers and Matins was reduced

Today the festive Masses are being sung on all major feasts: Christmas, New Year, Epiphany, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, Easter, Ascension of Jesus, St. Helen, Pentecost, Holy Trinity, Corpus Christy, St. Anthony, Assumption of Mary, St. Rocco, All Saints, Our Lady of Health, Christ the King, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The festive Mass with a procession is sung in the first Sunday in July, when the great crucifix that dominates the St. Helen's church is being venerated. The crucifix was brought to the church by the Vlahov family, so the feast is also called "The Vlahov Cross". In the old days this feast had been celebrated on July 1. The Vlahov Cross is carried in processions when marking significant anniversaries. In the past there had been much more festive Masses than is the case today (St. Fabian and Sebastian, St. Stephen, St. Joseph, Annunciation, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Mark, St. Peter and Paul, Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Rosary, St. Nicholas, Immaculate Conception of Our Lady). On the first Sunday of the month the Introit is festively sung, and "Zdravo Tilo Isusovo" (Hail, Body of Jesus) is always the communion song. Incense is used in the Mass and a short Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follows. In the past times this was held in the afternoon.

Vespers were held in the afternoon on bigger holidays, often on Sundays and always on the first Sunday of the month ("Mlada nedjelja"). Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament would follow the Vespers. Today there are only a few Vespers during the year, at the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, St. Rocco and All Saints, when a festive Vespers is sung, immediately followed by Vespers for the Dead.

Earlier, Matins were regularly held on 4 a.m., on Christmas, New

Year, Holy Name of Jesus (January 2), Epiphany, and the Matins for the Dead on All Souls Day (November 2). In the old times there was also a Matins on Easter and there were also three Matins of the Easter Triduum, which are usually called "Baraban". Today, there are only parts of the Matins left in the Holy Week and introductory psalms of the Matins left on Christmas (before the Midnight Mass), and on St. Rocco prior to hagiographies and sometimes on St. Anthony before hagiographies. The custom of the helding of the Midnight Mass was introduced to Šepurina a short time ago. On this occasion, the introductory psalm from the old Christmas Matins is sung as the Introit for the Mass, with a plea not to be forgotten like other psalms from Matins had been forgotten.

"Tebe Boga hvalimo" (Te Deum laudamus) was sung many times during the year. It is an integral part of each Matins, it is sung eight days leading up to Christmas, on New Year's Eve, on Epiphany at the end of the home blessing ceremony, at the end of some processions, such as on St. Rocco, and on processions on certain feasts or special praises.

About the traditional melodies

Of course, the melodies in solo singing were different depending on different parts of the church year. For solo readings there are the following melody types: common, festive, Lent, which is the same as the Advent type, type for the deceased, melodies of Matins during Christmas time, specific melodies for certain readings in the Holy Week and the melody for hagiographies.

Melodies that were sung in group singing were also diverse. Some melodies were common to all types of masses. At festive Masses the singing was slower and louder. A "common" mass ("obična misa") differs from a "festive" one ("svečana misa") by melody of the Introit ("ulazna pjesma"), "Gospodine, smiluj se" (Kyrie Elei-

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son), readings ("čitanje", "štenje"), psalm, introduction to Gospel ("uvod u Evanđelje"), and final benediction i.e. dismissal ("završni blagoslov"). The Mass in the Lent and Advent differs in the melody of the Introit, Kyrie Eleison, introduction to Gospel, the communion song and the final benediction.

There are five different melodies in the festive Vespers. The first four psalms are sung in the same melody, and the fifth psalm and the hymn of the given holiday are both sung in a specific melody. "Veliča duša moja Gospodina" (Magnificat Anima Mea Dominum) has its own melody and all antiphons are sung in a specific melody.

In Matins the Invitatory psalm ("uvodni psalam") and responses ("zazivi"), regular psalms, psalms of praise, Te Deum laudamus, readings and all antiphons have their own melodies. It is similar with the Matins in the Easter Triduum, but without Te Deum laudamus and the Invitatory psalm with responses, but there is a special melody for the ending canticle "Blagoslovljen Gospod Bog Izraelov" (Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel) and psalm "Smiluj se meni, Bože " (Miserere mei, Deus), as well as three groups of readings, each group with its own melody.

All liturgical services for the deceased (funerary rites, Matins, Vespers, Requiem Mass and accompanying songs) have their special "mourning" melodies.

About popular pieties and songs

In the Šepurina parish there were brotherhoods of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Rocco, St. Joseph, St. Fabian and Sebastian, the Most Blessed Sacrament and the maiden society dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The brotherhoods did not have special songs, but they paid membership fees, took care of the broth-

erhood's altar and the flag and the celebration of a brotherhood patron's day. Allowances for guest priests and symbolic prizes for church singers during occasional common dinners were paid from these membership fees. When a "brother" would die, candles would be lit on the altar of the brotherhood's patron saint and the song "Braćo brata sprovodimo" (Brethren, we bury our Brother) would be sung. On the brotherhood patron's day, a Holy Mass would be served for all the late members of the brotherhood. The longest standing brotherhoods were St. Rocco's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The former survived until 1980s and the latter by the year 2000. They disappeared when their oldest members died. The young did not join and there were no incentives by the new generations of priests, as only a few of them were locals.

Different popular pieties were held in the parish: The Way of the Cross, the May and October devotions dedicated to Virgin Mary, the June devotions dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as well as various novenas, triduums and octaves on all major feasts, especially those dedicated to Virgin Mary. All these pieties mostly featured women, who sang different popular traditional church songs and prayed the Rosary half-sung. Private devotions were performed by fasting, lighting candles (the thicker and heavier the better), walking around the church, even on knees, and by giving gold jewelry, which was hanged on the saint's statue during holidays. People mostly went on pilgrimage to Tisno to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Caravaggio (Gospa od Karavaja), on May 26.

Various Christmas, Lent and Marian songs were sung in houses. From the old specific songs sung in churches, the songs to saints, e.g. St. Rocco, St. Anthony, St. Stephen and other saints, were preserved. Some of them were included in the Vespers of the given holidays, according to the categories of saints: martyrs, bishops, shepherds, etc. Various liturgical and paraliturgical songs dedicated to the Virgin Mary were also preserved ("Zdravo Morska

zvijezdo" [Ave Maris Stella], "O Marijo majko" [Oh, Mary, our Mother], "Tebe Majku Božju hvalimo" [Te Matrem Dei laudamus] ...), as well as songs dedicated to Jesus ("Isuse svih Spasitelju" [Jesus, Savior of all People], "Zdravo Tilo" [Hail, Body of Christ], "Pjevajmo braćo kršćani" [Sing, Christian Brethren], "Hod'te dico" [Come along, Children, God is calling you] ...).

In the post-Council time (after 1960-s), little by little, different offertory and communion songs from modern church songbooks were introduced, especially after the church acquired a harmonium (reed organ) in the 1970s, so songs were accompanied by music. The harmonium was played by Ivo Draganić–Vrančić. After he got sick in mid 1990s he stopped playing. Since there are no more available players, the traditional and modern songs are now all sung a cappella.

Traditional singing during the liturgical year

The Advent and Christmas time

As far as I can remember and according to the information acquired by elder people, there were no special songs during the Advent. Eight days before Christmas, on December 17, there was a celebration in the evening. Singers would sit down to dinner and on midnight the church bells would announce Christmas. Then they would go to the church, sing the festive "Te Deum laudamus" and went home. On New Year's Eve, they would also sing the festive "Te Deum laudamus" in the evening, as thanks for everything received in the previous year. Just before midnight the death-bell would ring as a sign the old year is finished. On midnight, the bells would celebrate the start of the New Year.

In our place there was no Midnight Mass, but there was Matins on

Christmas at 4 a.m. Today it is hard even to imagine the bell ringing at 3:15 a.m., when the church goers were awaken and called to the Christmas Matins. In the winter night without any lighting, people would surge to towards the church from all sides. They would first be welcomed only by oil lamps, and later the wax candles would be lit at all altars in the church. In this semi-darkness the calling verse from the Invitatory of the Matins "Isukrst nam se porodi, dodite poklonimo se" (Christus natus est nobis, venite, adoremus) would especially resonate in the hearts of the people. And no one was cold. After the Matins, which lasted for more than 90 minutes, a "Shepherd's Mass" (Dawn Mass) would be held and then the people would go to their homes. The daily festive Mass was held at 10 o'clock. In the afternoon, the Vespers would be sung. The same happened on New Year, Holy Name of Jesus (January 2) and Epiphany.

When wishing a merry Christmas, people would usually say: "Have a Marry Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, St. John the Evangelist's Day, The Holy Innocents' Day and all other days of the year". And on New Year: "Have a Happy New Year". The Christmas songs included "U se vrime godišta" (In hoc anni circulo), "Ovoga vrimena" (In This Holy Time), "Veseli se Majko Božja" (Mother of God, Rejoice), "Spavaj, spavaj Ditiću" (Sleep, Sleep, oh Baby), and "Raduite se narodi" (Rejoice, All Peoples). On St. Stephen's Day they sang the song to St. Stephen, on New Year "Na tom mladom litu" (The King of Heaven Was Born) and on the Epiphany the song on The Three Holy Kings. Some songs, such as "U se vrime godišta", "Tri kralja jahahu" (Three Kings Rode), "Na tom mladom litu" and "Radujte se narodi" are sung to a similar melody as in other places in Dalmatia. The song of St. Stephen's Day "Stjepan jur blaženi" (Stephen the Blessed One), as well as the songs on St. John the Evangelist's Day, The Holy Innocents' Day, New Year and Epiphany are sung to the same melody as Christmas song "Ovoga vrimena". The song "Kad se Bog čovik učini" (When God Became

a Man) was primarily sung on Christmas, but sometimes on other holidays during the Christmas time too. For a long time it was not sung, but we reintroduced it recently. There are also songs from Matins and Vespers in the Christmas time that have a common melody different from Matins and Vespers of other holidays.

A day before Epiphany, in the afternoon, the Feast of the Blessing of Water was celebrated. A large tub with several hundreds liters of water would be placed in one part of the church and a stand with a cross, candles and flowers would be placed upon it. Priest with singers would stand before it and they would sing psalms, "Litanije Svih Svetih" (Litany of the Saints), the Blessing of Water ceremony and Te Deum laudamus. After that, the folk who had arrived to the church with dishes would take the blessed water from the tub and brought it home for various customs.

On the Epiphany, after the Mass that ended around 6.30 p.m., the blessing of the houses would immediately follow and last until late in the night. After that everyone would gather in the church again and sing Te Deum laudamus. Afterwards, the singers and the parish priest would sit together for a dinner. During the blessing, the priest was accompanied by altar boys, carrying holy water and incense, as well as singers, singing the traditional song on the Three Holy Kings, from house to house. Singers rarely entered the houses, only for a short break or to have a drink. Some of the singers carried double knitted bags on their shoulders, for receiving gifts, mostly dry figs and sometimes in almonds, or, even more rarely, in money. Even today a priest is accompanied by singers when blessing the houses and in front of each house they sing a couple of verses of the traditional song "Kad se Isus porodi" (When Jesus Was Born).

On Christmas, New Year, Holy Name of Jesus (January 2) and Epiphany, when singing the song "U sve vrime godišta" (similar

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on Easter when singing the song "Na dan Božjeg uskrsnuća" [On the Day of the Christ's Resurrection]), it is a custom to kiss a small crucifix that stays on the altar (unlike the big crucifix that is kissed on Good Friday). The alms collected during this ceremony go to altar boys as their prize. In the old times, before and immediately after the World War II, these were mostly almonds and rarely money. However, during the Christmas time, there are no more Matins and Vespers. All of the old traditional songs survived, but new ones are sung as well.

Lent and Easter

During Lent the Way of the Cross was held on Sunday afternoon, often on Wednesday, and every Friday was the time for Lent pieties. Friday was the day for singing "U Gospodina mučenje" (Lord's suffering saved the world), followed by "Divnoj dakle" (Tantum Ergo Sacramentum) and the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. On the last Friday of the Lent psalm Miserere mei, Deus replaces the "U Gospodina mučenje" and is sung to the Holy Week melody. Among all Lent pieties, only the Way of the Cross survived, which is performed before the Mass on Lent Sundays.

Around the middle of the Lent period people planted wheat in long wooden pots and used it to decorate the Lord's tomb during the Holy Week (the custom of planting wheat in Advent time didn't exist). On Passion Sunday (the Sunday before Palm Sunday) all altars used to be covered in purple curtains, and sculptures, paintings and all crucifixes used to be wrapped in purple cloth.

The service on Palm Sunday used to start early with olive branch blessing, followed by a procession around the church accompanied by the song "Djeca židovska" (Pueri Hebraeorum). When the procession reaches the entrance door, one choir enters the church and closes the door from the inside, and the priest and the oth-

er choir, the cross bearer, and the people remain in front of the door. The choir inside, facing the door, starts singing "Slava ti, hvala i čast" (Gloria, Laus et Honor) which the choir outside repeats as refrain till the end of the song, when the cross bearer knocks on the door with the crucifix. The choir inside opens the door and the procession enters the church singing "Ulazeći Gospod u sveti grad" (When the Lord entered the Holy City). The Mass continues with the sung "Muka po Mateju" (St. Matthew Passion) which contains divided singing roles. Since 1991 St. Matthew Passion is not sung on every Palm Sunday; it has been replaced by the cyclical singing of Passions of Matthew, Luke and Mark. The afternoon of Palm Sunday was the time for Fourty Hours' Adoration with specific psalms and blessings. Today the procession on Palm Sunday is the same as it used to be, with the exception that the procession enters the church and remains in the lower part of the church while Gloria, Laus et Honor is sung.

The evening of Holy Wednesday was the time for singing the Holy Thursday Matins accompanied by stamping of rods on church floors and pews at the end of the service. Parish volunteers ("fabriceri") used to control boys in order to prevent them to bring too thick rods that could damage the church pews. During the singing of the Matins, fifteen candles used to burn on a triangular stand (seven on each side and one on the top) and six more on the altar. After each psalm was finished, one candle on the stand was put out. After all 14 psalms were sung, 14 candles were put out, except for the one on the top of the stand. During the singing of the canticle "Blagoslovljen Gospod Bog Izraelov" (Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel) one candle on the altar was put out after every two strophes so, at the end, all candles except the one on the top of the stand were put out. This burning candle used to be taken off and hidden behind the altar. People used to sing psalm "Smiluj se meni Bože" (Miserere mei, Deus) in the darkness. After the priest finished praying, people bang with their rods and make rattle (Baraban) which is in-



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terrupted when the hidden candle is taken out. Baraban refers to the noise made with the rods, but also to the three Matins when the rattling of the rods took place: the Matins of Holy Thursday which took place on Wednesday evening, the Matins of Good Friday on Thursday night and the Matins of Holy Saturday on Friday evening. The transferring of all Holy Week ceremonies to the evening, which took place after the Second Vatican Council, resulted in the near vanishing of the Matins. In our days, fortunately, all melodies have been preserved and Matins are held on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday in a shortened form and last 25-30 minutes before the services of the Easter Triduum. Six candles on the lateral altar are lit and put out one by one while Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel is sung. After the last strophe, the last candle is being put out, which is followed by rattle in the church.

The morning of Holy Thursday was reserved for the Mass of the Lord's Supper, stripping and cleaning of the altar, transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the lateral altar (Altar of Repose), exposing of the Lord's tomb, binding of the bells in the church and the tower and the setting up the guard for the Lord's tomb. The Matins of Good Friday was sung on Holy Thursday, and was followed by singing of "Muka Gospodina Našega Isukrsta i Plač Matere Isusove" (Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Weeping of Jesus's Mother) in octosyllabic verses written by the Franciscan friar Petar Knežević in 1753. This text is popularly called "Gospin plač" (Madonna's Weeping). It was divided into roles, but all were sung by men, including the role of Mary.

Before transferring the Most Blessed Sacrament to the lateral altar, the curtain from the Lord's tomb was removed and the body of Christ exposed; long pots with wheat were arranged in front of the tomb. Several pots formed a cross right in front of the tomb's center, and others were placed around it. An oil lamp was placed in each pot.

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During the Easter Triduum wooden clappers (čičarke) replaced bells by inside and outside of the church. Church service was usually announced with bells, but now they were replaced by čičarke. Several young men walked through the village carrying čičarke and announcing the beginning of service. Since consecrated hosts were stored in the lateral altar during the Holy Week, during communion they used to be transferred under a large colorful ceremonial umbrella accompanied by the sounds (čičanje) of wooden clappers. In those days, especially on Good Friday, people used to come to church during the whole day to pray before the tomb and they used to bring olive oil for lighting the oil lamps the whole year round. They used to bring large quantities of oil so the church stored them in its own traditional stone containers. This oil was used to the benefit of the church as a community of all parishioners.

During the Holy Thursday and Good Friday services a pointy stand was placed on the balaustra (stone altar rail that was removed after the Second Vatican Council reforms) with cardboard construction with carved Stations of the Cross. It was all wrapped with transparent paper, a candle burnt inside, the cylinder construction spun slowly and, as some kind of a primitive slide projector, showed the Christ's Passion. The cylinder used to be placed on a pointy stick, spun manually and, since a candle was burning inside, it probably caused the spinning to continue. This "primitive slide projector" was removed in early 1960's and then, unfortunately, destroyed in the 1980's.

The morning of Good Friday was the time for the Good Friday liturgy with a sung St. John's Passion, the uncovering of the Cross (all crucifixes covered with the purple cloth on Passion Sunday were now uncovered), genuflection and kissing of the Cross. Earlier, while many people attended the service, during the uncovering of the cross the first song to sing used to be "Puče moj" (Popule Meus), and then "Himan križu" (Hymn to the Cross). Today "Puče

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moj" is sung during Veneration of the Cross, and "Himan križu" during Communion. Some women used to come through the church on their knees, approach the cross and kiss it, while the others used to walk and kneel several times. Today people only walk to the cross. In the evening of Good Friday the Matins of Holy Saturday took place, including an exhausting long sermon (often involving a special preacher from outside the parish) and "Gospin plač" (Madonna's Weeping), sung while the priest rested and prepared for the procession. Then followed a procession with singing of "Smiluj se meni Bože" (Miserere mei, Deus). The procession lead through the village, while the oil lamps burnt in the windows. In the procession people used to carry large lanterns on long sticks that lit the way and served as decoration. Two crosses were carried at the head of the procession, the first one with the figure of Christ's body and the second one was the Way of the Cross crucifix. A priest walked under the baldachin with the Most Blessed Sacrament, in front of him went the altar boys carrying a thurible ("kadinjak"), and in front of them walked the singers. On the side of the baldachin walked the Žudije (guards of Lord's tomb) carrying their weapon and ladder, reed with sponge, tools for the crucifixion (nails, hammer, rope, pliers) in one weaved basket, and a kerosene lanterns in their hands. Upon return to the church people sang "Ispovidajte se" (Confitemini Domino) and "Blagoslov puka" (Blessing of the People), and the service ended with the Benediction with the Cross. The modern procession is similar to the old one, but without the lit oil lamps on the windows.

The Easter Vigil and Mass on Holy Saturday used to be held in the morning, while today it is held in the evening. The old service, as well as the modern one, starts with the blessings of fire near the church, with burning a Paschal candle and singing the Old Testament readings. During the singing of Kyrie Eleison, right before the proclamation of Resurrection, all candles are put out and the church is dark, except for several oil lamps. Dark curtains are

drawn over the windows. By the singing of Gloria in Excelsis Deo the Žudije (quards) double and triple. During the singing of Gloria the guards fall down and run out of the church, and two guards in white shirts and white caps with flags run out of the sacristy, symbolizing angels holding honorary guard in front of the empty Lord's tomb. At the same time the curtains on the windows spread open. By every altar, statue and window, there is a person standing and pulling the rope in order to spread all the curtains at the same time. The figure of Christ's dead body is pulled from the tomb and all bells ring. Before the Second Vatican Council reforms church flags, that were aligned in front of the church before the service, were carried to the altars: during the singing of Gloria in Excelsis Deo, while the guards were falling down and running out of the church, men, each with his own flag, came running into the church and placed the flags on stands near the altars. Today the flags are already placed inside the decorated church before the Easter Vigil service. The candles on the altars and "čoka" (large candleholder in the center of the church) are lit. The atmosphere reflects the miracle of Resurrection. The remaining guards change into white clothes and at the proclamation of the Gospel enter the church and all together, standing in two lines and holding flags in their hands, they keep guard in front of the empty Lord's tomb.

Easter morning was the time for the festive Mass with honorary guard, and the afternoon for festive Vespers and the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The song "Na dan Božjeg Uskrsnuća" (Rejoice us at the day of the Christ's Resurrection, Hallelujah) used to be sung only during the ceremony of kissing the small altar crucifix after the sermon on Easter day and this custom was preserved till mid-eighties. Today, this song is sung on Holy Saturday, Easter Day and Divine Mercy Sunday (first after Easter) as an offertory song, during communion and at the end of the Mass. The same melody is used for Easter sequence song "Svetoj žrtvi Uskrsnici" (Victimae Paschalis).

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Corpus Christi ("Tijelovo")

During the Octave of Corpus Christi, which takes place after the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament used to be held every evening until the 1980's, accompanied by Corpus Christi songs from Petar Vlašić's "Bogoslužbenik", with special texts for each day of the Octave of Corpus Christi. A small procession used to walk from the altar to the church door where the village and its inhabitants were blessed. The Octave of Corpus Christi is no longer held, but on Sunday following Corpus Christi a small procession from the main altar to the church door is held, with the Most Blessed Sacrament under a baldachin, accompanied by a song referring to the Sunday of the octave.

On Corpus Christi day a procession with the Most Blessed Sacrament under a baldachin used to walk through the village and had four stations. Today the Corpus Christi procession starts with the first four strophes of "O jezici, hvale dajte" (Pangue, Lingua, Gloriosi), followed by "Dan večere Gospodina" (The Day of the Lord's Supper), which is sung during the procession from one station to the next (4 stations), to the church entrance. Upon entrance the two last strophes of Pangue, Lingua, Gloriosi are sung, before the final Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Many children and women clad in traditional costumes used to attend the Corpus Christi service, as well as the services on other holidays. Women and children alike used to carry baskets filled with flower petals they threw along the way of the procession. House windows and balconies were decorated with multicolored silk scarves. Today, the procession looks the same, but without the decorations and flower petals, because there are no children.

Liturgical year (ordinary time)

Saint Mark's Day

The feast of Saint Mark (Rogation Day) used to be celebrated during Eastertide. After Mass a procession walked to the fields for the blessing of crops. It has been long since it was last held.

Saint Helen ("Sveta Jelina")

The feast of Saint Helen (the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross) used to be celebrated on May 3, but due to the fact that it was a working day and to the small congregation during the 1980's, it was transferred to the first Sunday in May. The song "Sveta Jele Križarica" (Saint Helen of the Cross) from the famous songbook "Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga" (Pleasant Conversations of the Slavic People) written by Franciscan friar Andrija Kačić Miošić in 1756 was previously sung only during mass while Te Deum laudamus was sung in the procession. Now Kačić's song is sung during the procession.

The church of Saint Jelina was built in 1620 with well-known gilded baroque altar restored in the Conservation Institute in Zagreb 8 years ago. The church is a protected monument. The church used to have an older simple type of bell tower ("zvono na preslicu"), and the new monumental bell tower was built in early 19th century. Its bells were used for military needs during World War I, and after the war funds were raised for the purchase and mounting of the new bells. The bells had an extraordinary sound and were the pride of the village and the parish. During the later modernization of the bell clapper and electrification the sound has been lost, especially in "slavljenje" (ceremonial ringing).

Assumption of Mary and Saint Rocco

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a great holiday for Šepurina. The parish's church is dedicated to this solemnity, but the patron saint of the parish is Saint Rocco. The Mass on the Assumption of Mary was festive, but only one priest was present. On Saint Rocco's day three priests were present because masses "in terzo" were common before the Second Vatican Council reform. The main altar is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and Saint Rocco, with his statue, has a special altar, as well as some other saints. Before the Council the Mass was performed on these lateral altars on a certain saint's holiday.

In the morning of the day of Saint Rocco, the patron saint of the place, we sang a psalm with responses, and then a sung hagingraphy. This was followed by the festive Mass on the altar of Saint Rocco, always "in terzo", with three priests. After the Mass the statue of Saint Rocco was taken down from the altar and displayed in the center of the church, accompanied by a song dedicated to the saint. All golden votive offerings (ex-votos) hung on the statue. The afternoon was the time for the Vespers, which was followed by the procession carrying the statue and all church and fraternity flags. The village was decorated and silk scarves hung from the windows. The procession went through the center of the little marina, and a bridge made of boats was formed between two small guays. The passage between the guays was 8-10 m wide; the boats would align along this passage. Planks used to be placed on boats and served as bridges. The procession moved toward the left part of the village, crossed the "bridge" and returned through the right part of the village. The boats that served as bridges, as well as other boats in the marina, were decorated with flowers and flags on upright lantine (long wooden sail rods).

Today, in the morning of Saint Rocco's day, half an hour before the service, the psalm with responses and the hagiography of Saint Rocco are sung, which is followed by the festive Mass with three priests. The afternoon is reserved for the Vespers, then festive Mass and the procession through the village, carrying the statue of Saint Rocco and flags. After the procession we sing Te Deum laudamus and in the end kissing of the relics takes place, accompanied by the popular church song "Do nebesa" (To the Heavens). A large number of priests, along with a large congregation, some of which wear traditional costumes, participate in the afternoon service. A feast follows.

All Saints and All Souls

The Vespers for the dead in older times was sung only on All Saints' Day, but today this service is also sung during funerals. On the morning of All Saints' Day a festive Mass is held. The afternoon is the time for the festive Vespers, which is followed by the Vespers for the dead, visit to the cemetery, prayer, service of the Absolution of the Dead and blessing of the graves.

On All Souls' Day Matins and Mass for the dead were held at 4 in the morning and this was followed by the first olive picking. Many people came to church with their tools for the picking. Before the beginning of the service at 3:15 in the morning the death-bells would ring. Those were followed by the other bells. A small coffin was located inside the church; it was black and had a silver cross and a silver border; they placed it on the catafalque and surrounded by lit candles. At around this time on All Souls day some people used to go to the cemetery, bringing flowers, some sort of chrysanthemum, small and half wild, that grew around people's houses. It is called "dobri čovik" (a good man).

Services for the dead

The singers have always had the duty to sing at funerals from the deceased's house to the church, in the church, and, in the old days, during the wake, in two choirs. Until the Second Vatican Council the complete or only a part of the Matins i.e. Nocturn ("noćnica") for the dead used to be sung at funerals, but there was no Mass. There couldn't be one, as all funerals took place in the afternoons. The Mass for the deceased used to be held later, most often a day after the funeral. The funeral was followed by the wake ("sedmina") at the house of the deceased, with a small buffet, consisting mostly of small fish and chard, homemade wine and exceptionally doughnuts. This gathering included the prayers for the deceased, singing of psalms and "Dan od gnjeva" (Dies irae).

The Requiem Mass today is part of the funeral. Considering that many people today die in hospitals or nursery homes, and many of them far away from Prvić, Šibenik, or even Croatia, the deceased are transported home on a special ship. Sometimes, after the wishes of the relatives, they are brought home in the morning, and the funeral starts at the house, same as for those deceased that die in their own houses. Sometimes they are brought in by ship just before the funeral and the funeral procession starts from the waterfront and follows to the church. A memorial Mass is held in the church, followed by regular prayers and songs. The funeral continues in a procession to the cemetery, always accompanied by singing. Singing accompanies all funerals of the deceased Catholics, and the number of singers varies from 3, 4 to 8 or 10. Ten to twenty five funerals take place every year, in nice weather and bad, and sometimes it is difficult to find time for all these duties.

Contemporary funeral ceremonies are similar to those conducted before the Second Vatican Council, with the exception that the Requiem Mass replaced the Matins for the dead, and the order of fu-



neral songs is somewhat different. Dies irae used to be sung as a sequence song, and "Braćo, brata sprovodimo" (Brethren, we bury our brother) only to members of fraternities. Now both these songs are sung as offertory or communion songs, and sometimes during funeral procession from the church to the cemetery. Miserere mei, Deus used to be sung on the way from the house to the church door, "Pomozite sveci Božji" (Subvenite, Sancti Dei, occurite, Angeli Domini) while entering the church, Miserere mei, Deus again after exiting the church and on the way to the cemetery. While entering the cemetery, we used to sing "Iz dubine" (De Profundis) and, finally, Absolution of the Dead. Today Miserere mei, Deus is sung only on the way from the house to the church and from the church to the cemetery. Since the trip is long, we also sing the Vespers for the dead, the Psalm 42 "As the deer longs for streams of water" and the canticle Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel.

Ringing of the bells

The ringing of the bells was different depending on the occasion.

All three bells used to ring for ordinary festive and Sunday Masses, and on more important holidays and the first Sunday of the month ("mlada nedjelja") the ceremonial ringing ("slavljenje") was performed. All three bells, the death-bell, the large and the small bell, were used for the ceremonial ringing. One man gave the rhythm with the bell for the dead, and the other rhythmically banged the other two bells, which, depending on the performer's skill, was a joy to listen. Eight days before every large feast ceremonial ringing was performed. For a less important holiday, the ceremonial ringing lasted for three days, and for the first Sunday of the month one day. In the evening after the Angelus bell-ringing the bell used to strike three times, then five, and finally seven times. The first three symbolize the three nails in Christ's body, the five symbolize five wounds of Christ, and the seven symbolize seven sorrows of the

Blessed Virgin Mary.

On regular days Angelus bell-ringing was signified with the strike of the small bell, and on holidays and Sundays with the strikes of the large bells. Before more important feasts ceremonial ringing with all three bells for Angelus bell-ringing was performed, but also during praises ("pohvale"), when the bells rang in the afternoon hours preceding the holiday.

Death used to be and still is announced by the death-bell. Before the funeral, and as the announcement of the beginning of the funeral, the death-bell used to strike to one side only (knelling, i.e. "brecanje" in Croatian). Apart from this, after the Angelus bell-ringing in the morning and in the evening before the funeral the death-bell used to be announced. When the priest went from the church to the house of the deceased the death-bell was striking to both sides. During the funeral on the way from the house to the church and from the church to the cemetery, all three bells rang. Death of small children was announced by the knelling of the large and the small bell (to one side).

Accidents were announced by the long ringing of the death bell to both sides. Call to work was announced with alternate knelling (to one side) of the large and the small bell.

Žudije – guarding Lord's tomb

The guarding of Lord's tomb lasts from Holy Thursday till Easter. The custom of Žudije (in Croatian dialect the word means "Jews") starts on Holy Thursday after communion: Žudije enters the church during the ceremony of moving the Most Blessed Sacrament from the main to the lateral altar and the procession under the baldachin moves from the main altar to the church door and returns to the lateral altar accompanied by the Žudije and singing "O jezici, hvale

dajte" (Pangue, Lingua, Gloriosi) [the older title in Croatian is "Usta moja uzdižite"].

The guards used to change during the whole day and late into the night and used to continue early in the morning. Today it is different. It starts about an hour before the service and lasts for an hour after the service; it finishes after people leave the church. The guard used to change every 15 to 20 minutes. The leader used to come with two new guards and, after a mace hit the ground, the guards would exchange places and the leader would leave with the old guards.

The tradition of guarding Lord's tomb has lasted since the second half of the 19th century. Till 1953/54 the uniforms were navy dark blue till singing of "Gloria" on Holy Saturday and white after that moment and during the service on Easter day. During the time the guards wore blue uniforms and instead of the navy ribbon on their caps they wore a ribbon with an inscription "Guard of Lord's tomb". When they wore white uniforms their caps bore the inscription: "Halleluiah, Hallelujah". They also bore a staff in their hands with a flag bearing the inscription: "He has truly resurrected, Hallelujah". The top of the staff was decorated with a small bouquet of violas. In the early 1950's the uniforms changed and Žudije started to dress in the cosutmes of a Roman Empire soldier, but these uniforms were never fully completed. Today, Žudije wear helmets, semi-long gown, and wooden spears, knives and halberds for weapons, which they bore in earlier times as well as today. The leader of the Žudije bears the mace.

Till the 1950's the guard in the Žudije custom was kept mostly by men above 25 years of age, then it was taken over by young high school boys, even older elementary school boys accompanied by one or two older men. It should be noted that the custom of guarding Lord's tomb started to vanish and vanished completely for a period of time, but was revitalized in the early nineties and lasts till today.

The number of participants varies, but the usual number is thirteen. On the afternoon of Holy Saturday the Žudije used to visit houses to collect food and money they used for a feast.

On the present and future of traditional church singing

Unfortunately, the tradition of traditional church singing in Šepurina on the island of Prvić is vanishing. Most of the singers are elderly people, and younger people have left Prvić, so prediction is an ungrateful task, but it is certain that the reduction of the tradition will continue. I hope it will not vanish completely. It can be said that the present group of singers was formed in the early 1990's. They were later joined by several younger singers, but considering that 15 years have passed since, most of us are getting older, and the younger ones mostly live outside Šepurina and join us only occasionally. Since the number of people and the congregation is decreasing, we can not expect the revival of religious life or singing. The singers usually come from singer families or were altar boys. Retired men joined the singing after their retirement and return to Šepurina.

The present choir has several leads, they are all old and of poor health, except from the young Šime Ukić who occasionally comes from Zagreb. Neven Skroza, the present first lead started to be interested in traditional church singing in the second half of the 1970's and joined in 1978. He took over the lead from the older singers in the early 1980's but the choir then numbered few singers. His father, who died in 1976, was a church singer. The second leader, Mladen Miš, is the son of Ante Miš who was the lead for a long time, until his death in 1980. Mladen joined the choir in 1990. When he was a child, Nedjeljko Grubelić, the third lead, was always "hanging around" the older singers. Later, during the time he was home away from the sea, he often used to come to the church, sometimes he even sang, especially on more important feasts. He became an active member in the 1980's. When he was a boy, the fourth lead-soloist of the young-

er generation, Šime Ukić, was first an altar boy and then the guard of Lord's tomb. In the early 1990's Grgo Ukić, Tomislav Ukić, Jerislav Ukić, and Nikica Skroza started singing. In the mid-1990's Bruno Skroza and Šime Ukić joined the choir. From the late 1990's till 2005 Tomislav Skroza, Vitomir Antić, Ivica Ukić and Benedikt Cukrov joined the group, too.

Church singers used to gather together more, and now it comes to several meetings a year, although they are more frequent in the last several years considering guest performances at traditional church singing festivals in Zaton, the Šibenik Cathedral, Zadar, Zagreb, Metković, Novalja and Zaostrog. Evenings with the parish priest are organized after the blessing of the houses on Epiphany and Saint Rocco's day, and sometimes around Saint Cecilia's Day. When the bishop visits the parish, the singers join him for a formal lunch.

In my personal opinion, much more could have been preserved. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to talk more to the last old leads of traditional church singers Roko Učić, who died in early 1991. He was an excellent singer of church and secular songs. He died suddenly and I hereby thank him to have bestowed on me so many melodies.

I am happy, content and grateful that a large number of melodies have been recorded in this way. In my opinion, this happened in the nick of time, resulting in the preservation of special symbols of our time and the past of this region, my home place. Maybe future generations would listen to it and say: "This is how our ancestors sang, God bless them", and maybe it will be of some interest to other people as well.

All of the above has been written based on my knowledge and memories and some of it based on the stories of other people.

Neven Skroza

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ŠEPURINA

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