



DALMATIA

CENTRAL

# CULTURAL HERITAGE



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The central part of the East Adriatic coast has played an important role in the history of the region. Consequently, it boasts a remarkable cultural heritage. The archeological finds excavated in the local caves witness to human presence as early as the Pleistocene period (the Ice Age), when a large part of the Adriatic was still above the sea level. Material traces of the ancient populations of Illyrians, particularly the Delmate who built their strongholds (citadels) and monumental graves-mounds on hilltops, are still visible. The Illyrians traded with and fought against the Greeks who gradually penetrated the territory and in the 4th century BC. founded a colony on the island of Vis (Issa). Their settlement of Pharos, present-day Stari Grad, on the island of Hvar, was founded in 384 BC.

Starigrad (Faros) on the island of Hvar, and its fields in which the ancient Greek division of land into parcels is still visible

The 4th - century head of the Goddess Aphrodite makes part of the Archaeological Collection at Vis

← Angels in mind - air by master Radovan, portal of Trogir cathedral, (13th century)





Relief representing  
the divinity Karios  
(4th - 3th centuries BC),  
Kairos Art  
Collection,  
Trogir



South Italic painted vases  
(4th century BC),  
Archaeological Collection at Vis



Ruins of the Roman  
amphitheatre at Solin (Salona)

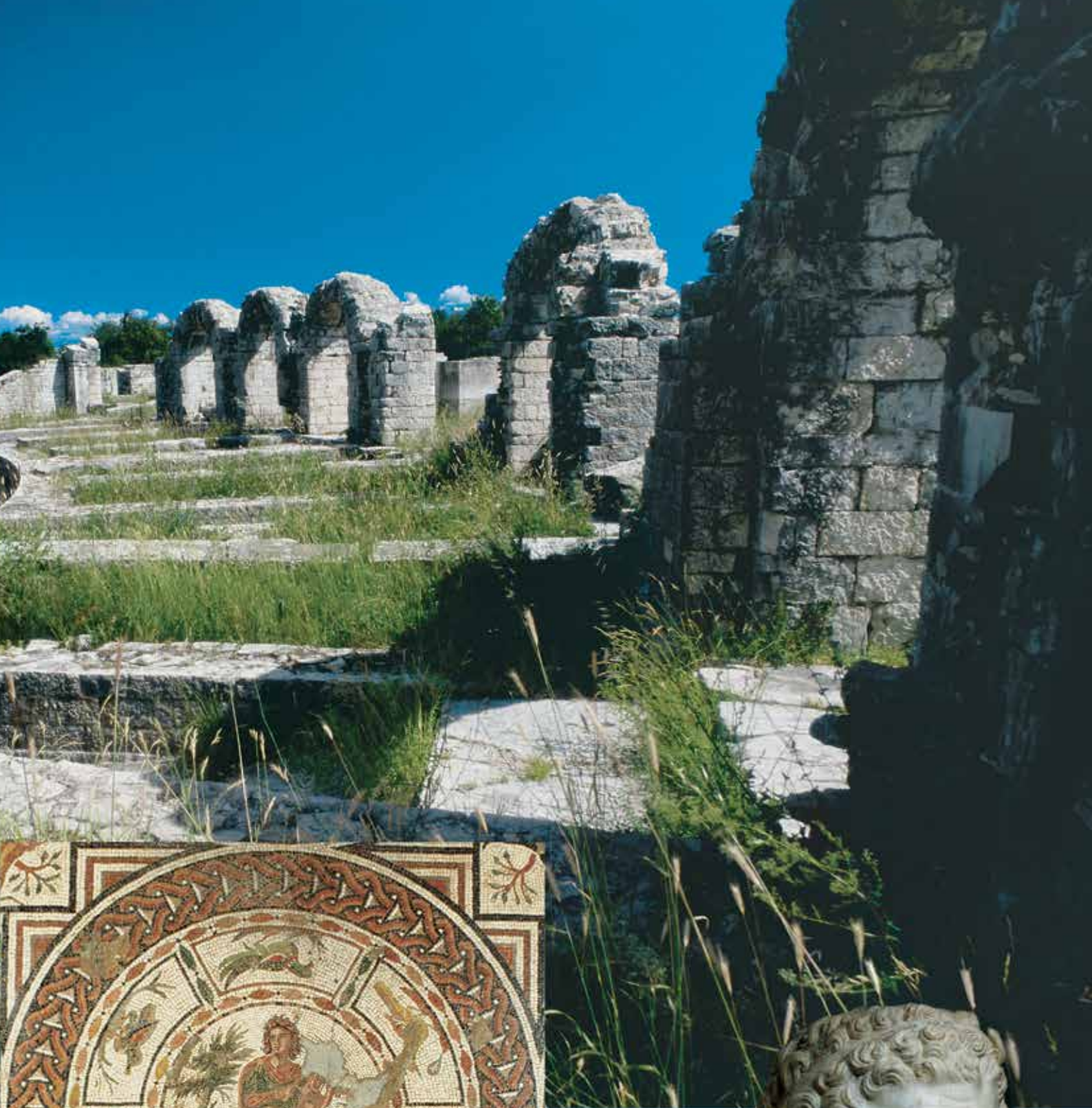
Tragurion, present day Trogir, was originally an Illyrian settlement. Salona, present-day Solin, is mentioned for the first time in the 2nd century BC. as a port of the Delmate.

The Romans, whose conquests spanned several centuries, subdued the Illyrians, along with the bellicose Delmate. On the site of the former Illyrian stronghold of Tilurium, present-day Trilj, they founded a military camp. This small town, situated on the road leading inland to Bosnia and at the Upper Cetina has an important archeological area where finds from both prehistoric and antique periods have been excavated. Over the next few centuries Salona was settled by the Greeks and the Romans. At the end of the 1st century BC. it became the metropolis of the Roman province of Dalmatia (Illycum) which extended over a much larger area.

Statue of the Goddess Hecate  
excavated at Čitluk (Aequum) near  
Sinj (1st century). Archaeological  
Collection of the Franciscan  
monastery at Sinj.







A mosaic from Salona depicting  
Orpheus (1st century).  
Archaeological Museum in Split

The head of Heracles  
found at Čitluk (Aequum)  
near Sinj (1st century)  
makes part of the  
Archaeological Collection  
of the Franciscan  
monastery at Sinj







Aerial view  
of the historic centre of Split





Bell tower  
of Split  
Cathedral

In the last years of the 3rd century AD. The Emperor Diocletian, who was born here, had a monumental palace built in the vicinity of Salona, where he retired after his abdication.

Salona became the center from which Christianity spread in the region. It became the seat of the episcopacy and the arena of many martyr deaths. The Christian martyrs St. Domnius (Sv. Duje) and St. Anastasius (Sv. Staš) who died here became the patron saints of Split.



A reconstruction  
of the original appearance  
of Diocletian's palace  
(according to E. Hébrard)





Peristyle of Diocletian's palace





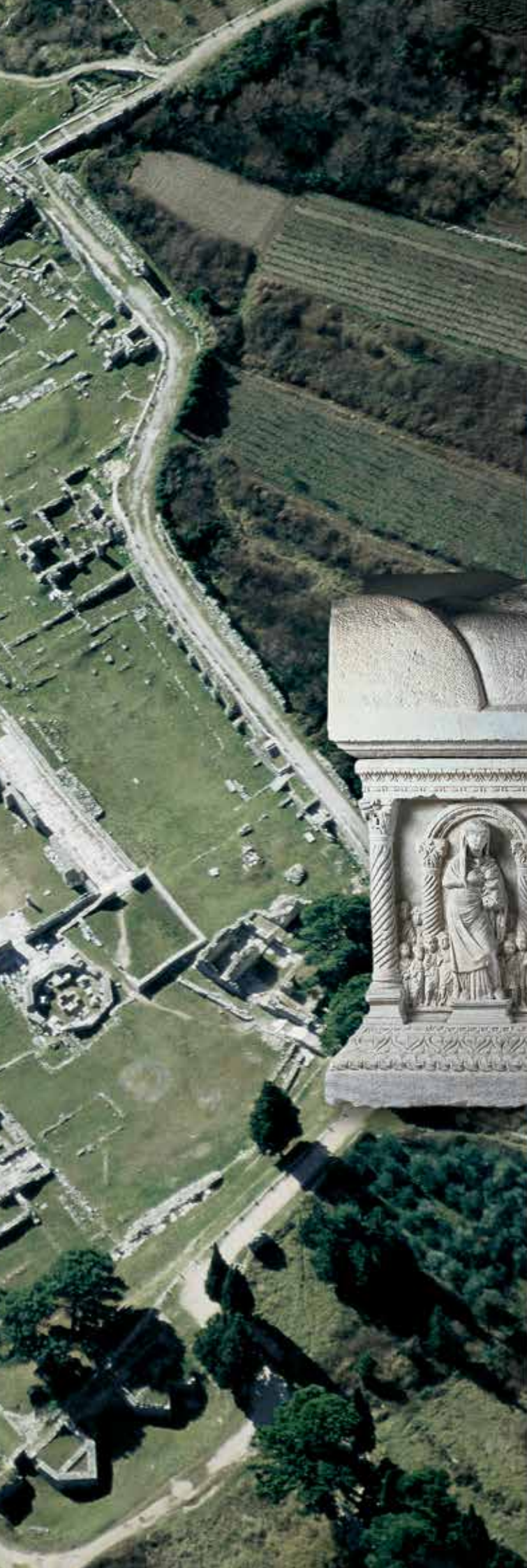
One of the halls  
in the basement  
of Diocletian's  
palace



Northern edge  
of Salona with  
the early-Christian  
sanctuary







The sarcophagus from Salona Portraying the Good Shepherd (4th century), Archaeological Museum at Split



Fortress  
of Klis  
above Solin

Only a couple of the coastal settlements survived the crises of the Antique World and the migration of the peoples. Salona was destroyed. Yet, between the 9th and 11th centuries its outskirts became one of the political headquarters of the Croats. The ruined rests of their coronation basilicas and rulers' tombs can still be seen. Diocletian's palace was large enough to host the whole late antique and early medieval town of Split. The archbishop of Split received the title of Primas of Croatia and Dalmatia.



Church of the Holy  
Trinity in Split  
(10th-11th centuries)

Church of the Holy  
Salvation at the source  
of the river Cetina  
(9th century)





The 11th century relief portrait of a Croatian King, Baptistery of the Cathedral of Split



Queen Helen's sarcophagus (+976), Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments





The 13th century wooden door by master Buvina on the portal of Split Cathedral

The mausoleum of the Emperor Diocletian, who had persecuted Christians, was converted into the Cathedral in which the Salonitan martyrs were venerated. Split and Trogir developed into medieval communes, while the small town of Omiš (antique Oneum) situated in the place where the river Cetina meets the sea, remained a pirate's stronghold almost until the beginning of the 15th century.



The 13th century choir stalls in the Cathedral of Split. Detail.





Interior of Emperor  
Diocletian's  
mausoleum  
converted into  
the Cathedral



The 13th century  
pulpit in the Cathedral  
of Split.  
Detail.

The Flagellation of Christ  
by Juraj Dalmatinac  
(15th century). detail from  
the sarcophagus,  
the altar of St. Anastasius  
in Split Cathedral





Trogir, with its concise skyline interrupted only by the prismatic shapes of its towers and steeples, looks like a castle on water. It is situated on a tiny island which has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Yet, the most fantastic of the Dalmatian towns is the medieval Split nested in Diocletian's palace. Inside its walls it developed complex spatial relationships, with its houses and churches are crowded among the ruins of the imperial halls and temples.



The Cathedral  
at Trogir

The 13th - century  
portal of Trogir  
cathedral was  
carved by master  
Radovan and his  
successors.





Historic centre  
of Trogir



Interior of the  
Cathedral at Trogir





The 13th century  
Trogir Evangelistary  
contains this miniature  
Presentation  
in the Temple. Trogir,  
Gallery of Paintings



This 14th century gilt  
silver crown embossed  
with jewels is kept at the  
monastery of St. Anthony  
on Čiovo near Trogir







Silver case of the  
13th century  
Evangelistary,  
Treasury of Split  
Cathedral



Silver jug traditionally  
believed to be a gift  
from queen Elisabeth  
Kotromanić married  
Anju (14th century),  
Treasury of Trogir  
Cathedral



The 15th century relief representing the Baptism of Christ by Andrija Aleši decorates the Baptistry of Trogir Cathedral

Hvar, located on the island of the same name, has all the attributes of a town. Klis, near Solin, is dominated by a fortress which commands a magnificent view. Once it was considered the door of Dalmatia and Croatia. Sinj and Imotski are places built at the feet of the strongholds of Croatian feudal lords.



The 15th century relief portrait of a humanist by Ivan Duknović was built into one of the walls of the so-called small Ćipiko palace at Trogir







The 15th century  
Chapel of St John in the  
Cathedral of Trogir



Statue of St Paul  
by Nicolo Fiorentino  
in the Chapel of St John  
in Trogir Cathedral, 15th century



The 15th and 16th century Turkish conquests in the hinterland swept away the medieval, feudal culture. The coastal towns remained under the Venetian sway from the 15th until the 18th century. Consequently, they have conserved their medieval looks, furbished by the architectural interventions of the Renaissance and Baroque styles.



Madonna in the Rosary  
by Blaž Jurjev  
Trogiranin, in the Gallery  
of Trogir, 15th century







Bishop Toma Niger Mrčić  
by Lorenzo Lotto (+1556).  
The Franciscan monastery  
at Poljud in Split

The majority of houses in Trogir  
and Split date back to the 12th  
and 13th centuries and are built  
in the Romanesque style.

The 13th century  
fresco painting  
representing Christ  
flanked by Mary and  
John. Parish church  
at Gornji Humac  
on the island of Brač

St Jerome by Gentile  
Bellini (+1507). Trogir,  
Gallery of Paintings







Town of Omiš (antique Oneum) situated  
in the place where the river Cetina meets the sea

Kačić's square  
in Makarska







The hermitage of Blace  
on the island of Brač

The miniature Omiš, curling under a fortress at the mouth of the river Cetina, is set against a dramatic scenery of rock faces. Makarska, located at the foot of Mount Biokovo, has an almost alpine background. Its Baroque appearance dates back to the period following the late 18th century liberation from the Turks. The town of Hvar rises step-wise under its fortress and is turned to the sun and the sea. Its well protected port was the winter harbor of the Venetian fleet as is still testified by the arsenal which, on the upper floor, houses the town theatre, opened in 1612. Many places on the islands have an urban touch. Škrip, in the inland of Brač, developed within the perimeter of a prehistoric citadel and has a tower raised above an antique mausoleum. Vis, on the island of the same name, extends along a spacious and indented bay, with a Franciscan monastery built over the ruins of an antique theatre. The natural beauty of Dalmatian landscapes is complemented by that of its cultural and historic monuments. The fortress of Imotski is perched on the brink of a chasm at whose bottom Blue Lake lies.

Summer villa of the  
poet Petar Hektorović  
(+ 1572) in Stari Grad





Building in stone is a tradition and peculiarity of Dalmatia, whose most important quarries are located on the island of Brač. The art of local stonecutters is readily exhibited by carefully dressed local pavements, posts, lintels and well heads. The portal of the Cathedral of Trogir, a work by Radovan and his successors completed in 1240, represents the peak of Dalmatian sculpture. Here often foreigners worked shoulder by shoulder with domestic masters. Bonino da Milano decorated the tomb of St. Domnius in the Cathedral of Split in 1427. The altar of St. Anastasius built in the same church in 1448 was designed by Juraj Matijev (Juraj Dalmatinac, Giorgio Dalmata) who made a name for himself in Italy and Dalmatia. Nicolò Fiorentino brought the Renaissance style to Dalmatia.

The Dominican  
monastery at Bol  
on the island of Brač







Hvar harbour and the Arsenal, with the Cathedral in the background

From 1468 on, together with Andrija Aleši and Ivan Duknović from Trogir (Giovanni Dalmata, Ioannes Dalmata), this Italian artist decorated the Chapel of St. John in the Cathedral of Trogir. Duknović won renown in Italy and Hungary. Woodcarving has a long local tradition. In 1213 master Buvina made the doors for the Cathedral of Split and decorated them with scenes from the New Testament. The choir stalls of the Cathedral date back to the 13th century. The woodcarver Ivan Budislavić made the choir stalls in the Cathedral of Trogir in 1439.



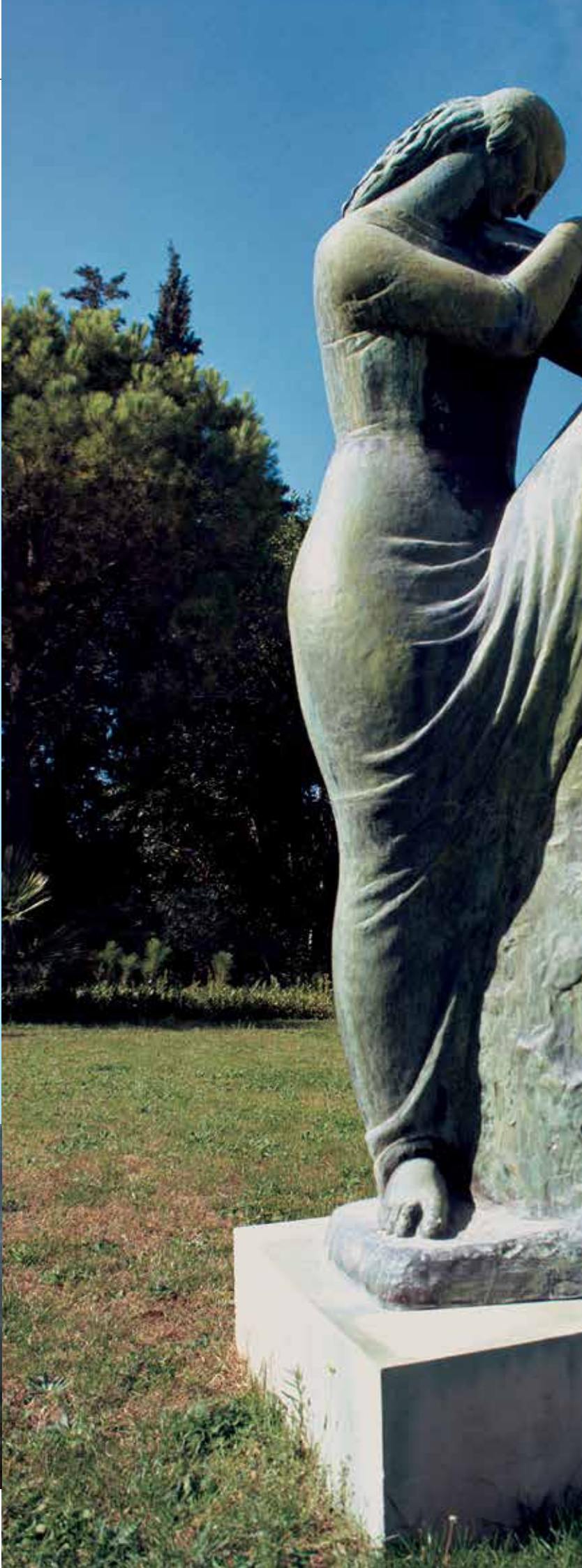
Hvar town theatre in the Arsenal



The interiors of local palaces and churches, museums and galleries treasure numerous artifacts and antiquities. The Evangelistary of Split, which is kept in the Cathedral, goes back to the 7th century. The legend has it that it was brought from Salona. The Evangelistary of Trogir, depicted in the 13th century, probably in the scriptorium of the Benedictine monastery of St. John, is one of the most lavishly decorated Croatian codexes. In the Middle Ages the Dalmatian towns had several painting shops, some of which developed recognizable styles. The most famous was that of the late Gothic painter Blaž Jurjev Trogiraniin, who lived in the former half of the 15th century. Also, over the centuries many works of Venetian painters have been purchased. In order to decorate the organ's door in the Cathedral on the model of those of St Mark in Venice, the citizens of Trogir commissioned the painted panels from the same author, Gentile Bellini. Toma Nigris-Mrčić (1450-1531), bishop, humanist and author of anti-Turkish speeches,



Studio of the painter Vidović





Distant chords,  
20th century,  
the Meštrović Gallery



had himself portrayed by the famous Lorenzo Lotto.

Particularly numerous are paintings by Palma the

Younger, whose works were commissioned by  
fraternities and private citizens even from smaller  
corners, such as Brač.

This rich artistic tradition has survived to date.  
Numerous works by the sculptor Ivan Meštrović  
(1883-1962), who won renown in Europe and the  
USA, are on show in his Gallery in Split. Emanuel  
Vidović (1879-1953), a lover of dark church interiors  
and vibrant, saturated atmospheres, is the most  
famous painter of Trogir and Split.



The Meštrović Gallery, Split



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