

# A Divided Hungary in Europe



A Divided Hungary in Europe:  
Exchanges, Networks and Representations,  
1541-1699 –  
Volume 3:  
The Making and Uses of the Image  
of Hungary and Transylvania

Edited by

Gábor Almási, Szymon Brzeziński, Ildikó Horn,  
Kees Tszelszky and Áron Zarnóczy

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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# THE PERCEPTION OF THE MEDIEVAL KINGDOM OF HUNGARY-CROATIA IN CROATIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY (1500–1660)

IVA KURELAC

## *Introduction*

The main purpose of this study is to examine how Croatian historiography of the Renaissance and early modern period perceived the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia and the role this image played in constructing the political identity of the Croatian lands.<sup>1</sup> The historical works of Ludovicus Cerva Tubero (Ludovik Crijević Tuberon), Mauro Orbini (Mavro Orbini), Dominicus Zavoreus (Dinko Zavorović) and Georgius Rattkay (Juraj Rattkay), who were either prominent members of the clergy or noblemen, will provide the basis for this study. This choice of authors aims to cover the widest possible time range, that is, the period from the beginning of the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. In addition, by taking into account the development of historiographical methodology, as well as the development of the historical-political ideology underlying the work of the aforementioned authors, we will try to prove how and why the perception of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary changed during that period. Taking into account the context of wider political and historical circumstances in Central and South-East Europe, the authors' attitudes towards this issue will be analysed from the standpoint of the political influence of the royal court, the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire on Croatian lands.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the issue of the early modern nation and national identity, see P. Burke, "The uses of Italy," in *The Renaissance in the National Context*, ed. by R. Porter (Cambridge 1992), 13–18; Z. Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma* [Illyrism before Illyrism] (Zagreb 2008), 114. For more on the issue of composite kingdoms in medieval Europe, see D. Waley and P. Denley, *Late Medieval Europe 1250–1520* (Harlow 2001), 4–7.

### ***Croatian historiography at the beginning of the Renaissance***

Croatian historiographical production of the Renaissance and early modern period was thematically and ideologically largely oriented towards the interpretation of historical and political events of the medieval period (from the end the eleventh century to the first quarter of the fifteenth century), when all Croatian lands (including its both major constituent parts of Dalmatia and Croatia *stricto sensu*) were politically bound to the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>2</sup> The political reality in the period of Renaissance was quite different from the former period. The Ottomans conquered large parts of the kingdom after 1526, and after the death of the last Jagiellonian king, Louis II in 1526, the Habsburgs were elected as the kings of Hungary and Croatia, which resulted in the moving of the political centre outside the country—to Vienna and Prague. Though Hungary and Croatia both retained their own political institutions (first of all, their diets), the final effect of this situation was that in this period the political life only partly took place within Hungary and Croatia.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the European Renaissance and early modern period were fundamentally vexed with deep social and political crises. Frequent warfare with disastrous economic consequences and depopulation were among the crucial issues of the first half of the fifteenth century. Thus, the already difficult conditions caused by famine, plague and colder weather, resulting in climatic deterioration (the so-called little ice age), worsened even more.<sup>4</sup> There was further dissention and antagonism between certain European states, which grew stronger as a result of their inability to find an adequate solution for a joint anti-Ottoman political action. All these circumstances affected the Croatian lands even more severely, consequently influencing the Croatian historiog-

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<sup>2</sup> T. Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovekovlje* [The Croatian Middle Ages] (Zagreb 1997), 57–8; L. Kontler, *Povijest Mađarske: Tisuću godina u srednjoj Europi* [History of Hungary: A thousand years in Central Europe] (Zagreb 2007), 69–71, orig. Eng. ed.: *A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (London 2002); B. Trencsényi and M. Zászkaliczky, “Towards an Intellectual History of Patriotism,” in *Whose love of which country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe*, ed. by B. Trencsényi and M. Zászkaliczky (Leiden 2010), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Kontler, *Povijest Mađarske*, 148–50; I. Jurković, *The Fate of the Croatian Noble Families in the Face of Ottoman Advance* (Ph.D. diss., Central European University Budapest 2004), 56–8.

<sup>4</sup> Waley-Denley, *Late Medieval Europe*, 93–8.



raphy of that time.<sup>5</sup> The ruinous effect of these events, particularly that of Ottoman conquests, became fully evident in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, during the so-called *plorantis Croatiae saecula duo*, when the Croatian lands faced the heavy territorial losses of Lika, Krbava, Slavonia and southern Croatia.<sup>6</sup>

One should first consider the key political circumstances of the early modern period to understand better the historical and political mechanisms which most affected historians' interpretations of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia. Exposed to the territorial and political pretensions of three powerful political forces in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—the Hungarian Kingdom, the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire—the Croatian lands were in a state of intense political instability and anarchy, stagnating socially and economically, as well. From the mid-fifteenth century, it was principally the Ottoman expansion that led to political destabilisation, which the Croatian lands resolutely opposed from the very beginning, after the fall of Bosnia in 1463.<sup>7</sup> Another turning point was the Battle of Krbava in 1493, when the Ottomans critically defeated the Croatian army and the most distinguished members of Croatian nobility perished (counts Frankapan, Zrinski, Blagajski, Ban Emeric Derencsényi's son and many others), while the ban of Croatia (viceroy) and many others were imprisoned. Franciscan friar John Tomašić in his *Chronicon breve regni Croatiae* (sixteenth century) described this event as “the first downfall of the Croatian Kingdom.”<sup>8</sup> After these events, the Croatian nobility intensified their efforts to stop further Ottoman attacks, simultaneously beseeching Christian Europe for help, calling themselves *antemurale Christianitatis*. The defence against the Ottomans was not exclusively a Croatian issue during this period, with similar efforts and ideologies present in Hungary

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<sup>5</sup> M. Kurelac, “Croatia and Central Europe during the Renaissance and Reformation,” in *Croatia and Europe: Croatia in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, vol. 2, ed. by I. Supićić (London and Zagreb 2008), 41, 55.

<sup>6</sup> The term itself originates from the poem *Plorantis Croatiae saecula duo* by Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1652–1713) a nobleman and polymath from Senj. “Paulli Vitezovich Plorantis Croatiae seculi I et II,” in *Izvadci iz kalendara latinskih zagrebačkih: Calendarium Zagrebiense* [The excerpts from Zagreb Latin calendars: Calendarium Zagrebiense] (Zagreb 1703), s. p.; Z. Blažević, “Plorantis Croatiae saecula duo: Discursive Adaptations and Performative Functions of the Baroque ‘stabat mater’ Topos,” in *Passion, Affekt und Leidenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by J. A. Steiger (Wiesbaden 2005), 929–39.

<sup>7</sup> M. Kurelac, “Croatia and Central Europe,” 41–4; 51; Raukar, “Croatia within Europe,” 2:7, 13.

<sup>8</sup> A. Nazor and Z. Ladić, *Povijest Hrvata: Ilustrirana kronologija. History of Croats: Illustrated chronology* (Zagreb 2003), 142.

and Poland too.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, almost parallel to the first Ottoman attacks, the Croatian lands became even more disunited by the political encroachments of the Venetian Republic upon Dalmatian territory, which by 1420 lead to the subordination of all Dalmatian cities to the Venetian state, except for the city of Ragusa (Dubrovnik).<sup>10</sup> At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the royal court lost its political weight among the Croatian nobility due to its indecisive participation in the anti-Ottoman alliance during the Venetian-Ottoman war of King Wladislas II (1490–1516), the influence of the Venetian Republic meanwhile increasing.<sup>11</sup> As a result, in spite of intense military actions as well as the diplomatic and political engagement of the Croatian nobility, the territory of the Croatian Kingdom began to decrease in size from the fifteenth century, and by the mid-sixteenth century a larger part of Croatian lands (Lika, Krbava, Slavonia and southern Croatia) had been conquered by the Ottomans. Consequently, in the 1561, the Croatian Diet called the remaining parts of the free territory “the relics of the Kingdom of Croatia” (*Reliquiae reliquiarum olim inclyti Regni Croatiae*).<sup>12</sup>

Despite such difficult political and historical circumstances, at the beginning of the Renaissance, intellectuals of the urban centres of Croatia

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<sup>9</sup> I. Jurković, “Knez Bernardin Frankapan i njegovo doba” [Count Bernardin Frankapan and his times], in *Bernardin Frankapan Modruški, Oratio pro Croatia: Govor za Hrvatsku (1522)* (Modruš 2010), 34–5. The term *antemurale Christianitatis* was used for the first time in the letters that the Croatian ruling classes sent from the assembly in Bihać to Pope Alexander VI and to the German Emperor Maximilian in 1494, and after the defeat in the Battle of Krbava, in order to attain help from Europe in the defence against the Ottomans. Later on the term itself was accepted by the Pope Leo X and the Emperor Ferdinand. M. Kruhek, *Krajiške utvrde i obrana Hrvatskog Kraljevstva tijekom 16. stoljeća* [Fortresses of the military border and the defence of the Croatian Kingdom in the sixteenth century] (Zagreb 1995), 49–53. On the international context, see also: M. Imre, “Der ungarische Türkenkrieg als rhetorisches Thema in der frühen Neuzeit,” in *Deutschland und Ungarn in ihren Bildungs- und Wissenschaftsbeziehungen während der Renaissance*, ed. by W. Kühlmann and A. Schindling (Stuttgart 2004), 93–109; Kontler, *Povijest Mađarske*, 151.

<sup>10</sup> T. Raukar, “La Dalmazia e Venezia nel basso medioevo,” in *Venezia e Dalmazia*, ed. by U. Israel and O. J. Schmitt (Rome and Venice 2013), 70; Kurelac, “Croatia and Central Europe,” 42.

<sup>11</sup> T. Raukar, “Hrvatska na razmeđu 15. i 16. st.” [Croatia at the turn of the sixteenth century], *Senjski zbornik* 17 (1990), 7–9.

<sup>12</sup> Document 49, 15 May 1562, in “Acta comitialia regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae Slavoniae – Hrvatski saborski spisi III,” in *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, vol. 39, ed. F. Šišić (Zagreb 1916), 90–9; Raukar, “Croatia within Europe,” 7; Kurelac, “Croatia and Central Europe,” 49.

and Dalmatia were increasingly integrated into the *respublica litterarum* (Republic of Letters). Consequently, men of letters started to take significant part in the political and diplomatic efforts to acquire effective help for the Croatian lands in defence against the Ottomans, but these requests for help mostly did not meet an adequate reaction in Europe. Due to the nearness of the Italian Renaissance centres, a humanist knowledge and world-view spread early in the Croatian lands, thus the first indications of this new cultural phenomenon started to show as early as the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>13</sup> This very intense flourishing of the Croatian intellectual elite introduced all the relevant courings of the European Renaissance into the Croatian lands. The intellectual boom was thus in evident contrast to the grave political crisis and state of deterioration.<sup>14</sup>

It should be no wonder that along with all well-known characteristics of European humanism, Croatian humanism developed two specific characteristics which can easily be detected in most of the works of the time: an anti-Ottoman attitude and a distinct Christian spirit, which appeared either in form of religious and moral prose or Christian poetry, with an ideological agenda to protect European *Christianitas* from further decline caused by Ottoman attacks.<sup>15</sup> Historiography, as an important part of the *studia humanitatis*, served Croatian humanists as an ideal platform for constructing ideological agendas, oriented towards the question of self-identification of Croats as Slavs, as well as defining their position towards the Hungarian Kingdom, the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>16</sup> In the Renaissance and early modern period, Croatian historians'

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<sup>13</sup> For more details, see: D. Novaković, "Latinsko pjesništvo hrvatskoga humanizma" [Latin poetry of Croatian Humanism], in *Marko Marulić: Hrvatski latinsti*, ed. by Z. Diklić (Zagreb 1994), 60.

<sup>14</sup> Raukar, "Hrvatska na razmeđu 15. i 16. st.," 12–13; B. Glavičić, "Hrvatski latinisti-humanisti na razmeđu XV/XVI. stoljeća" [Croatian Latinists and humanists at the turn of the sixteenth century], *Senjski zbornik* 17 (1990), 66.

<sup>15</sup> P. O. Kristeller, "The European Diffusion of Italian Humanism," *Italica* 39 (1962), 1–20; R. Black, "The Renaissance and Humanism: Definitions and Origins," in *Renaissance Historiography*, ed. by J. Woolfson (New York 2005), 97–105; M. Kurelac, "Hrvatski humanisti rane renesanse: Hrvatska i Ugarska predkorvinskog doba" [Croatian humanists of the early Renaissance: Croatia and Hungary in the period before Matthias Corvinus], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 19, no. 11 (1987), 95, 104; B. Glavičić, "Latinism in Croatia from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century," *Croatia and Europe: Croatia in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, vol. 2, ed. by I. Supićić (London and Zagreb 2008), 408; Novaković, "Latinsko pjesništvo hrvatskoga humanizma," 67–68.

<sup>16</sup> M. B. Petrovich, "Croatian Humanists and the Writing of History in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," *Slavic Review* 37 (1978), 624–39; R. Black,

perception of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia was often ambivalent; in their narratives and interpretations, they vary between pro-Hungarian and anti-Hungarian positions in their attitude towards the Hungarian king, nobility and politics in general. In the following sections we will analyse the motives for such historiographical attitudes in the examples of a few prominent works of Croatian historiography from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### ***The Ragusan historiographical circle: Ludovicus Cerva Tubero and Mauro Orbini***

A particular place in our discussion belongs to historians from the city of Ragusa. The pro-Hungarian attitude of the Ragusan government should be interpreted within the context of the position that the city-state of Ragusa acquired in the period of the rule of the Angevins (1301–1409), more precisely, after 1358 when the city acknowledged the political authority of King Louis I of Anjou (1342–1382). Among the crucial reasons for such an attitude was the fact that from the mid-fourteenth century the Republic of Ragusa, due to the loyalty of the Ragusan governors towards the Hungarian Crown, achieved a high level of political and economic prosperity, autonomy and continuity of power, which made its position significantly different from the position of other Dalmatian communes.<sup>17</sup> In spite of that, it seems that later on, within the Ragusan Renaissance historiographical circle, the perception of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia changed and came to be informed by the position of the Croatian people and the Croatian nobility within the kingdom and their common Slavic identity. Historiographical works by two prominent Ragusan humanists, Ludovicus Cerva Tubero and Mauro Orbini, offer good arguments for such statement.

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“Humanism,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History c. 1415–c. 1500*, vol. 7, ed. by C. Allmand (Cambridge 1998), 257–8.

<sup>17</sup> Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode: Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma* [The frame of freedom: Ragusan nobility between the Middle Ages and humanism] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik 1999), 77–8; Z. Pešorda Vardić, “Kruna, kralj i grad: odnos Dubrovnika prema ugarskoj kruni i vladaru na početku protudvorskog pokreta” [The crown, the king and the town: The relation of the Dubrovnik community toward the crown and ruler at the beginning of the movement against the court], *Povijesni prilozi* 26 (2004), 24–5; L. Kunčević, “O dubrovačkoj *libertas* u kasnom srednjem vijeku” [On Ragusan *libertas* in late Middle Ages], *Anali Dubrovnik* 46 (2008), 14–16.

What could have been the reason behind the interpretation of the political role and image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia among the Ragusan Renaissance historians? How can we explain the historiographical focus of Tubero and Orbini? One should look for an answer in the historical-political changes of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that gravely weakened the political power of the kingdom. After the fall of Belgrade in 1521 and the Battle of Mohács in 1526, when the young King Louis II (reigning 1516–1526) died, the independent Kingdom of Hungary literally came to an end.<sup>18</sup> The fall of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary inevitably had severe repercussions on the situation of the Croatian lands. Consequently, in the sixteenth century, due to the imminent Ottoman threat, the official politics of the city-state of Ragusa became more cautious about expressing its loyalty to the Hungarian Crown, since its political status and survival also depended on collaboration with the Ottomans.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the process of the political disintegration of the medieval Croatian lands, which began during King Matthias Corvinus's rule (1458–1490), undoubtedly lessened the importance of Hungarian rule and the kingdom, being replaced with a greater interest in the ideological and political self-determination of the Slavs.<sup>20</sup>

Ludovicus Cerva Tubero, a Benedictine friar from Ragusa, tried to give an objective and neutral picture of the political turmoil in the Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia between 1490 and 1522, that is, the period that followed the death of his contemporary King Matthias Corvinus, in his work *Commentarii de temporibus suis*.<sup>21</sup> It was written in the first half of the 1520s, but published only in 1603 in Frankfurt.<sup>22</sup> One can recognise two main imagological aspects regarding the medieval kingdom in Tubero's work: the first one is focused on the political entity, Hungary-Croatia itself, and the second one is oriented towards the perception of an ethnic entity, the Hungarians. By intertwining these two subjects, Tubero, in a typical humanist manner, constructs the image of the kingdom as the *antemurale Christianitatis*, emphasizing its role in the internal stability of the Croatian lands. In the process of creating such an image, Tubero emphasises the

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<sup>18</sup> J. Bak, "Hungary: Crown and Estates," *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 707.

<sup>19</sup> Römer, *Okvir slobode*, 80.

<sup>20</sup> B. Grgin, "The Center and the Periphery: Medieval Croatia in the Realm of King Matthias Corvinus," *Radovi: Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 44 (2012), 204.

<sup>21</sup> Ludovik Crijević Tuberon, Ragusa, 1458–Ragusa, 1527.

<sup>22</sup> V. Rezar, "Uvodna studija: Latinitet Ludovika Crijevića" [Introduction: The Latinity of Ludovicus Cerva], in *Ludovik Crijević Tuberon: Komentari o mojem vremenu* (Zagreb 2001), xli–xlii; Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*, 385–6.

Hungarians' devotedness to Christianity ("The Hungarians [...] were inherently hostile towards the Ottomans and most dedicated to Christianity"), and justifies their barbarian features through reference to their Scythian origin.<sup>23</sup>

Further analysis of the content of Tubero's *Commentarii* reveals additional motives for such a stress on the image of Hungary-Croatia as *antemurale Christianitatis*. The specific focus on King Matthias Corvinus and the tradition of the Hungarian Crown was mostly due to Tubero's animosity towards the Venetians and the Ottomans, and very likely the influence of the famous cultural circle surrounding Matthias Corvinus on Croatian humanists, including Tubero himself.<sup>24</sup> Yet the most important reason for such a historiographical approach was likely the fact that Tubero perceived Hungary-Croatia as his homeland and the Hungarian-Croatian kings as the rightful rulers, who had lawfully inherited their power over the Croatian lands.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of these views, Tubero's historiographical image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia was not unvarying in its pro-Hungarian attitude. Another, more critical side of Tubero's interpretation of Hungary-Croatia surrounded the position of the Croatian lands within it. It is significant that when writing about the political situation of the kingdom, Tubero is rather critical, particularly towards the level of political rights of Dalmatian and Croatian noblemen. Thus, he points out, for example, that only Hungarian noblemen and bishops had an exclusive right to vote at the diet of Hungary, which is in fact erroneous, since the Croatian nobility was accepted as a part of the kingdom and were not treated as foreigners.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Hungari [...] Turcis per se essent infensi et Christiano nomini deditissimi*. L. Tubero, *Commentarii de temporibus suis*, ed. by V. Rezar (Zagreb 2001), 165; D. Dukić, "Ugrofilstvo u hrvatskoj književnosti ranoga novovjekovlja" [Hungarophilia in Croatian early modern literature], in *Kulturni stereotipi: Koncepti identiteta u srednjoeuropskim književnostima*, ed. by D. Oraić Tolić and E. Kulcsár Szabó (Zagreb 2006), 96–7.

<sup>24</sup> Rezar, "Uvodna studija: Latinitet Ludovika Crijevića," xxix–xxxii; Glavičić, "Hrvatski latinisti-humanisti," 99.

<sup>25</sup> *Neque enim Dalmatae, ui aut armis coacti, sed cognationis iure in Hungaricam concessere ditionem*. ("And Dalmatians [...] were not forced by arms to obey Hungarian power, but by the means of consanguineous law") Ludovicus Tubero, *Commentarii de temporibus suis*, 100.

<sup>26</sup> L. Tubero, *Commentarii de temporibus suis*, 12. For the context of Hungarian late medieval parliamentarism, see more in: J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn im 14.-16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden 1973); M. Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London 2000); L. Péter, *Hungary's Long Nineteenth Century: Constitutional and Democratic Traditions in a European Perspective*.

Such an ambivalent approach can be considered fitting to an ideological agenda common to many Croatian humanists: On the one hand, they often perceived Hungary as their homeland, remaining loyal to the Hungarian court in Buda, which they regarded as the principle propagator of the *antemurale Christianitatis*, and with which they had intense cultural connections. On the other hand, their interpretation of the historical role of Hungary-Croatia was also largely influenced by their growing urge to define the political identity of the Croatian lands as well as to focus on the rights and privileges of its inhabitants under the Hungarian Crown.<sup>27</sup>

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the internal political crisis in the Croatian lands reached its climax. The consequences of the Battle of Mohács were worsened by the internal political turmoil of two pretenders struggling for the Hungarian throne. The Croatian nobility was divided in two factions, one elected Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg (1527–1564) as the king of Croatia at the diet in Cetin in January 1527; another recognised King John Szapolyai (1526–1540) as the king of Hungary-Croatia at the diet in Dubrava at the same time. The nobility of Hungary elected the same candidates slightly earlier, Ferdinand at the diet of Pressburg (Pozsony, Bratislava) in December 1526 and John Szapolyai at the diet of Székesfehérvár as early as November 1526.<sup>28</sup> The civil war between the aforementioned parties was a result of their ambivalent political approach, in which the first party preferred the Habsburgs, expecting them to act more efficiently against the Ottomans, while the second one preferred Szapolyai as representative of domestic interests (encouraged by the example of the election of King Matthias Corvinus about seventy years earlier).<sup>29</sup>

Later on, in the seventeenth century, the historiographical focus of Croatian humanists understandably changed, and became more involved in the question of the origin and unity of the Slavs. Such topics are particularly dominant in the work *Il Regno de gli Slavi* (Pesaro, 1601) by Mauro Orbini, a Ragusan Benedictine friar, which is considered to be the most complete presentation of the seventeenth-century Illyrian ideogeme.<sup>30</sup> Even though the image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary was not a crucial topic for the pan-Slavist Orbini, Tubero's influence is evident in

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*Collected Studies* (Leiden 2012). On Croatian nobility, see Jurković, "The Fate of the Croatian Noble Families."

<sup>27</sup> Dukić, "Ugrofilstvo u hrvatskoj književnosti," 99.

<sup>28</sup> Kontler, *Povijest Mađarske*, 147.

<sup>29</sup> Kurelac, "Croatia and Central Europe," 49–51.

<sup>30</sup> Mavro Orbini, Ragusa, ca. mid-1500s–Ragusa, 1611. Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 176.

some places in his work. Following Tubero, Orbini accepts the premise that the Croats were not forced into a union with Hungary with arms, but through family inheritance: “after King Krešimir died without male heirs, and his only daughter became married to the Hungarian.”<sup>31</sup> Moreover, similar to Tubero’s criticism of the level of political rights for Croatian lands under the Hungarian Crown, Orbini also questions Hungarian power, writing that “the Croats neither wanted Hungarian *bans* nor Hungarian rule, and that they continued to elect *bans* among themselves.”<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, Orbini’s image of Hungary-Croatia was also shaped by his own ideological and political agenda of Slavic and Croatian unity. In this context, Orbini’s interpretation of the manner in which King Louis I of Anjou took Dalmatia away from the Venetians is a particularly significant example. It was exactly during King Louis’s reign that all Dalmatian cities, including Ragusa, were again joined with the Croatian Kingdom after the peace treaty of Zadar (1358), and Orbini placed that event within the wider historical and political context of unity of Dalmatia and Croatia and the political integration of the territory of the Croatian lands. It is significant that he even finishes his discussion of Croatian history with this event: “Following that conquest, King Louis became the ruler of Dalmatia as well, after taking it away from the Venetians. Thus at that time both Dalmatia and Croatia were united and subordinated to one single ban.”<sup>33</sup> The very idea of the unity of the Croatian lands will later on, in the seventeenth century, remain among the crucial and the most recognisable premises of Croatian historiography.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Šibenik historiographical circle: Dominicus Zavoreus*

In 1602 Dominicus Zavoreus, a nobleman, humanist and historian from Šibenik, finished his work *De rebus Dalmaticis libri octo*, which was never published.<sup>35</sup> The work is important because it is considered the first systematic written history of Dalmatia.<sup>36</sup> It also serves as an excellent ex-

<sup>31</sup> M. Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi hoggi corrotamente detti Schiavoni* (Pesaro 1601), 394.

<sup>32</sup> Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, 394.

<sup>33</sup> *Dopò la qual conquista il Rè Lodouico si fece padrone etianodio di Dalmatia, pigliandola dalle mani de'Venetiani. La ondela Dalmatia, & Croatia fù all'hora vnita, & posta sotto vn Bano.* Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, 396.

<sup>34</sup> Raukar, “Croatia within Europe,” 12.

<sup>35</sup> Dinko Zavorović, Šibenik, ca. 1540–Šibenik, 1608.

<sup>36</sup> A. Šupuk, “Sitniji prilozi biografiji prvog hrvatskog historiografa” [Smaller contributions to the biography of the first Croatian historiographer], *Zadarska*



ample of how complex historical and political circumstances, particularly the political and military struggle for the defence of Croatian *reliquiae reliquiarum*, as well as the author's personal attitude towards the Venetian Republic, the Ottoman Empire and the Hungarian Crown, influenced his ideological and historiographical interpretation of the image of the medieval kingdom.<sup>37</sup>

The ideological frame of Zavoreus's work was largely determined by his explicit anti-Ottoman and anti-Venetian attitude, as well as by his disagreement with the expansionist politics of the Bosnian King Tvrtko I (1378–1391). It is very likely that Zavoreus's opposition to the Venetian government, which eventually led to the stigmatisation of his historiographical work, was the main reason why his work *De rebus Dalmaticis* remained unpublished. In spite of this, Zavoreus's work on the history of the Dalmatia remained popular and was transcribed and translated into Italian several times, and these manuscripts continued to circulate among the members of the Dalmatian intellectual elite. The work was written under the patronage of Zavoreus's friend and brother-in-law, the famous Croatian scholar Faustus Verantius.<sup>38</sup> Its main purpose was to furnish the ideological guidelines and historiographical arguments to both the noblemen and the commoners in Dalmatia and the city of Šibenik, and to help in forming and maintaining their awareness of their own political identity.

Describing the historical events from antiquity to the year 1437, when King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437) died, among numerous other topics, Zavoreus depicts the rule of the Hungarian-Croatian kings in Dalmatia as a protective one, presenting himself, as far as this topic is concerned, as a pro-Hungarian historiographer. Zavoreus's most important historical sources on which he based the description of the period of the

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revija 2, 8 (1968), 149; I. Kurelac, *Dinko Zavorović: Šibenski humanist i povjesničar* [Dinko Zavorović: Humanist and historian from Šibenik] (Šibenik 2008), 37–40.

<sup>37</sup> For the purpose of this scholarly analysis the manuscript from Biblioteca Marciana in Venice is used [hereafter: M]. Z. Dominicus, *De rebus Dalmaticis libri VIII*, Mss. Latini; Cl. X. Cod. XL-3652.

<sup>38</sup> Zavoreus married the sister of Faustus Verantius in 1582. I. Kurelac, *Dinko Zavorović*, 66–68, 84–94; Faustus Verantius (Faust Vrančić, Šibenik, 1551–Venice, 1617) was a Croatian humanist, diplomat in the court of Emperor Rudolph II, inventor, lexicographer and polymath. Among numerous ecclesiastical and diplomatic posts, he also held a titular post as the bishop of Csanád in Hungary. M. Kurelac, "Vrančić, Faust," in *Hrvatska opća enciklopedija*, vol. 11, ed. by S. Ravlić (Zagreb 2009), 499. See also: M. D. Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World: Croatian and Hungarian Latinity in the Sixteenth Century* (Zagreb and Dubrovnik 1986), 292–305.

rule of the Árpáds (1102–1301) and Angevins (1301–1409) in Dalmatia is the work *Rerum Ungaricarum decades* by Antonius Bonfinius (1427–1502) and 40 royal and other charters.<sup>39</sup> Zavorović is particularly keen to explain how political and historical events at the broader regional level, such as political tensions between the Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia and the Venetian Republic, have influenced local events within the Dalmatian communes which, as he interprets it, have benefited from Hungarian rule. Books 4–8 of *De rebus Dalmaticis* thus give numerous examples of the ways in which Dalmatian inhabitants celebrated the establishment of Hungarian rule. In his description of Dalmatians celebrating King Coloman (1102–16) and raising him up to immortality after he defeated the Venetians, Zavoreus quotes Bonfini's work:

Numerous noblemen and princes of that province went ahead of the triumph with the king's approval; their heads shaved, as if they were newly liberated, so that it looked like the king, as is custom, triumphed over the liberated Dalmatians and not over the defeated Venetians. Thus, due to that glorious enterprise, everyone considered Coloman to be worthy of immortality.<sup>40</sup>

The image of medieval Hungary-Croatia in the work *De rebus Dalmaticis* is also interpreted in the context of the liberation of Dalmatia from the Venetians. For example, using the quotes from the works of Antonius Bonfinius and Petrus Iustinianus, Zavoreus describes how King Coloman, after the city rebelled against the Venetians, gave "perpetual freedom" to Zadar as well as to the other Dalmatian cities, which made the contrast between the Venetian and Hungarian rule in Dalmatia even more intense:

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<sup>39</sup> I. Kurelac, "Počeci kritičke historiografije u djelu *De rebus Dalmaticis* Dinka Zavorovića" [The beginnings of critical historiography in the work *De rebus Dalmaticis* by Dinko Zavorović], (Ph.D. diss., University of Zagreb 2010), 59–62, 72–6, 103–11; Antonius Bonfinius (Antonio Bonfini), a humanist and historian from Ancona (Italy), worked at the court of King Matthias Corvinus, and was the author of the historical works *Rerum Ungaricarum decades tres ...* (Basel 1543) and *Libellus de Corvinae domus origine* (Basel 1577). Cf. T. Kardos, *A magyarországi humanizmus kora* [The age of Hungarian humanism] (Budapest 1955), 150–201; Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World*, 14, 20, 46, 62–63.

<sup>40</sup> *Multi quoque illius provinciae nobiles et plerique reguli, non invito rege, raso capite, velut in novam libertatem asserti, ante triumphum processere, ut rex non tam de victis Venetis, quam liberatis Dalmatis, rite triumphare videretur. Quare hoc praeclarissimo tantum facinore Colomanum immortalitate dignum omnes censuere.* M, f. 86□ – 86□.

Thus at once almost all Dalmatians defected from the Venetians. The Zaratines were among the first ones. After they threw down the Venetian rule, they accepted the military defence sent to them by the king (according to Bonfinius and Petrus Iustinianus). The others followed their example and expelled Venetians from all parts. Coloman filled Dalmatia with auxiliary troops, upon which the Dalmatians relied, and [to whom they] immediately defected. Soon afterwards, the king issued an edict, granting Dalmatia permanent freedom, as he previously promised (according to Bonfinius and charters).<sup>41</sup>

In terms of Zavoreus's ideological and political agenda, it can be concluded that such parts of the text have even a certain subversive dimension, and are important evidence of his intention to declare himself a political opponent and critic of the Venetian government and to emphasise his inclination towards the Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia.

Another important factor that strengthened Zavoreus's pro-Hungarian orientation was his attitude towards the medieval Kingdom of Bosnia, more precisely, his criticism of the Bosnian King Tvrtko I's politics of expansion, which grew stronger after the death of King Louis I of Anjou in 1382, during the Croatian magnates resistance against the crown (1383–1408). King Tvrtko supported them in pursuit of his own agenda, and turmoil spread over to Dalmatian communes, causing numerous inter-party struggles between them.<sup>42</sup> Regarding these events, Zavoreus once again declares himself a political sympathiser with the Hungarian Crown. His personal political preferences are further emphasised in recounting an ancestor from his mother's side, Luca Vitturi, a nobleman from Trogir, who according to a historical document from 1390 urged the Council of Trogir to remain loyal to the Hungarian-Croatian King Sigismund instead of the Bosnian King Tvrtko I.<sup>43</sup> In his pro-Hungarian attitude Zavoreus thus also followed family tradition.

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<sup>41</sup> *Quare ad unum fere omnes Dalmatae a Venetis defecere, atque in primis Iadrenses. Qui eiecto Venetorum magistratu, missum a rege praesidium admisere (eodem Bonfinio teste et Petro Iustiniano). Horum exemplo caeteri ducti, Venetos undique exegerunt. Colomanus auxiliaribus copiis Dalmatiam compleverat, quibus Dalmatae freti subito defecerunt. Regis mox edicto, veluti ante promiserat, perpetua libertate Dalmatiae donata, (Bonfinius et diplomata testantur).* M, f. 79□.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, f. 125□.

<sup>43</sup> Document 203, 9 May 1390, in *Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 17, ed. by S. Gunjača (Zagreb 1981), 286–7; Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*, 85–6; Vardić, “Kruna, kralj i grad,” 35.

In the year 1390 the citizens of Šibenik and Split gave themselves up to King Tvrtko (according to the public documents). The citizens of Trogir followed their example and the speakers in their public council decided to defect to King Tvrtko. Lucas Vitturi, a nobleman by birth, himself loyal to the Hungarian Crown, encouraged the citizens not to defect, and he finally solemnly announced it and ordered a public document to be composed as well.<sup>44</sup>

What was the final purpose of Zavoreus's ideological and political agenda? The historiographical and ideological frame of the work *De rebus Dalmaticis* implies that among three dominant political forces, the author chose the Hungarian Crown as the only acceptable political option, within which the Croatian lands should be both territorially and politically united. Moreover, Zavoreus's own personal political attitude played a part. He was exiled by the Venetian government for four years (1585–88) from his hometown of Šibenik, and thus as a historiographer expressed loyalty towards his homeland via loyalty to the Hungarian Crown. Zavoreus's history of Dalmatia should not be perceived as a mere description of historical events, but as an attempt to discuss the numerous important political issues and attitudes of the Dalmatian intellectual elite towards the past and present. One should recognise in his animosity towards Ottoman and Venetian rule and sympathies towards Hungary-Croatia the beginnings of the aspiration of Croatian humanist historiographers for the political and territorial unity of Dalmatia and Croatia.

The ideological and political stance of *De rebus Dalmaticis* was further developed by the "father of Croatian historiography," Iohannes Lucius (Ivan Lučić Lucius, 1604–1679), a nobleman from Trogir, in his *De regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae libri sex* (Amsterdam 1666). His historiographical approach was far more scientific, objective and critical, and deprived of the influence of the medieval chronicles and annals, which were the most common historical sources in the Renaissance. One of the most important purposes of *De regno* was to prove that Croatia and Dalmatia, according to

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<sup>44</sup> *Sibenicensis et Spalatensis anno Christi millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo Stephano Tuvartko [!] regi se tradiderunt (ut diplomata testantur). Horum exemplo ducti, Tragurienses in publica eorum contione pro deficiendo ad Stephanum regem oratores destinarunt, ibique Lucas Victuri [!], haud ignobili genere ortus, uti fidelis Ungaricae coronae, ne deficerent cives, hortatus est ac tandem sollemniter edixit et de edictione publicum instrumentum conficiendum iussit (ut publica documenta testantur).* M, f. 125□ – 125□.

royal and other charters, had the status of one unified, autonomous and independent kingdom (*regnum*, not *regna*) since ancient times.<sup>45</sup>

### ***The Zagreb historiographical circle: Georgius Rattkay***

The historiographical and ideological agenda of the Zagreb canon Georgius Rattkay,<sup>46</sup> as presented in his work *Memoria regum et banorum Regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae, Sclavoniae* (Vienna, 1652), represents the author's deep awareness of the territorial and political integrity and autonomy that Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia lost during the sixteenth-century wars with the Ottoman conquerors, as well as his determination to restore it. Like the works of his predecessors, Rattkay's motives for writing history can be detected in the historiographical circumstances of the time, i.e. the joint defence of Christian Europe against the Ottoman Empire. But the most important part of his ideological and political agenda was the intention to present the members of the Croatian political elite as equal to the Hungarian. In contrast with all the authors presented above, Rattkay was not a Dalmatian, but grew up and lived within the part of Croatia which was under the rule of the Habsburgs.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of Rattkay's perception of the image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia, it is important to note a distinction between his interpretation of its internal and international political role. On the level of internal politics, Croatian historiographers tended to emphasise Rattkay's anti-Hungarian attitude. As the Hungarian historian Sándor Bene concurs, it was as these historians claimed a result of Rattkay's intention to protect the privileges of the estates of Croatia and the integrity of the kingdom, to respond to Hungarians' attempts at centralisation and to oppose the use of the term *partes subiectae* for the Croatian lands.<sup>48</sup> In the same context, one also notices that despite the joint political platform in terms of the struggle against the Venetians and the Ottomans, Rattkay in his *Memoria* perceived

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<sup>45</sup> M. Kurelac, *Ivan Lučić Lucius: Otac hrvatske historiografije* [Ivan Lučić Lucius: The father of Croatian historiography] (Zagreb 1994), 75–6; M. Kurelac, "Život i djelo Ivana Lučića-Luciusa," [The life and work of Ivan Lučić-Lucius] in I. Lučić, *O kraljevstvu Dalmacije i Hrvatske* (Zagreb 1986), 28–33, 53.

<sup>46</sup> Juraj Rattkay, *Veliki Tabor*, 1612–Zagreb, 1666.

<sup>47</sup> Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, 274–5.

<sup>48</sup> S. Bene, "Ideološke koncepcije o staleškoj državi zagrebačkoga kanonika," [Ideological concepts of a Zagreb canon about the class-state] in *Juraj Rattkay, Spomen na kraljeve i banove Kraljevstva Dalmacije, Hrvatske i Slavonije*, ed. by M. Valentić (Zagreb 2001), 28–33; G. Rattkay, *Memoria regum et banorum, regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Sclavoniae* (Vienna 1652), 57.

Croatia and Hungary as a *regna distincta* connected through the person of the common Habsburg monarch.<sup>49</sup>

As far as the international political role of the Kingdom of Hungary is concerned, Rattkay's ideological agenda was significantly different. In the third book of his *Memoria*, on the history of the autonomous Kingdom of Hungary, from King Saint Ladislaus to the Battle of Mohács, Rattkay bases his narrative on the works of historians close to the Hungarian and Habsburg court (Bonfinius, Thuróczy and Istvánffy),<sup>50</sup> describing the rule of Hungarian kings in Dalmatia as primarily the joint struggle against the Venetians, against the pretensions of the German Empire, and the preservation of territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia. This approach is fairly close to the ideological frames of Zavoreus's work.<sup>51</sup>

### Conclusion

These few examples from the most prominent historiographical works of the Croatian Renaissance and early modern period testify to the importance of the image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia. The dy-

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<sup>49</sup> M. Valentić, "Predgovor" [Preface], in Juraj Rattkay, *Spomen na kraljeve i banove Kraljevstva Dalmacije, Hrvatske i Slavonije*, ed. by M. Valentić (Zagreb 2001), vi; Rattkay, *Memoria regum* 58.

<sup>50</sup> Nicolaus Istvánffy Pannonius (Miklós Istvánffy, Kisasszonyfalva, 1538–Vinica, near Varaždin, 1615) was a Hungarian statesman, diplomat, historian and counselor of the Emperor Rudolf II. He was the author of the work *Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis libri XXXIV ab anno 1490 ad annum 1605* (Cologne 1622), which is considered to be one of the most important sources for Croatian and Hungarian history of the sixteenth century. Cf. Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World*, 151–2; I. Mandušić, "Ugarski povjesničar Nikola (Miklós) Istvánffy (1538.-1615.) i njegovo djelo *Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis* u hrvatskoj historiografiji" [The Hungarian historian Nicholas (Miklós) Istvánffy (1538–1615) and his manuscript *Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis* in Croatian historiography], *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 64, 33 (2009), 33, 40–8. Iohannes de Thurocz (János Thuróczy, c. 1435–1490) was a Hungarian chronicler and notary to the court of King Matthias Corvinus, and author of the work *Chronica Hungarorum* (Brno 1488). See *Reperitorium fontium historiae Medii Aevi*, vol. 11, ed. by A. Potthast et al. (Rome 2006), 199; E. Mályusz, *A Thuróczy-krónika és forrásai* [The Thuróczy chronicle and its sources] (Budapest 1967).

<sup>51</sup> G. Rattkay, *Memoria regum et banorum*, 57–130; For example, Rattkay emphasises the role of King Louis I Anjou in liberating Dalmatia from the Venetians, and he writes that "this King has indeed taken great care for our lands, like no other Hungarian before him did, by expelling the external enemies with vigilance," Ibid., 74.

nasties of the Árpáds and Angevins were understood to have played an important part in the process of the creation of the Croatian political space and its economic development.<sup>52</sup> The perception of the kingdom was also influenced by the fact that the Croatian lands were politically and territorially divided between the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian Republic and the Hungarian Crown. Such circumstances inevitably gave the Croatian intellectual elite a stronger urge for self-identification and self-determination in the face of international political factors, which could take various forms.

Some Croatian humanists (like Dominicus Zavoreus) accepted the pro-Hungarian attitude as a form of expression of their loyalty towards their own homeland. Such an attitude can also be interpreted as a politically subversive factor aimed at opposing the Venetian government. Another important reason for the positive interpretation of Hungarian rule among some Croatian historians of the pre-national period was that it served them as a plausible ideological and political platform within which divided Croatian lands could be united.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the perception of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia in the works of the aforementioned authors varies, depending on whether it is interpreted from the point of view of internal or international politics. In terms of the international political defence against the Venetians and the Ottomans, the politics of the Hungarian Crown concerning the Croatian lands was interpreted as a protective one, and Hungarian power and authority was praised. On the other hand, from the standpoint of internal politics, self-identification was a more important issue for Croatian humanists. Thus in the works of some Croatian historiographers (Tubero, Orbini and Rattkay), one can note the criticism of the position and the level of rights that the Croatian noblemen had in Hungary-Croatia, as well as the level of rights of the inhabitants of Dalmatia and Croatia in general. The image of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary-Croatia in Croatian historiography of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries played an important part at the ideological and political level, and it often served as a plausible political frame for accomplishing the unity of Croatian lands, but it was multi-layered and interpreted in many different ways.

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<sup>52</sup> For more details on the role of the Árpád and Anjou dynasties in Croatian history and a survey of previous scholarship, see Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje* and Raukar, "Croatia within Europe," 7, 12.