Acta Poloniae Historica
121, 2020
PL ISSN 0001–6829

Maciej Czerwiński
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6602-1299
Institute of Slavonic Studies, Jagiellonian University

OLD DUBROVNIK, YOUNG SERBIA AND VAGUE CROATIA. MENTAL MAPS IN THE SERB-CATHOLIC IMAGINATION IN DUBROVNIK

Abstract

This article describes the experience of the community of Serb-Catholics living in Dubrovnik in the early twentieth century. It is based primarily on an investigation of the literary and cultural periodical *Srdj* (1902–08). This study focuses, firstly, on the conceptual ambivalence resulting from efforts to apply linguistic criteria to determine Serbian identity and, secondly, on the efforts to construct a mental map that would serve projections of Serbian symbolic territory. While the presence of the Serb-Catholic milieu in the city was short-lived (from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War), it nevertheless left traces on the urban landscape that typified the ambivalent formation of national identity along religious lines, as Croatians were associated with Catholicism and Serbs with Orthodoxy.

Keywords: Serb-Catholics, Dubrovnik, Dalmatia, nation-building, Serbia, Habsburg monarchy

I
INTRODUCTION

A glance at the map of the Habsburg Monarchy following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 reveals emphatically just how peripheral a place Dalmatia (officially the Kingdom of Dalmatia) had in the Empire. Dubrovnik had an even less important position. This once wealthy commune that had competed with Venice in terms of status was now located at the periphery of a periphery, squeezed into a narrow isthmus between the Adriatic and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Owing to its exceptionally rich culture – which is evident both in the cultural landscape (architecture) and in writing (in documents from the past and in literature) – Croatians and Serbians alike, as well as Italians

http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/APH.2020.121.07

in some sense, have staked claims to Dubrovnik. The Croatian historical imagination depicts Ragusa as the quintessentially Croatian town, both today and historically. The Serbian counterpart is based on the conviction that Dubrovnik is, or at least was, Serbian.[1] This assertion might seem somewhat surprising given that Serbian identity was ultimately formed around Orthodoxy, while the Croatian identity centred on Catholicism, with Dubrovnik having been an overwhelmingly Catholic commune. With today's inhabitants of the city considering themselves Croatian, the Serbian claims might appear as groundless acts of imperialism that seem all the more radical in light of the fact that in 1991 the city came under siege and bombardment from the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). Although Dubrovnik's Catholicism determined that it became Croatian, there were in the past communities – some quite influential and involving members of the Church hierarchy – that considered themselves to be Serbs of the Catholic faith. The historian Ivo Banac termed them the 'exception' to the rule regarding faith and national belonging.[2] While these groups served the political objectives of the dynamic Serbian state, they never gained a foothold beyond the intelligentsia.[3] As it turned out, nation-building in this space was shaped most significantly by religious faith (Croatians = Catholics, Serbians = Orthodox). Nevertheless, Serb-Catholics should not be overlooked in studies on the history of the commune because their activities reflect the tensions and ambiguities that were fundamental to national identities in the region.[4]

[1] This version of the historical imagination prevails in Serbian school curricula and in textbooks on history and the Serbian language. Magdalena Dyras, 'Wizja przeszłości narodu w najnowszych serbskich podręcznikach do historii', in Maria Dąbrowska-Partyka (ed.), *W poszukiwaniu nowego kanonu* (Kraków, 2005), 251–65.

[2] Ivo Banac, 'The Confessional "Rule" and the Dubrovnik Exception: The Origins of the "Serb-Catholic" Circle in Nineteenth-Century Dalmatia', *Slavic Review*, vol. 42, issue 3 (1983), 448–474. See Vlaho Benković, 'Dubrovački Srbi-katolici i novi kurs u hrvatskoj politici 1903–1905', *Dubrovnik*, i, 1–2 (1990), 211–31; Trpimir Macan, 'O pristupu srpskokatoličkom fenomenu (U povodu nekih interpretacija)', *Dubrovnik*, i, 1–2 (1990), 232–46; Nikola Tolja, *Dubrovački Srbi katolici. Istine i zablude* (Dubrovnik, 2011); Jeremija Mitrović, *Srpstvo Dubrovnika* (Beograd, 2002); Svetozar Borak, *Srbi katolici* (Novi Sad, 1998).

[3] While some researchers (Nikola Tolja, for example) have shown that there were some Serb-Catholics in rural settlements around Dubrovnik, it was ultimately the case that they failed to develop Serbian consciousness.

[4] The most significant successes (including political ones) of the Serb-Catholics came in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and in the first decade

In this article, I examine Serb-Catholics' conceptual system, focussing in particular on the function of mental maps in their imagination.[5] I am interested in the role that Serbs and Croats (as well as Serbia and Croatia), the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and a prospective expanded Serbia/Yugoslavia played in the conceptual framework employed in their thinking. I will focus primarily on the literary-cultural journal *Srdj* (named after the mountain that rises above Dubrovnik), which was published between 1902 and 1908 and was the leading periodical of Serb-Catholics.[6] This was a particularly interesting period because from 1905, with the formation of Croat-Serb Coalition, the historical imagination of the Serb-Catholic milieu – at least upon first glance – seemed to undergo significant transformation. Alongside the Serbian identity, this group also started to promote the Yugoslavian idea. Both projects, in fact, competed with the increasingly integrated Croatian nation, yet neither managed to overcome this rival completely. It could even be argued that the Serbian and Yugoslavian projects – unintentionally, of course – enabled the ultimate crystallization of the Croatian idea.

II
SERB-CATHOLICS

In one article published in *Srdj*, the development of medieval Dubrovnik was described thus: "the Roman and Serbian tribes fused together; but the Slav element would prevail to the extent that the emerging city adopted a Serbian name".[7] The equation of 'Serbian' and 'Slavic', which was typical of certain strands of philology and was exploited in Serbian political claims, enabled the author to claim that Dubrovnik was an ancient Serbian commune. Of course, this is far removed from

---

of the twentieth century, although it was also the case that certain individuals described themselves as Serb-Catholics earlier (since the 1840s) and later (until the Second World War).

[5] I have drawn on Wojciech Chlebda's concept of 'mental map'. See Wojciech Chlebda, 'Polak przed mentalną mapą świata', *Etnolingwistyka*, xiv (2002), 9–26..

[6] The most important figures involved in the periodical were Antun Fabris, Luka Zore, Antonije Vučetić, Vice Adamović, Baltazar Bogišić, Lujo Vojnović, Pero Budmani, Petar Kolendić and Kristo P. Dominiković. Fabris was also editor of the official bulletin of the Dalmatian Serbian Party *Dubrovnik* (1896–1904).

[7] Vice Adamović, 'O bedemima grada Dubrovnika', *Srdj*, i, 3 (1902), 105.

the truth because the elites of Ragusa tended to promote communal identity above all into the early nineteenth century, with some references made to Slavic identity. However, they never mentioned the Serbian identity. In texts published by the Serb-Catholic community, this attitude became a given. Thus not only Dubrovnik was declared a Serbian city (the 'Serbian Athens') but the legendary founder of Ragusa, Duke Pavlimir, also became a 'Serb', while the language and literature of the city were also 'Serbian.'

The obvious question that emerges from this is: why were the inhabitants of Dubrovnik, comprised mainly of urban elites educated according to the Western tradition, so susceptible to the Serbian idea which was so evidently far-removed from the city's heritage?

Nation-centred ideology, whether Croatian or Serbian, became more prominent during a crisis of the class-based order, which in Dubrovnik mostly took the form of an oligarchic, caste-based system.[8] Napoleon, abolishing the aristocratic republic in 1808, followed by Ragusa coming under Habsburg control in 1815, served to weaken the power and authority of the patriciate while gradually eroding the solidarity of this social group. The dynamics of both the development of nationalist ideology and of increasing national integration were influenced by ideas drawn from the Italian Risorgimento.[9] Its influence extended beyond inspiring Serbian and Croatian nationalists with ideas of national sovereignty. The Risorgimento also undermined Slavic claims to Dalmatia. Thus Serbian/Croatian elites found themselves between the Habsburg hammer and the anvil of a nascent Italy (the Serbians/Croatians shared Italians' critical view of Austria as well as Austria's fears of Italian nationalism).[10]

---

[8] Joanna Rapacka, *Rzeczpospolita Dubrownicka* (Warszawa, 1977); Ivo Banac, 'Struktura konzervativne utopije braće Vojnovića', in Frano Čale (ed.), *O djelu Iva Vojnovića* (Zagreb, 1981), 19–49.

[9] See Rade Petrović, 'La Dalmazia e il Risorgimento Italiano fino al. 1860', in Vittorio Frosini (ed.), *Il Risorgimento e l'Europa* (Catania, 1969), 289–96.

[10] The construction of national identity proved to be an exceptionally complex process in Dalmatia primarily because the terms used to refer to national groups in the nineteenth century tended to be unclear and often overlapped. Various terms were used to refer to nationalities. One of the luminaries of the Illyrian idea in Dalmatia, Božidar Petranović, was of Serbian origin and referred to himself as an Illyrian from Dalmatia, which did not prevent him from referring to Dalmatians as 'Serbs of both Churches'. Medo Pucić for some time declared himself an *'Illyrio--Slavian* from Dubrovnik'. There were also alternative terms in operation, such as

These processes intensified as Habsburg administrators and soldiers appeared in Dalmatia. They were recruited mainly from northern Italy and supported Dalmatian autonomy, meaning that they opposed the region's incorporation into Croatia and Slavonia. They found adherents among some of the local Slavic intelligentsia whose penchant for Macaronic Latin could be forged into support for an 'autonomist' national programme. There were two aspects to it: Italian nationalism and the 'Slavic-Dalmatian' programme, which made reference to a vague Dalmatian nationality. Both positions were conducive to the crystallization of Serbo-Croat alliances in Dalmatia. Furthermore, they certainly inspired the emergence of the Serb-Catholic movement. Serbia seemed to be the only power that could restrain Austrian domination and Italian expansionism. However, placing hopes in Serbia created tensions with the desire to incorporate Dalmatia into Croatia – something that even led Serbians to forge an alliance with the autonomists. A Serbian-Croatian conflict was thus inevitable.

Ivo Banac argues that the Orthodox cleric Đorđe Nikolajević (1807–96) was the most significant figure promoting the claim that the Serbs were a nation of three faiths in Dubrovnik (this idea was a common place among Serbian intellectuals at the time but it was most commonly associated with the ideas of Vuk Karadžić) and that the city was thus 'Serbian'.[11] It was, most probably, thanks to him that Orsatto Pozza became an admirer of this idea. By this time, he was already presenting himself as a Slav bearing the name Medo Pucić (1821–82). It cannot be ruled out that it was his authority – as the descendant of a family that had ruled the city for several hundred years, created its legal system and laid the foundations for its cultural wealth – that ensured that this idea gained popularity among some Catholics. Another person who played an important role in spreading

---

slovinstvo, jugoslavjanstvo, srpsko-hrvatstvo, srpstvo and hrvatstvo. It should also be stressed that the attitude of the elites of Dubrovnik to the rest of Dalmatia was ambivalent as a sense of superiority prevailed when surveying the rest of the region. This was most evident in the writings of Medo Pucić. This was perhaps a reason why the Serb-Catholic movement was influential in Ragusa. See Nikša Stančić, 'Srbi i srpsko-hrvatski odnosi u Dalmaciji u vrijeme narodnog preporoda', *Zadarska revija*, xxxix, 5–6 (1990), 587–619; see also Antoni Cetnarowicz, *Odrodzenie narodowe w Dalmacji. Od „slavenstva" do nowoczesnej chorwackiej i serbskiej idei narodowej* (Kraków, 2001).

[11] Banac, 'The Confessional "Rule"', 453.

this idea was Matija Ban (1818–1903) as he often reproduced Karadžić's ideas regarding a single Serbian language and its many dialects in the periodical *Dubrovnik* in 1851.

The founding fathers of the periodical *Slovinac* Pucić and Ban became figures of authority in the early twentieth century for the elites working on the bi-weekly *Srdj*, the focus of my analysis in this article. Indeed, the two men were seen as the originators of a spiritual genealogy. Evidence for the claim was said to be found in the fact that nearly all notable members of this milieu were educating Serbian/Montenegrin rulers. In an enthusiastic commentary on Luka Zore being appointed teacher to the children of Prince Nikola Petrović, the editors noted that Ragusa "gave its children over to the Serb courts in order to enlighten the future of Serbia".[12] The hypostasised Dubrovnik came to be represented as an elderly man who was to transmit his wisdom to the Serbian states, i.e. Serbia and Montenegro.

> Having grown weary of its former glories and the eternal hymn of the waves of the murky Adriatic, the elderly man grew younger and gifted the Serbian ruling houses his outstanding sons as teachers and assistants – Matija Ban, Đaja [?], Med [Pucić], Milaković, [Vlah] Bogišić, [Lujo] Vojnović and now Luka Zora; Dubrovnik is proud that he has placed his children on the later of Serbian greatness and Serbia's future.[13]

Such a perspective, one that imagines Dubrovnik as a wise old man, is of fundamental significance as it binds the abovementioned political structures with an almost biological thread. This was a belief to which another journalist writing for the same periodical would return:

> The spirit is stronger than the body; ideas transcend all else. Human [political] existences are fragile, but the national spirit is eternal and indestructible – in consciousness, in education and national unity. On 31 January 1908, we remember that exactly one hundred years ago, the Dubrovnik Republic, the oldest state structure, the inheritor of medieval *Srpstvo*, fell at the hands of a great power that dealt forceful blows. At other times, likewise, at the hands of great powers, other Serbian states fell – in Macedonia, the Serbian state, the Bosnian state, the Zetan state and the Herzegovinian state. The spirit of *Srpstvo* was never defeated because it could not fall. It guarded all of these ruins. It was raised up by books, songs

[12] K.S. [?], 'Kulturne vijesti', *Srdj*, i, 16 (1902), 757
[13] *Ibid.*

> and legends; it lived on in poetry, in books and language, it tended to our eternal flame, always ready to offer a new spark and inspire the spirit to new acts of creation.[14]

All of the former state structures mentioned in the statement are deemed Serbian, with the longest-standing of them (Dubrovnik) said to be responsible for preserving the spirit of *Srpstvo*. In the nineteenth century, when the Serbian state was revived, the old commune by the Adriatic was expected to pass on the baton of its primacy to all of the 'Serbian' lands. Notably, Novaković's article does not mention Croatia for the reason that although the Serbs, and thus Serb-Catholics, recognised the existence of Croatians, they limited the extent of the group to those speaking the Chakavian and Kajkavian dialects. Croatia thus features in this discourse as a nebulous and rotten construct lacking a clear identity. In its encounter with the young and vigorous Serbia, the claim goes, it simply could not compete for the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of Dubrovnik.

III
LANGUAGE AND MENTAL MAPS IN THE IMAGINATION OF SERB-CATHOLICS

Prevalent among Serbian and Croatian elites of the nineteenth century were political ideas that made common language and heritage (often seen as one and the same thing) central to nation-building processes. In Dalmatia, this grew into a political movement that sought to deploy the national language in the struggle against Italian influences. It soon became clear, however, that the concept of 'the national language' was built on weak foundations, with an ambiguous set of associations with it enabling fairly arbitrary, or even frivolous, ways of formulating evidence for the existence of a nationality or even superiority of one nationality over another. This was associated, too, with the ambivalences that were part of the political programmes of those seeking to revive Dalmatia, as they went to-and-fro between Crotianness, Serbianness and broader notions of Illyria or Yugoslavia.[15]

---

[14] Stojan Novaković, 'Ujedinjujmo se kulturom', *Srdj*, vii, 1–5 (1908), 1.

[15] Absorbing the tradition of Dubrovnik into the canon of Croatian national tradition also proved to be exceptionally complex and was typified by conceptual tensions. See Maciej Falski, 'Dubrownik w chorwackiej przestrzeni kulturowej z perspektywy

Everywhere where natural law was stressed, reference was made to Slavic origins as manifested in language. Other cultural factors, such as political tradition and religion/faith, were deemed irrelevant. One supporter of such a perspective was the man who codified modern Serbian, Vuk Karadžić. For him, a Serb was anyone who used the Shtokavian dialect, regardless of whether they were Orthodox, Catholics or Muslims. However, his term 'Serbs of the Roman faith' (*Srbi rimskoga zakona* or *rimski Srbi*) were not to be considered analogous to Serb-Catholics. While Karadžić's concepts should be considered as academic reflections that had little basis in reality, the Serb-Catholics were a genuine social formation. To put it another way, their political programme was based on Karadžić's concepts, but it served to express the genuine desires of part of the elite rather than stemming, as Karadžić claimed, from the spirit of the people. Literary and cultural phenomena were interpreted in *Srdj* along broader political lines with references made to the past in various historical, philological and ethnographic essays. Alongside local subjects (focused on Dubrovnik), the periodical also explored regional issues (with a strong focus on Serbian culture, with significantly less attention paid to Croatian) and European matters (as evident in translations and discussions of Western European literature). The breadth of perspectives offers a clear indication of the mental map that his group sought to project. Dubrovnik was considered part of the Serbian lands that were in turn imbued with European culture, both East and West, with the Habsburg state (and German-language culture of Central Europe) mostly absent. This is also evident in the fact that Cyrillic and Latin script (the two 'Serbian alphabets') were granted equal status in the periodical. The monarchical frameworks are entirely overlooked, with the resonance of Austrian-Hungarian and Hungarian-Croatian disputes almost null in the periodical, as if the city of Dubrovnik was not affected by them. Readers unfamiliar with the circumstances of the time might even reach the conclusion that Dubrovnik was indeed part of Serbia. The best illustration of this are the reports on the 100th-anniversary celebrations of the Serbian uprising in Belgrade when "the grandson of the famous leader [Karađorđe], king Peter Karađorđević, received the Serbian crown".[16]

XIX stulecia', in Joanna Goszczyńska (ed.) *Problemy tożsamości kulturowej w krajach słowiańskich: jej formy i przemiany*, ii (Warszawa, 2004), 35–61.

[16] 'Bilješke', *Srdj*, iii, 18 (1904), 862.

It seems that such projections were a conscious strategy on the part of the editors who consequently sought to marginalise and thus stigmatise 'rotten' Austria, thus framing it as the apotheosis of Serbia. Furthermore, the editors deliberately published texts by authors from the remaining 'Serbian lands' – Serbia (Novaković) and Bosnia (Ćorović, Stojanović). In doing so, they sought to demarcate the borders of Serbianness, thus creating an image that Dubrovnik was part of a great family inhabitant a massive area.

The initial issues in the first year of publication (1902) included anonymous readers' letters who requested information on the history of Dubrovnik. The editors' responses (likewise unsigned) offered legitimation for claims that Dubrovnik was a Serbian, rather than Croatian, city.[17] At the same time, the Serbian Party's bulletin *Dubrovnik* and the periodical *Crvena Hrvatska* engaged in a heated discussion about the ethnic allegiance of the neighbouring district of Župa, although what they were really debating was the nature of Dubrovnik, with the publications seeing it as Serbian or Croatian respectively.[18] Both sides (represented by the Catholic cleric Vice Medini and a certain Nikša N.) drew on historical arguments in their attempts to prove that Dubrovnik had been Serbian or Croatian. The adherent of the former claim referred to Konstantin Porfirogenete and documents of Serbian kings, as well as historians' arguments (including Croatian historians, such as Franjo Rački, for example). The adherent of the latter claim referred to the Latopis of a priest from Dukla and to Dubrovnik writers who declared that their language was Croatian (Nalješković, Bruer Pavlović).

In the first issue of *Srdj*, the author of a letter to the editors called into question the supposed fact that Dubrovnik and the surrounding

[17] The polemics were largely a response to ideas appearing in the Croatian periodical *Crvena Hrvatska*. See Višeslav Aralica, 'Nacionalna ideologija i povijest u *Crvenoj Hrvatskoj* i *Dubrovniku* 1902. godine: čija je Župa', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, xxxvi, 3 (2004), 997–1011; Robert Bacalja and Katarina Ivon, 'Hrvatsko-srpski odnosi na stranicama *Crvene Hrvatske*', *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU*, cix (2017), 385–406.

[18] The discussion became more heated after Fabris decided to publish Nikola Stojanović's controversial 'Srbi i Hrvati' in the *Dubrovnik* bulletin. Stojanović referred to Croatians in offensive terms in the article published on 31 Aug. 1903, just ten days after it was reprinted in the Zagreb-based periodical *Srbobran*, which led to disturbances in the Croatian capital.

area could be described as a 'purely Serbian land'. The editor begged to differ and offered two arguments. In his view, the surrounding area that became part of the republic was once Orthodox, something that had remained evident in the customs of the local population. The disappearance of 'the Serbian name' among the people could be explained by the fact that the areas claimed by Dubrovnik were subsequently Catholicised. Thus, the Serbians no longer referred to themselves as Serbs. This was, he claimed, also the reason why they did not call their language Serbian but rather 'ours' (*naški*) or Slavic (*slovinski*). The consequences of this were that

> in contrast to this, the Croatian name does not serve as a national name [*narodno ime*] in the territory of Dubrovnik and never did. It was introduced recently as an alien species that has failed to take root and will never do so because the soil is unsuitable. Among the people inhabiting the lands of the old Dubrovnik state, this name does not function anywhere. … In light of what I have argued so far, it should be as clear as daylight to anyone that the territories of the former State of Dubrovnik belong to the Serbian tribe.[19]

Following the author of this statement, it would thus be necessary to speak of the existence of Serb Catholics (capitalising the initial letters) who "are as dedicated to their Serbian nationality as they are to their Catholic faith".[20]

What is surprising in these responses is that the editor does not make reference to linguistic factors. If he had done so, then there would be no need to refer to the customs that prevail in the area around Dubrovnik as evidence of their alleged Serbianness, as he could have claimed that all users of the Shtokavian dialect, whether rural or urban, were Serbians, whatever their faith. It seems clear that it was difficult, for some reason, to avoid mentioning the Orthodox faith as a defining aspect of being Serb.

The editors made use of this trope in subsequent issues, likewise in response to a letter from an anonymous reader who stated that he "had good reason to keep my identity hidden from public opinion".[21] (It is clear that the polemics were conducted in a rather heated atmosphere.) This reader's questions concerned terms such as 'the Croatian

[19] 'Bilješke', *Srdj*, i, 1 (1902), 76.
[20] *Ibid.*, 77.
[21] 'Bilješke', *Srdj*, i, 7 (1902), 316.

language' and 'Croatian city' that were used in respect of Dubrovnik. According to the editors, there were of course cases in the past where these terms were used, but they should not be considered particularly significant because they appeared only 'sporadically'. It was also impossible, they argued, to claim that there had been a Croatian influence on the city since "even the women here know that Dubrovnik was never part of the Kingdom of Croatia but was merely a protectorate of the Hungarian [*ugarski*] king who was also the Croatian king".[22] In response to the author of the letter that referred to information on display at one exhibition in Vienna declaring the Croatian nature of the city, the editor responded that "it is hardly surprising that even today then Germans are getting their terms confused when they write about Serbs and Croats … For them, Serbian is when something is written in Cyrillic and Croatian in Latin script".[23] Austria is thus presented here not only as an unwelcome but also arrogant and incompetent representative of imperialism. In subsequent passages, the editor makes reference to the belief that Dubrovnik is a Serbian city. However, he fails to refer to any historical evidence – a practice he himself criticised in others – and simply stated that he "could speak a great deal about its Serbianness [*Srpstvo*] and prove that both the civic and clerical authorities in the city of Dubrovnik recognised that the vernacular language [*pučki jezik*] should be called Serbian". Indeed, calling it Croatian, he argued, was less popular and thus "there is no evidence that our better writers, for example, Gundulić, Palmotić, Djordjić and others, ever referred to their language as Croatian or that they referred to themselves as Croatians".[24] But given that the abovementioned writers also never referred to themselves as Serbs, the author of the texts simply refers to his previous statements from earlier issues. Yet, they offered no proof that those writers or indeed the broader population of Dubrovnik considered themselves to be Serbs because his analysis applied only to the area around the city (which is, in fact, also much more complex and Serbian identity of it was brought into question[25]).

---

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *Ibid.*, 321.

[25] See Niko Kapetanić and Nenad Vekarić, *Konavoski rodovi* (Zagreb–Dubrovnik, 2001, 2002, 2003).

What is more important than this brief outline of inaccuracies – which serve as an illustration of an incoherent system of concepts – is that the discussion regarding language led the author to reach for the key arguments used by Serb-Catholics. They are based on Karadžić's idea that the Shtokavian dialect is Serbian while the Chakavian dialect was exclusively Croatian. We are aware today that the area in which a dialect was spoken was not identical to the spaces in which new national identities were constructed, whether Croatian, Serbian or any other. Nevertheless, the authors' contribution to *Srdj* considered Vuk Karadžić an unsurpassed authority. His linguistic theories were also applied to the past. This was how Bartol Kašić's grammar from the island of Pag, *Institutionum linguae illyricae libri duo* (1604), came to be described by the philologist Petar N. Kolendić as "a Serbian grammar for foreigners".[26] He also gave a Serbianised version of Kašić's forename, meaning that he became Vartolomej, which was Serbian, rather than Bartol, which was Croatian. He also deemed the textbook written by the Italian Piarist Francesco Maria Appendini (1808) to be a Serbian grammar. In order to prove the Serbianness of the book, he referred to a previously unknown passage (*ispisan list*), which was supposedly intended as part of the introduction. The passage stated that he sometimes calls this beautiful dialect (*bel dialetto*) "Illyrian [*illirico*], sometimes Slavic [*Slavo*], and sometimes Serbian [*Serbico*]".[27] This passage is missing from the first edition (1808), but it was, according to Kolendić, included in Kosta Vojnović's critical edition of 1896.[28] Believing it to be a translation of one of Jernej Kopitar's scholarly texts, Kolendić claimed that this was a deliberate move on Vojnović's part in order to avoid using the term 'Serbian'. Demonstrating that the term 'Serbian' was indeed used to describe the language of Dubrovnik was supposed to provide a definitive argument proving the group's central claim, namely that Dubrovnik is an unquestionably Serb city. The Serbs

[26] Petar M. Kolendić, 'Prilozi istoriji srpske kńige u Dubronviku', *Srdj*, iii, 12 (1904), 566.

[27] *Ibid*. The author claims that the text is titled *Provedimenti da adottarsi per la perfezione della lingua Illirica*.

[28] Kosta Vojnović was the father of Lujo and Ivo but, in contrast to his sons, he did not identify with either Serbian culture (Lujo) or Yugoslavian culture (Ivo). Instead, he identified with Croatian culture. The dramatic division within the Vojnović family offers a powerful illustration of just how complex choosing between national ideas was at the time.

also drew attention to the fact that in some Italian and Latin writings from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries the term *lingua serviana* was used and often translated as 'the Serbian language'. However, it would seem, as the Serbian linguist Pavle Ivić also demonstrated, the term was used by the Romance-speaking population of the city to refer to the language spoken by part of the city's population because, he argues, the population from the surrounding rural areas called it Serbian. Furthermore, it also constituted the official language of communication between Dubrovnik and Serbian rulers in the Balkans. As Anita Peti-Stantić has recently noted, in some documents the term referred to the Cyrillic alphabet rather than to the language itself. [29]

In any case, claiming that a language provided evidence of the existence of a particular nationality is based on essentialism, an approach that fails to recognise that signifiers are expressions of conventionality and instead treats signifiers as expressions of an objectively existing state of affairs. By following the principle, the name of a language is assumed to be analogous to the name of a nation, even if there is no evidence to show that the users of a language, mainly before contemporary nations had been formed, considered themselves to be members of a particular nation.

There was also a debate on the pages of the periodical over the alphabet and its 'national allegiance'. According to Karadžić's theory, the Shtokavian dialect marked the boundaries of the Serbian nationality; therefore, any text written in this dialect, regardless of the alphabet it was in, was considered Serbian. It was thus hardly surprising that efforts to present Cyrillic texts as Croatian met with sharp criticism from the editors. The less renowned Croatian philologist Đuro Šurmin was subject to particularly strong attacks following the published of his monograph *The History of Croatian and Serbian Literature* [*Povjest književnosti hrvatske i srpske*] in 1898 in which he used the term 'Bosnian-Croatian Cyrillic'. In his review, Bogićević considered this "attempted assassination of Serbianness and Serbian literature [*atentat na Srpstvo*]". He cited sources in which Bosnian Franciscan monks referred to their Cyrillic as 'Serbian script'. This polemic ultimately led to an argument over whom the entire Franciscan tradition belonged to. Šurmin considered it Croatian, because it was Catholic, whereas Bogićević believed it was Serbian, as it was in

[29] Anita Peti-Stantić, *Jezik naš i/ili njihov* (Zagreb, 2008), 276–94.

Cyrillic and the Shtokavian dialect. The conflict over traits marking national belonging becomes particularly clear. While Croatian intellectuals tended towards foregrounding religious markers, Serbian groups – beyond the Orthodox intelligentsia – preferred linguistic conceptions of the nation.

Croatians were mentioned only in passing in *Srdj*, with Zagreb almost completely marginalised as the centre of Croatian political life. At most, a single column was dedicated to Croatian language and literature. In 1903, the periodical launched a series of articles on Croatian short stories, focusing in particular on their role in shaping images of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The column was written by Svetozar Ćorović, a Serb from Mostar. The same year, *A Review of Contemporary Croatian Literature* appeared, with the author given as Ignotus (Frano Branislav Angeli Radovani).

Svetozar Ćorović was the brother of Vladimir, the well-known author of a history of the Serbian nation that was published in multiple editions. His essay was ironic in tone, making reference to 'our so-called Serbian brothers',[30] whom he accused of conducting a propaganda campaign in Bosnia. These brothers' goal (the goal of the Croats) was to "Croatianise everything under the Bosnian and Herzegovinian sky". He considered Bosnia and Herzegovina to be irrefutably Serbian, although he was not entirely consistent in his view as he considered not only Chakavian and Kajkavian writers to be Croatian authors, but also Ivan Aziz Miličević and Osman Nuri Hadžić – his fellow Shtokavians from Mostar. It is difficult to say why linguistic criteria were not applied in this case, but it was clear that they were insufficient alone to define Serbianness. It should also be noted that Ćorović speaks of 'Orthodox and Catholic Serbs' but not of Muslim Serbs (Hadžić was Muslim and was co-authoring with Milićević as Osman-Aziz). At another point, in an analysis of Josip Eugen Tomić's book *The Dragon of Bosnia (Zmaj od Bosne)*, he declares openly that the author was seeking to "drive a wedge between Muslims and Orthodox Serbs while imposing name Croatian on them".[31] It is thus evident that arguments presented in *Srdj* served as part of polemics relating to the entire Serbian symbolic space, with the conflict over the occupation

[30] Svetozar Ćorović, 'Bosna i Hercegovina u hrvatskoj pripovjetci (1)', *Srdj*, ii, 1 (1903), 42.

[31] *Ibid.*, 178.

and annexation of Bosnia providing the basis for a significant disagreement between Serbs and Croatians.

A second author mostly cited Croatian writers born in the Chakavian region, such as Vladimir Nazor (Brač), Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević (Senj), Ante Petravić (Hvar), Eugen Kumičić (Istria) and Viktor Car Emin (Istria). He failed to add, though, that they tended to write in Shtokavian, thus – following the logic of the idea outlined above – in the 'Serbian' language. Another crucial factor is that alongside native Chakavians, the list also featured Kajkavians (Vladimir Vidrić and Ksaver Šandor Gjalski) and, perhaps more surprisingly, two Shtokavians – Ivo Vojnović from Dubrovnik and Josip Kozarac from Slavonia. Thus, in apparent contradiction of the Serbian ideology, each Croatian region was categorised as being constitutive of Croatianness. This is particularly surprising because Serb-Catholics promoted a vision that claimed that these territories were purely Serbian.

IV
IN THE SHADOW OF THE 1905 COALITION

While 1905 did not mark the end of the activities of the Serb-Catholic milieu, it did see significant modifications of its views, with this also becoming evident in the *Srdj* periodical. In turn, this led to a shift in the contours of the community's mental map, which contributed to the emergence of the politics of the 'new course'. The *Dubrovnik* bulletin appealed for Serbs and Croatians to put an end to their struggles, which were even termed 'civil war' (*građanski rat*).[32] The first issue of *Srdj* of 1906 announced that an agreement (*sloga*) had been established that would lead to a common fraternal dance (*kolo*), with *Srdj* becoming "the voice of the Adriatic Coast, the voice of Dubrovnik and an echo of the poems of Gundulić".[33] The editors increasingly used the term 'Yugoslavian' instead of 'Serbian'. The Yugoslavian position, in theory at least, suggested Serbian-Croatian understanding rather than the expansion of Serbian culture. Soon the periodical would come to use the term 'Serbo-Croats',[34] while Dubrovnik was

[32] *Dubrovnik*, xcvii, 19 (1905), 1.

[33] P.U. [?], 'Uskrsnuće Srđa', *Srdj*, v, 2 (1906), 59.

[34] Vojin Mališić Tavridski, 'Dubrovnik. Kulturni centar jugoslovenski', *Srdj*, vii, 1–5 (1908), 37.

referred to as 'the Serbo-Croat territory of St Blaise' or, more broadly, 'the Serbo-Croat homeland'.

The revival of the policy of 'national unity' (*politika narodnog jedinstva*) was accompanied throughout the 1906 issues by a notable shift in attitudes towards Croatians. They were now visible not only in the context of polemical debates. They were referred to on equal terms with Serbians. While it remained unclear what exactly both ethnonyms (Serbs and Croats) referred to (for example, was Vuk Karadžić's criterion that the Serbian nation was one of three faiths still relevant?), it was nevertheless significant that both appeared on equal terms. Even the death notice following the passing of the editor Luka Zore did not mention the fact that he considered himself a Serb. His short biography did indeed use the word 'Serbian', but in a rather ambiguous semantic context. Its author claimed that Zore had since his youth "cultivated warm Slavic and Serbian feelings; he loved Croatianness as much as Serbianness".[35] However, in the following sentence, he wrote of "uniting all Southern Slavs on the basis of the Serbian language". It seems, then, that the accumulation of terminology that at the same time referred to analogous and yet diverse elements was intended to aid the declarative amelioration of the Serbian-Croatian disputes. The case was similar in the discussions of the monograph *Dubrovnik. A Historical Walk* [*Dubrovnik – jedna istorijska šetnja*] written by Lujo Vojnović, a radical Serb-Catholic.[36] There was no mention whatsoever of a Serbian Dubrovnik, with the reviewers speaking only of Serbs and Croatians who "upon the classical foundations of ancient freedom forget earlier disputes".[37]

The modification of the tone of debate went so far that the periodical began to publish discussions of Croatian traditions, such as those of the Frankopan and Zrinski Bans of Croatia that featured in Dubrovnik literature, for example, Vladislav Menčetić's 1664 work *Trublja slovinska*. The editors also agreed to publish an extensive historical sketch on the subject of the neighbouring Poljice district. While it might not have been about Dubrovnik, the author of the text, Jakov Pivčević,[38] openly

[35] Antonije Vučetić, 'Luko Zore', *Srdj*, v, 16 (1906), 791.

[36] *Id.*, 'Ocjene i prikazi', *Srdj*, vi, 4 (1907), 180.

[37] *Ibid.*, 181.

[38] This text was continued by his son Ivan. The right-wing geographer Filip Lukas has also commented on this.

discussed the Croatianness of the region, with Poljice having been part of the old Kingdom of Croatia. He called his native language Croatian and the inhabitants of the district 'our Croatian brothers from Bosnia'.[39]

In order to balance out the Croatian presence, however, other articles were included that spoke of the proposed unity of the Croatian and Serbian nations (Jovan Cvijić) and of Serbian literature in Dubrovnik (Pavle Popović). Excerpts from Jovan Cvijić's widely-discussed essay on the ethnographic map of the Balkans demonstrate, in contrast to the hypotheses proposed by Popović, that Croatians and Serbians are "branches of the same nation that remain politically divided".[40] Cvijić did not propose a name for this nation, but he did indicate that both Serbians and Croatians have different histories. It could be argued, cautiously, that this text belonged to the Yugoslav ideology, which advocated that while there were differences between the nations, they would be overcome. Popović's text, however, was different. He clearly returned to the Serb-Catholic ideas that claimed Dubrovnik an exclusively Serb city. In his view, Ragusa was the incubator of the Serbian language because "Dubrovnik was destined to accept Serbian literature",[41] and precisely at a time when the Serbian state was collapsing. Thus Dubrovnik was bound to restore its literature as a new state was being reborn. Serb-Catholic ideas started to appear in the periodical again from this issue onwards. Consequently, the mental map was constructed based on the expansion of the existing state (Serbia) rather than through the formation of a new state, Yugoslavia. Such declarations, though, were hardly a reflection of reality and the influence of the Serb-Catholic movement started to wane.

V
EPILOGUE

The Serb-Catholic programme was based on a linguistic conception of the Serbian nation, although its adherents were not consistent in this respect. Its coherence was disrupted not only by the use of ambivalent

[39] Jakov Pivčević, 'Letimice kroz Poljica (Poljica i Poljičani)', *Srdj*, vi, 13 (1907), 39.

[40] Jovan Cvijić, 'Principi i metode za izradu etnografske karte Balkanskog Poluostvra', *Srdj*, vi, 10 (1907), 465.

[41] Pavle Popović, 'Dubrovačka književnost', *Srdj*, vi, 11 (1907), 481.

terms to describe social reality but also by the need for political pragmatism. The ideology of reconciliation that was introduced into the conceptual framework by way of the Yugoslav idea could not entirely efface the Serbian-centred perspective. Indeed, both views intersected and led to a degree of terminological syncretism. The impossibility of fusing religious criteria (Serbs as Orthodox) with linguistic criteria (Serbs as users of the Shtokavian dialect) continued to hang over the fate of Serbia, and this remains the case even today. This was also an indirect cause of the collapse of the Yugoslav idea. While for some time, it did offer a genuine opportunity to overcome terminological tensions, it could not be realised fully in the end. Nevertheless, awareness of the presence of Serb-Catholics in the cultural landscape of Dubrovnik enables a more nuanced view of the formation of national ideologies at the turn of the twentieth century. This process turned out to be far from predetermined and was instead highly ambivalent.

trans. Paul Vickers

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aralica Višeslav, 'Nacionalna ideologija i povijest u *Crvenoj Hrvatskoj* i *Dubrovniku* 1902. godine: čija je Župa', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, XXXVI, 3 (2004), 997–1011.

Banac Ivo, 'Struktura konzervativne utopije braće Vojnovića', in Frano Čale (ed.) *O djelu Iva Vojnovića* (Zagreb, 1981), 19–49.

Banac Ivo, 'Vjersko *pravilo* i dubrovačka iznimka: Geneza dubrovačkog kruga *Srba katolika*', *Dubrovnik*, i, 1–2 (1990), 179–210.

Cetnarowicz Antoni, *Odrodzenie narodowe w Dalmacji. Od "slavenstva" do nowoczesnej chorwackiej i serbskiej idei narodowej* (Kraków, 2001).

Mitrović Jeremija, *Srpstvo Dubrovnika* (Beograd, 2002).

Peti-Stantić Anita, *Jezik naš i/ili njihov* (Zagreb, 2008).

Petrović Rade, 'La Dalmazia e il Risorgimento Italiano fino al. 1860', in Vittorio Frosini (ed.) *Il Risorgimento e l'Europa* (Catania, 1969), 289–96.

Stančić Nikša, 'Srbi i srpsko-hrvatski odnosi u Dalmaciji u vrijeme narodnog preporoda', *Zadarska revija*, xxxix, 5–6 (1990), 587–619.

Tolja Nikola, *Dubrovački Srbi katolici. Istine i zablude* (Dubrovnik, 2011).

Maciej Czerwiński – South Slavic languages, literatures and cultures of the twentieth century in semiotic, discursive and historical perspective; professor at the Institute of Slavonic Philology, Jagiellonian University; e-mail: maciej.czerwinski@uj.edu.pl