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Reviving the Middle Ages in Croatia

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REVIVING THE MIDDLE AGES IN CROATIA*

Trpimir Vedriš

It is no exaggeration that the study of the Middle Ages has played a crucial role in the study of Croatian history since its establishment as an academic discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹ This special interest in medieval history, however, had little in common with what is nowadays called “medieval studies.” Research in Croatian medieval history, similarly to other countries in nineteenth-century Europe, was strongly linked to the process of nation building, which has been much discussed lately.² One aspect of this legacy can serve as an appropriate point of departure here, namely, the fact that interest in the medieval period not only held the imagination of nineteenth-century Croatian “historian-politicians,” but also many (if not a majority) among the most prominent Croatian historians of the twentieth century were medievalists. With all the differences between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, medieval studies have always been “the most prominent and fruitful area of Croatian historiography.”³

The fall of Communism after 1989 and the final dissolution of the multi-ethnic “fortress of socialism in the Balkans” during the war of 1991–1995 promised uncertain fortunes for Croatian history. Yet, while in this context one might instantly think of the upsurge in nationalist abuses of history, the “return of medieval studies” in recent Croatian history actually turned out to be good

* I hope that this occasion with its joyful atmosphere allows for a lighter tone. If nothing else, it explains (if not pardons) any oversimplification, lack of precision and possible hastiness of conclusions. I am grateful to Lovro Kunčević for his comments.

¹ Institutionalized by the foundation of the academy of arts and sciences (1867) and the modern university (1874). For a detailed account of the history of the discipline see Stjepan Antoljak, *Hrvatska historiografija* [Croatian Historiography] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2004).

² The most recent assessment of Croatian historiography in English is: Neven Budak, “Post-socialist Historiography in Croatia since 1990,” in *(Re)Writing History: Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. Ulf Brunner, Studies on South East Europe 4 (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 128-164 (hereafter: Budak, “Post-socialist”). An example of the “coming of age” of the local tradition is evident in Mladen Ančić, “Kako danas čitati studije F. Račkog” [How to Read the Studies of F. Rački Today], in Franjo Rački, *Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske prije XII. stoljeća* [The Internal State of Croatia before the Twelfth Century] (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2009.)

³ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 132. It is important to note that the privileged position of the (Early) Middle Ages in older Croatian historiography was based on the fact that it was the only period of Croatian independence. As a result, most discourses on “historical right” between the sixteenth and twentieth century were based on that heritage.

news. Here I will briefly assess some aspects of the changes that took place in the 1990s and address the role of CEU's Department of Medieval Studies alumni in contemporary Croatian academic historiography. Finally, I will provide a list of the most important institutions and periodicals in the field at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

1. From the Beginning to the Present: Late Twentieth-century Croatian Historiography

Legacies of the past

Although both “post-war” and “post-socialist” Croatian historiography await historians, in order to appreciate more fully the changes which took place after 1989, I will briefly summarize some of the trends relevant for developments which have recently been analysed more elaborately and proficiently.⁴ Methodologically, while medieval studies in the “founding times” met contemporary European standards, the field experienced stagnation in the period after 1918, followed by even worse stagnation in the socialist period.⁵ The prevailing trends established in the late nineteenth century – an interest in political history focussing on Croatia's constitutional position in diverse historical contexts⁶ – seem to have prevailed during the most of the twentieth century.

Without devaluing the positive products of post-war historiography, Croatian historiography in the second half of the twentieth century was a rather conservative field of study, “ideologically anesthetised” to a certain extent,⁷ but as both the cause

⁴ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 132-138.

⁵ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 135, detected “rapid modernization and the quantitative development of medieval studies” in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁶ Interest in the early medieval “golden age” of Croatian history remained a constant in Croatian historiography from the nineteenth-century political opposition to what was perceived as Austrian or Hungarian oppression. With the change of historical fortune, the medieval past has often been evoked to take the same role in opposing the assimilation of the Croatian into Yugoslav or more open Serbian nationalism (although, ambiguous as they were, medieval topics were also used in the opposite direction; one of the most prominent examples probably being attempts to link the Croatia of Tomislav and the Serbia of Dušan or the motif of the “common fight of our nations against the foreigners.” A telling example of “the cult” of Gregory of Nin was analysed by Neven Budak in *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* [The First Centuries of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994): 159-198.

⁷ Although Croatian post-war historiography has probably “been much less Yugoslav and much less Marxist than was generally believed” (Budak, “Post-socialist,” 128), and medieval studies were spared the intensive

and the effect of previous times, lacking contacts with contemporary developments in the international scholarship.⁸ Looming like a dark cloud over the post-war practice of history was an almost total lack of interest in international trends, which resulted in a certain methodological backwardness in medieval studies in Croatia.⁹ Probably the most important factor in the gradual dissolution of that isolation were “direct and more regular contacts with ‘more developed’ historiographies of neighbouring countries”¹⁰ since the 1970s that started to influence the choice of topics and methodological approaches of Croatian medievalists in the 1980s. Some of the most important books published in early 1990s – novel in their methodology and the choice of topics – were actually “conceived” in this “period of transition.”¹¹ Meetings such as those in Mogersdorf, which brought together, among others, Austrian, Hungarian, and Croatian historians, played an important role in overcoming isolation.¹² Another important factor was the introduction of the novelties of the Annales school into the local tradition.¹³ Although many aspects of both the research and teaching of medieval topics might be considered defective even today, particular issues which should be singled out as extremely negative in the post-war period were isolation (low participation of the local

interest shown by Communist authorities in the modern period, the prevailing ideology did cause the isolation of Croatian historiography and pushed it in the direction of “a certain self-sufficiency,” Budak, “Post-socialist,” 130.

⁸ One had to wait for the mid-1990s to attest, for the first time after the nineteenth century(!), a significant number of Croatian students studying abroad.

⁹ Although describing the tradition as conservative and showing strong continuity with nineteenth-century historiography, Budak has recently stressed the interest in economic and social history in the second half of the twentieth century as an example of the positive influence of a Marxist worldview, Budak, “Post-socialist,” 129.

¹⁰ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 137.

¹¹ Probably the most important titles in this sense are: Neven Budak, *Gradovi Varaždinske županije u srednjem vijeku* [The Towns of Varaždin County until the end of the Sixteenth Century] (Zagreb: Dr. Feletar 1994); Nenad Ivić, *Domišljanje prošlosti* [Thinking the Past] (Zagreb: Zavod za znanost o književnosti Filozofskog fakulteta, 1992); Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Rod i grad. Dubrovačka obitelj od 13. do 15. stoljeća* [Kin and City: The Ragusan Family between the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Century] (Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofski Fakulteta u Zagrebu, 1994).

¹² See also Ivica Šute, “Sudjelovanje hrvatskih povjesničara na simpoziju Mogersdorf (1972-2001) [Participation of Croatian Historians in the Mogersdorf Symposium],” *Historijski zbornik* 54 (2001): 229-233.

¹³ After a certain “dead season” in the 1970s, the influence of the Annales school resulted in positive changes which became visible in the early 1980s. On the influence of the latter see Neven Budak, “Le ‘Annales’ e la storiografia croata,” *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1 (2000): 75-87; also idem, “Post-socialist,” 139-148.

scholars in international symposia and projects before the 1990s¹⁴) and uncritical nationalism, often spiced up with Marxist phraseology.

Post-socialist historiography

It might be argued that primarily the teaching and (to a lesser extent) medieval research topics in Croatia became narrower after 1990, and sometimes even more parochial, but one should not forget that Croatian medievalists within Yugoslavia had always shown little interest in the history of other “Yugoslav nations.” If recent research and teaching was narrowed down almost exclusively to Croatian history and lost some of the broader regional context in the 1990s, this should be noted with caution. Namely, the very concept of a “regional context” was previously dictated by political and ideological needs to a large extent, promoting a particular set of relations and discriminating in others.¹⁵ Therefore, from the perspective of a medievalist there are not many reasons to regret the dissolution of the “Yugoslav paradigm” as the exclusive context of Croatian Middle Ages.¹⁶

Another unambiguously positive shift can be traced in the local historiography, primarily in topics and methodology. The introduction of new topics and approaches in medieval studies in Croatia as a part of broader transformation of epistemological and ideological configurations cannot be explained by a single cause. Moreover, although the opinion that “the year 1990 brought almost no change”¹⁷ has been expressed, and political and social changes did not directly influence the changes, they certainly coincided with the gradual shift in scholarly epistemological configurations. It is not only that the early 1990s bore the fruit of the efforts of previous generations (the “transformation of the 1980s”), but that was also the

¹⁴ Cf. also Idem, “Hrvatska historiografija nakon 1990. Pokazatelji s Odsjeka za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu [Croatian Historiography after 1990 – Indicators from the Department of History, University of Zagreb],” *Historijski zbornik* 56-57 (2004): 91-110.

¹⁵ Here, I mean primarily the geographic framework which to a certain extent delineated the regional context to South Slavic neighbors while discriminating historically important contacts with North Italy, Venice, Austria and Hungary. Most paradigmatic examples are probably to be found in Bogo Grafenauer, et al., ed., *Historija naroda Jugoslavije* [History of the Nations of Yugoslavia], vol. 1 (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1953).

¹⁶ Although the lack of a regional context and a comparative perspective are still perhaps two of the burning problems of contemporary medieval studies in Croatia.

¹⁷ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 132. The outburst of national euphoria in the 1990s seemingly did not seriously damage what was solid academic historiography by that time, yet it indeed perpetuated an outburst of amateurish and revisionist writing, although both seem to have dwindled lately.

period when something new was conceived.¹⁸ As a result, I would maintain that the mid-1990s simply – for better or worse – marked an important shift in Croatian historiography. Furthermore, it seems to me (being aware of my highly subjective position) that the activity of the Department of Medieval Studies, among other (possibly equally important) causes,¹⁹ has made a visible impact on contemporary Croatian historiography.

2. The Impact of Departmental Alumni

Institutional positions of alumni

The case of the Croatian alumni of the CEU Medieval Studies Department is indisputably a success story.²⁰ Nothing symbolizes this success better than the fact that the first PhD candidate to defend his doctoral dissertation at CEU was Stanko Andrić in 1998. Most of the Croatian students at CEU come from the University of Zagreb, more precisely, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, still the central institution of higher education in Croatia.²¹ According to rough statistics, in the period 1994 to 2008, 18 students from Croatia obtained their MAs at the Medieval Studies Department of CEU. A high proportion of them (61%) were accepted into the PhD program. Yet, even if their satisfaction and pride in being part of the department did not count, the reason for the department to be proud is the fact that 14 of them (78%) found jobs in higher education and/or research institutions in Croatia. In this sense, the mission of establishing a scholarly network of alumni might be considered well accomplished.

Avoiding a list of all the particular achievements of the alumni, let it be stressed that their success is not only about controlling positions or producing important publications. The phenomenon hard to grasp (and therefore more

¹⁸ Among other factors I aim at is that actually during these war years the first group of Croatian students came to Budapest to start their studies at CEU.

¹⁹ Other important factors might include an initial “general openness of Croatia and Slovenia for foreign influences since 1960s as well as the gradual dissipation of the Socialist system in the 1980s.” (Budak, “Post-socialist,” 131), but – also the growing number of students doing their graduate studies abroad in 1990s.

²⁰ The role of the department was already noticed and expectation was expressed that both alumni and those in training would secure Croatian medieval studies’ safe way to “further modernization and professionalism.” Budak, “Post-socialist,” 138.

²¹ Its monopoly was shaken by the founding of parallel Croatian Studies in Zagreb in the 1990s, as well as the foundation of other regional universities and departments.

appropriate to be told *viva voce*) – and yet, maybe even more profound – is that of the collegial spirit preserved by most of the alumni. Practical fruits of cooperation are felt especially in the spirit of benevolent and serious peer review, free exchange of ideas, books, and material. The good relations maintained between the alumni very often and very practically dissolve the divisions, not only of the walls of disciplines and institutions but also of destructive personal conflicts inherited with positions.

Activity and the impact of the alumni: Publications and organisation

Among most obvious novelties brought by the alumni one should mention the introduction of new topics and new methodologies (also novelties in teaching). Maybe the most “visible” topics, previously relatively neglected, which the alumni might be credited with promoting are the history of everyday life, gender history, and hagiography. Although grounded in the interests of the group of scholars gathered in the historical society “Otium,” active since the early 1990s²² – and therefore the historians of the previous generation should be credited with the innovation here – some of the best fruits of interest in the history of everyday life were produced by departmental alumni.²³ Similarly interest in the history of women and the family did not appear out of the blue with the CEU alumnae, yet maybe the most important recent book in the field is based on the author’s CEU MA.²⁴ The Croatian Society for the History of Women “Clio” (*Hrvatska udruga za proučavanje povijesti žena “Clio”*) has organised successful sections at many conferences with a relatively high percentage of medieval topics.

The field which probably shows the clearest departmental influence is hagiography. Although hagiography in the broadest sense never ceased to attract Croatian medievalists, it is through the action of departmental alumni that it received an official position in the field. The Croatian Hagiography Society “Hagiotheca” was founded in April 2004 by group of departmental students/alumni, who presented their work in the same year at a conference at CEU.²⁵ Broader-scale activities of

²² The society was dedicated to the history of everyday life and published a successful journal of the same name. The activities unfortunately died out around 2000 with the publication of the last volume of *Otium* (7-8 (2000)).

²³ E.g., Gordan Ravančić, *Život u krčmama u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku* [Life in Taverns of Medieval Dubrovnik] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Dom i svijet, 2001).

²⁴ Zrinka Nikolić, *Rodaci i bližnji: dalmatinsko gradsko plemstvo u ranom srednjem vijeku* [Kin and Kith: Dalmatian Urban Nobility in the Early Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2003).

²⁵ *Saints and Patronage*, Third Hagiography Society Symposium, Budapest, CEU (24. 6. - 27. 6. 2004).

the society followed when successful conferences were organised in Dubrovnik and Split in 2005 and 2008, respectively.²⁶ A third conference is being organised in cooperation with International Hagiography Society for spring 2010 in Poreč. The society has started publishing the conference proceedings – the first was in print in May 2008²⁷ and the second is expected towards the end of 2009.²⁸ Along with the proceedings, Hagiotheca plans to launch two other series: Hagio-fontes and Hagio-monographiae, dedicated to critical editions of Croatian hagiographic sources and authors' studies and monographs, respectively. Like the successful book of S. Andrić, published in 1999, Marina Miladinov, another member of Hagiotheca, produced a monograph in English on eremitism in Central Europe based on her doctoral dissertation.²⁹

The activities of the alumni certainly extend beyond innovative and groundbreaking projects; besides regular teaching and participation in state-funded projects many of them are engaged in the diverse traditional fields of basic research. For example, the “HAZU [Hrvatska Akademia Znanosti i Umjetnosti—Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts] group” of alumni successfully participate in publications of medieval sources, fruitfully combining their international experience with more traditional activities.³⁰ It is hard to trace all the private scholarly activities of the alumni, yet they can be found in a very broad spectrum from innovative teaching to the organisation of conferences. Among other things to be underlined is their participation in the preparation of international conferences and projects.

²⁶ *Hagiografija: historiografija, izvori i metode*. I. hagiografski Hrvatskog hagiografskog društva “Hagiotheca” i Odsjeka za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu [*Hagiography: Historiography, Sources and Methods*. I. Hagiographic Conference of the Croatian Hagiographic Society “Hagiotheca” and the Department of History of the Faculty of Arts in Zagreb] (Dubrovnik, November 20 – 23, 2005).

²⁷ Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš, ed., *Hagiologija: kultovi u kontekstu* [Hagiology: Cults of the Saints in Context] (Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008). It is worth noting that besides positive reviews the authors were awarded a prize by the Society of University Teachers and Other Scholars for 2008.

²⁸ Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš, ed., *Identity and Alterity* (Zagreb: Leykam international–Hagiotheca, in preparation).

²⁹ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude: Eremitism in Central Europe between East and West* (Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008). Significantly, this book is credited with being the first book written by a Croatian author in English published in Croatia.

³⁰ E.g., *Obsidio Iadrensis - Opsada Zadra* [The Siege of Zadar], Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium; vol. 54, Scriptores; vol. 6, tr. Veljko Gortan, et al., ed. Damir Karbić, Miroslav Kurelac, Zoran Ladić (Zagreb: Academia scientiarum et artium Croatica, 2007).

3. Medieval Studies in Croatia Today: Institutions and Publications³¹

In Croatia only a few institutions would formally claim to offer medieval studies – yet many promote research in “medieval studies” in practice. The following list is not meant to be exhaustive (to a large extent it ignores, for example, ecclesiastical institutions), yet it will serve the purpose of providing the most elementary information. Without doubt, Zagreb is still the centre with the main activities centered around the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU) and the University of Zagreb.

The Academy

Institute for Historical and Social Sciences (*Zavod za povijesne i društvene znanosti*) in Zagreb, among other departments, covers the work of the Department of Historical Sciences (Odsjek za povijesne znanosti).³² Initially established as part of archive of the academy, the institute is dedicated to the publication of medieval archival material and other relevant sources for Croatian history, preparation of tools for the auxiliary historical disciplines and basic research. They publish *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti HAZU* [Journal of the Department for Historical Sciences of the Institute for Historical and Social Sciences] (vol. 21/2008) and a number of source series (*Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae; Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi Jugoslaviae; Monumenta Croatica Vaticana, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum, meridionalium* etc.). The Department of Archaeology (Odsjek za arheologiju) is focused mostly on the research of Antique and Early Medieval sites in Roman south Pannonia (contemporary northwestern Croatia).

The most important departments of HAZU outside Zagreb are in the towns that can boast preserved medieval archives. The Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik (*Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku*)³³ focuses on the history of Dubrovnik. They publish *Anali* ([Annals] in Croatian, vol. 46/2008) and *Dubrovnik Annals* (in English) as well as the specialised series (*Monumenta historica Ragusina, Monografije, Prilozi demografskoj povijesti Dubrovnika i okolice* [Contributions to the

³¹ Cf. <http://hrcak.srce.hr>, “Hrcak” [Hamster] is the central portal of Croatian scholarly journals which, following the Open Access Initiative, offers the access to most of the important Croatian journals in the humanities.

³² http://www.hazu.hr/odpovzg_hr.html.

³³ <http://www.zavoddbk.org/>.

Demographic History of Dubrovnik and Surroundings] and *Pretisci* [Impressions]). The Institute for Historical Sciences in Zadar (Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Zadru)³⁴ (est. 1954) mostly focuses on research in the State Archive in Zadar. They publish an annual, *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* [Works of the Institute for Historical Sciences of HAZU in Zadar] (vol. 50/2008) with a great deal of material on the Late Medieval history of Zadar and Dalmatia.

The University

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (*Filozofski fakultet*) hosts a number of departments which might lay claim to Medieval Studies (History, Art History, Archaeology, and to a certain extent Classical Philology and Slavic Philology). Yet, so far the epicenter of recruitment and other activities has been the Department of History,³⁵ which has fostered the development of medieval studies by the recent establishment of an MA module dedicated to the Middle Ages and a multi-disciplinary doctoral program in Medieval Studies initiated and coordinated by Prof. Neven Budak, also a CEU visiting professor.³⁶ Among other activities, the department expects to re-vitalize the Croatian Byzantine Society (originally founded in the 1990s), which will certainly provide a platform for various types of future cooperation with international associations. *Historijski zbornik* (Historical Almanac, vol. 61/2008) is an official journal of the Society for Croatian History (*Društvo za hrvatsku povjesnicu*), but traditionally prepared and edited by the members of the Department of History. Another journal connected to the same department is *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* (Proceedings of the Institute for Croatian history, vol. 40/2008).

The decentralisation of the university in the late 1990s led to the multiplication of regional faculties and departments. The Faculty of Humanities of the University in Rijeka hosts Departments of History (since 1998) and Art History, with substantial research on medieval archaeology and art. The Faculty of Humanities in Pula (formerly a part of the University in Rijeka) was transformed into the independent university

³⁴ http://info.hazu.hr/zavod_zapovijesne_znanosti_u_zadru.

³⁵ <http://www.ffzg.hr/pov/pov2/index.php>.

³⁶ Both programs were inspired to a certain degree by the program of the CEU Department of Medieval Studies and in that sense a positive model has been successfully planted. They will certainly promote medieval studies as a distinct field of research, but it will be interesting to see how this transmission of the departmental model will affect future recruitment from Zagreb University. Although the program requires at least one semester's stay in a foreign university, one still cannot predict to what extent the teachers (from diverse departments) will encourage their best students to leave for Budapest.

“Juraj Dobrila” in 2006 and a Department of History was also founded there as a part of the Section for Humanities (*Odjel za humanističke znanosti*). It focuses on research on the regional history of Istria. The University in Zadar also has departments of History, Art History, and Archaeology with substantial parts of the programs dedicated to medieval studies.³⁷ Croatian Studies (*Hrvatski studiji*)³⁸ were established in Zagreb in the early 1990s and have a growing role in higher education with a number of CEU alumni permanently or occasionally teaching medieval history.

A significant move towards the recognition of medieval studies as a separate and interdisciplinary field of research was the establishment of the International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages as an independent research centre of the University in Zagreb in 1993, during the height of the war. It hosts annual symposia in Motovun in Istria and publishes its proceedings in the journal *Hortus Artium Medievalium* (vol. 15/2008). Besides *Hortus* the center has also launched a series of monographs (*Dissertationes et monographiae*). Its multidisciplinary profile makes it one of the most prominent institutions active in archaeological research, conferences, and publication.

The Croatian Institute for History (*Hrvatski institut za povijest*),³⁹ initially established as the Institute for History of the Working Class in 1961, became the Institute for Modern History in 1990 to broaden its field of activities, with the Department for Croatian Medieval History added in 1996. The institute publishes *Povijesni prilozi* (Historical Contributions, vol. 35/2008) and *Review of Croatian History* along with several monograph series. The institute coordinates the work of Department of the History of Slavonia, Baranya, and Sirmia situated in Slavonski Brod. The department was founded in 1996 and focuses on the regional history of contemporary Slavonia. The department publishes *Scrinia Slavonica* (vol.8/2008) with substantial space dedicated to medieval topics.

Another regional institute in Istria is *Centro di Ricerche Storiche* in Rovigno,⁴⁰ founded in 1968 by the *Unione Italiana*, a representative organization of the Italian minority living in Croatia and Slovenia. Among other activities the center promotes research in a medieval history of the region, successfully bringing together Italian, Slovenian, and Croatian scholars. The institute publishes several periodicals and series: *Atti*, *Collana degli Atti*, *Fonti*, etc.

³⁷ <http://www.unizd.hr>.

³⁸ <http://www.hrstud.hr>.

³⁹ <http://www.isp.hr>.

⁴⁰ <http://www.crsrv.org>.

The institute for ecclesiastical history of the Catholic Theological Faculty in Zagreb publishes the journal *Croatica Christiana Periodica* (vol. 62/2008). Published since 1977 it covers topics from Croatian ecclesiastical history and religion.

Important research and publication projects (especially in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods) are carried on by various archaeological museums.⁴¹ Among the most prominent are: the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments (*Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika*) in Split, which conducts archaeological (mostly Early Medieval) research with the focus on the Central Dalmatian hinterland. The museum publishes the periodical *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* (Old Croatian Education, new series vol. 35/2008) and diverse series (*Monumenta Medii Aevi Croatiae, Katalozi i monografije* [Catalogs and Monographs], *Katalozi izložbi* [Exhibition Catalogs], *Kulturno–povijesni vodiči* [Cultural-Historical Guidebooks]). The Archaeological Museum in Split (est. 1820)⁴² generally focuses on the Classical heritage, but through projects dealing with Late Antiquity its activities are often relevant for medievalists also. The Archaeological Museum in Zadar,⁴³ with its Medieval Department, is active in northern Dalmatia focusing on Early Medieval sites and publishing the periodical *Diadora* (vol. 22/2007) and other publications. The archaeological museum in Zagreb⁴⁴ holds a medieval collection, one of the richest and varied medieval collections in Croatia.

This brief list must conclude with a practical observation; I would stress the fact that Zagreb – more precisely the Department of History at the Faculty of Humanities – still presents a centre for both recruitment of ongoing (and future) students and promotion of the alumni mission. This situation might change, especially with alumni beginning to work at regional universities (such as Pula) or due to a growing network of scholars communicating with the alumni community. The present state of affairs shows that successful departmental/alumni networking has primarily affected the field of history, while other disciplines (e.g., archaeology or art history) have so far remained closed to a greater degree to influences coming from the CEU Department of Medieval Studies.⁴⁵

⁴¹ For the list of museums in Croatia see http://www.mdc.hr/muzeji_en.aspx.

⁴² <http://www.mdc.hr/split-arheoloski>.

⁴³ <http://www.amzd.hr>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.amz.hr>.

⁴⁵ This is, unfortunately, especially true for the institutions in Dalmatia. The reasons – although possible to identify – cannot be discussed here.

Instead of a Conclusion

In Croatia, the collapse of Communism and the establishment of independence may not have caused but coincided with modernization and, without a doubt, marked (unlike the dissolution of the previous multi-national association in 1918) a positive influence on the future of the discipline. On the ideological level, socialist influence has been described as leaving no trace, therefore interpreted as failing completely.⁴⁶

Scholarly institutions in the 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century witnessed decentralisation that resulted in the founding of new departments, research institutes, and museums, many to a large extent/exclusively dedicated to Medieval Studies. Improving quality or introducing innovative approaches did not always follow quantitative growth. Even though the theoretical grounds underpinning a large part of the research on medieval topics in Croatia still have not changed substantially since the mid-twentieth century, all these new positions as well as the growing number of young scholars who have studied abroad or maintain contacts with international scholarly communities promises both the further “internalisation” and flourishing of medieval studies in Croatia.

As for the impact of the alumni, although one should beware of taking the uncritical stance of self-estimation or over-blown triumphalism, it is apparent that a group of departmental alumni and current students already make a visible contribution to the modernisation and proliferation of medieval studies (mostly history) in Croatia. Not only do they hold prominent positions in major institutions, but they have already published important works. Those engaged in teaching are often credited with introducing novelties and new standards. The impact is by far most obvious in the field of history, while younger generations of Croatian archaeologists, art historians, and others who want to study abroad so far do not seem to be equally attracted to CEU. All these observations make it quite clear that departmental alumni will strongly color/influence future Croatian medieval historiography. The diversity of their subjects and approaches reflects only not their personal and institutional interests, but also echoes the vitality of departmental

⁴⁶ Budak, “Post-socialist,” 129. To a certain degree the opposite view was recently by medievalist M. Ančić, who, in a series of essays criticized the survival of socialist mentalities in the Croatian scholarly community. See Mladen Ančić, “Što ‘svi znaju’ i što je ‘svima jasno’.” *Historiografija i nacionalizam* [What ‘Everybody Knows’ and What is ‘Clear to Everybody’: Historiography and Nationalism (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2009)].

scholarly life.⁴⁷ The decision about whether things have been getting better or worse in the last 15 years is, of course, in the eye of beholder. Refraining from criticism here, I would conclude that successful recruitment and the personal satisfaction of most of the Croatian students have created lasting ties between their professional position and their second alma mater. Finally, besides successful recruitment and an attractive departmental program, the fact that most Croatian students came to CEU from the University in Zagreb reveals yet another story of continuity – that of historical and cultural ties which bound Zagreb and Budapest for almost a millennium. For a medievalist it is certainly exciting to see how, after almost a century of following separate paths, Croatian students return to Budapest, proving not only that the department in the last 15 years has succeeded in one of its central goals, but also showing that medieval legacies in the region are still vividly alive.

Croatian alumni’s “TOP 15” – in chronological order (1993-2008)⁴⁸

Budak, Neven, ed. *Etnogeneza Hrvata – Ethnogenesis of the Croats*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 1995.

Jurković, Miljenko, and Tugomir Lukšić, ed. *Starohrvatska spomenička baština – Rađanje prvog hrvatskog kulturnog pejzaža* [Early Croatian Monument Heritage – The Birth of the First Croatian Cultural Landscape]. Zagreb: MGC – Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofski Fakultet u Zagrebu – Matica hrvatska, 1996.

Margetić, Lujo. *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovno obiteljsko i nasljedno pravo* [The Croatian Medieval Family and Hereditary Law]. Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1996.

Raukar, Tomislav. *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje: prostor, ljudi, ideje* [The Croatian Middle Ages: Space, People, Ideas]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga–Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 1997.

⁴⁷ As a surprised “older” PhD student returning to the department after a longer period recently told me: “Things are being done in a completely different way than in our times...”.

⁴⁸ This list is based on the votes of the alumni who answered my call to make their “best of” Croatian historiography in the last 15 years. It does not, however, represent the opinion of all the alumni, just other medievalists.

Hrvatska i Europa. Kultura, znanost i umjetnost [Croatia and Europe. Culture, Science, and Art]. Ed Ivan Supičić. Vol 1: *Srednji vijek (VII-XII. stoljeće): rano doba hrvatske culture* [The Middle Ages (Seventh to Twelfth Century): The Early Period of Croatian Culture]. Ed. Josip Bratulić, et al. Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti–AGM, 1997.

Katičić, Radoslav. *Litterarum studia: književnost i naobrazba ranog hrvatskog srednjovjekovlja*, [Literacy and Education of the Croatian Early Middle Ages]. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1998.

Andrić, Stanko. *Čudesna svetoga Ivana Kapistrana: Povijesna i tekstualna analiza* [The Miracles of St. John of Capistran: Historical and Textual Analysis]. Osijek i Slavonski Brod: Matica hrvatska Osijek i Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1999.

Janeković-Römer, Zdenka. *Okvir slobode: Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma* [The Framework of Freedom: Dubrovnik Rulers between Medieval Thought and Humanism]. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999.

Hrvatska i Europa. Kultura, znanost i umjetnost, ed. Ivan Supičić, Vol 2: *Srednji vijek i renesansa (XIII.-XVI. stoljeće)*. Ed. Eduard Hercigonja et al. Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti – Školska knjiga, 2000.

Grgin, Borislav. *Počeci rasapa: kralj Matijaš Korvin i srednjovjekovna Hrvatska* [The Beginning : King Mattias Corvinus and Medieval Croatia]. Zagreb: Ibis grafika – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 2002.

Nikolić, Zrinka. *Rodaci i bližnji: dalmatinsko gradsko plemstvo u ranom srednjem vijeku* [Kin and Kith: Dalmatian Urban Nobility in the Early Middle Ages]. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2003.

[Thomas the Archdeacon.] Toma Arhidakon. *Historia Salonitana: povijest salonitanskih i splitskih prvosvećenika*, [History of the Bishops of Salona and Split]. Tr. Olga Perić. Studies, Mirjana Matijević Sokol and Radoslav Katičić. Split: Književni krug, 2003.

Levak, Maurizio. *Slaveni vojvode Ivana: kolonizacija Slavena u Istri u početnom razdoblju franačke uprave*, [Slavs of Duke John: The Colonisation of the Slavs in Istria at the Beginning of Frankish Rule]. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2007.

Miladinov, Marina. *Margins of Solitude: Eremitism in Central Europe between East and West*. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008.

Marinković, Ana, and Trpimir Vedriš, ed. *Hagiologija: kultovi u kontekstu* [Hagiology: Cults of the Saints in Context]. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2008.