foundations. The religious aspect, however, does not interfere nor dissipate its artistic or aesthetic value. Deeply implanted devotion is simply part of her being.


The first half of the nineteenth century is characterized by radical social changes which marked the beginning of the history of modern bourgeois era. After exhausting Napoleonic campaigns, and despite restoration and absolutism, much of Europe witnessed the strengthening of the basic democratic tenets founded on legal equality and the proclaimed goals of the bourgeois society. Democratic processes established during the revolutionary movements of the '20s and '30s, culminated in the general European unrest of 1848. Technological and industrial revolution, population explosion, and the growth of agricultural industry contributed to social changes, accompanied by a major shift in political theory and practice. The principle of monarchistic legality was gradually replaced by various forms of conservativism. On the other hand, all the political streams striving toward reforms were founded on the liberal political philosophy. Lastly, the development and strengthening of national consciousness in the liberal context, demanded, with its integrational power, abolition of territorial and ethnic dismemberment, constructing at the same time the framework of European power struggles.

Dubrovnik area, and Croatian lands in general, did not experience these processes as intensely as did most of the Western Europe. Nevertheless, the territory of the former Republic did witness reverberating effects of the global events, but in social terms, Dubrovnik was not yet ready to undergo internal political reforms. The overall European climate of change crept to the borders of the Republic, followed by repercussions of the Napoleonic wars. Rapid change of political and economic structure as well as the discontinuity in development resulting from these processes, engendered the loss of political autonomy, economic breakdown, and the dissolution of the old social structure, demarkating thus fundementally new guidelines of Dubrovnik’s history in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Periodization of Dubrovnik’s history following the fall of the Republic is conditioned by a series of institutional and political changes. The 1808 French abolition of the Dubrovnik Republic should be recognized as a historical turning-point. Formally speaking, it marked the disappearance of a social, political, and economic structure which kept struggling over the centuries for its maintenance in the traditional world of the Ancien regime. Dramaticall period of French administration experienced two phases. The first, 1808-1809, when new government was established, even though the fate of the abolished Republic still seemed uncertain. The second phase, from 1809 to 1814, saw the annexation of the Dubrovnik area, and its becoming part of the Illyrian provinces. It was then, for the first time, that basic tenets of the bourgeois legislative were being partially introduced, which formally marked the discontinuity of the ancient aristocratic regime. This process was underlied by the complete economic paralysis resulting from the devastation of the commercial fleet, the chief element of Ragusan economic power. The profound social schism provoked the
disappearance of the patriciate almost over-
night, together with old wealthy families
whose social status was closely linked to the
welfare of the Republic.

The significance of the occurring chan-
ges can clearly be seen only in the light of
the fact that in the course of the century, the
territory of the Republic witnessed the shap-
ing of an original social system with most
distinctive features. Therefore, as with the
fall of the Republic we are not exclusively
dealing with the abolishment of sovereignty
and aristocratic pattern of government,
which, in part, continued to exist, but also
with the folding of a whole social system
bearing centuries-old attributes and tradition,
so Dubrovnik-like and different from the
neighboring lands. It is this perspective that
contributes to the better understanding of all
the details related to the political history and
mentality of the nineteenth-century Dub-
rovnik society.

Administrative experiments, incomple-
teness of the introduced social reforms, along-
side myriad imposed taxes and a disastrous
economic situation, were reasons enough to
stir popular discontent of all the Dubrovnik
classes against the French government. Con-
trarily, a fairly short six-year French rule,
on account of its social accomplishments,
remained deeply rooted in the minds of all
the Dubrovnik’s social strata.

The hope of the restoration of the Re-
public still present in the minds of the nobil-
ity and few citizens during the abortive anti-
French uprising in 1813/1814, was brutally
disillusioned by Austrian steps undertaken
over its two-year temporary rule - Intendance
(1814-1816). International political situation
offered no ground for the Republic’s resto-
ration, and Dubrovnik was yet unable to bear
the new integrational idea, and create a real
social force capable of its enforcement. Aus-
trian rule was formally established by the
resolutions of the Vienna Congress of 1815,
and reinforced between the years 1817 and
1822. Being centre of one of the districts of
the Dalmatian Kingdom, Dubrovnik entered
the long-lasting alliance with the Habsburg
Monarchy. During the period of absolutism,
the old order folded at once. Some patricians
fled, while the remaining accepted the real-
ity of the bourgeois society. The latter amal-
gamated with the well-to-do business-
headed commoners, and lived on the land
earnings, government and military service. Thus, the patriciate was formally losing its
noble status symbols, which were strictly
determined by the Statutes and other laws
of the abolished Republic. An identical pro-
cess can be traced with Antunini and La-
zarini, as the social code with these two most
distinguished non-noble groups was directly
related to the existence of the aristocratic
system.

Losing its previous position, Catholic
church was also experiencing a crisis. Dubrovnik archbishopric lost most of its es-
tate during the French rule. Following the
church reorganization in 1828, the Austrian
authorities definitely transferred most of the
church properties to the state. Ston bishopric
was abolished, and Dubrovnik church dis-
trict was no longer governed by an arch-
bishop. By losing its formal status,
Dubrovnik archbishopric came under the au-
thority of the Dalmatian Metropolitan in
Zadar.

Finding itself on the outskirts of the new
political and industrial landscape, the re-
cently shaped citizen substratum advanced
slowly due to the devastated economy and
lack of capital. Nobility still owned the bulk
of land, but with the dawn of the 19th cen-
tury, citizens, and even peasants, who earned
their capital in trade and shipping, emerged
as landowners. The latter amassed their property by buying feudal rights from the nobility during the period of the abolition of the fideikomis institution (1811-1817). These new owners and businessmen, in line with the city intelligence, created a colorful substratum of the modern bourgeoisie. The rest of the urban society consisted of small-scale tradesmen, artisans, mariners, fishermen, manual workers, and the city paupers. In the smaller urban centres of the Dubrovnik district, Cavtat, Orebić, and partly Ston and Slano, as well as the City itself, there already existed groups of shipowners and business-minded men. In spite of the anti-maritime Austrian policy, they continued with commercial pursuits in the Adriatic and Mediterranean. Thus, Dubrovnik’s shipping industry managed to preserve the basis for quicker development which was to take place in the second half of the century. Being dependent upon the conditions of the maritime market, sea-oriented businessmen tended to shift their capital in land, inheriting thus the classical landowner-tenant relationship, the latter being landless peasants. Therefore, landownership still represented a major social problem. Introduction of the Austrian General Public Law in 1816 implied derogation of all the laws of the former Republic, apart from the issue of feudal rights which remained unsolved, and was, in practice, approached as a private legal matter on the administrative and not judicial level. This generated long-term tension in the relationship between the landowners and peasants, since the latter represented the vast majority of population.

For fear of political dissatisfaction and resurgence of republican traditions, Austrian exertion of authority proved to be much milder in the Dubrovnik area than elsewhere in Dalmatia. In addition to its advocacy of the antiquated landownership relations characteristic of Dubrovnik, Habsburg Monarchy aimed to win over the remainder of the patriciate, old middle-class families, and peasantry by introducing a number of stimulating government measures and privileges so as to pacify the area (retirement pensions and state sinecures were granted, no liability to tax payment and military service). The City resumed its significance in the political, administrative, and strategic sense. In this respect, the District Office, civil administrator’s office, Municipal Office, inferior court, and high school were all seated in Dubrovnik. Strong military forces were also stationed there, the army having seized, reconstructed, and rebuilt all the French fortifications, notably Fort Impérial. Several consular representatives added to the political weight of the City, particularly those of Russia and England who took most active part in diplomatic affairs.

In addition to the production of oil and wine, modest economic results were achieved owing to the revival of the maritime commerce, and trade with the Turkish hinterland. No relation can be established between the existence of several manufactural workshops in the then Dubrovnik, and the course of industrialization in the Western Europe. Dubrovnik, like the rest of Dalmatia, had built its prosperity on the trade and shipping industry. Agricultural production was insufficient, and no major improvements could have been attained under the new government either, due to the absence of the basic elements of development: natural resources, capital, and market. Governmental economic measures were highly restrictive and unenterprising. On account of the antiquated Austrian mercantilistic policy characterized by high taxes and export orientation through the Danube basin, south Cro-
Danubian lands remained completely isolated. A series of epidemics and crop failures, plus the imposition of land tax in 1842 were to exacerbate the already gloomy prospects. It was the gradual restoration of shipping and transit commerce during the ’40s and further that enabled Dubrovnik to maintain its central position among the Dalmatian cities.

In the light of romanticism, the politically active population envisaged the abolition of the Republic as something ideal, contributing thus to the escape from the stern absolutistic reality. This idea, however, could not have been materialized in its integrational sense, and was subsequently replaced by contemporary forms of ethnic and national identification. Political, economic, and social lethargy engendered by the isolation and absolutistic centralism, was interrupted by occasional cultural events, such as Martecchini’s edition of Gundulić’s work, alongside other Ragusan poets who wrote in Croatian and Italian languages during the ’20s and ’30s. Publishing results were crowned by the 1841 encyclopedian edition Galleria degli Ragusei illustri. Owing to its remarkable tradition, Dubrovnik succeeded in maintaining its leading cultural and political position in Croatian terms, as it nested some of the foremost artistic and intellectual minds of the period.

Noteworthy linguistic tradition, and Dubrovnik’s consciousness regarding the cultural integrity of the Croatian littoral, provided most favorable conditions for the spread of the Illyrianist movement in Dubrovnik, and its interaction with Zagreb. The authority of old Ragusan literature and linguistic heritage were built into the very foundations of the Croat National Revival. Relationship between Dubrovnik and Zagreb was further strengthened by myriad personal contacts, correspondence, and visits by the leading figures of the Revival. The Dubrovnik circle of Croat Illyrianists, notwithstanding the omnipresence of the obscure and general Slavic political idea, had most clear views of the national interests. Contributing to the Revival journals, notably to Danica and Zora dalmatinska, a number of Dubrovnik Illyrianists and later advocates of the national movement promoted their ideas. The clear political view of the Dubrovnik Revival circle manifested in its determination to grasp the imperative need for the integration of the Croatian lands, and gradual recognition of Croat name. A similar attitude was expressed in 1848 by none other than the officials of the municipal authority of the Dubrovnik area. Due to the social circumstances in the absolutistic period, many features of the political life began to manifest after the proclamation of the Constitution in 1848. The upheavals of 1848 were the result of political and social fermentation over the preceding decades, and Dubrovnik’s experience should, therefore, be primarily viewed in the sequence of the changes initiated by the 1808 fall of the Republic. Dissolution of absolutism was greeted in both Dalmatia and Dubrovnik with enthusiasm, for it was closely related to the problem of integration with Croatia, and liberal political forces emerged with the issues of landownership and citizens’ rights. The articulation of national consciousness was one of the major developments of the 1848 revolutions, that triggered thus the publishing of two new journals generally covering democratic and national topics. Democracy and nationhood became the central concern of the future political relations.

There were a number of reasons for the population of eastern Herzegovina to migrate to Dubrovnik: relatively open borders, possibility of gaining citizenship, poverty, and
epidemic diseases. Straining to expand its influence over the Ottoman territory, Austria, for the first time, yielded to a variety of Dubrovnik-bound Orthodox immigrants, who, during the first half of the century, assimilated their own confessional integrity to a pronounced Serb national feeling. A parallel process of Croat national integration, notably in culture and literature and within the Illyrianist framework, opened the issue of national relations. Although other parts of Croatia witnessed no national rivalries in 1848, Dubrovnik was experiencing the first complex ideological forms of national differentiation. The spread of Karadžić's idea of the “linguistic Serbhood”, pro-Serbian propaganda of the Russian consul to Dubrovnik and the Orthodox priest in the City parish, as well as the financial prosperity of the Orthodox newcomers - tradesmen and businessmen - vastly contributed to the process of national differentiation in this area.

The year 1848 saw the establishment of two National Revival circles in Dubrovnik. The ideology of the Croat circle of Dubrovnik Illyrianists, all of whom belonged to the city intelligence and aristocracy, was best exhibited in the Dubrovnik’s papers Rimembranze della settimana and L’Avvenire, founded that very year. Contrary to the former mainly culturo-linguistic contents, and owing to constitutionality and freedom of press, these journals opened their pages to the political demands of the Dubrovnik populists. The articles in L’Avvenire, in particular, converged with the all-Croat wants for integrity. Devoid of ethnic basis, but fanned by great many outside factors, Serb national programme found its stalwarts among several ideologists of the “Serbo-Catholic” idea. In the initial phase, the “Serb Catholics” were unable to make clear distinction between the Serb and Slavic idea in their intent to spread it in Dubrovnik and Dalmatia. Being governed by pragmatism and political goals of the Serbs in Habsburg monarchy, advocates of the “Serbo-Catholic” idea supported the unity of Dalmatia with Croatia. Later, however, acting as instruments of great Serbian ideology, they held Dubrovnik to be Serbian and not Croatian. Being inconsistent, multi-character and highly dependant, the group of “Catholic Serbs” had no major influence in Dubrovnik, particularly not in the early phase.

Disregarding the negative consequences which, after all, resulted from the overall historical processes, the first decades of the Austrian rule witnessed the reinforcement of the cultural and political bond between Dubrovnik and Croatian lands. A positive, yet latent dimension of the Austrian annexation kept hovering during the longtime process of national and territorial integration of the Croat people, perceptible both in time of the Illyrianist movement in the first half of the century, and later, over the period of intense political struggle. The entire history of Dubrovnik is thus experienced as a major ideological backup of the pronounced Croat political aspirations, and an indispensable source of the culturo-historical heritage, the City being viewed as one of the centres of the Croat National Revival.


*Okvir slobode* is a book that provides ample insight into Ragusan patriciate, from their real and invented roots to the social, political, ideological, economic and spiritual