

Philologists from the Lika Region – Activities and Contribution to National Identity

The author of this paper provides an overview of the linguistic activity of Šime Starčević, Fran Kurelac and Ante Starčević, philologists from the Lika region. The minister Šime Starčević is the author of *Nova ríscoslovica iliricska: vojníckoj mladosti krajícsnoj poklonjena*; the first Croatian grammar written in Croatian that was based on the štokavian dialect. Fran Kurelac was a famous philologist, pedagogue and founder of *The Rijeka School of Philology*, where he taught his specific artificial language. Ante Starčević, regarded as the Father of the Nation, was active not only in politics, but also in linguistics. His works *The Country Prophet (Selski prorok)* and *Something About Wedding Customs in the Lika Region (Nešto o pírnih običajih u Lici)* represent the reality of contemporary Lika. Furthermore, the author points out the main characteristics of the philologists from the Lika region: stubbornness, consistency and ruthlessness. These are the result of centuries-long tough living in the military part of Croatia, the so-called Vojna Krajina (Military border). The author notes that these philologists should also be remembered for their original ideas and language concepts, which are still being unwarrantably disregarded.

The article leads to the conclusion that the field of activity of the philologists in question is closely related to the way regional as well as national language is viewed today; as an essential element of national identity.

Key words: Ante Starčević, Fran Kurelac, identity, Lika, philology, Šime Starčević