

# RENAISSANCE TO THE EAST: WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP'S BLIND SPOT OR JUSTIFIED NEGLECT?

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UDK: 821.163.42.09»14/15«  
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This paper examines why Renaissance scholarship in the West pays only passing attention to the developments south of Venice and east of Nuremberg–Leipzig–Wittenberg on the example of recently published reference books and books on reading and printing in the Renaissance: Paul F. Grendler's *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (1999); *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (2009); Andrew Pettegree's *The Book in the Renaissance* (2010); Guglielmo Cavallo's & Roger Chartier's *A History of Reading in the West* (1999); and Jean-François Gilmont's *The Reformation and the Book* (1996). While a rich body of literature on the Renaissance exists in the areas peripheral to the mainstream (Croatia, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary), there is little evidence of any dovetailing of research in the West into areas beyond its traditional boundaries. This gives rise to questions: Is there a blind spot in Western scholarship when it comes to the Renaissance to the east? Can the disregard be explained or justified? Obstacles to a more inclusive scholarship are examined and opportunities for a greater integration of research are explored.

**Key words:** Western Renaissance scholarship, Renaissance in Croatia and Eastern Europe, integration of Renaissance research, *incunabula*, 16<sup>th</sup> century book, Renaissance book market.

It is very common to read claims, in Croatian literature on the Renaissance in general and studies on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century culture of the book and printing in particular, that Croatia was integrally connected to European cultural developments and accomplishments of that period. These claims are usually supported with hard facts, including numbers, specific names, dates and places and are by no means frivolous or unjustified. Thus, for example, writing in the journal *Slovo* in 1984 on the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the printing of the Glagolitic missal (1483), Šime Jurić equates the first Croatian printed book to the »highest typographical accomplishment of its time« and goes on provide the broader context within which this *incunabulum* appeared:

[...] I am speaking of the one hundred and fifty books from the 15th century, whose creators were Croatians, be it as writers, compilers, translators, publishers, printers, or contributors by other means. These incunabula of our origin have a multifaceted significance especially as clear indicators of the cultural aspirations and creative endeavours of a small nation which, in those times long past and within the limitations of its means, contributed to the most important invention of the new era. They [the incunabula] are equally significant as evidence of our enduring connection with the great centres of European culture.<sup>1</sup>

Similar claims are made by Mladen Bošnjak, Ivan Esih, Zvonimir Kulundžić, Radoslav Katičić, Josip Bratulić, Igor Fisković, Slobodan Prosperov Novak,<sup>2</sup> and others, and are likewise repeated, on the strength of their own examples, by Polish, Czech, Hungarian and other Eastern and Central European scholars.<sup>3</sup>

All this is in accord with the widely accepted definition of the Renaissance which scholarship has been debating for the past fifty and more years. The most straightforward and cogent version of the definition seems to be Paul F. Grendler's:

Renaissance... means a chronological period beginning in the late fourteenth century in Italy, and beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century in the rest of Europe, and lasting into the early seventeenth century. Intellectual, political, social, economic, artistic and musical developments united the period and made it unique... [S]cholars should view the Renaissance as a particular era of European history with characteristics of its own.<sup>4</sup>

It would seem that the »when« and the »what« of the definition are not contentious. That is not the case when it comes to the »where«. Even though the

<sup>1</sup> Šime Jurić, »Hrvatske inkunabule«, *Slovo*, 34 (1984), 81 [translation: V. Bubrin]. (»...riječ je o stotinu i pedeset tiskanih knjiga 15. stoljeća, kojima su tvorci bili hrvatski ljudi, i to kao pisci, priređivači, prevodioci, izdavači, tiskari ili na drugi koji način. Te su inkunabule našega podrijetla višestruko značajne, posebice kao bjelodano svjedočanstvo kulturnoga stremljenja i stvaralačkoga napora jedne malene nacije koja je u to daleko doba, u granicama svojih mogućnosti, pridonijela svoj obol najznačajnijem otkriću novoga vijeka. Isto su tako važne kao dokaz naših trajnih veza s velikim središtima evropske kulture.«)

<sup>2</sup> For titles and publication details see *Selected Bibliography* at the end of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> See for example: Samuel Fiszman, ed., *The Polish Renaissance in Its European Context*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1988; Sante Gracioti, *Italia e Boemia nella cornice del Rinascimento europeo*, Olschi, Firenze, 1999; J. Huszti, »The Beginning of the Renaissance in Hungary,« *The Oxford Hungarian Review*, 2/3 (1923); and generally, Oskar Hoelck, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, Ronald Press, New York, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Paul F. Grendler, »Renaissance Humanism, Schools, and Universities«, in Max Engammare et al., eds., *L'Étude de la Renaissance: nunc et cras*, Librairie Droz S.A., Genève, 2003, 70.

Turkish onslaught »sharpened the definition of Europe,«<sup>5</sup> in geographic and cultural terms, judging from the questions that surround the consideration of specific aspects of the period, including and perhaps especially the book and reading in the Renaissance, a much smaller world emerges than the promise of the all-embracing definition. Thus, for example, already in 1958, in the pioneering book by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'apparition du livre* (first translated into English in 1976 as *The Coming of the Book*, and reprinted several times since), introducing the events of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the authors pose the question:

Why was it that everywhere, from Avignon to Mainz, from Haarlem to Strasbourg, men were exercising their ingenuity on the problem of producing multiple copies of manuscripts by mechanical means?<sup>6</sup>

According to one of the book's closing chapters, »The Geography of the Book«, the impact of the rapid expansion of printing in Western Europe (Germany, Italy, France, the Low Countries in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and Portugal, Spain, and Poland from a slightly later period) is outlined, but questions regarding some remaining peripheral areas persist:

How, and when, was printing introduced in the countries of Northern Europe, with their less dense populations and their greater distance from the original centres of the [book] trade? How did it adapt itself to the Slav countries, especially to those where a different alphabet was used? How did it adjust to the entirely new conditions encountered by Europeans in their conquest of the New World, where it was necessary to master vast expanses of territory which long remained almost uninhabited?<sup>7</sup>

The lumping together of »Slav countries« with areas of less dense populations to the north and the newly conquered territories across the ocean may be open to an interesting but redundant interpretation; in fairness, however, the authors recognize the limitations of their own direct research and defer the chapter on the arrival of the printed book to Slav countries to the Slavic specialist, Mme. A. Basanoff, a librarian in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.<sup>8</sup>

A more detailed explanation of the fortunes of the printed book in Europe during the Renaissance and later, focusing on the »geography of reading practices«, is offered by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier in their 1995 *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental* (translated into English in 1999 as *A History of Reading in the West*):

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<sup>5</sup> John A. M a r i n o, »The Invention of Europe,« in John Jeffries M a r t i n, ed., *The Renaissance World*, Routledge, New York and London, 2007, 140.

<sup>6</sup> *The Coming of the Book*, Verso, New York and London, 1990, 29.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, »The Slav Countries,« 199-207.

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the geography of reading practices in the Western world depended primarily on the vicissitudes of history. In each region relations with written culture were inscribed within a specific combination of circumstances involving literacy rates, religious preferences and the area's degree of industrialization. The resulting differences created well-established, durable frontiers. One of these separated a Europe that had achieved a high rate of literacy early on from a Europe that only later became literate; another lay between lands that remained Catholic and lands that became Protestant; still another divided areas of early economic development from regions that retained a traditional economy.<sup>9</sup>

Cavallo's and Chartier's Europe consists of the Mediterranean arc, but not beyond Italy, along with central Europe around Germany and England, and takes in developments from the scribal to the print culture. However, without overstepping the general demarcation, at least one of the contributors to *A History of Reading in the West*, Anthony Grafton, in his article »The Humanist as Reader«, points to an exciting world of books beyond the traditional »heartland« and whets the appetite for a closer look:

...[I]n the many non-Italian environments from Dijon to Cracow where medieval and Renaissance, vernacular and Latin traditions converged like currents of different temperatures in an ocean, all sorts of whirlpools formed.<sup>10</sup>

By and large Western literature on the book and reading during the Renaissance is concentrated on what Andrew Pettegree in his *The Book in the Renaissance* calls »the Heart of Europe«<sup>11</sup> on the basis of the sheer output of printed materials in the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In geographic terms he is referring to the quadrangle extending from Venice – Leipzig – Wittenberg to the east, Antwerp to Wittenberg to the north, Lyon to Antwerp to the west, and Lyon to Venice to the south, with centres such as Cologne, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Basel and Strasbourg scattered in the middle (see **Illustration #1**). As we shall see later, Pettegree's quadrangle fits his thesis on the economic side of the printing industry perfectly, though, as he himself shows, it is not as precise when assessing the impact of printing in cultural terms.

<sup>9</sup> *A History of Reading in the West*, transl. by Lydia G. Cochrane, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999, 20-21. Using terms advanced by Riccardo Picchio in the 1960s, Slobodan Prosperov Novak completes the picture of Renaissance divisions according to religion by distinguishing between *Slavia romana* and *Slavia orthodoxa* in his *Slaveni u renesansi*, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 2009. See especially chapters »Kako su Slaveni ostali izvan prve europske književne republike«, 11-19, and »Paralelogram slavenske nazočnosti u Europi«, 53-59.

<sup>10</sup> *A History of Reading in the West*, 188.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2010, 267-9.

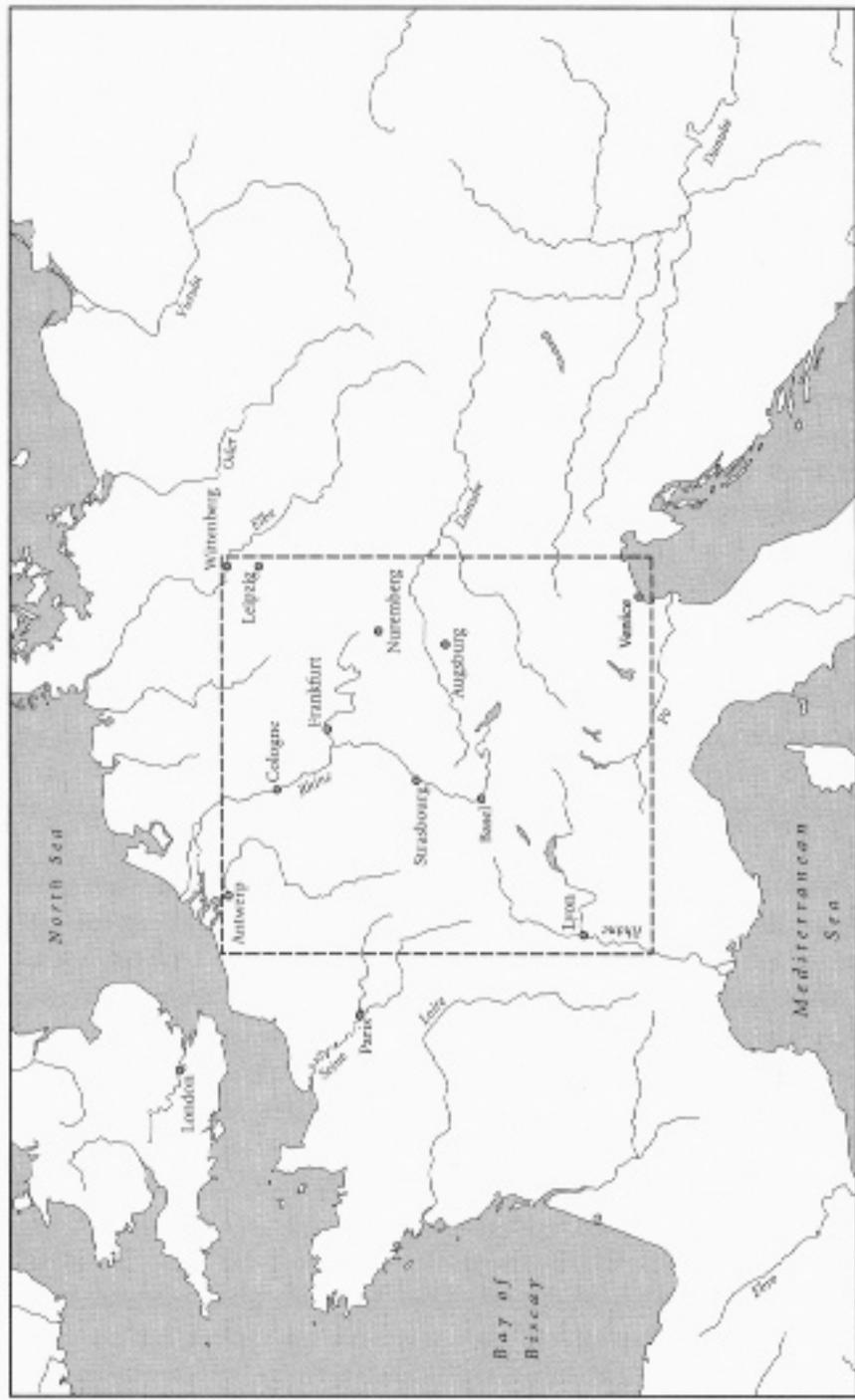


Illustration 1: Heart of Europe. The geographical disposition of Europe's major printing centres.

From this general introduction, I would now like to briefly examine how the Croatian and Eastern European (Slavic) Renaissance fares in Western scholarship within the framework of the »history of books and readers,« in three specific types of literature, namely reference sources such as bibliographies and specialized encyclopedias; books on specific Renaissance themes such as humanism and the Reformation; and monographs on Renaissance books and reading. The body of this literature is indeed vast,<sup>12</sup> so I will be selective, focusing on the most recent publications and those that lend themselves to the topic at hand.

### Reference books

The growing field of the history of the book in Western scholarship in the Renaissance and of the printed book in general, which had its beginning during that period, can be measured in part by looking at the number of reference-type publications: general histories, bibliographies, encyclopedias. Suffice it to say that Croatian and Slavic Renaissance do not figure prominently in Western Renaissance publications of this type.<sup>13</sup>

One might have expected a more comprehensive coverage of books and other aspects of the Renaissance in Croatia and other Slavic areas in specialized dictionaries, handbooks and bibliographies, such as Joseph Rosenbaum's *A Bibliographic History of the Book: An Annotated Guide to the Literature* (1995), *The Oxford*

<sup>12</sup> As noted by Anthony G r a f t o n, who together with Paul F. Grendler is one of the foremost Western scholars on Renaissance education, »The history of books and readers... which rose to prominence first in France and then in the English-speaking world, has sparked the creation of massive collaborative histories of publishing, in which historians, literary scholars and art historians are revolutionizing our knowledge of how texts were produced, formatted, distributed and consumed.« (See: »Renaissance Research Today: Forms and Styles,« in E n g a m m a r e *et al.*, eds., *op. cit.* [4], 66.)

<sup>13</sup> While the topic of the book figures prominently in general studies of the Renaissance such as in Paul J o h n s o n's *The Renaissance* (2001), Jerry B r o t t o n's *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction* (2006, in the popular Oxford University Press series »A Very Short Introduction«), and John Jeffries Martin's *The Renaissance World* (2007), it is not surprising that the focus of these publications, though cross-disciplinary, is exclusively on Italian and transalpine culture. Martin does speak of the Renaissance as a »fertile ground for intellectual exchange« (12-13), which he illustrates by describing the trend of Western humanist teachers travelling to the east. However, no mention is made of Croatian, Polish and Czech students and also teachers who were active in the West. One contributor to Martin's *The Renaissance World*, John A. Marino in his article »The Invention of Europe,« throws into the mix the continent's multiplicity of languages, regional bonds as well as differences in an emerging European identity; in the end, however, *The Renaissance World* gives more coverage to the ties between the Renaissance and the Ottoman Empire (see Daniel Goffman, »The Ottoman Empire,« 347-63) than to what lay between these two opposite spheres, namely Croatia and Central East Europe.

*Dictionary of the Renaissance* (2003), and Charles N. Nauert's *The A to Z of the Renaissance* (2006). Rosenblum does not hide the fact that his selection of works on the book is primarily, though not exclusively, from the West, but no information related to the Slavic and the non-Western European worlds is offered. *The Oxford Dictionary* is completely silent on the Eastern and Central European Renaissance, while Nauert's sketchy coverage mentions the spread of the printing industry to parts of Central Europe (xxviii), but dedicates a mere quarter of a page to Matthias Corvinus and the Corviniana Library (97), half a page to Janus Pannonius (321-22), and has no more than five bibliographic entries on Poland (529).<sup>14</sup>

There are two exceptions to this conspicuous neglect or occasional references: the six-volume *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, edited by Paul F. Grendler (1999, reprinted in 2000), and the two-volume *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, edited by Michael Suarez, SJ and H.R. Woudhuysen (2010). As the titles suggest, the first publication is specific to the Renaissance but not exclusive to the book, while the second is specific to the book, but not exclusive to the Renaissance. Bearing this in mind, with respect to the question of the representation of the Croatian and Eastern European (Slavic) Renaissance, Grendler's *Encyclopedia* is as promising as the *Oxford Companion* is disappointing. Grendler's work, consisting of more than 1,100 articles by more than 600 authors, covers areas traditionally relegated to the margins, including two entries on Croatia by three contributors. Under the heading »Croatia and Dalmatia« we have a general article »Croatia and Dalmatia in the Renaissance« by Anita Mikulić-Kovačević, and a specific article on »Art in Croatia and Dalmatia« by Radovan Ivančević (translated by A. M-K., Vol. II, 106-9). The second piece is on »Dubrovnik« by Susan Mosher Stuard (Vol. II, 216-17). Each entry is followed by a brief but useful bibliography. Granted that the content of these articles is general in nature and more informative than analytical, it represents a positive development in which the editor appears to have sought out existing experts in North America (Susan Mosher Stuard) and in Croatia (Radovan Ivančević), and opened up the pages of his *Encyclopedia* to new scholars (Anita Mikulić-Kovačević). Using original as well as translated contributions well satisfies the publication's scope and objectives.

The two-volume *Oxford Companion to the Book* with 1300 plus pages, is also a grand undertaking, broad in scope and contents, involving close to 400 contributors, authoring some 50 specific articles and an alphabetical thematic listing. Though not exclusively historical, given the origins of printing and the proliferation of books in the 15th and 16th centuries, it is not surprising that many of the articles converge on the period of the Renaissance. After articles on topics such as »The European Medieval Book«, »The European Printing Revolution« and »The Economics of Print«, »Bookbinding«, etc., the *Companion* launches into the history of books around the world, mostly in Britain, but also in Germany, Italy,

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<sup>14</sup> Charles N. Nauert, *The A to Z of the Renaissance*, The Scarecrow Press, London, Toronto, Maryland, Oxford, 2006.

Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and the Balkans, the latter being of particular interest for our discussion. Given the nature and the scope of the publication, it is understandable that the coverage is selective and succinct. What seems to be a shortcoming of the piece entitled »The History of the Book in the Balkans«, authored by Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia and Aleksandra B. Vraneš, is that it tries to fit no fewer than ten different and often culturally and linguistically distinct areas in one article. Presenting the history of printing and book production by applying geopolitical demarcations of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21st centuries appears to be less than an optimal approach. The authors are compelled in the end to deal with each area separately (starting with Bulgaria through Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia, to Albania and Romania). When it comes to the South Slavic component of the puzzle, books printed in the Glagolitic script in Croatia and in various types of Cyrillic are given their due, such as the earliest Croatian *incunabulum*, the 1483 *Missale Romanum*, the 1493 Crnojević's Cyrillic press from Montenegro and the 1494 printing press of Blaž Boromić in Senj. It is unfortunate that the *Companion* omits to give just due to more than a dozen *incunabula* that emerged among the South Slavs, and misses the opportunity to comment on the history of the book and book production that tie this part of Europe, especially Croatia, with printing in the West. Thus, apart from one or two sentences mentioning Venice, where many Croatian books were printed and from where the art was learned and imported, no mention is made of places such as Lyon and Basel, where books by Croatian, ergo South Slavic authors were also printed in the 1500's. Book production by Croatian and Slovenian Protestants in Urach, yet another important area of contact between the mainstream and the periphery, is completely overlooked. The *Companion's* »The History of the Book in the Balkans« also fails to provide any meaningful bibliography even though by 2009, the year of its publication, more than two dozen relevant publications were available in English, French and other Western European languages.<sup>15</sup> The *Oxford Companion's* approach resembles in many ways the one found in Lucien Febvre's and Henri-Jean Martin's 1958 *L'apparition du livre*. It is regrettable that in spite of extensive research since 1958 the *Oxford Companion* fails to advance the subject of the book among the Southern Slavs in the Renaissance and in general in any meaningful way.

### **Humanism and the Reformation**

The coverage of Slavic books fares better in specialized Renaissance research, specifically in the literature on humanism and especially on the Reformation. The inclusion of Croatian and other humanists from the Slavic world both enriches

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<sup>15</sup> See *Selected Bibliography* at the end of this article.

and broadens the field. Prime examples of this are the books by Marianna D. Birnbaum, particularly *Humanism in a Shattered World: Croatian and Hungarian Latinity in the Sixteenth Century* and *Janus Pannonius, Poet and Politician*, published in 1986 and 1981 respectively, and Marcus Tanner's *The Raven King: Matthias Corvinus and the Fate of His Lost Library*, which appeared in 2008. Equally valuable and perhaps even more encouraging in terms of representation of Croatian and Slavic Renaissance in Western scholarship is the inclusion of the discussion of Croatian humanism in publications of an all-European nature. Albert Rabil Jr.'s two-volume *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy* (1988) provides a prime example. In Volume 2, entitled »Humanism Beyond Italy,« Dražen Budiša's article »Humanism in Croatia,« Rado L. Lencek's »Humanism in the Slavic Cultural Tradition with Special Reference to the Czech lands,« and Marianna D. Birnbaum's »Humanism in Hungary,« stand out in particular. These worthy contributions stand side by side with the studies on humanism in England, Spain, France, Germany, the Low Countries, and on Erasmus. While these are not primarily studies on the book and book production, all three authors include in their coverage also this integral aspect of Renaissance heritage. Thus, Budiša draws attention to the polygraphic form of Croatia's written monuments (Glagolitic, Bosnian Cyrillic and Roman alphabets), later to be reflected in the development of printing of Croatian books. As proof of the Croats' integration with the wider European tradition, Budiša describes the frequent visits of Italian teachers (*magistri humanitatis*) to the eastern Adriatic shores and the departure of Croats to Italian cities in order to pursue their education, as well as to the humanist circle of Croat writers at Buda, and the circle of Croat humanists who were active within the framework of Protestantism.<sup>16</sup>

With respect to the Reformation, three authors are worth singling out: Jean-François Gilmont and his *La Réforme et le livre: L'Europe de l'imprimé (1517-1570)* (1990), translated into English by Karin Maag as *The Reformation and the Book* (1998), and Karin Maag's own *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe* (1997), in collaboration with Andrew Pettegree in the book's introductory chapter. Quite understandably, these publications concentrate primarily on Slavic and Eastern European areas where the Reformation appears to have taken root; Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia, and its forays into Poland. Also included is a section on Hungary and Transylvania, and Protestantism's clash with Orthodoxy in 16<sup>th</sup> century Moldavia. In the context of this research, by their own admission the authors invariably grapple with the challenges of what Pettegree elsewhere calls »a patchwork quilt of ethnic communities cut across shifting political boundaries.«<sup>17</sup> With the existence of institutions of higher learning in cities such as Prague and

<sup>16</sup> Dražen Budiša, »Humanism in Croatia,« in Albert Rabil Jr., ed., *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, vol. 2, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1988, 265-92.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *op. cit.* (11), 111-12.

Cracow, the authors emphasize the demand for Latin and scholarly books and contacts with Western humanists, such as Erasmus and others.<sup>18</sup> They also take note of the new energy brought to printing as a result of the religious controversies in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, not only in Latin but also in the vernacular, mainly in Czech, as well as German. The materials printed in German were intended primarily for the settled German enclaves throughout Eastern and Central Europe, reaching as far as Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), which itself was an important eastern outpost of Lutheran printing.<sup>19</sup>

But as noteworthy as these examples are, there are still some conspicuous gaps in this research. For example, there is no reference in the above-mentioned publications to the flurry of translation activity and book production in Urach (Wittenberg) and Regensburg by the Croatian and Slovenian Protestants, Stipan Konzul, Antun Dalmatin, Primož Trubar and others. While it is true that these efforts did not result in any notable gains in the promulgation of Protestant reforms, the technical accomplishment of setting up printing in the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets, along with the cultural significance of translating biblical and other religious texts into Slovenian and Croatian for the wider use of all Southern Slavs cannot be denied. Granted that this particular area of research has started to flourish only recently even among Croatian, Slovenian and other Slavic scholars, a cursory review of available sources in German and other Western languages listed in publications such as Alojz Jembrih's *Stipan Konzul i »Biblijski zavod« u Urachu* (2007), and Slobodan Prosperov Novak's *Slaveni u renesansi* (2009) makes this omission in publications bearing the title *The Reformation and the Book* and their likes all the more conspicuous. Nonetheless, there is room for optimism, given that we have two bodies of literature with only a bridge between them missing. Perhaps translations of representative Croatian and other Slavic research into French, English, etc., as it was seen in publications on humanism, hold the answer to the question of how best to narrow the gap and arrive at a more comprehensive and inclusive coverage of the book and other aspects of the Reformation within the broader context of the Renaissance.

### Monographs on books and reading

Books about books have become a field of research onto itself. This, together with the emergence of online databases, which make books and works of art from the Renaissance immediately accessible on screen, has prompted one

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<sup>18</sup> See also Paul F. Grenler, »The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation,« *The Renaissance Quarterly* 57 (2004), 1-42.

<sup>19</sup> See Andrew Pettegree and Karin Maag, »The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe,« in Karin Maag, ed., *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1997, 13. See also Pettegree, *op. cit.* (11), 112-13.

observer to call ours »a new bibliographical world.«<sup>20</sup> It is also often held up as one of the prime examples of the advancement of Renaissance studies in the past two decades, building on the seminal work on Renaissance manuscripts, the *Iter Italicum* by Paul Oskar Kristeller. Examples of publications from three European major languages can be cited. In chronological order, they are: Karl Schottenlohrer's *Bücher bewegten die Welt: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Buches* (1951-1952 and 1968, translated into English in 1989 as *Books and the Western World: A Cultural History*); the already mentioned Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's *L'apparition du livre* (1958); Elisabeth L. Eisenstein's two-volume *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979) and more recently her *Divine Art, Infernal Machine* (2011); Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier's compilation of essays *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental* (1995 and 1997); and Andrew Pettegree's *The Book in the Renaissance* (2010).<sup>21</sup>

In our review of references to the printing and reading of Croatian and Eastern European (Slavic) books in Western scholarship, Pettegree demonstrates a refreshing awareness and openness to the subject beyond the strict Western European confines. The others limit their discussion of the book explicitly or implicitly to the traditional Western European confines. For example, Schottenlohrer's exploration of where books were printed, distributed and collected during the Renaissance, their influence on princely courts, and the stimulus they derived from the Reformation, confines itself to the developments in Germany and Western Europe. In the case of Elisabeth Eisenstein, while the scope of her *Divine Art, Infernal Machine* is broader with respect to the impact of the book on historical and political developments in Renaissance Europe, the points regarding religious conflicts and regional rivalries are based primarily on the examples of Italy and Germany. Her earlier the two-volume *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* focuses on the cultural transformation brought about by the introduction of printing, including the formation of modern consciousness, censorship, the shaping of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Clearly, she had no need to go beyond Western Europe in order to find material in support of her thesis.

Notwithstanding the worthiness of the above-mentioned publications, insofar as Croatian and Slavic Renaissance is concerned, only Pettegree widens the scope of research without blurring its focus. Though his *The Book in the Renaissance* is also centred on Western Europe as seen in the already mentioned quadrangle, the heart of European book production and its market, i.e. the »business of the book«, Pettegree also explores the wider theme of the *culture* of the book. It is this wider approach that takes him to areas around the quadrangle, including Croatia

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<sup>20</sup> G r a f t o n, *op. cit.* (12), 59-61.

<sup>21</sup> One should mention here also a series of more popular books, exemplified foremost by Alberto Manguel's *A History of Reading* (1996), which have done a lot to promote the topic of books and reading; these, however, are too general to merit specific discussion within the narrow confines of the present discussion.

and Slavic Central Europe. What prompts this is Pettegree's observation that very soon after Gutenberg the story of the Renaissance book world was defined by an enormous diversification of the book market:

...[A] world shaped less by the idealism of scholars than by pragmatic businessmen for whom the only books that mattered were those that turned a profit. In the process print pushed into areas of society previously untouched by the medieval manuscript... [Books] in the vernacular languages flourished side by side with the still buoyant market for texts in Latin, the international language of scholarship.<sup>22</sup>

Not surprisingly, the road to any discussion of Croatian books during the Renaissance, as well as books of other parts of Slavic Europe, leads to Venice. Pettegree notes that with the expansive reach of Venice's publishing, books printed in that city reached every corner of the European market, from Spain and Portugal to Hungary and Poland, all outside of the heartland of the European book world.<sup>23</sup> Given that the mainstay of the industry in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was liturgical publishing, Venetian publishers responded to the requests for printing missals and breviaries for the rites of some thirty dioceses outside the Italian peninsula, from Esztergom to York, from Zagreb to Zaragoza.<sup>24</sup> The German Lutheran printing presses served a similar function a few decades later for the Reformation movement in Bohemia and Poland (which of course included German settlers in those areas, Sudetenland, Silesia, and the already mentioned Königsberg).<sup>25</sup> Further on in *The Book in the Renaissance* the point is made that these areas also had their own, albeit smaller printing industry, with Poland and Bohemia publishing some 4,000 books each during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup>

What is particularly commendable is that with every new or major trend discussed, Pettegree also shows the things that do not fit the core European mold but represent an exception. Thus, for example, he ends Chapter 12 entitled »Market Forces« with a sub-chapter called »Outriders« wherein he describes the book markets and activities away from the center of European printing, »...which spread the experience of print to the farthest reaches of the European landmass – and beyond.«<sup>27</sup> In this context he describes the challenges of casting Cyrillic and Glagolitic types, and the remarkable results achieved on the example of the Croatian 1483 Glagolitic (Roman) missal:

<sup>22</sup> Pettegree, *op. cit.* (11), xiv.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. It can be surmised that in the case of Zagreb Pettegree is referring to the *Missale secundum Chorum et Rubricam Almi episcopatus Zagrabiensis Ecclesiae*, published in Venice in 1511.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

A huge technical problem was the casting of the Cyrillic [and Glagolitic, V.B.] type. Given the relatively low levels of literacy this involved an investment that could most easily be undertaken in the larger, better capitalised centres of printing. Most early printing for the South Slavic lands was undertaken in Venice. Particularly remarkable was a missal with Glagolitic type published for use in Croatia. This was a cultural masterpiece, but a doubtful economic proposition.<sup>28</sup>

Interestingly and quite tellingly, the source from which Pettegree draws this information is an article written in French by a Croatian scholar, Aleksandor [sic] Stipčević, »Aspects de la production du livre croate au XVe siècle,« which appeared in *Les Croates et la civilisation du livre*, edited by Henrik Heger and Janine Matillon and published at the University of Paris – Sorbonne, in 1986.<sup>29</sup> Pettegree's closing thoughts on Slavic Renaissance printing are perhaps open to debate, but from a Western scholar's point of view understandable:

Overall, printing in the Slavic languages is the most fragmented and disjointed of all European print traditions: a tribute to the enduring interest in experimentation rather than a fundamental factor in the intellectual evolution of these lands.<sup>30</sup>

More than once in his book Pettegree refers to Matthias Flacius Illyricus as a resolute Lutheran standard bearer<sup>31</sup> and a pamphleteer during internal Lutheran (Protestant) disputes in Magdeburg in the mid-1550s, without mentioning the reformer theologian's provenance. What is surprising, however, is that *The Book in the Renaissance* omits to mention the printing presses and book production by Croatian and Slovenian Protestants in Urach. The same is true of the article that Pettegree co-authored with Karin Maag on »The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe« in *The Reformation and the Book*. In light of recent research confirming the impact of those efforts in the development of the Croatian language and culture,<sup>32</sup> one wonders if Pettegree would find reason to modify his view regarding the absence of »fundamental factors in the intellectual evolution in these lands«?<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 383, footnote 38.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 265-6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>32</sup> I have in mind here Alojz Jembrih's *Stipan Konzul i »Biblijski zavod« u Urachu. Rasprave i građa o hrvatskoj književnoj produkciji u Urachu (1561.–1565.) i Regensburgu: prilog povijesti hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti protestantizma*, Folia Protestantica Croatica – 01. Teološki fakultet »Matija Vlačić Ilirik«, Zagreb, 2007. In addition to the body of Jembrih's book itself, it also contains an extensive bibliography (367-81), with many entries in German, and a couple in Italian and Latin.

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.* (30).

Reading through Pettegree's *The Book in the Renaissance*, one can easily draw parallels between the types of books and printed materials discussed therein and the printed outputs discussed in Croatian literature on the book in the Renaissance exemplifying the Croatian printing and book heritage.<sup>34</sup> Though extensive, the list is not exhaustive, and includes the following:

- missals, lectionaries, breviaries, books of hours, catechisms and hymnals;
- theological and philosophical treatise, hagiographies and religious polemics;
- orations and open letters or addresses;
- statutes, historical writings and news pamphlets;
- dictionaries, grammars and primers;
- encyclopedias;
- maps and cartography;
- medical manuals;
- merchant manuals;
- vernacular literature of various kinds.

This is indeed an impressive list of multidisciplinary Renaissance printed books and materials, set apart from their Western counterparts not so much by contents, but in many cases by their language (vernacular Croatian and liturgical Slavonic), their polygraphic variety (Latin, Glagolitic and Cyrillic) and in a few instance also their local, Croatian production. It is understandable that Croatian scholars are inclined to emphasize the place of origin of authors and printers more than their Western colleagues for whom authorial provenance and culture may be of incidental interest. Even though the volume of these printed outputs pales in comparison to what came out of Western Europe, it is undeniable that the printed book advanced the spirit of the Renaissance in Croatia and other parts of Eastern Europe.

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<sup>34</sup> See especially Josip Bratulić and Stjepan Damjanović, *Hrvatska pisana kultura*, vol.1, Veda, Križevci, 2005, and Eduard Hercigonja, ed., *Hrvatska i Europa: kultura, znanost i umjetnost. Svezak II: Srednji vijek i renesansa*, Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti and Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2000. The latter title was published in English as follows: Ivan Supičić, ed., Eduard Hercigonja, deputy ed., Roland Jovanović - Baroldas, English language co-ordinator and ed., *Croatia in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance: A Cultural Survey* (Volume 2 of *Croatia and Europe*), Philip Wilson Publishers – Školska knjiga, London-Zagreb, 2008.

## Conclusion

What conclusion can be drawn from this brief overview of literature on the book regarding the representation of the Croatian and Eastern European (Slavic) Renaissance in recent Western scholarship? Although one cannot say that Western scholarship ignores the manifestations of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe altogether, it has not integrated this area into its research. As can be seen from the literature on the book and on reading, Croatia and Eastern Europe remain peripheral, still on the margins of the Western European scholar's interest.

This raises the question: is this marginalization justified? The answer depends on what one chooses to emphasize. Looking at the book as a commodity of the business or trade of printing and publishing, irrespective of how highly the Croats, Czechs and Poles may regard their contribution, the activities in the West surpassed by far the meager output of Eastern Europe and its sparse network of distribution. The statistics, which Western publications often display, and Pettegree's appears to be the most accurate and pointed account, speak for themselves (see chart in **Illustration #2**). As Pettegree shows, of the total of 345,170 printed

**A SUMMARY OF PRINTED OUTPUTS  
THROUGHOUT EUROPE, 1450–1600**

	<i>Vernacular</i>	<i>Scholarly</i>	<i>Total</i>
France	40,500	35,000	75,500
Italy	48,400	39,600	88,000
Germany	37,600	56,400	94,000
Switzerland	2,530	8,470	11,000
The Low Countries	17,896	14,021	31,917
Subtotal	146,926	153,491	300,417
Percentage of total	81.99%	92.48%	87.03%
England	13,463	1,664	15,127
Spain	12,960	5,040	18,000
Scandinavia	873	793	1,666
Eastern Europe	4,980	4,980	9,960
Subtotal	32,276	12,477	44,753
Percentage of total	18.01%	7.52%	12.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,202</b>	<b>165,968</b>	<b>345,170</b>

Illustration 2

outputs throughout Europe from 1450–1600, a mere 9,960 came out of Eastern Europe. This number also pales in the narrower comparison with other areas of Europe outside of the core of the Europe's Renaissance printing centres, with the exception of Scandinavia. Even if one were to add to the Eastern European total the printing outputs by Croatian and other Slavic authors in the core printing centres in Latin and other Western languages, statistically the difference would not be significant.

Many authors often point out that in the period immediately after the introduction of printing, in addition to religious institutions, the biggest demand for printed books came from universities. Consequently, printing shops were soon concentrated in cities with universities. In the Slavic lands only Prague and Cracow could boast such an institution at that time. It should also be pointed out that towards the latter part of the Renaissance the book was closely tied to the aspirations of the Reformation, once again, with few exceptions, a predominantly Western phenomenon. Strictly in business terms, we are reminded that those who dominated the economics of publishing also had much to do with the identity of the book and its dissemination.<sup>35</sup> The fact that there were agents, humanist teachers in Slavic lands, missionaries (Reformers), book peddlers, itinerant printers, even bookshops (e.g. the *librarius* Don Paolo Vukašinić in Dubrovnik<sup>36</sup>), demonstrates how far and wide the printed book reached but does not detract from the domination of the Western European core of book production and circulation.

All this goes to explain, if not totally justify, the underrepresentation in Western scholarship of the book in Eastern European (Slavic) world. With regards to Croatia in particular, it seems that her proximity to Venice was both a blessing and a curse. A blessing, because study after study shows that through Venice, Croatian churchmen, scholars and writers, though fewer in number, were integrated in the humanist movement. A curse, because their identity in the contribution to both Western and Slavic Renaissance culture got lost in the big picture. This goes not only for the authors writing in Latin, Italian and Croatian, but also the craftsmen who worked as printers in Venice and other Western European printing centres. It is only in Croatian research that they are unambiguously recognized and given their due. A similar argument can also be made with respect to the Croats who took part in the Reformation – any discussion of the Reformation can hardly be conducted without including the likes of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Stipan Konzul, Petrus Paulus Vergerius – however, in their case the nature of their translation and printing endeavours leaves no doubt regarding their Slavic identity.

<sup>35</sup> *A History of Reading in the West, op. cit.* (9), 189. See also Paul F. G r e n d l e r, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1977, 14-16.

<sup>36</sup> See Josip T o r b a r i n a, *Italian Influence on the Poets of the Ragusan Republic*, William & Norgate Ltd., London 1931, 24-5, and John Jeffries M a r t i n, »The Renaissance: A World in Motion,« in *The Renaissance World, op. cit.* (5), 3-30.

When it comes to the book as a cultural phenomenon rather than a trade commodity, the slight coverage of the Renaissance to the east in Western scholarship is more difficult to justify. In my opinion, this is where the blind spot still exists. The unawareness or inattention in Western scholarship to the unique contents, the script, the emergence of the vernacular and other indicators of a vibrant Renaissance culture in areas beyond Western European core remains common. In spite of extensive research and studies on Renaissance topics in Croatia and elsewhere to the east, Western- and Eastern-European scholars seem to continue to work for the most part in isolation of one another. It is, therefore, refreshing to come across exceptions to the above rule in the works of Renaissance specialists such as Paul F. Grendler and Albert Rabil Jr., who include in their compilations authors and studies from beyond the usual Western-European confines.<sup>37</sup>

However, it is Andrew Pettegree who addresses our question directly. In an article co-authored with Karin Maag some three years before his *The Book in the Renaissance*, he touches upon the »curious, and in many ways distorted perception« of Western scholars in face of the question whether there was a Reformation in Eastern Europe. This observation can safely be applied to Western scholarship's awareness of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe in general. The main and perhaps the most obvious reason given for the sad state of affairs is the barrier of language:

...[L]inguistic barriers continue to be a powerful impediment to studying these [Reformation/Renaissance] events. The complicated ethnic and linguistic patchwork of Central and Eastern Europe means that a scholar often needs to master several languages as a basic tool of research. This can be a compelling disincentive to all but the most persistent and gifted.<sup>38</sup>

Pettegree gives another reason, taking into account the political situation in Central and Eastern Europe during the time when Renaissance scholarship was flourishing in the West:

...[T]he most powerful reason for the neglect of Eastern Europe has been the troubled history of the region in the twentieth century. The almost total exclusion of lands such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia (as it then was) and

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<sup>37</sup> In the case of Grendler, in addition to the coverage of Renaissance in Croatia in his *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, and his inclusion of several Slavic and Eastern-European Protestant Reformation religious leaders/university professors, among them also Matthias Flacius Illyricus, in his article »The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation«, he also includes the Istrian-born Petar Pavao Vergerije Istranin in his *An Italian Renaissance Reader* (1992). In the interest of completeness it should be mentioned that Croatian poets Ianus Pannonius, Georgius Sisgoreus, Marcus Marulus, and Aelius Lampridius Cerva are included in Alessandro Perosa's and John Sparrow's *Renaissance Latin Verse* (1979).

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Pettegree and Karin Maag, *op. cit.* (19), 1-2.

Poland from free cultural and political interchange with neighbouring lands to the west for 45 years from 1945 had a huge distorting effect.<sup>39</sup>

While the second of the two obstacles has been overcome with the fall of the »Iron Curtain,« the linguistic barrier remains. With few honourable exceptions, there are no signs that Western scholars are rushing to learn Croatian, Czech, Polish, or Hungarian, to name at least those areas with a Renaissance culture of some significance.

There are, nonetheless, short-term solutions to this shortcoming in the absence of any signs of longer-term integration of scholarship. Making greater use of translations into Western languages of works of Eastern European scholars makes eminent sense, particularly on topics that straddle both sides of the continent (as I have endeavoured to show, examples of this already exist in the study of humanism and the Reformation). Another, equally effective approach could be to take greater advantage of Western-trained scholars specializing in the Renaissance in Eastern Europe and related comparative studies by including their works in Renaissance-focused periodicals and learned conferences. Finally, one should not overlook the opportunities offered by computer and internet-aided collaborative projects, the new »bibliographic world« alluded to earlier.<sup>40</sup> In this author's view, these and similar approaches would bring about a greater awareness of the Renaissance to the east, not as a separate field, but as an integral part of Renaissance studies.

### **Acknowledgement:**

The author and *Colloquia Maruliana* are grateful to Professor Andrew Pettegree and Yale University Press for their kind permission to reproduce the map of the »Heart of Europe« and the »Summary of Printed Outputs Throughout Europe, 1450–1600« as these appear on pages 268 and 357 respectively in Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Grafton, *op. cit.* (12).

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