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“Neither a peasant nor a gentleman”: Vladimir Ardalić, commissioner and honorary founder of Croatian Antiquarian Society, in correspondence with Lujo Marun

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Vladimir Ardalić was one of the most prolific associates of the Croatian Antiquarian Society and the only member who was ever named honorary founder for his archaeological contributions. This paper, almost entirely based upon Ardalić’s 488 unpublished letters intended for Lujo Marun and dated between 1893 and 1917, investigates his role as a sort of a rural “renaissance man” of the Dalmatian *fin de siècle*, who acted as an intercessor between the rural peasantry of Bukovica which had access to valuable early medieval archaeological objects and locations, and the First Museum of Croatian Monuments which had the means and desire to procure these objects and to organize archaeological excavations at many of these sites.

Apart from Ardalić’s contributions to the field of archaeology, attention is also given to other aspects of his life, such as his political career in the municipal government of Skradin, his fruitful association with the South Slavic Academy of Sciences and Arts for which he wrote many ethnographic works, and his rich social life which, in many ways, formed the basis for his career as a politician, amateur archaeologist, ethnologist and paleontologist.

Translated: Graham McMaster