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The Practice of the Collective Memory on the Island of Hvar, Case Study of the Hvar People's Uprising

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This paper explores one contemporary reflection of the important event in the history of the island of Hvar in central Dalmatia. It is symbolically named “island of memory” as it possesses particular feature of separateness that the sea has established in isolating the island community to become particularly interwoven and interdependent. In this manner the symbiotic insular society frames memory of the specific historical instances that were of distinctive island's origin. Connecting the theory of the nissology with the theory of the collective memory the hypothesis of the “island of memory” is suggested by which island population creates its collective memory on the specific geographical features of the island separateness and internal social cohesion.

It deals with the remembrance of the “Hvar People's Uprising” of 1510-1514 and its leader Matij Ivanić that is considered a move for social equality in the feudal period of Venetian Republic. Today they are the symbols of the resistance against all kind of external intervention and elements of island population's cohesion and self-sufficiency. The transition process of the Uprising in the island collective memory was modified by various political and ideological stimuli but retained distinctive island traits.

Key words: nissology, collective memory, island of Hvar, Vrbanj, Hvar People's Uprising, Matija Ivanić, island of memory, island community

Introduction

Local communities that are particularly interwoven and close connected hold to memory as something of an exceptional value. Such line of thought is





particularly applicable to the small island communities.¹ This paper explores the means of remembering of particular historical narrative appropriate to the island of Hvar's history.² In order to discuss the practice of collective memory of the particular island and how that memory has been formed it is necessary to understand particular features of an island community, as a whole. An island, as a part of the land surrounded by the sea, forms memory through different associations that emphasise its unique geographical position. The crucial feature is the separateness that the sea has established in isolating the island community to become particularly interwoven and interdependent.³ How great or small is the distance from the mainland or the neighbouring island makes no significance because local community builds the identity on the natural border provided by sea. The identity does not undermine regional or national one but builds additional associations as a result of particular circumstances.⁴ This identity can be named fixed as opposed to a fluctuating one due to the unique island position that builds upon the character of local community. Although, when observed in chronological perspective there are fluctuations which are the consequence of modernity but certain elements remain the same. Those elements include the need for self-sustainable life, self-defence in a case of an external aggression, basic food cultivation and production, and seafaring. They are all built upon the notion that outside help could be lost some time. Therefore, the island community appreciates its closeness, interdependence and compactness.

To trace different aspects of identity of the community good starting point is the collective memory. The theoretical approach to this vast area of memory studies proceeds from Maurice Halbwachs seminal concept on collective memory.⁵ The framework of the memory surpasses individual impressions and is supplemented by a group memory that resides outside

1 On the island studies, nissology, cf. Godfrey BALDACCHINO, Islands, *Island Studies Journal*, *Island Studies Journal* 1, no 1, (May 2006), 3-18, <https://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/vre2.upei.ca/islandstudies.ca/files/u2/ISJ-1-1-2006-Baldacchino-pp3-18.pdf>, (31 January 2020); Pete HAY, A Phenomenology of Islands, *Island Studies Journal* 1, no 1, (May 2006), 19-42, <https://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/vre2.upei.ca/islandstudies.ca/files/u2/ISJ-1-1-2006-Hay-pp19-42.pdf>, (31 January 2020). Nissology is being explained as "critical, inter- and pluri- disciplinary study of islands on their own terms". However, Baldacchino elaborates this definition with the key mandate of nissology as "sharing, advancing and challenging existing theorization on islands and islands studies; while avoiding, delimiting or debunking false or partial interpretations of the island condition", BALDACCHINO, Islands, *Island Studies Journal*, 9.

2 Since there are variety of islands with the wide differences of the area covered, here I am focused on the island of medium surface with the population between 10,000 and 20,000. Those are characteristics of typical Adriatic island and Hvar is not an exception.

3 HAY, A Phenomenology of Islands, 32-33. Hay quotes the book of David HARVEY, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Oxford, 1996 who wrote on the permanence of place that acquire much from the collective activity of people who mould the place and give new layers to existent narratives.

4 Cf. Ana PERINIĆ LEWIS, *Otoci otoka Hvara. Pluralizam lokalnih otočnih identifikacija*, Zagreb, 2017. Perinić Lewis writes of multiple identities that are appropriate to different places on the island or even different parts of the island. Those are connected to the migration background, urban or rural place and even to local preconceptions and stereotypes.

5 Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. On different theoretical approaches and concepts see: James V. WERTSCH, Henry L. ROEDIGER III, Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches, *Memory* 16(3), (2018), 318-326.





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timespan of the particular life. In the course of time progress memory is built upon, modified and appropriated with the various means of expression and commemoration. Starting from the idea of Maurice Halbwachs "that no human being ever lives in total isolation; all human activity is socially determined or socially constructed"⁶ I would extend this premise to describe island society that is isolated in itself from the outside groups (regional, national, international) when adopting certain ideas and constructions by means of which it processes the past, remembers and applies experiences. So, to explore Halbwachs idea of inexistent isolation, it is possible to build on the same idea even further and postulate that island society lives in a particular isolation of the outside world while the islanders, on the opposite, are closely connected in regard to that isolation. However, from a chronological perspective it can be argued that previously in history this isolation was greater, and nowadays it is somewhat reduced or even eliminated due to the means of modern communication. Certain amount of that isolation always remains because it is not dependant on the quality of communication but on the idiosyncrasy of an island society.

Moulded by the insular feature the island community undergoes specific process of remembering. Particular historical narratives that are of local origin gain attention and are used as the identification markers of the island community. The dominant feature of narratives is set by the geographical determination of the island and by the opposition to "the other" who is/are not of island origin.⁷ The narratives surface as collective memory when particular contemporary problems arise which are manifested in disagreement to the other; whether to the mainland, to the particular policy or some national/regional legislature which is of negative effect for the island's population. However, these memories developed and framed through past always associate with contemporary issues that are in the centre of local preoccupation. The correlation of the collective memory and the island's particular features explored within nissology may serve as the hypothesis named "the island of memory". In this instance, "the island of memory" acquires literal and figurative meaning, while it certainly is an island and symbolically it is an individuality determined by geographical nature populated with the society that produces collective memory. This article aims to explore a particular historical narrative, its appearance, development and reflections on the island of Hvar and the position within the contemporary collective memory. Since "island of memory" signify isolated and reshaped narratives it is necessary to understand the underlying account and the ways it modified and blended into contemporary collective memory context. It is valuable to notice the process of transformation from researched accounts to reframed and re-evaluated accounts within the local collective memory. To associate with certain historical narratives means to frame particular views

6 Erika APFELBAUM, 5. Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory, in: Susannah RADSTONE / Bill SCHWARZ, eds. *Memory. History, Theories, Debates*, Fordham University Press, 2010, 77-92, 85.

7 PERINIĆ LEWIS, *Otoci otoka Hvara, Pluralizam lokalnih otočnih identifikacija*, 22.





and opinions about them, to process them collectively and to employ historical imagination. This article aims to achieve a crossing between theories of nissology and the collective memory with historical perspective.

Setting

The island of Hvar is situated on the eastern Adriatic coast in the central Dalmatia, a historical region up to the First World War. Nowadays the name Dalmatia is not used officially and only denotes a historical region part of Roman Empire, Medieval Croatian Kingdom, Venetian eastern Adriatic possession, and 19th century Austrian crown land.⁸ Being a part of the larger states, Hvar always followed similar historical destiny, but also had a particular individual life especially denoted by the communal organization under the Venetian Republic when local self-governance was supported.⁹ The experience of self-governance and the feature of the island's separateness from the land made an imprint on the local community life. Maritime traffic that is in essence very irregular, unstable, subject to weather conditions, and economic reasoning created the notion of uncertainty. The connections with the neighbouring land were not regular and island had more appreciation and benefit for the connections with Venice and other Dalmatian communes.¹⁰ Between two other islands of the similar size (Brač and Korčula) and near several smaller (Vis, Šolta, etc.) Hvar, the main town on the island of the same name, was important stop on the sailing routes that proceeded from north to south within the eastern Adriatic coast. Due to the elongated shape, the ships sailed off its southern side for the passage to south Adriatic and the Mediterranean Sea.¹¹ This made Hvar a very important centre of maritime trade that became, with fishing, viticulture, olive and corn growing, and to a smaller extent cattle breeding, the main economic activity of the island.¹²

Besides the main town, several other places on the island developed taking strategical positions on the northern shoreline, including Stari Grad, Jelsa, and Vrboska, with Sućuraj on the most eastern point of the island the closest to the mainland. Very fertile ground for vine and olive growing

8 Bibliography on the history of the island of Hvar is extensive. Cf. Grga NOVAK, *Hvar kroz stoljeća*, Hvar, 1960; Miro A. MIHOVILOVIĆ, ed, *Otok Hvar*, Zagreb, 1995; Francis William CARTER, *Development of Settlement and Population up to 1900 on Hvar Island, Central Dalmatia, Croatia*, Doctoral thesis, Zagreb, 1999.

9 Maja NOVAK, *Autonomija dalmatinskih komuna pod Venecijom*, Zadar, 1965.

10 Contemporary perspective is mostly positioned from the mainland towards the islands often with a confusing outcome interpreting the island out of that position. In previous centuries, especially during the time of the Venetian dominance the sea view was maintained as the normal. This produced a different construction of what is centre and what is periphery creating ambiguity to a modern observer.

11 Mithad KOZLIČIĆ, Plovidba Jadranom 14.-16. stoljeća u putničkim izvješćima, *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru, Razdio povijesnih znanosti* vol 35, no. 22 (1996), 257-279.

12 Šime PERIČIĆ, Pregled razvitka gospodarstva otoka Hvara do 1941., in: Miro. A. MIHOVILOVIĆ, ed, *Otok Hvar*, Zagreb, 1995, 266-291.





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occupies the central part of the island between Stari Grad and Jelsa and below the villages of Vrbanj and Dol. This land known as *Campus Sancti Stephani* had been cultivated even since the arrival of the ancient Greeks settlers in 384 BC, and on through the centuries having today an important function for the island's agriculture. All these elements enabled the independent living and self-sustainable development. The population on the island varied in number, with the influx of migration from the Ottoman Empire in several instances but mostly during the 16th and 17th centuries. This shaped different identities and tradition that are not easily noticeable today but there is the dominant division of the population of the central part of the island (old population) and those on the eastern part (that originates from the migrations).¹³ The most recent census of 2011 produced a number of 11,077.¹⁴ On the contemporary basis, due to the highly developed tourism and influx of new population it is very debatable to speak of genuine island community but nonetheless smaller communities especially within island's villages are preserved keeping the traits of the collective memory.

Hvar People's Uprising

The case study of the collective memory deals with a specific historical event originating from the early 16th century. While under the Venetian rule, from 1510 to 1514 the whole island was engulfed in very bloody class struggle that shook the fabric of the insular world. The unrest is known as Hvar People's Uprising signifying the clashes between the classes of nobles and the commoners (plebeians) over different issues that surfaced over the centuries of coexistence. The island came for the first time under the Venetian rule in 1278.¹⁵ With several brief interruptions the Venetian dominance consolidated in 1420 and remained until the 1797. During this period, the Venice gave to commoners wider rights that almost levelled the difference between the classes. They were allowed to have insight in fiscal and tax books, to exempt themselves from the services with the fines paid, and to vocalise their demands with the body named Plebeian Congregation. However, the nobles were careful not to allow the commoners to take control of the island introducing laws through the Great Council, thus nullifying all the demands of commoners. This situation, where both classes had certain rights and privileges, but the whole power was reserved for the nobles, was a cause of occasional frictions. At the beginning of the 16th century, those differences escalated when some of the nobles were accused of raping the girls from the commoners' ranks instigating

13 PERINIĆ LEWIS, *Otoci otoka Hvara, Pluralizam lokalnih otočnih identifikacija*, 194-222.

14 The census results distributed according to municipalities https://www.dzs.hr/hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/H01_01_03/h01_01_03_zup17.html (31 January 2020).

15 Lovorka ČORALIĆ, Otok Hvar u prošlosti, in: Miro A. MIHOVILOVIĆ, ed, *Otok Hvar*, Zagreb, 1995, 72-93, 76.





an organized movement that ended up in an open revolt. The revolt started in 1510 simultaneously with the case of miraculous cross weeping blood that instigated collective turbulence and brought the situation to a boiling point.¹⁶ The leader of the commoners was wealthy Matij Ivanić from the village of Vrbanj who had houses in several places on the island and enough land. The difference between his social and economic position demonstrates the gap that was present between the classes and the inability to move upwards on this ladder. Very soon, he assembled an army of 2,000 men with 30 galleys that patrolled the waters of the island. The first action happened in Stari Grad where Ivanić managed to force the nobles to accept their demands and on to Hvar town where the similar action took place asking for equal division of taxes and equal membership within the Great Council. The confrontations on the island continued for some time before the first intervention of Venice who organized peace negotiations that ended in reaching an agreement. Venice sent *Providore* Sebastian Giustiniani to bring order but his treatment of the rebels was extremely harsh and only made the situation worse. The rebellion continued for four years until the 1514 when Venice sent a fleet of 15 galleys of war under the command of Vincenzo Capello who destroyed the ships of commoners, occupied the island and successfully managed to capture most of the rebels, some of them hanged as a warning. Matij Ivanić escaped the island to the mainland and later went to Rome where he died, leaving behind the fame of an elusive rebel. The struggle for the equality on the island continued later but it never reached such a blooded level as it was during the early 16th century.

Hvar People's Uprising is among the best researched cases in contemporary Hvar's historiography. The plethora of written sources of Venetian and Hvar's origin enabled a good insight into the processes behind the uprising. After some early modern local historians who had described the uprising in their writings, Šime Ljubić, a historian of the local origin gave a fairly detailed description in his book "Pregled hrvatske povijesti"¹⁷ published in 1864. Since then, the Uprising has become a part of almost all books dealing with the overview of national history. The position of the late 19th century and early 20th century Croatian historians was of Hvar Uprising as a fight against the cruel Venetian governance and the laws it passed. Similar attitude remained in the early 20th century during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between World Wars. It was important to present Venice Republic as a foreign force that subjugates the local population or leaves them in an unfair struggle against the nobles. However, during the second, Socialist Yugoslavia, Matij Ivanić and the

16 The research on the Hvar People's Uprising is extensive cf. Nikša STANČIĆ, ed, Matij Ivanić i njegovo doba, *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 10, no. 1 (1977), https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id_broj=4490; (31 January 2020); Ivo KASANDRIĆ, *Hvarski pučki ustanak*, Split, 1978; Andro GABELIĆ, *Ustanak hvarskih pučana. Izvori, tokovi, dometi*, Split, 1988; Marija ZANINOVIĆ-RUMORA / Joško BRACANOVIĆ, *Izvori o hvarskom pučkom ustanku/Sources About the Hvar People's Uprising*, Hvar, 2014; Mateo BRATANIĆ, ed, *500. obljetnica ustanka hvarski pučana: zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa*, Hvar, 2014.

17 Šime LJUBIĆ, *Pregled hrvatske povijesti*, Rijeka, 1864, 169-171.





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Uprising gained more attention in historiography but also in public in general. The publication of the local periodical "Hvarski zbornik" in 1973 brought new intensity in the study of the uprising.¹⁸ During the last quarter of a century several books were published dealing with different elements of the Uprising history. Two conferences were held on the island with the presentations of different historians who explored different aspects of the Uprising and the role of the leader Matij Ivanić.¹⁹ It can be fairly concluded that the topic is well researched and understood. However, some questions remain unanswered due to contradictory opinions of historians or even to the exaggeration of historians who focused on the social differentiation of classes, a very prominent topic of investigation during the Socialist Yugoslavia. One of them was Andro Gabelić who wrote several books on the Uprising always sticking to the issues of social clashes observed from the Marxist historiography corner.²⁰ Interpreting particular document of the 5 August 1511 and quoting the opinion of Maren M. Frejdenberg on the same document Gabelić insisted that commoners had in mind "an advanced socio-economic programme" in order to take the rule from the hands of the nobles and introduce "democratic government".²¹ In time, his interpretation were even more radicalised while he started to speak in terms of revolution.²²

The paths to collective memory

Between two Worlds Wars the roots of the Uprising and Matij Ivanić started to spread across the island of Hvar. Since most of the peasants as colonates²³ worked in the fields owned by rich landowners giving part of their crops (grapes, olives etc). to them, they started to rebel against it. From 1922 there were several attempts to break this burdensome relationship that ended in higher police presence on this island stopping the spread of the revolt. The peasants had in mind the Uprising of the 1510 and Matij Ivanić who, in their

18 ZANINOVIĆ-RUMORA / BRACANOVIĆ, *Izvori o hvarskom pučkom ustanku/Sources About the Hvar People's Uprising*, 22.

19 The first conference took place in 1976 with the published articles in Nikša STANČIĆ, ed, Matij Ivanić i njegovo doba, *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest*, 10, no. 1 (1977), https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id_broj=4490. (31 January 2020). The conference held in Hvar was frequented by local population who accepted some ideas presented. The other in 2010 to mark the 500 year anniversary of the beginning of Uprising took place in Hvar, Stari Grad and Vrbanj, the very location of different stages of the Uprising. The proceedings of this conference were also published: Mateo BRATANIĆ, ed, *500. obljetnica ustanka hvarski pučana: zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa*, Hvar-Zagreb, 2014.

20 Beside already referenced book of Gabelić, cf. also Andro GABELIĆ, *Ivanićev ustanak i bunt Dalmacije. Kritika degradiranja slobodarske baštine*, Hvar, 2007; Andro GABELIĆ, *Tri sadržaja Ivanićeva ustanka. Položaj Dalmacije i odnos njezinih staleža prema Veneciji*, Split, 2012.

21 GABELIĆ, *Ivanićev ustanak i bunt Dalmacije. Kritika degradiranja slobodarske baštine*, 85.

22 Announcing the second conference of 2010 the regional daily newspaper wrote of the Hvar's Uprising as 'the first bourgeois revolution in Europe': "Hvarski je ustanak prva revolucija", *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 25 May 2010, 17.

23 Colonate is a peasant working on land of rich owner, free but tied to a land giving almost 1/4 of the fruits to the masters. This remnant of feudal relations remained in Dalmatia until the 1930s, cf. <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=32469> (31 January 2020).





opinion, had resisted the very same issues. The name of rebel leader was popular amongst the members of the Communist Party that had strong roots on the island. The class resistance and the opposition to ruling elites as the exploiters fed on the Uprising narrative. All the similarities in the agrarian relations, especially the difficult position of the colonates contributed to the acceptance of the Matij Ivanić as the symbol of the resistance. The name of rebel leader took root amongst the population on the island of Hvar, especially amongst those who were opposing to politics and ruling elites. He was associated with issues dealing with land cultivation, peasants, poor and oppressed. On several occasions before the Second World War in Vrbanj, a birthplace of the rebel leader, there was a heated discussion between members of Croatian Peasant Party and the members of Communist Party as how to name cultural centre and the idea of local communists to name it after Matij Ivanić had won.²⁴ Obviously, the name had the strength to cross the party lines since the whole island esteemed the values of the historical event four centuries old.

The issues of social equality, the overthrow of the upper classes, especially when substantiated by historical examples, were always commonly accepted topics in the period of Socialist Yugoslavia. When the Second World War started the name of Matij Ivanić became very famous and gradually spread from local insular environment to the whole Yugoslavia. After the small partisan battalion on the island was named after him, his name became the beacon of the antifascist resistance. The comparisons between the Venetian rule and the Italian fascist occupation of the island were excellent motivator for local partisan forces. Soon Ivanić was a topic of party lectures and indoctrination, a rebellious leader who had fought the dominance and the oppression of the higher classes. His name became the paragon of resistance against foreign occupation (referring to Italian and after 1943 German occupation) but also against the oppressions of higher classes who were seen as the culprits for the difficult position of workers and peasants.

During the war, the name of Matij Ivanić became the person of importance in the manifest of National Liberation Committee of Dalmatia that used his example as a factor of cohesion putting him in the line of other famous characters from the Dalmatian history such as: Grgur Ninski, Ivan Gundulić, Marko Marulić and Frano Supilo. All of them are paragons against the “enemies”, a generic term that incorporates different external forces in Dalmatia through history. Among them, Matij Ivanić, is present as a rebel “puntar”²⁵ from Hvar.²⁶ Afterwards, his name was often used in speeches and manifests giving him new layers of meaning and significance that became accepted on the island of Hvar and in the whole Dalmatia.

24 Nikola ANIĆ, Pučki ustanak na Hvaru i Narodnooslobodilački rat, in: Nikša STANČIĆ, ed, Matij Ivanić i njegovo doba, *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 10, no. 1 (1977), 513-523, 514.

25 “Puntar” in plural “puntari” denotes the rebels from the northern Croatian territories with feudal relations, cf. *Hrvatski enciklopedijski rječnik*, Zagreb, 2002, 1079.

26 The manifest of the National Liberation Committee of Dalmatia to the people of Dalmatia of 29 January 1943, cf. U smislu narodnih težnji, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 13 March 1975, 3.





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Very famous communist marching song “Slobodarka” (Song of Freedom) with the first verse “Padaj silo i nepravdo” (Fall oh force and injustice) was sang calling in mind his name.²⁷ The song was adapted on several occasions by the local poets²⁸ who added the verses appropriate to the social position of peasants but also referring to the Uprising and its leader. The verses speak of the stolen right, enslaved low classes and calls to mind the Uprising and Ivanić. The translation of the most important verses: “Our stolen rights, Come give them back to us! If you do not give, we will not beg, The people themselves will seize them! /We have raised cities for you, Built buildings and towers, Forever we have been slaves, And for you we laboured./ The misfortune will be great, In the strong places, When you see that from the villages We are advancing with the pickaxes./ “A new age shall come to be, Oh Matij Ivanić. From the grave you will rise, And with you into battle I shall go!” The local poets managed to incorporate into verses all the elements of the Uprising, from the social inequality, class conflict, call to overthrow the nobles and oppressors and specifically naming Matij Ivanić to lead into battle, manufacturing a 16th century insurgent into a paragon leader of antifascist movement. On occasions the name of Matij Ivanić was substituted with the Lenin.²⁹ Inevitably, such substitutions were meant to incorporate the wide range of ideas streaming from Soviet Union based in class struggle and the intentions to overthrow exploiting regimes. Since the song became very popular and was widely sang during the war and the name of Matij Ivanić did not always communicate the idea to different nations in Socialist Yugoslavia, while the name of Lenin had more universal significance. Several key motifs in the song refer to the popular peasant culture (forced labour, pickaxes, and villages) attesting to the ideas of the Uprising, but also to elements of de-urbanisation since the building and tower are seen as places of slavery and forced labour. Urbanisation has been represented in the domination of Venetian Republic that helped the nobles to break the Uprising. In the contemporary context the urbanisation was represented in the form of land owners who lived in villas (buildings or towers), but also in the occupation of the island and the whole region during Second World War by Italian and German forces.

The meaning and importance of the Uprising and its leader that was exploited throughout the 20th century had a huge impact on the island population. The tradition was rooted strongly during the Socialist Yugoslavia giving the island of Hvar's community a particular reference point, a link to “glorious history” brought to collective memory. The model of Matij Ivanić, a

27 The song was written by Josip Smodlaka, prominent politician from Dalmatia as an anthem of his Croatian Democratic Party founded in Split in 1908. The Party represented mostly peasant population fighting for better agrarian relations and the abolition of colonate system, cf. Josip SMODLAKA, *Zapisi dr. Josipa Smodlake*, Zagreb, 1972, 51.

28 The adaptation of the original song was done by locals, Grga Gamulin and Ante Bojanić in 1935, cf. ANIĆ, *Pučki ustanak na Hvaru i Narodnooslobodilački rat*, 525. Grga Gamulin had been, at that time, student in Zagreb, and after the War he became university professor of art history.

29 Cf. ANIĆ, *Pučki ustanak na Hvaru i Narodnooslobodilački rat*, 525; Rodoljub ČOLAKOVIĆ, *Susreti s Hvarom*, *Hvarski zbornik* 3, (1975), 33-46, 34.





fighter for just cause, for the rights of the oppressed, and for the strong island individuality, remained the dominant representation of the past. In the years following the war the Uprising became a focal point that was commemorated almost with the same intensity as the antifascist victory in the war. It seems as if these two historical events separated almost with four and a half centuries were amalgamated into joint commemoration practices. To confirm such fusion, it is possible by reading the text of the commemorative plaque set upon the wall of Matij Ivanić Culture Centre in Vrbanj. The text of translation goes: “People of the island of Hvar, liberated from the shackles of slavery on 444th anniversary of the Uprising against the lords in the birth place of the people’s leader Matij Ivanić commemorating the fallen for justice and freedom of the working people raise this plaque, 30 May 1954”.³⁰ Obviously, the text commemorates two separate events while mentioning the “people” in the Croatian form “puk” which is very similar to “pučani” ie. commoners who were liberated from the supposed “slavery”, while they had been free but lower in social strata. The reference of slavery was juxtaposed to the liberation in Second World War although it specifically states that it happened 444 years ago. Further on, the adjective “fallen” refers to both the Uprising commoners and the Second World War partisan casualties. And finally, the confirmation of this line of thought is the mentioning of “working people” that cannot be related to the Uprising but only to the contemporary, post Second World War situation.

The production of memory using the Uprising and Matij Ivanić continued farther during the period of Socialist Yugoslavia. It was mostly done on provisional anniversaries of the Uprising, especially during the 1970s and early 1980s. Several new plaques were put up to mark his house in Vrbanj, another house of his ownership in Vrboska, and the place in Hvar town before the Rector’s Palace where the 2 000 armed commoners headed by Matij Ivanić demanded the equality of classes and formed Great Council as the representative body of all people in Hvar commune. The last plaque, erected in 1983, speaks further of the ideals of freedom and equality of all people in politics and civil rights. It seems that the memory of the Uprising was additionally exploited on the island, but it gradually lost its previous enthusiasm. The first conference on the Uprising of 1976 showed that Matij Ivanić actually had been wealthy commoner with several houses and lands who had left Hvar while the Venice reasserted its authority over the island. After two unsuccessful attempts to return, he settled in Rome where he died rich.³¹ Although these new findings did not blemish Ivanić’s character in local memory, they however, produced new traits of adventurous and rich rebel. Nonetheless, his significance started gradually to move from the political position to local collective memory level.

30 In original: “Puk otoka Hvar oslobođen okova ropstva na 444. godišnjicu bune protiv gospode u rodnom mjestu pučkog vođe Matije Ivanića na spomen palima za pravicu i slobodu radnog naroda podiže ovu ploču 30. maja 1954.”

31 Nada KLAJIĆ, Novi pogledi na uzroke bune Matija Ivanića u svjetlu društvenih pokreta u srednjovjekovnoj Dalmaciji, in: Nikša STANČIĆ, ed, Matij Ivanić i njegovo doba, *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 10, no. 1 (1977), 51-64.





The practice of collective memory

Since the break-up of Socialist Yugoslavia, the Uprising and Matij Ivanić's character were of no associational value to a new Republic of Croatia, leaving the tradition of the Uprising to the collective memory of the island of Hvar. The production of memory by the political elites gradually subsided giving place to production on the level of island community or even to a specific place such as Vrbanj where the centre of memory is positioned. Since the memory is transmitted by people in the process of permanent evolution opened to different influences, occasionally dormant and again revived,³² the associations of Uprising after the 1990s were modelled within the framework of the island of Hvar's inhabitants, or particularly to smaller units which appropriate the memory according to particular occasions. The existing body of knowledge about the Uprising among them is modelled through the education and the island as the scenery of the Uprising. These are supplemented by existing plaques that give particular information but also "communicate" as reminders of particular events and call to mind "glorious" past. The process is rendered down to the narratives that arise of particular occasions where some feature of Uprising is referential to contemporary issue.³³

The only official information that island community gets is through education and those are very sparse. The history handbook for high school has only one small paragraph about the Uprising. After giving basic data on the demands of the commoners, mentioning the leader of the revolt – Matij Ivanić, it is concluded that the commoners had not managed to endanger communal system and Venetian authority on the island.³⁴ However, since the Uprising is the important aspect of local history teachers tend to widen the presentation of the topic that includes visits to a particular sights of interest, such as the birth place and the house of Matij Ivanić in the village of Vrbanj.³⁵ In this manner, the pupils are introduced to history that gradually, after the end of teaching, turns into collective memory refreshed by particular island sights that pop up on occasions as the important places they were familiarised in education.

With this basic information that are infused during the education into the collective memory of the island additional layers of the narrative are formed in the process of historical imagination. "All relations between past and present, memory, temporality itself all underwrite the processes of the

32 Pierre NORA, *Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, *Representations*, no. 26, Special Issue Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989), 7-24, 8. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928520> (31 January 2020).

33 On the memory production James V. WERTSCH, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 10-29.

34 Hrvoje PETRIĆ / Goran RAVANČIĆ, *Povijest 2*, Zagreb, 2003, 182.

35 The exact house where Ivanić was born is unknown, although the sources place it in Vrbanj. The house that is in collective memory of the village community designated as his birth place is of uncertain background and not substantiated in sources. However, the plaque on the house that was erected during the Socialist Yugoslavia mistakenly describes that particular house as the Ivanić's birth place. Cf. GABELIĆ, *Ivanićev ustanak i bunt Dalmacije. Kritika degradiranja slobodarske baštine*, 134-135.





historical imagination” according to Bill Schwarz who wrote of the similar processes of understanding past of professional historians and memory of particular community.³⁶

Since the whole island was the scenery of the Uprising it can be addressed as the environment of memory (*milieux de mémoire*) whereas the inhabitants are the carriers of collective memory who, in union with the place, while processing memory, turn combined into site of memory (*lieux de mémoire*). According to P. Nora there are three components of the site of memory: “material, symbolic and functional”.³⁷ All of them can be traced in the memory of the Uprising (material in archives and the publications of historians, symbolic in the rituals associated with the event, and functional in the processing of the memory within island community).

After early 1990s the Uprising went through process of deritualisation,³⁸ with the exception of the 2010 conference when two new plaques were erected. However, this was one occasion that did not resound within the island community like the previous during Socialist Yugoslavia.³⁹ The reason is that it did not involve any political factors neither any kind of message was communicated, so the deritualization was continued. It seems that the Uprising and Matij Ivanić are committed to the collective memory of the island that is modelling them according to existing issues and topics that arise from time to time.

One particular occasion of the practice of collective memory happened in 2003 when there was initiative by local communal authorities and farmers to cement old road that led to the farming fields. Since those fields had been under protection of Ministry of Culture’s Conservation Department from Split due to their ancient Greek origin, the Department put a ban of the cementing the road and ordered it to be restored to previous conditions. This had an adversary effect on locals, especially those from Vrbanj who were looking upon the situation as an attack on their rights to freely go to their fields without car damage that occasionally happened on the unpaved road. The final outcome of the commotion resulted in the Vrbanj farmers’ blockade of the ferry port in nearby Stari Grad the only connection with the mainland at that time. As reported by witnesses and local newspapers the farmers called in mind the Uprising and its leader Matij Ivanić as the role model for the situation at hand.⁴⁰ The context of the protest and the remembrance of the Uprising by the farmers presents several parallels that could be drawn. The protest stands for the Uprising itself as an opposition to difficult situation that was administered from the above. Since the ban came from Split, a regional centre, not from the island, such situation created similarities to the position

36 Bill SCHWARZ, 3. Memory, Temporality, Modernity, in: Susannah RADSTONE / Bill SCHWARZ, eds. *Memory. History, Theories, Debates*, Fordham University Press, 2010, 41-58, 42-43.

37 NORA, Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire, 7, 18-19.

38 Ibid, 12.

39 Hvarski je ustanak prva revolucija, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 29 May 2010, 17.

40 Prosvjednici pola sata blokirali trajektnu luku, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 14 October 2003, 4.





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of Venetian Republic towards the island of Hvar during the Uprising. The symbolic severance of relations would be to stop ferry traffic which was a direct link with the mainland ie. the centre of the resented ban. Since some of the farmers brought farming tools (hoes and pickaxes) to protest, it bears resemblance to the commoners who used same weapons to fight their cause during the Uprising. After the protest, that was essentially unsuccessful, local farmers spread the story that they managed to overpower present police forces, although that information is false.⁴¹ Besides the similarities at hand, the most important detail was that the occasion brought to mind, within the protesters, the Uprising and Matij Ivanić, as a role model of their predicament and behaviour, the confirmation that collective memory is modelled according to existing concerns.⁴²

In the last 50 years, the island of Hvar mostly developed through tourism based on summer holidays and rich cultural heritage.⁴³ However, the narrative of the Uprising did not fit in the touristic offer since it was constructed on the traits of opposition to external influence and distinctive island features. Although there were initiatives to introduce the character of Matij Ivanić to the tourism the idea remained unfulfilled since it was difficult to remodel the narrative in a way appropriately acceptable to outside visitors.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The island of memory as a hypothesis applied to this particular case study has manifold meanings. Starting from the geographical notion of an island as the space surrounded by the sea, as a result we are faced with the living environment where the society is fashioned differently in comparison to the mainland society. The first association is of natural isolation that creates different living condition exhibited in everyday life through work, social comportment and acquired attitudes. In historical perspective, the life on the island was never without problems and thus it generated self-sustainable community which had to come up with solution to all challenges. Thus, physical isolation gradually conditioned life and mind-set of independence, divergence and self-preservation. Constructed island identity fixed within the local community might be decoded when reading into the particular

41 Transcript of the interview with one of the protesters Petar Razović on 1 February 2020 in possession of the author.

42 Another confirmation of such reasoning is the title of the newspaper article "Matij Ivanić is called to mind even today on the island" where it is stated that inhabitants of the island of Hvar remember Matij Ivanić when facing with the difficult situation, cf. Matiju Ivanića na škoju i danas zazivaju, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 21 August 2012, 24.

43 Marinko PETRIĆ, *Hvarski turistički spomenar: sentimentalno putovanje kroz turističku prošlost Hvara*, Hvar: Turistička zajednica grada Hvara, 2001.

44 Visko Haladić: Matij Ivanić i danas može služiti Hvaranima, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 21 September, 2014, <https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/dalmacija/visko-haladic-matija-ivanic-i-danas-moze-sluziti-hvaranima-247370>. (31 January 2020).





narratives that are existing in the collective memory. Such sites of memory are particularly preserved from external influences due to the separateness conditioned. The impact of modernity did not skip the island but, nonetheless due to the deep-rooted notion of detachment collective memory is even more maintained. Such community creates particular narratives as a result of interdependence and closeness and moreover, those narratives relate to the particularities of the world they are occupying.

The case study of the Hvar's People Uprising and the leader of the movement Matij Ivanić is distinctive "island of memory" as the event that happened five centuries ago but still very much present and processed in the collective memory of the island community. During the 20th century it was researched by historians who produced the narrative that was apt for island community and immediately appropriated. Moreover, the features of Matij Ivanić were exploited during the Socialist Yugoslavia in politics and ideology since they had associations with dominant issues. After the break-up of Yugoslavia in early 1990s the memory of Uprising and Matij Ivanić were committed to island community exclusively. Shaped through the passage of time and within particular circumstances the site of memory continues to be processed on the island of Hvar occasionally materialising with extraordinary vehemence. All three components: the island, the community and the symbols construct this specific site of memory.





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Sažetak

PRAKSA KOLEKTIVNOG PAMĆENJA NA OTOKU HVARU, STUDIJA SLUČAJA HRVATSKOG PUČKOG USTANKA

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Članak istražuje suvremeno sjećanje na važan događaj iz povijesti otoka Hvara smještenog u središnjoj Dalmaciji. Simbolično je nazvan „otok sjećanja“ pošto ima posebnu odliku odvojenosti koju je more uspostavilo izolirajući otočnu zajednicu koja je postala snažno isprepletena i međuovisna. Na ovaj način povezano hvarsko društvo oblikuje sjećanje kroz posebne povijesne događaje koji imaju specifično otočno porijeklo. Spajajući teoriju nisologije s teorijom kolektivnog sjećanja uspostavlja se hipoteza „otoka sjećanja“ prema kojoj otočno stanovništvo gradi svoje kolektivno sjećanje na specifičnim obilježjima geografske separacije i unutarnje društvene povezanosti.

U radu se obrađuje sjećanje na „Hvarski pučki ustanak“ iz 1510.-1514. i njegova vođu Matija Ivanića kao pokret za socijalnu jednakost u razdoblju Mletačke Republike. Danas, to su simboli otpora svakoj vrsti vanjskog utjecaja i čimbenici kohezije i samodostatnosti otočnog stanovništva. Proces tranzicije Pučkog ustanka prema otočnom kolektivnom sjećanju se modificira kroz različite političke i ideološke utjecaje, ali zadržava distinktivno otočno obilježje.

