

Remnants of Regional Pride – A Review of Z. Freivogel's *Carski i kraljevski razarač Warasdiner*

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Zvonimir Freivogel. (2021). *Carski i kraljevski razarač Warasdiner*. Zagreb-Varaždin: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti. (pp. 117; bibliography; hb; 150 HRK; ISBN 9789533473932)

The monograph *Carski i kraljevski razarač Warasdiner* (*Imperial and Royal destroyer Warasdiner*) is the work of well-known Croatian naval history and warfare specialist Zvonimir Freivogel. It was published in 2021 with the help of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The monograph concerns the fate of a would-be destroyer of the Chinese Navy, *Lung Tuan*, which entered service as an Austro-Hungarian destroyer after the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. The vessel was given a name of great regional significance, *Warasdiner*, as the city of Varaždin represents an important location in Croatian history, thus giving gravity to Freivogel's research of the topic. His monograph focuses on *Warasdiner*'s war efforts and the destroyer's ultimate fate following the end of war in 1918.

The monograph is written entirely in Croatian, excluding topic summaries, which are in English and German at the end of the book. It is composed of 117 pages enriched with 93 black and white photographs from private collections across the globe, four technical drawings of various naval war vessels, three photographs used with the permission of The Varaždin City Museum, two naval maps, as well as a representation of one of Austria-Hungary's Imperial and War Navy flotillas. The book's content is divided into seven large chapters: "Austroougarska ratna mornarica" ("The Austro-Hungarian War Navy") (pp. 13-17); "Izum torpeda, torpiljarke i razarači torpiljarki – svjetski i austroougarski razvoj" ("The invention of torpedoes, torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers – their international and Austro-Hungarian development") (pp. 17-27); "Razarači klase *Huszár*" ("Huszár class destroyers") (pp. 27-43); "Obnova kineske ratne mornarice na prelasku iz 19. u 20. stoljeće" ("The Chinese Navy's recovery at the turn of the 20th century") (pp. 43-47); "Od *Lung Tuana* do *Warasdiner*a" ("From *Lung Tuan* to *Warasdiner*") (pp. 47-51); "Varaždinska 16. pješačka pukovnija" ("The 16th infantry regiment of the Austro-Hungarian Army") (pp. 51-63); "Razarač *Warasdiner* u Prvome svjetskom ratu" ("*Warasdiner* and its efforts in the Great War") (pp. 63-99). The opening part of the monograph also contains the editor's commentary, as well as Freivogel's short introduction to the topic (pp. 7-13). The closing pages of the book contain summaries (pp. 99-103), the sources consulted (pp. 105-109), and an index of important information (pp. 111-117).

The Chapters “The Austro-Hungarian War Navy” (“Austrougarska ratna mornarica“) (pp. 13-17) and “The invention of torpedoes, torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers – their international and Austro-Hungarian development “ (“Izum torpeda, torpiljarke i razarači torpiljarki - svjetski i austrougarski razvoj“) (pp. 17-27) describe innovations that made a significant change in the *modus operandi* of Austria-Hungary’s Imperial and Royal Navy at the turn of the 20th century. The end of the 19th century represented a period of rapid technological advance, which foreshadowed a new era of naval warfare. Modern shipyards capable of constructing warfare relevant vessels appeared in Austria-Hungary at the end of the 19th century. At that time, the Empire possessed the globe’s seventh largest naval and armed force. During the Great War, geopolitical circumstances hindered Austria-Hungary’s anticipated war efforts, especially in conducting naval warfare. The absence of widespread strategic ports in the Mediterranean impaired Austria-Hungary’s mobility and the effective reach of its naval vessels. Meanwhile, the constant presence of British, French and Italian (Italy joined the war in May 1915) submarines and destroyers posed a great danger to Austria-Hungary’s merchant shipping and other activities in the Adriatic.

During the first decade of the 20th century, the Austro-Hungarian Navy matched the average rate of production of British shipyards. By 1912, twelve *Huszár* class destroyers represented the most dangerous asset of the Navy. Their development and detailed technical characteristics are further presented in the chapter (pp. 27-43). The destroyers were developed from British and Japanese technical blueprints, and the majority of these powerful vessels were constructed and launched in Trieste (five of them), starting in 1904. By the outbreak of the Great War in July 1914, *Huszár* class destroyers were replaced by a more powerful destroyer class.

The Chinese Navy, following a series of defeats against the superior Japanese Navy in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), took interest in renewing its assets. One of the most promising offers came from Austria-Hungary, which presented an acceptable option for material and finance-deprived China. The chapter “The Chinese Navy’s recovery at the turn of the 20th century” (“Obnova kineske ratne mornarice na prelasku iz 19. u 20. stoljeće“) (pp. 43-47) explains the activities of Chinese diplomatic delegates and their efforts in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. Ship construction was agreed upon in Great Britain, Italy, Germany and Austria-Hungary. In 1910, Austro-Hungarian officials authorised the additional construction of a single *Huszár* class destroyer, which was to be delivered to the Chinese Navy. *Huszár* class destroyers were explicitly intended for internal use. However, this authorization was a rare exception. The destroyer was launched in Trieste in April 1912 with the name *Lung Tuan*.

The first naval vessels ordered in Europe were delivered to China from Great Britain in 1913. However, in the wake of the Chinese Revolution in 1911, the Chinese government terminated agreed-upon contracts with European powers regarding the construction of much-needed naval assets. Despite *Lung Tuan*’s launch in 1912, Freivogel emphasises the lack of evidence as to why the destroyer had not been delivered to the Chinese Navy before the outbreak of global conflict in July 1914. This yet unexplained phenomenon is the focus of the next chapter, “From *Lung Tuan* to *Warasdiner*“ (“Od *Lung Tuana* do *Warasdinera*“) (pp. 47-51). By the outbreak of conflict in July 1914, *Huszár* class

destroyers were put out of service and replaced by newer and more versatile *Tatra* class destroyers. However, as the conflict intensified, *Huszár* class destroyers were once again put in service, and the Austro-Hungarian authorities put *Lung Tuan* in active service on 10 September 1914 under the name *Warasdiner*. The destroyer remained in active service until the end of the Great War.

The next chapter gives much-needed focus to the existence and war effort of the 16th infantry regiment of the Austro-Hungarian Army (pp. 51-63). *Warasdiner* was named in honour of regiment's bravery and selflessness in early campaigns against the Kingdom of Serbia. The regiment was mostly composed of men from northern parts of Croatia. This unit proved itself as a valuable asset of the Austro-Hungarian forces, conducting early offensives against the enemy. The chapter emphasises the unit's early war effort, as well as its popularity, thereby offering an explanation as to the origin of the destroyer's name.

The following chapter, "*Warasdiner* and its efforts in the Great War" ("Razarač *Warasdiner* u Prvome svjetskom ratu") (pp. 63-99), represents the most extensive part of the monograph. It focuses on reconstructing *Warasdiner's* war efforts based on available documentation, as well as giving an insight into the intensity of naval warfare in the Adriatic during the Great War. Almost immediately after the outbreak of war, *Tung Luan* was renamed *Warasdiner* and put into active service as part of the Imperial and Royal Navy. Its main task was monitoring enemy submarine activities in the Adriatic. With Italy joining the war in April 1915, naval operations in the Adriatic greatly intensified. The Italian Navy had access to the formidable *Soldati* class destroyers, which had great mobility and firepower, overpowering *Huszár* class destroyers. In the first part of 1915, *Warasdiner* was further appointed as an anti-submarine vessel, reporting activities of sighted enemy submarines in the Adriatic. In the second half of the year, the destroyer conducted operations at Italian and Albanian ports. In December 1915, *Warasdiner* successfully destroyed the French submarine *Fresnel* off the coast of Adriatic, marking its greatest accomplishment of the war. Until the end of the Great War, *Warasdiner* further conducted battle operations against targets off the coasts of Albania and Italy. Its war efforts are further represented in the chapter (pp. 78-99). At the end of 1918, *Warasdiner* was given to the representatives of the newly founded State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. Following the peace treaties of Versailles, which confirmed Austria-Hungary's dissolution, the destroyer was officially given to the Italian Navy. However, it was soon dismantled and sold for scrap metal. Thus ended the life of the famous *Warasdiner*, which conducted (as Freivogel claims) "*23 convoy escorts, two mine-hunting campaigns, four submarine pursuits, as well as a hydroplane escort operation*" (p. 83).

The published monograph provides valuable information on the importance of Croatian troops and the influence they exerted on Austro-Hungarian propaganda during the Great War. A summary of *Warasdiner's* activities represents an important discovery, further widening the understanding of complex naval activity in the Adriatic during the Great War. High-quality photographs of multiple naval vessels comprise a big part of the work and fit together well with its textual content. Furthermore, the monograph is bound to promote new research on this topic in the future. The monograph will be of use to

everyone, but especially to interested individuals looking to broaden their understanding of naval activity in the Adriatic during the Great War. Moreover, the work is likely to promote research into Croatia's regional history and its undeniable role in the early campaigns of the Great War as (then) part of Austria-Hungary. Translations of the monograph in English and other languages would be most welcome.