

From the Editor

It is with great pleasure that we present the latest issue of the *Croatian Studies Review* to the academic community and wider public. The publication of this issue has been impacted by several significant events. Therefore, the fact that it is finally here brings even more joy.

After 25 years as the Editor-in-Chief of the Croatian Studies Review, Luka Budak retired in 2020. This departure left the journal, alongside the Croatian Studies Centre at Macquarie University, where he served as the Director for over 35 years, in my hands. This transition occurred amidst another curriculum change within Croatian Studies at Macquarie University, which introduced a new study structure in early 2020. Furthermore, this coincided with the onset of pandemic restrictions, occurring just three weeks into the academic year.

All these events caused a shift in our focus, aligning with many teaching academics globally, as we redirected our attention toward online teaching and other non-research activities due to the significant impacts of pandemic restrictions. Additionally, during a period of reduced pandemic restrictions, we faced the task of unpacking roughly 300 boxes of books, journals, and archive materials. These materials had been inaccessible for three years due to building refurbishments, and in late 2020 they finally found their new home within the new Arts Precinct at Macquarie University.

For those of us at the University, the pandemic restrictions translated into prolonged periods of working from home, limited resource accessibility, and, most notably, a disruption to our established staff mobility program with Croatian universities. Consequently, for over three years, the Croatian Studies Centre was unable to host overseas guests or facilitate staff travel for research or other purposes. Additionally, the University proposed cuts to courses and units in 2021. This led to the loss of cultural and advanced language units in 2020, followed by the removal of the Diploma of Languages and the Croatian Studies Major in 2021 within the Croatian Studies program.

While these changes redirected our focus toward reinstating lost opportunities, collaboration with colleagues abroad and the work on the *Croatian Studies Review* continued. Throughout 2021 and the first half of 2022, we processed a substantial number of submissions, each undergoing a double-blind peer review. We are most grateful for the dedication and expertise of our reviewers, whose contributions were invaluable to the peer review process. Regrettably, not all submissions could be considered for publication.

The Editorial Board is committed to enhancing the journal's quality to better serve the academic community, both as authors and readers. As part of this commitment, the journal will continue to use English as its primary language. While we support Croatian language preservation in our other initiatives, the journal's uniqueness lies in it being the sole multidisciplinary scholarly publication discussing Croatian and Croatian-related topics in English. This approach aims to widen its accessibility to a broader academic audience. We acknowledge the importance of preserving the Croatian language but believe maintaining this journal's distinctive direction is equally significant. While numerous Croatian journals publish articles in Croatian, this publication stands as the sole known platform presenting Croatian history, language, literature, culture, and traditions in English. This distinctive focus remains integral to the journal's mission.

This volume comprises two original scholarly works (Velić, Macan & Medak), two professional articles (Njegovan, Bošnjak), one book review (Činć), and a tribute article honouring the significant contributions to Croatian Studies in Australia by Professor Peter Hill, Gracian Biršić OFM, and Vladimir Novak OFM (Budak).

As previously mentioned, the completion of this volume for publication would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions and timely feedback from our international pool of reviewers. I am deeply appreciative of their efforts. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to all those involved in both the current and previous issues, including editors, assistant editors, secretaries, members of the editorial or advisory board, and others. The preparation of any publication for print necessitates a dependable and diligent team.

Finally, I express my gratitude to our partners: the Ministry of Science and Education, the Central State Office for the Croats Outside the Republic of Croatia, and the Croatian Studies Foundation of Australia. Their financial and other forms of support have been instrumental in sustaining this journal. I also acknowledge Luka Budak and his past teams, who laid the groundwork for the *Croatian Studies Review* many years ago, establishing its reputation among Croatian scholars in Croatia and worldwide. It is my aspiration that we continue in their footsteps and further elevate the journal's quality and research impact.

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