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The Perpetuation of Greater Serbian Ideas about the Croats and Croatian Language in the Seemingly Scientific Works on Vuk Stefanović Karadžić

On the basis of a broad array of scholarly works, the paper breaks down the seemingly scientific approach to Greater Serbian ideas of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in contemporary works which rely on the sources which, implicitly or explicitly, perpetuate those very same ideas. An example of such an approach is an article titled *The Role of Vuk Karadžić in the History of Serbian Nationalism* by Slovak historian Maroš Melichárek, as well as the many works to which this historian makes reference to, in order to create an impression of studiousness and impartiality.

Keywords: Croatian language, Croats, Greater Serbian ideas, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić.

1. Introduction

This paper presents and analyses the seemingly scientific approach to the Greater Serbian ideas of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in works which rely on sources which, implicitly or explicitly, perpetuate those very same ideas. A stark example of such an approach is the article, on which I will thoroughly focus, titled *The Role of Vuk Karadžić in the History of Serbian Nationalism (In the Context of European Linguistics in the First Half of the 19th Century)*, written by Slovak historian Maroš Melichárek in 2014 for the 19th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature and Folklore, organized by The University of Chicago, and published by Serbian Studies Research in 2015.

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The main stated aim of Melichárek's article "is to present various interpretations of the 1849 controversial treaties by Vuk S. Karadžić 'Kovčezič za istoriju, jezik i običaje Srba sva tri zakona'" (*Treasure Box for the History, Language and Customs of Serbs of All Three Faiths*) in which Karadžić, *inter alia*, perpetuated the fallacious theory according to which all speakers of Shtokavian dialect group of Croatian and Serbian (and Bosnian and Montenegrin) languages are Serbs notwithstanding their ethno-cultural identities. Melichárek lays out four interpretations of Karadžić's motifs behind this theory. As this paper will show, the lion's share of Melichárek's interpretations, especially concerning the fourth one, comes down to a series of apparently scientific claims and/or references to numerous pseudoscientific works. To a reader unfamiliar with the subject this can create a false impression of Melichárek's studiousness and impartiality concealing the likely true aim of his study which might consist of whitewashing of, as he refers to it/them, "so-called Serbian nationalism" and/or "so-called 'Greater Serbian' ideas".

2. Greater Serbian ideology or the ideology of Great(er) Serbia

Not unlike other ideologies, Greater Serbian ideology provides its adherents with a framework "for political debate and action" and it contains three basic "elements: critique, ideal and agency" (Schwarzmantel, 1998, 2). Greater Serbian ideology considers the borders of Serbia as imperfect since they do not encompass all the people it perceives as Serbs, e.g., Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Shtokavian-speaking Croats etc., and all the lands it deems as Serb(ian), e.g., large swaths of Croatia, parts of or the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro etc. To take a glance at the examples of the contemporary discursive expressions of this ideology one needs to look no further than the books and speeches² by Serbian politician and intellectual Vojislav Šešelj (e.g., Šešelj, 2007). Furthermore, like any other political ideology, Greater Serbian ideology "offers a view of agency or the means by which the movement from an imperfect to a better ... society [the enlarged Serb state in this case – added by V.M.] is to be achieved" (Schwarzmantel, 1998, 2). In the case of the ideology of Great(er) Serbia, this is evident in the actions conducted by Serb(ian) political-military leadership amidst the disintegrati-

2 Šešelj thoroughly explained his vision of Greater Serbia during his trial at the ICTY.

on of Communist Yugoslavia and the War in Croatia (1990-1995) which, in no small part, this leadership caused and initiated (see e.g., Meier, 1999 and Nazor, 2011).

3. The presence of Greater Serbian ideas in Melichárek's (pseudo)scientific discourse

Serbian linguist and an enforcer of the revolutionary reformation of Serbian literary language, conducted at the behest of Jernej Kopitar and Austrian authorities, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) is certainly not to blame for the actions of Serbian political-military leaderships throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but this does not mean that his writings and ideas did not influence Greater Serbian ideologues and/or politicians like Šešelj (see e.g., Matić, 2022). As Melichárek correctly observes, the crux of the issue is that Karadžić regarded all the speakers of Shtokavian dialect group of central South Slavic languages as Serbs notwithstanding their (quite often non-Serb) ethno-cultural identities (Melichárek, 2015, 55, 56, 59, 62-63). In the notorious article *Serbs all and everywhere (Srbi svi i svuda)* of his *Treasure Box* Karadžić wrote that “Roman and Turkish Serbs”, that is Catholic and Muslim speakers of Shtokavian, “have lost their [Serb] national name (...)” sometime in the past. He also wrote that the name “*Croats* ... justly belongs only to *Chakavians*”, i.e., the speakers of Chakavian dialect group of Croatian language, “whose language is only slightly different from Serbian” (Karadžić, 1849, 6-7).

Melichárek provides the readers of his article with four interpretations of Karadžić's motifs behind this theory: “[1.] The first possibility is that Vuk Karadžić consciously increased the number of Serbs to the detriment of Croats and Bosnian Muslims ... [2.] We may also consider the fact that Vuk Karadžić to some extent adopted the ideas of prominent European Slavists (Kopitar, Šafárik, Dobrovský and others). [3.] The ethnic diversity within the Military Border of Habsburg Empire could also have influenced him. [4.] His document could also have been a sort of defense against the growing Croatian nationalism and efforts to acquire the cultural legacy of Dubrovnik on the part of the Croats [numbers added by the author]” (Melichárek, 2015, 55).

3.1. *Karadžić as Serbian nationalist*

“The first possibility is that Karadžić knowingly increased the number of Serbs denying and Croats and Bosnian Muslims respectively Slavic Muslims in the Ottoman Empire (although in their case was a matter of nationality very unclear) by the theory that every shtokavian speaker was considered Serb” (Ibid: 63) What was Karadžić denying could hardly be clear from this messy sentence to a reader unfamiliar with the subject. Melichárek most likely wanted to write that Karadžić was denying Shtokavian-speaking Croats and other non-Serbs their (non-Serb) ethno-national identities because of their language. However, he provides no reference to his remark that a “matter of nationality” was “very unclear” in the case of Croats and Bosnian Muslims, and that is quite indicative. Melichárek’s implicit aim here might be to create an impression that all the Shtokavian speaking Orthodox “Vlachs” in today’s Croatia and western parts of today’s Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1849 have had a clear/modern Serb national identity (see e.g., Grčević, 2019, 127-159) or simply that the “matter of nationality” was clearer in the case of proto-national Serbs than for instance in the case of the proto-national Croats. Despite these conundrums, Melichárek dedicates only one more sentence to the first of his four possible answers to the question he posed, that is what led Karadžić to regard all Shtokavian speakers – including a large “part of existing Croatian nation” – as Serbs and concludes that Karadžić’s writings “could be regarded as a manifestation of nationalism with regard to the increase of the Serbian national awareness and building of a strong Serbia in the future” (Melichárek, 2015, 63). However, Melichárek fails to further elaborate this and that is also quite indicative.

That Karadžić “knowingly increased the number of Serbs” by regarding all non-Serb Shtokavian speakers as Serbs is evident in the Karadžić’s own words which Melichárek does not cite in his study. Karadžić *inter alia* wrote that for the “Serbs” of “Roman” (Catholic) faith it is still “hard to refer to themselves as *Serbs*” and that they (and “Turkish Serbs”) “do not want to adopt” the Serbian national name, “but in all likelihood they will little by little get used to it” (Karadžić, 1849, 2, 6-7). He also wrote that “we just need to make the *Šokci* refer to themselves as Serbs ... and may they believe whatever they like”.³ Thus, many Karadžić’s writings, especially *Serbs all and everywhere*, could indeed

3 “Nataša Bašić: Jezični identiteti nesrpskih naroda u velikosrpskom programu državnoga sjedinjenja”.

be regarded as a manifestation of Serbian nationalism aimed at the spread of Serbian national identity among the non-Serb populations.

3.2. *Karadžić as a diligent student of early Slavonic Studies*

“The second alternative may be the fact that” Karadžić’s “conclusions ... followed the work of leading linguists and slavists during Karadžić’s era, like Kopitar, Dobrovský, Kollár, Miklošič and Pavol Jozef Šafárik” (Melichárek, 2015, 63). It is well known that Vuk Karadžić was not the first to equate the Shtokavian dialect group exclusively with Serbian language and to identify all Shtokavian speakers as Serbs, and that he was greatly influenced by at least Josef Dobrovský and Pavol Šafárik (Grčević, 1997a; Grčević, 1997b). In the two pages in which he elaborates this possibility nowhere did Melichárek write that it is clear from the explicit “statements of certain Slavists that they were aware that their theoretical classifications had no basis in the actual prevalence of the ethnonyms *Croat* and *Serb* among the common folk” (Grčević, 2019, 124-125) at the time, which could have been neatly linked to his presumption that Karadžić consciously increased the number of Serbs to the detriment of Croats.

Mario Grčević notes that German linguist and author Jacob Grimm stated or admitted in 1824 that the common folk across the vast Shtokavian areas do not want to call themselves Serbs despite his (Grimm’s) and the wishes of Slavonic Studies’ founders: “neither Illyrian, nor Croatian Serb wants to call himself a Serb” (Grčević, 2019, 125). Dobrovský likewise wrote that “not a single Bosnian will call himself a Serb, and the same goes for Dalmatians, but can it be said that they are not Serbs because of this?” (Jagić, 1885, 109). Šafárik wrote that the ethnonym “*Croats* extends far beyond the borders that we set for Croatian dialect because the denizens” of the area “even to Neretva and from there towards the east into Turkish Croatia ... call themselves Croats. According to the main features of their dialects, they have been counted into Serbs by us” (Grčević, 2019, 126).

Nevertheless, Melichárek is on the right track here. However, despite citing a serious source on the matter on the page 63 of his study (that is Grčević, 2009), he still fails to mention another possibility – that Karadžić might have written his *Serbs all and everhywhere* as a part of the Austrian imperialist agenda at the implicit or explicit behest of Jernej Kopitar and Franc Miklošič, whose plan was to linguistically and culturally Croatize the Serbs, without imposing

the ethnonym and linguonym *Croat(ian)* on them, and to gradually Serbianize the Catholic Croats by imposing the Serb(ian) ethnonym and linguonym on them⁴ (Grčević, 1997b; Grčević 2009, 181). The plan was, in a sense, to turn the centuries-long Croatian literary tradition (in demotic Shtokavian) and language against the Croats, but in no small part against the Serbs as well and their literary tradition (which was not in demotic Shtokavian).

3.3. *The Military Frontier*

“Another possible explanation” for Karadžić’s “idea of all shtokavian speakers as Serbs might have been ... the existence of the Military Frontier, whereas [sic!] the population in this area was heavily mixed with Serbian majority and spoke mainly shtokavian dialect” which “coincides with the territory of Military Frontier to great extent⁵ ... Original Croatian population of Military Frontier was not so numerous, and so the refugees from the Ottoman territories inhabited the area – mostly Serbs” (Melichárek 2015: 66-67). There is a great deal of sources – various editions, books written based on population statistics, archival material, the 1848 population census – about the population of the Military Frontier of the Austrian Empire at the time of Karadžić’s publishing of his *Treasure Box* (Korunić, 2018, 465-468), but Melichárek only cites Tomislav Bogovac’s *Nestajanje Srba* (1994), and notes that the “population of the frontier was 54% Orthodox Christian” (Melichárek, 2015, 66). To a slightly critical reader this could simply look as sloppy work by this employee of the Department of History at the Faculty of Arts of the Pavel Josef Šafárik University in Košice. However, this is Melichárek’s standard (pseudo)scientific *modus operandi* to which one could add many questions: Had the majority of the Military Frontier’s population really self-identified as Serbian? In which population census (before Karadžić’s publication of his *Kovčezič za istoriju*)? Was the Croatian population the original population in the territory of the entire Austrian Military Frontier? Were the “refugees from the Ottoman territories” inhabiting the area which would be encompassed

4 I do not know whether Karadžić knew that a Catholic Croat author Petar Knežević (1701-1768), whom he mentions as one of “the older authors” of the Catholic faith “who had been writing in clearer Serbian” (Karadžić, 1949), had been referring to his Shtokavian Croatian as “Croatian language”. Knežević published the *Missa u Harvatski jezik (Holy Mass in Croatian language)* in 1767.

5 Only in small(er) part did the area of Shtokavian dialect group of Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian languages coincide with the territory of the Military Frontier.

by the 1840s Military Frontier really “mostly Serbs”? How does Melichárek know that most of these refugees self-identified as Serbs?

“There is no doubt that in 1846 the population census, with special language/ethnic questionnaire, had been conducted on the territory of entire Habsburg monarchy”, because that has been “testified by many sources, especially the books of J. Hain and E. Fényes and *Tafeln zur Statistik* for the years 1845 and 1846” (Korunić, 2018, 485). In 1852-53 Joseph Hain wrote a large book in two volumes about the population census(es) of 1846-51 in the Austrian Empire and dedicated most of it to the language and ethnic questionnaire conducted during the 1846 census. In this book Hain notes that there are 524.048 Croats (*Kroaten*) and 339.176 Serbs (*Serben*) settled in the territory of the entire Military Frontier. He notes that there are 598.603 Orthodox Christians (*Nicht unirte Griechen*) and 514.545 Roman Catholics (*Römisch-Katholische*) living there. Elek Fényes notes that in 1846 the Croatian Military Frontier was inhabited by 268.315 Croats and 244.377 Serbs (Ibidem, 540-542, 485).

Still, it is important to emphasise that there had been no census across the territory of (modern-day) Croatia which demanded that (all) the citizens choose their ethnicity/nationality (in the modern sense of the word) before the one in 1948. However, there is only one old(er) census which distinguished between Croatian and Serbian mother tongue(s), the one in 1890 which was the first census after the Croatian and Slavonian Military Frontier had been united with civil Croatia-Slavonia. For 369.600 Orthodox registered as denizens of Croatia and Slavonia it stated that their mother tongue was “Serbian”. The Croatian historian Marko Rimac shows that almost a half of them were settled in Syrmia which was in no small part within the territory of former Serbian Vojvodina and, at the time of the census, close to the Serbian Principality. Furthermore, for only 2424 Catholics, most of whom lived in Syrmia, it is stated that their mother tongue was “Serbian”. On the other hand, for 192.531 Orthodox inhabitants of Croatia-Slavonia it stated that their mother tongue was “Croatian”, and only 3183 of them lived in *Srijem*. As for 1.342.379 Catholic inhabitants of Croatia-Slavonia, their mother tongue was “Croatian” (Rimac, 2007, 226, 253-255, 290). This could be neatly linked to Vuk Karadžić’s complaints that Catholic “Serbs” refuse to refer to themselves as *Serbs*. These data also repudiate Melichárek’s not very subtle though implicit claim that the “matter of nationality” was clearer in the case of Serbs than for instance in the case of Croats in the 19th century.

In that context it is significant how the 1890 census “shows that, with the exception of Syrmia, Serbian-speaking Orthodox in Croatia and Slavonia mostly lived in places with larger diocesan centres. This, too, cannot be explained by some incorrect census methodology or some systematic census manipulation, because it was precisely in such centres that the Serbian Orthodox Church could most easily promote the Serbian national name and Serbian national consciousness through the confessional term ‘Serb’” (Grčević, 2019, 159). Not unlike (proto-national) Croat peasants, Serb peasants within the territory of the Military Frontier “were involved relatively late in the process of the integration of their respective nation ... The [Serb] Orthodox Church played an important integrative function by bounding the Serb name with [Orthodox] religion” which made the “transition from the use of Serb name as the confessional label” (for the Orthodox) “toward the label” of national identity easier (Gross, 1981, 178, 179) than in the case of Croats, whose ethnonym was not religiously determined and was widespread among the (premodern) Catholics, Muslims, Protestants and Orthodox South Slavs (Grčević, 2019). However, as 1890 census and numerous other sources show, the process of Serb national integration was far from over at the time of Karadžić’s publishing of *Serbs all and everywhere* (more in Grčević, 2019, 121-139). Simply put, the Orthodox population in Croatia-Slavonia (and Dalmatia) had been heterogeneous and of quite diverse origins (Rimac, 2007, 228). The Croatian historian Ljiljana Dobrovšak concludes that most of the Orthodox who were settling in the area of future Croatia throughout the early-modern centuries had been Vlachs, who were later Serbianized due to their Orthodox religion (Dobrovšak, 2014, 37), known in premodern times as “Serbian”, “Rascian” or “Greek” religion (Grčević, 2019).

3.4. *Karadžić defending Dubrovnik from Croatian Nationalism*

The fourth of Melichárek’s answers to “why Karadžić decided to include among Serbs on the basis of language also Croats and Bosnian Muslims” are interpretations of the Serbian philologist and historian Vladislav Sotirović who presented Karadžić’s work as “a defence against the intensifying Croatian nationalism (which culminated in the second half of the 19th century) represented by Ante Starčević and others, whose aims was to achieve ‘croatization’ of all shtokavian Serbs, as in the area of Dubrovnik” (Melichárek, 2015, 67). It is not necessary to elaborate in detail that Starčević’s nationalism, “which cul-

minated in the second half of the 19th century”, was more likely a reaction to Karadžić’s nationalism in *Serbs all and everywhere* (1849) than *vice versa*. More importantly, as a seemingly scientific underpinning for his claim Melichárek references three Sotirović’s articles: *The Croatian national (‘Illyrian’) revival movement and the question of language in the phase from 1830 to 1841* (2006), *Nineteenth-century Ideas of Serbian ‘Linguistic’ Nationhood and Statehood* (2000) and *Pitanje jezika i pisma u Dalmaciji 1903. g. i početak politike “novog kursa”* (2006). The last of these three articles I do not find relevant as a reference to the claim that Sotirović presented “Karadžić’s work as a defence against intensifying Croatian nationalism” and against “the ‘croatization’ of all shtokavian Serbs, as in the area of Dubrovnik”. With respect to this claim the second article proves to be relevant in *de facto* only one small paragraph in which Sotirović correctly, though indirectly, concludes that “Dubrovnik’s literary and cultural legacy became” a target of (Greater) Serbian claims only after Karadžić’s concepts were popularized among Serb(ian) scholars (Sotirović, 2000, 14), that is after Karadžić reformed the Serbian literary language by heavily relying on Croatian literary heritage (Grčević, 2009a). Sotirović’s third article is not relevant if one is to search for correct information, but it is a *par excellence* example of one of many pseudoscientific works on which Melichárek relies to appear unbiased and professional. Certain claims and conclusions of the paper written by Sotirović, thus, deserve a detailed analysis.

In this paper Sotirović writes “that the so-called *Serbo-Croatian language* ... is divided into three basic dialects: *kajkavian*, *čakavian* and *štokavian*”⁶ (Sotirović, 2006, 107). In fact, these are three dialect groups (*narječja*) of which two are only Croatian (Kajkavian and Chakavian), while Shtokavian dialect group is part of both Croatian and Serbian (and Bosnian and Montenegrin) languages. These dialect groups are composed of dialects. The Serbian language has another dialect group called Torlak(ian)⁷ (Matasović, 2008, 35; Auburger 2009, 244; Grčević,

6 Sotirović also notes that “*štokavian* dialect is divided into three sub-dialects (*ekavian*, *ijekavian*, *ikavian*) according to the pronunciation of the ... *jať*” (Sotirović, 2006, 107). As noted, Shtokavian dialect group has (more than three) dialects. The latter are not only classified according to the pronunciation of the Proto-Slavic *Yat*, but also according to new or old (Shtokavian) accentuation and the prevalence of Shtakavian (*onjište*, *štap*) or Schakavian (*ognjišće*, *ščap*) (Lisac, 2003, 29).

7 It might be interesting to add that Sotirović writes how Slovenes in Slovenia speak Kajkavian, though it is not clear whether he concludes that on the basis of 1832 Ivan Derkos’ writings or 1997 Petar Miloslavljević’s writings (Sotirović 2006, 103-104). However, Sotirović should know that the use of the interrogative pronoun *kaj* in Slovenian language doesn’t

2009b, 180). However, Sotirović persistently neglects the Torlak dialect group and parrots the claim that: “Serbs ... were speaking (only) *štokavian* dialect”, that Shtokavian was “spoken by all Serbs and very small number of those who accepted the ethnic name of Croats at the time [early 1800s – V.M.]”, and that in the early 1800s Shtokavian had been “spoken ... by all Serbs and only minority of Croats” (Sotirović, 2006, 102, 104, 108). Why does Sotirović neglect (negate) the Torlak dialect group of the Serbian language, implying that it is merely a part of Shtokavian? This becomes clear when one reads his other works in which he claims that “it is almost impossible that the dialectal trichotomy of the Croatian nation emerged exclusively on the pure Croat ethnic basis” because “Shtokavan, Kajkavian and Chakavian are not and could not be dialects of one ethno-language ... these are three different and separate languages” (Sotirović, 2019, 345, 358). Not unlike Vojislav Šešelj (Matić, 2022), Sotirović concludes that it can be claimed, “with every right”, that the Shtokavian dialect group “is the main feature of Serbian” identity and “original national language of the Serbs” (Sotirović, 2019, 347). He, thus, implies that Shtokavian dialect group could have emerged only on a pure Serb ethnic basis, but this is a Greater Serbian ideological construct which crumbles when faced with the scientific comprehension of medieval ethnic identities and of the emergence of South Slavic idioms (Matić, 2022).⁸ As part of his Greater Serbian *imaginarium*, Sotirović provides the readers with a map which allegedly shows the “territorial distribution of Serbs and Croats after their migrations to the Balkans, according to” *De Administrando Imperio* (DAI). Though without any reference to it, Sotirović most likely took this map from Marko Aleksić’s paper about the alleged Serb tribe of *Neretvani*⁹ and renamed it to fit more squarely with his narrative. Since his paper deals with the Croatian national revival from 1830 to 1841, a reader unfamiliar with the topic might wonder about the purpose of the map which supposedly shows the ethnic composition of central South Slavic areas in the early medieval centuries.

make that language part of Kajkavian dialect group of Croatian nor *vice versa*, as much as Torlak dialect group of Serbian nor Macedonian, Bulgarian and Russian are not part of Shtokavian dialect group (of Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian languages) because they feature the interrogative pronoun *što/čto*.

8 As I have written in one essay, it is very unlikely that the Serbs, only one Slavic *gens* which settled among the Slavs and Vlachs in the so-called Balkans in the late 8th century, had been somehow responsible for the emergence (from West South Slavic Proto-language) of Western and Eastern Shtokavian dialect groups (https://www.academia.edu/94229964/Shtokavian_supradialect_and_Serbian_imperialism).

9 “Marko Aleksić: Neretljani – zaboravljeno srpsko pleme”.



Fig. 1. Territorial distribution of Serbs and Croats after their migration to the Balkans, according to Constantinus VII Porphyrogenetus. Source: Sotirović, 2006, 105

However, it is very likely that Sotirović's aim with this map is the visualization of his implicit claim according to which the Shtokavian dialect group had allegedly emerged from the medieval "Serb biological tissue" or "Serb national body" (Žutić, 2005, 31, 32). Putting obvious questions about the map (e.g., were *Neretljani* on the map Serbs or Croats? Were all inhabitants of *Srbija/Hrvatska/Bugarska* – Serbs/Croats/Bulgarians? etc.) aside, it should be noted that it is amusing how the map is supposed to be based on the 10th century DAI, which does not claim that Dioclea is Serbian nor settled by Serbs, nor that *Pliva*, *Imota* and *Hlivno* counties are within Serbia and not within Croatia. When faced with serious historiography, Sotirović's map and its title, reflecting his primordial understanding of premodern ethnic identities¹⁰, fall apart in an instance (e.g., Budak, 2008, 223-241; Ančić, 2005, 94-99; Ančić, 2011; Živković, 2011, 393-395; Vedriš, 2015, 590-591). More importantly, Sotirović's other aim with this map is most likely to *ex silentio* prove that in the 1800s the Croats were adopting originally an exclusive "Serbian language" as their standard/literary language. This is probably why Sotirović places the Croatian Shtokavian-based literary language under quotation marks as "Croatian" (Sotirović, 2006, 104).

10 Sotirović's primordialism is also indirectly visible when he mentions Croatian polymath Pavao Ritter Vitezović. In his rather short paper, Sotirović notes two times that Vitezović was "of German origin" or a "writer of German origin" (Sotirović, 2006, 109, 113), despite the fact that Vitezović's mother was Croatian. We can only presume what is the implicit aim of these repetitions, but I am pretty certain they are in line with Nikola Žutić's portrayal of modern Serbs as descendants of a pure "Serb biological tissue" and Croats as descendants of different ethnicities.

Be as it may, Sotirović's claims that Shtokavian was spoken by "a very small number of those who accepted the ethnic name of Croats at the time" of the Croatian national revival and that Croatian "literature up to that time was mainly written in *čakavian* and *kajkavian* dialects (or languages)" (Sotirović, 2006, 107) also cannot withstand critical and scientific scrutiny. Proto-national Croats had been speaking and writing in their native Shtokavian idioms since the Middle Ages.¹¹ Since the late 1400s onwards more and more demotic

11 As noted under the reference 8, there had hardly been an *ipso facto* causality between the emergence of medieval Western and Eastern Shtokavian dialect groups and the emergence of early-medieval Serb Principality/Kingdom (the same goes for Chakavian dialect group and the emergence of early-medieval Croat Principality/Kingdom). The latter was not a *conditio sine qua non* of the former and *vice versa*.

With regards to West Shtokavian, it is important to emphasize that a significant part of this dialect group had been encompassed by the "Croatian medieval state" (Matasović, 2008: 34) which, according to 1200s chronicler of Split Thomas the Archdeacon, encompassed the entire (West Shtokavian) Hum Principality (Ančić, 2001: 151). Based on written, material and toponym sources, today's historians claim that the easternmost border of early medieval Croat Principality & later Kingdom was on the river Vrbas or slightly east of that Bosnian river. As noted by the 10th century DAI, the area of (future) Shtokavian Donji Kraji was within the territory of Croatia. East of the river Vrbas there are still two toponyms (*Harvačani*) derived from the Croat ethnonym which indicate that in medieval times the area was part of Croatia and/or settled and ruled by the Croat warrior stratum (Ančić, 1999: 30-32). However, it's not unreasonable to assume that in times of stability and strength the Croat proto-nobility and rulers could have every now and then expanded their rule onto the original ("small land" of) Bosnia and on the parts of East Herzegovina (*Zahumlje*). If it was possible for the Ban of Croats to be "the lord of all Bosnia and Hum" and to conduct military operations in East Herzegovina in the early 1300s (Ančić, 1997, 80-138), it could be assumed that the same could have been possible for the powerful ones of the early-medieval Croat rulers or ruling groups. In the late 13th century the area of Donji Kraji was governed by *comes* (*župan*) Hrvatin Stipanić, whose name was derived from the Croat ethnonym. Hrvatin was a vassal of the "Ban of Croats" and "lord of all Bosnia and Hum" Pavao of Bribir to whom, some historians convincingly argue, he was related. Hrvatin was the founder of Hrvatinić noble family. In the early 1300s some counties of Donji Kraji stood "with the Croats" against the Ban of Bosnia. In his book on the medieval city of Jajce Mladen Ančić presumes that the Croatian ethnic consciousness might have been the primary motivating force of some of Donji Kraji's noble clans in the dynastically turbulent years of the early 14th century (Ančić, 1999, 35). "Of the Croats Ban Hrvoje" (*Od Hrvata ban Hrvoje*), as wrote the 17th century Ragusan poet Junije Palmotić about Hrvatin's grandson Hrvoje, who was both Croatian and Bosnian magnate while his brother Vuk was the Ban of Croatia. Hrvoje's name was also derived from the Croat ethnonym. He was close to both the Catholic Church and the Bosnian Church (*Krstjani*) (which sprung from the Catholic Bosnian Diocese), and had works written in both Chakavian (*Hrvojev misal*) and West Shtokavian (*Hvalov zbornik*). Western Bosnia, later known as "Turkish Croatia", might have been the place where in the late 1500s Mehmed from Transylvania recorded the *Hirvat türkisi* (*Croatian song*), a mostly West Shtokavian poem/song with Chakavian and Kajkavian elements. Lastly, Croatian identity was recorded in Shtokavian areas of Bosnia in the late 1400s. For example, Hungarian royal register notes that a Croat came from his hometown of Jajce to visit the King (Ibidem, 46, 33-48). Migrations from these Shtokavian areas to Chakavian areas were recorded already in "pre-Ottoman" times, i.e. prior to the great 16th century migrations of the Orthodox Vlachs and others towards the West (Ibidem, 49-55). It might be interesting

Croatian (Chakavian, Shtokavian and Kajkavian), rather than Church Slavonic, had been introduced into the literary production of the Croats (Oczkova, 2010, 133-151). Even though Chakavian literary language reached its zenith in the 16th century, this was the century of great migrations from the Shtokavian to Chakavian and Kajkavian areas. Shtokavian exerted more and more influence in the works of Chakavian poets and authors, like in the 1546 transcription of the Croatian Redaction of the Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja (Kapetanović, 2013). By the end of the 1600s and early 1700s Chakavian literary language lost its position to Shtokavian, mostly Ikavian, in many of the previous centres of Chakavian literacy. In addition, the influence of prestigious Shtokavian Jekavian literature of Dubrovnik can be clearly seen in the literary works of many native Chakavian poets of the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s. For example, in the *Poviest vandělska* – the most voluminous work of older Croatian literature – written by a native Chakavian of Split Jerolim Kavanjin (1641 – 1714), Shtokavian literary expression is dominant, and the influence of Dubrovnik’s prestigious

to add that clear elements of Shtokavian are present in the Cyrillic and mostly Chakavian documents of Split area already in the first half of the 1400s, like in one will written in 1436 in Klis, and transcribed in 1448 (*što je imanjja plemenščine moje, što sam kupil ... ča sam kupio*) (Damjanović, 2017, 107-108).

As for the East Shtokavian, it might be interesting to note that based on many medieval Byzantine sources, it could be assumed that *Croats* were settling the areas of that dialect group as well. The author of the 10th century *De Administrando Imperio* noted that “from the Croats who came to Dalmatia a part split off and came to rule over Illyricum ... They had an independent ruler who sent envoys but only to the ruler of Croatia out of friendship”. Byzantine author Niketas Choniates (c. 1150 – died after 1210) wrote about efforts by Serb ruler Nemanja in the years 1163-1173 “to win over Croatia” and who took “control over people of Kotor” (political Croatia was west of the river Neretva at that time). Teodor Skutariotas (born c. 1230), another Byzantine chronicler, also wrote on the late 12th century Serb ruler Nemanja’s efforts in spreading on Dioclea/Duklja: “He wants to win over the Croats and takes the rule over Kotor”. The 11th century Byzantine chronicler John Skylitzes wrote that the anti-Byzantine Slavic rebels asked Dioclean King Mihailo, “who was the ruler of the mentioned Croats, who had his seat in Kotor”, for help. Byzantine general and chronicler Nicephorus Brieniis (1062-1137) noted that around 1072 “the Croats and Diocleans rebelled and ravaged the entire Illyricum”. The 11th century Byzantine chronicler John Skylitzes noted that after the initial success of the anti-Byzantine uprising of the Dioclean Slavs, Bodin had been captured “as well as the one who was among the Croats behind Petrilo”. Thus, according to Byzantine sources, certain Petrilo was the commander of Dioclean Croats or Croats in Dioclea/*Duklja*, loyal to kings Mihailo and Bodin (Foretić, 1969, 62, 73-75). To all of this we might add that the Byzantine chronicler Michael of Devol wrote that Dioclea was settled by Croats (Vedriš, 2015, 593). The early-medieval Croats did not form any lasting political entity – which would have “institutionalized” their ethnonym – in the areas in which East Shtokavian later developed. However, Croat ethnonym did not vanish among a certain number of Slavs and Vlachs in those areas (today’s Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia) (Grčević, 2019, 15-70).

literature in this work can hardly be overstated (Tomelić Ćurlin, 2017). The fact that Shtokavian was the most widespread of the Croatian dialect groups and that a large part of Croatian literature, not only the one created by the poets of the Dubrovnik Republic but also by Franciscan and/or “Glagolitic” monks throughout Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Slavonia, had a fateful effect for the emergence of Croatian Shtokavian-based standard language (Krašić, 2009; Auburger, 2009, 53-54). Thus, Sotirović’s claim that Croatian literature until the 1800s had mostly not been written in Shtokavian is misleading, to put it mildly (Sotirović, 2006, 107).

One would need more space to present the preserved/documented examples of the Croat name being used by/for the premodern speakers of Shtokavian dialects of Croatian to denote their people and language, but I will focus only on some of the examples from and/or for the Republic of Dubrovnik. A poet of Dubrovnik Mavro Vetranović (1482/3 – 1576) wrote that his fellow Ragusans “exceeded in glory not only Dalmatians ... but also all the [other] Croats gathered together” (*natekli u slavi – ne samo Dalmate ... nego još sve Harvate skupivši jednoga*) (Bogišić, 1985, 134); In an epistle to Petar Hektorović, Vetranović referred to his language as Croatian, writing that Hektorović’s (literary) fame is known in various regions, “especially where the Croatian language flows/goes through”, thus in Dubrovnik as well (*a navlaš kud jezik harvatski prohodi*) (Katičić, 1988, 103). The famous literary works of premodern Dubrovnik had been written in the language in which, as Ragusan poet Nikola Nalješković (1500 – 1587) wrote, “the people of Croats cry and shout” (*narod Harvata vapije i viče*), that is, in Vetranović’s “Croatian language” (*jezik harvatski*) (Bogišić, 1985, 131). The 16th century Chakavian poet Hanibal Lucić, who translated Ovid from “Latin ... into our Croatian [language]” (*z latinske odiće svukši u našu harvacku pribukal*) (Bogišić, 1985, 133), referred to Shtokavian Dubrovnik as “the honor of our language” (*časti našega jezika*). In the 1500s the nobleman of Korčula island Ivan Vidali referred to Dubrovnik’s poet Nalješković “as the pride and glory of the Croatian language” (*Časti izabrana Niko, i hvala velika, hrvatskoga diko i slavo jezika*). Vidali also wrote that Dubrovnik is “called the crown of all Croat cities” (*harvatskih ter kruna gradov [se] svih zove*). Nalješković wrote about the pain that afflicted Petar Hektorović who “is the glory and joy of all of us” [Croats], accusing that pain for “having given him this torment to seize both his legs and arms” (*slava i dika po svitu od svih nas ... davši mu tej muke da mu ti*

prize i noge i ruke). And who that “we” or “us” are it is clear when Nalješković finishes his message to the gout of Mr. Petar Hektorović, saying to it: “please, don’t let all the Croats cry because of you now, please spare him” (*molim te togaj rad, nemoj svi Harvati da ne te plaču sad, hotjej ga parjati*) (Bogišić, 1985, 131-132). To which ethnic or proto-national community Nalješković belonged is also evident from his epistle to Hvar poet Hortenzije Bartučević, in which he referred to Bartučević as “the glory of all Croats” (*Hortenze pošteni slavo svih Harvata*) (Tomasović, 2012). Dominko Zlatarić (1558 – 1613) was yet another poet of Dubrovnik who had been referring to his language as “Croatian”. In 1597 he translated “from a large number of foreign languages into Croatian” (*iz veće tuđijeh jezika u harvacki*), and dedicated his work written in Dubrovnik’s Shtokavian Jekavian idiom to Croatian nobleman Juraj Zrinski explaining to him that the work was translated “into your Croatian language” (*u vaš hrvacki jezik*) and to “enrich this language of ours as well” (*za obogatit također ovi naš jezik*). And “With equal lust”, wrote Zlatarić, he set out to “make a Croatian woman of Greek Electra” (*učinit Hrvacku Grkinju Elektru*), that is, to translate Sophocles from Greek into Croatian, which is clear from the title of his work (Katičić, 1988: 104). Radoslav Katičić wrote that the son of Ban Juraj Zrinski asked Julij(e) Čikuljin for more of Zlatarić’s works, but that they rather “be Croatian or Dalmatian” (*da budu horvatska ali dalmatiska*), that is in Croatian from Dalmatia, and not in Italian language (Katičić, 1988, 105). The poets of Dubrovnik like Vladislav Menčetić (1617 – 1666) saw themselves as members of, as Menčetić wrote, “the nation of Croat people” (*narod puka harvatskoga*) (Grčević, 2019, 207). Furthermore, in 1618 the Government of Dubrovnik wrote to its confidant in Vienna whether it was possible to obtain the mercenaries, but that they should be “Croats of our language and Catholics” (*Crouati de nostra lingua e cattolici*) (Koščak, 1954, 190) of which some permanently settled in Dubrovnik (Macan, 1962). Of 85 students who identified as Croats (mostly from northern Croat areas) studying in the University of Graz between 1587 – 1616, one declared himself as *Raguseus Croata* – a Croat from Dubrovnik or Dubrovnik’s Croat (Fancev, 1935/36, 134). The Russian diplomat Count Pyotr Andreyevich Tolstoy, who in the late 1600s visited and spent some time in the Republic of Dubrovnik, confirmed in his travelogue that the inhabitants of this city-state call themselves *Croats* (*Gervati/Hervati*). Bernardin Pavlović, born in Ston in 1685, wrote for “the benefit of ... the priests of Croatian hand, and of all our

people” (*korist ... misnika harvaske ruke, i svega naroda nascega*), that is, “for the benefit of the people of Croats” (*za korist naroda harvasckoga*). It should not be omitted that Pavlović, as he himself noted, wrote his books in a language he had been referring to as “the Croatian language” (*harvaski jezik*) (Grčević, 2017, 12-13). Criticizing the rejection or neglect of the native Croatian language in Dubrovnik at the end of the 1700s and at the beginning of the 1800s, the partially Croatized Frenchman and poet Marko Bruerović wrote that “everyone” in Dubrovnik “would easily renounce the Croat antiquity” (*slavne bi se svako harvatske odreko starine*), because everyone is “ashamed to purely speak Slavic” (*stidi se svak jezik slovinski čisto govorit*) (Počić, 1852, 55-58). The works of Ragusan writers and poets that we find in the catalogue of the Venetian bookseller Bartolo Occhi in 1709 under the title *Number of Croatian books named from below ... on the Seafront of Croats (Broj knjig hervatskih jimenovanih odozdola ... na Rivi od Hrvatov)* (Katičić, 1988, 108) had been circulating across the proto-national Croat lands, but they – as Croatian academics succinctly noted in 2011 – had not been circulating among the proto-national Serbs, since Serb literature had been written in the Serbian redaction of Church Slavonic and also in “Russo-Slavic”, not in demotic Serbian (Shtokavian nor Torlak)¹², as Vuk Karadžić himself indirectly but clearly admitted (Grčević, 2009a, 37). Premodern Ragusans, thus, primarily wrote for “Dalmatians and Croats”, as notable Ragusan Stjepan Građić wrote in the 1600s.¹³

“Dalmatians” and “Croats” were two synonyms for the Croat proto-national community. It might be interesting to add that decades before Karadžić’s reform of the Serbian literary language, Serbs had been translating Croatian works written in Shtokavian idiom into their *slaveno-serbskij* literary language and that they regarded Croatian Shtokavian (Ikavian and Jekavian) as “Croatian dialect” or “Croatian language”, as a literary language, suitable “only for Dalmatians and Croats”. In the context of Melichárek’s study it also interesting that in 1815 Karadžić wrote how Vojvodina Serbs might have complained that he was imposing “Croatian language” on them if he had published all the poems of his *Pjesnarica* “in Herzegovinian”, that is in Jekavian (Grčević, 2019, 204-206, 202, 224-230). As the Serbian historian of (Serbian) literature Miodrag

12 “Izjava HAZU o srbijanskim presezanjima prema hrvatskoj književnoj baštini (2011.)”.

13 Photos, obtained from a friend, of those parts of original documents which mention Croatian ethnonym and linguonym, that premodern Ragusans used to refer to themselves and their language, can be seen in this essay: https://www.academia.edu/97445403/Premodern_inhabitants_of_Dubrovnik_Serbs_or_Croats.

Popović admitted in 1967, premodern literature of Dubrovnik (written mostly in Shtokavian-Jekavian) was an essential part of old Croatian literature, but not of Serbian. Not least because, as Serbian literary historian Jovan Skerlić wrote in 1914, the premodern Croatian literature of Dubrovnik (and Dalmatia) was not known to premodern or proto-national Serbs. Those Serbs who knew about it, did not consider this literature as their own (Koščak, 1992, 470-472).

It is, thus, more or less evident from the stated that Sotirović's theory according to which [educated] Croats started perceiving "Ragusan cultural heritage as ... Croatian one" (Sotirović, 2006, 110) only in the 1800s is not valid, to put it mildly. Despite the many noted premodern confirmations of the Croat name being used by Dubrovnik's inhabitants as the name of their people and language, known to intellectuals already in the 19th century (e.g., Split, 1895; Pavlinović, 1882, 43, 44)¹⁴, Sotirović relies on the 21st century pseudoscience and writes as follows:

"Serbian philologist Branislav Brborić (and many others) is in opinion that *štokavian* literature of Dubrovnik belongs to Serbian cultural heritage as this dialect is national Serbian language, but not Croatian one. According to his research, there are many Latin-language documents in the *Archives of Dubrovnik* in which the language of the people of Dubrovnik (*štokavian* dialect of *ijekavian* speech) is named as *lingua serviana*, but there is no one document in which this language is named as *lingua croata*. B. Brborić claims further that for centuries citizens of Dubrovnik had 'some' Serbian national consciousness and perception that their spoken language is Serbian. Among Ragusan inhabitants there was no Croatian ethnolinguistic consciousness before the *Illyrian Movement* and before Dubrovnik became included into Catholic Habsburg Monarchy (from 1815). In other words, from the time of *Illyrian Movement* the process of Croatization of Dubrovnik, backed by the Habsburg authority, started. Consequently, all Catholic Serbs from Dubrovnik became national Croats whose language was proclaimed by the leaders of the *Illyrian Movement* as *Croatian language* of *štokavian* dialect and *ijekavian* speech (Sotirović, 2006, 111).

First, it is well known that the expression *lingua serviana* had not been used by medieval and early modern inhabitants of Dubrovnik to denote their language, but to denote the Cyrillic script (Grčević, 2013, 8-9; Grčević, 2019,

14 It might be interesting to add that Josef Dobrovský knew Ragusan poet Dominko Zlatarić (1558-1613) had been referring to his native Shtokavian idiom as *Croatian language*, but that did not influence his late 18th and early 19th century pan-Serb agenda (Grčević, 1997, 14).

185-201). Even the member of the 19th–20th century Serb-Catholic movement in Dubrovnik Milan Rešetar, whom Sotirović cites as an objective source on the matter (Sotirović, 2006, 111), did not consider the expression *lingua serviana* as a reference to Dubrovnik’s Slavic idiom (Grčević, 2019, 184-185). There is no need to search for the expressions like *lingua croata* in Dubrovnik’s Archives because there are, as was have showed, enough preserved documents from the 1500s to the early 1800s, mostly written in Croatian, which show that premodern inhabitants of Ragusan city-state had been referring to their native idiom as *Croatian*. Second, throughout the long centuries of proto-national integrations, the Catholic inhabitants of the Republic of Dubrovnik did not have nor could have had Serbian identity, *inter alia*, because the *conditio sine qua non* of this identity since the high Middle Ages had been (Serb) Orthodoxy (Grčević, 2013; Bogović, 2017). Despite the pan-Slavic sentiments of Ragusan Baroque literary works, Serbs were “Others”¹⁵ in premodern Dubrovnik and were not allowed neither to sleep over within the city’s walls¹⁶, guarded by Catholic Croats (Grčević 2019, 215-218). Third, it has already been showed that Ragusan inhabitants did in fact have “some” kind of “Croatian ethnolinguistic consciousness before the *Illyrian Movement*.” Fourth, Austrian authorities were not *a priori* supporting “the process of Croatization” of Nalješković’s “crown of all Croat cities”, that is Dubrovnik, and and intermittently supported the Serb-Catholic movement in Dubrovnik, especially when this movement opposed Croatian efforts to unite Dalmatia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina) with Croatia-Slavonia (Ćosić, 2018, 23). Fifth, “all Catholic Serbs from Dubrovnik” were a minority among the Slavic population of the city and their movement failed because there had been no “ethno-cultural potential” in Dubrovnik and South Dalmatia for the formation and spread of Serbian identity.¹⁷ That is certa-

15 The demotic language was not a *differentia specifica* among the South Slav proto-national identities (see e.g., Golec, 2018).

16 “Izjava HAZU o srbijanskim presezanjima prema hrvatskoj književnoj baštini (2011.)”.

17 As I have recently written in an essay, there had been plenty of ethno-cultural potential for the formation and affirmation of modern Croatian national consciousness in the 19th century Dubrovnik. There were no (modern) nations in premodern times, but from today’s perspective we can identify proto-national identities. Due to cultural and social aspects of proto-national integrations, the process of ethnogenesis of the vast majority of Slavic inhabitants of the Republic of Dubrovnik had been shaping in favor of Croatness. This is ture even without all of the mentioned premodern confirmations of the Croatian name being used by Dubrovnik Republic’s citizens to denote their people and their Slavic idiom (https://www.academia.edu/97445403/Premodern_inhabitants_of_Dubrovnik_Serbs_or_Croats). In this context, it might be useful to note that there are more (preserved)

inly one of the reasons why the members of that movement generally refused to use the Serb ethnonym among the common Catholic folk of South Dalmatia in the first place (Ibidem, 8-25). Finally, as we have seen, the language of modern “Catholic Serbs from Dubrovnik” who “became national Croats” had been referred to as *Croatian* (not as *Serbian*) by premodern inhabitants of Dubrovnik and South Dalmatia long before the Illyrian Movement.

Despite all of this, Melichárek writes that “This period was marked by import of ‘croatiandom’ to areas with a significant percentage of the Serb population, as in ... Dubrovnik” (Melichárek, 2015, 67). He mentions no empirical or any other scientific sources for this claim, but notes that “The issue of Serbs from Dubrovnik region was elaborated” by Serbian historian Jeremija Mitrović in his 1992 book *Srpsstvo Dubrovnika (Serbness of Dubrovnik)*, printed by Belgrade’s Military Press at the time of Serbian forces’ bombardments of this South Croatian city. In this book Mitrović, *inter alia*, claims that Shtokavian dialect group belongs only to the Serbian language and, by romantically and selectively interpreting Porphyrogenitus’ narration, he projects modern Serbian nation onto all the Slavic and Vlach populations of the early medieval “Selavians” formed south of the river Cetina. However, the main anachronism of Mitrović’s book is the misuse of the short-lived modern Dubrovnik Serb Catholic movement for the purpose of proving the unprovable Serbness of the pre-modern inhabitants of South Dalmatia (Mitrović, 1992). Furthermore, Melichárek notes that “Croatian national ideas were being spreaded [sic!] in mythological form by politicians, bishops, canons and historians, who presented the idea of

confirmations of the Croatian name being used by Dubrovnik Republic’s citizens to denote their people and their Shtokavian idiom than for premodern Chakavian-speakers of Brač, Hvar, Korčula islands together nor for their idiom. One should also keep in mind that the same cultural-social forces behind the appearance of the ethnonym *Croat* and linguonym *Croatian* in premodern Dubrovnik, caused the appearance of this ethnonym and linguonym in central Istria (Raukar, 1997, 273). The best example is the 13th-14th century *Istrian Demarcation* in which the Croatian language (*hrvacki jazik*) is mentioned at least 20 times (*Crotian notary* is also mentioned) (Bratulić, 1978, 221-287). Not unlike medieval Comune of Ragusa/Dubrovnik, central Istria “never was a part of [Kingdom] of Croatia” (Sotirović, 2006: 111), but it was – according to Juraj Slovinač (1355/1360 – 1416) – nonetheless considered a part of Croats’ homeland: *Istria eadem patria Chrawati* (Tomasović, 2011, 17-18). In this respect one might also regard numerous medieval documents written by visitors in Dubrovnik which, since the 12th century onwards, mention this city as part of Croatia (Foretić, 1969, 79; Grčević, 2109, 205). In addition, Sotirović’s claim that “Dubrovnik with Southern Dalmatia was included into Croatia for the first time in history due to Communist rearrangement of ... Yugoslavia” (Sotirović, 2006, 111) is a nonsense, because Dubrovnik was within the territory of the pre-Communist Banovina of Croatia.

white and red Croatia” (Melichárek, 2015, 67). This is not problematic *per se*, when taken out of the context of Melichárek’s entire study. The problem is that as a “scientific” reference to this claim he cites ‘*Serbs all and everywhere*’ – ‘*Croatian lands*’ without the Croats, a 2005 paper by Serbian (pseudo)historian Nikola Žutić. Melichárek implicit aim might be to prove how modern Croat national identity in the 19th century South Dalmatia had no ethno-cultural basis accumulated throughout the preceding centuries. This identity, the *ex silentio* argument goes, had to be created *ex nihilo* and “in [a] mythological form” by Croatian nationalists whose aim was to carve a new “unnatural” nation (the Croats) out of the “Serb biological tissue” or “Serb national body”, as Žutić explicitly claims in the mentioned article (Žutić, 2005, 31, 32).

In the last pages of his study Melichárek writes that it is “important to note that the Serbian presence in Dubrovnik and whole of Dalmatia was undeniable and lasting centuries what can be evidenced by establishment of two Serbian monasteries in Krupa [and] in Krka in 1317 and 1350. Moreover”, he goes on, “an Eparchy on Island [sic!] Ston was founded by the St. Sava himself in 1219. Among significant Dubrovnik Serbs we may count Ivan Gundulić, a famous writer and philosopher Rudjer Bošković” (Melichárek, 2015, 68). Melichárek’s source for these claims are pages 84 and 85 of a book titled *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia’s Disintegration*, written by Serbian author Ana S. Trbovich and published by Oxford University Press in 2008.¹⁸ Trbovich indeed writes that “there was a large number of Roman Catholic Serbs in Dalmatia” (Trbovich, 2008, 84). She does not specify how many but makes a casual reference to her “scientific” source(s) for this: a book by a Serb *émigré* Lazo Kostich of 1963 and a 1903 book printed by members of the Serb Catholic political movement (*sapienti sat*). Indeed, Trbovich also wrote that “Serbian Christian Orthodox monasteries” of Krupa and Krka were built in 1317 and 1350 respectively, but makes no reference to any scientific source to back this claim, because none exists. On the other hand, she cites a 1995 article by Jovan Ilić in which this Serbian historian, casually and without any proof, claims that the Croatian poet Dživo Gundulić and the philosopher Rudjer Bošković “were of the Serbian origin” (Ilić, 1995, 317).

18 Trbovich’s book can hardly be regarded as a product of unbiased scholarship. It is enough to take a glance at all the sentences of her book which mention Great(er) Serbia since almost all of them deny the existence of this political and imperialist project.

In the very next sentence of his study, after he had concluded (based on the pages 84 and 85 of Trbovič's book) that "Among significant Dubrovnik Serbs we may count" Gundulić and Bošković, Melichárek notes "The fact ... that ethnicity of Ivan Gundulić isn't absolutely clear" (Melichárek, 2015, 68-69). If Gundulić's ethnicity "isn't absolutely clear", how can Melichárek casually portray him as a "Dubrovnik Serb"? In a footnote he notes that Gundulić was "of Serb, Croatian or Dubrovnik origin" and cites three sources for this: 1) page 59 of Croatian translation of Alberto Fortis' *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (as edited by Josip Bratulić) on which we read that "the City of Dubrovnik gave many notable poets of Illyrian language, among whom the most famous is Ivan Gundulić" (Bratulić, 1984, 59); 2) pages 56 and 57 of Branimir Anzulović's *Heavenly Serbia* on which one can read that Gundulić is "the author of a major work of Croatian Baroque literature, the epic poem *Osman*", and that he "was a native of Dubrovnik" (Anzulović, 1999, 56-57); and 3) the entire book on Gundulić written by T. (most likely Tatjana) Lorković. The latter book is not available to me, but if one is to believe other sources which Melichárek cites, it is hard to assume that Lorković's book provides its readers with proofs of the alleged Serb identity of the known Gundulić's ancestors. This is probably why, after concluding "that ethnicity of Ivan Gundulić isn't absolutely clear", he cites the famous and incorrect claim by Croatian historian Natko Nodilo "active in the second half of the 19th century" according to which "Serbian was the primary language in [premodern] Dubrovnik" (Melichárek, 2015, 69). In fact, here is Melichárek citing the mentioned Jeremija Mitrović's *Serbness of Dubrovnik*, a work which, *inter alia*, neglects most documented premodern examples of the use of Croatian name for the people of Dubrovnik and their Shtokavian idiom. It appears Melichárek simply adopted a pseudoscientific *modus operandi* to make the alleged Serb ethnicity of premodern *Dubrovčani* "clearer". Be it as it may, Melichárek is certain that "During the course of time Croats managed to achieve denationalization of Serbs in the region of Dubrovnik" (Ibidem, 69). He cites now works of scholarship on the issue of "denationalization" of Dubrovnik Serbs at the hand of the Croats. One could, thus, *ipso facto* conclude that the Catholic Croats were a vast majority in the region of Dubrovnik more than a century ago, when the alleged denationalization of Dubrovnik Serbs took place.

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Ovjekovječenje velikosrpskih ideja o Hrvatima i hrvatskom jeziku u naizgled znanstvenim radovima o Vuku Stefanoviću Karadžiću

Sažetak

Na temelju širokog spektra znanstvenih radova, u radu se razbija naizgled znanstveni pristup velikosrpskim idejama Vuka Stefanovića Karadžića u suvremenim radovima koji se oslanjaju na izvore koji, implicitno ili eksplicitno, perpetuiraju upravo te ideje. Primjer takvog pristupa je članak pod naslovom Uloga Vuka Karadžića u povijesti srpskog nacionalizma slovačkog povjesničara Maroša Melicháreka, kao i brojni radovi na koje se ovaj povjesničar poziva, kako bi stvorio dojam studioznosti i nepristranost.

Ključne riječi: hrvatski jezik, Hrvati, velikosrpske ideje, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić.