

(1989) from the old and famous Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Since 1991 he has worked at the Historical Institute in Kraków. In 1997 he was awarded a Doctor's degree with the thesis *Panstwa balkanske (Bosnia, Serbia, Dubrovnik) w obliczu agresji tureckiej w latach 1444-1463* [*The Balkan States (Bosnia, Serbia and Dubrovnik) under Turkish Expansion in the Period 1444-1463*]. He published the thesis in a somewhat expanded form in 2000 under the title *Krzyż i Polksiezyc. Panstwa zachodnich Balkanow wobec Turcji w latach 1444-1463* / *The Cross and the Crescent: West Balkan under Pressure between 1444 and 1463*. The history of Dubrovnik remains in the focus of his scientific attention, and thus in 2004 (in collaboration with J. Bonarek) he published the translation of Philippus de Diversis' *Description of the Famous City of Dubrovnik* from 1441. Wróbel has published many studies on the history of Dubrovnik and broader Balkan area, with emphasis on Bosnian church, slavery in Dubrovnik in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, »Fall of Bosnia in 1463 in the Light of the Contemporary Chroniclers«, »Participation of the Western Balkans in the Campaigns of Wladyslaw Jagiello against the Turks and the Political Consequences«, along with »Benedikt Kotruljević—Man on the Border of the Two Worlds and Two Epochs«. At present, he is completing his habilitation thesis entitled *Dubrovnik Republic 1358-1526*.

The contributions of the Polish historians should be highly valued and possibly financially supported through grants for the research in the Croatian archives, exchange of publications and professors, livelier contacts, etc. As the significance of Kotruljević's book by far surpasses the local borders and is an essential resource for the study of economic and social thought of Renaissance Europe, the latest translation in Polish is a welcome contribution to introducing this important treatise to the wider international readership.

Vladimir Stipetić

Zdenka Janeković-Römer, *Maruša ili suđenje ljubavi. Bračno-ljubavna priča iz srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika* [*Maruša or love on trial. A tale of romance and marriage from medieval Dubrovnik*]. Zagreb: Algoritam, 2007. Pages 327.

Maruša Butko, widowed Bratosaljić, daughter of a fifteenth-century Ragusan parvenu, would have sunk into oblivion had it not been for the rich resources of the Dubrovnik State Archives and the meticulous research of Zdenka Janeković-Römer. Why was the life of this particular woman brought to light after five hundred years of anonymity? The reason is fairly simple, for had she been our contemporary, her trials and fortunes would undoubtedly have added spice to the everyday media sensationalism. Namely, Maruša was the wife of two men at the same time.

The few details sprinkled here about her life raise many questions: What is 'small history' and what is its meaning? What is the correlation between 'small' and 'great' history? Who is Maruša Butko in fact? Is she a heroine or just another adulterous woman? Why does an eminent historian devote years of research in order to analyse the life of an adulteress? Are Maruša and her lovers but a bait we cannot resist?

'Great history' deals with the 'great reality', which is none other than the plurality of our limits, a framework in which, whether we like it or not, we are bound to move, banging our head on the walls or managing to cushion the blows. 'Great reality' is composed of our aspirations and our inability. It is above us and beyond us, and if lucky, we try to live in it unharmed. 'Small reality', however, is composed of achievements, small reality is us, it is within us, it is what we feel and how we really live.

And that is why, I think, Maruša Butko—a woman emerging from this 'small reality'—found herself in the focus of scholarly attention, both as a personality leaving certain trace and as a historical topic, or even motive for

something the author has tried to say through this character.

Despite all, the connection between Maruša and Zdenka Janeković-Römer is more than intriguing. Namely, the treasure trove of the Dubrovnik archives contains myriads of human fates, events and phenomena worthy of study. Considering that Zdenka Janeković-Römer has spent years digging in the archives and is familiar with its voluminous funds, why did she out of so many topics and individual fates pick out this particular woman? What was it that drew her to Maruša? The answer, however, is not simple, and an explanation should be sought in the realm of both the rational and irrational.

The rational answer lies in the scientific profile of Zdenka Janeković-Römer. A good interpreter of the past possesses that inherent quality to scent, probe, and through a fleeting glimpse assess at an early stage the value of the source and the far-sightedness of the possible conclusions deduced from it. It is a gift of a genuine scholar to be able to see a gemstone in the dust, to anticipate and foresee the chronology of the research. Zdenka Janeković-Römer has already demonstrated the highest scholarly standards with her previous books, markedly with *Okvir slobode*, presenting herself as an excellent analyst, historian of the essence, historian whose focus reaches beyond mere facts. The two hundred pages of this trial account have afforded Zdenka Janeković-Römer with the basis for an analysis of the entangled love relationships, marriage and the society of medieval Dubrovnik.

The irrational answer—that invisible reason why someone gets ‘hooked’ on a theme—has been elucidated by the authoress herself in her description of Maruša: “Because Maruša at a certain point in life tried in vain to follow her own desires despite the established norms. She naively attempted to have it all, wishing to indulge in life to the full. Guided by emotions, she arranged the marriage herself. She wished to decide on her own life”. Maruša was not a puppet whose strings were pulled by men in her

life. Maruša was not a victim of the situation. Contrarily, she created it. She ‘navigated’ in a predominantly patriarchal environment, the latter not being circumstantial, for at first glance she might appear a victim and men the protagonists. But that, however, is quite misleading. We so often surrender to the bias of the gender relations in the past—emphasizing masculine dominance and female inferiority and setting aside many arguments that could disintegrate this black and white picture. Similarly, Maruša appears to have been a victim of both the patriarchal relations and the men in her life, from her father to the lovers. How untrue! Maruša is the one holding a firm grip of the strings, she is the mistress, and men around her mere marionettes. She reprimands her own father, traditionally playing a crucial role in the choice of the daughter’s future spouse, for being selfish and dowry-centred, paying little regard for her. So menacing and malevolent is her forecast: “his prospects are poor and he will have a bad year”.

This syndrome of the mistress, woman who ‘writes history’, who turns several men round her little finger, who induces events, I believe is a source of fascination which Zdenka Janeković-Römer could not resist, along with yet another similar source—overwhelming emotions underneath the archive dust, whose eroticism swells as the centuries-old romances come to light. As a passionate historian, the author was simply far too tempted as she herself described “by a story from real life, so colourful, imbued with the scents and sounds of a lost reality”.

The result of her passion we have before us—three books in one. A book about medieval marriage and love, a book about women in Renaissance Dubrovnik, and a book about Maruša. Constructed on three interacting levels, this book is conceptually unique in Croatian historiography. Within such a concept, Maruša virtually features as a motive, a passion-based motive adding vividness to the study of a lost reality, as the book tends to zoom in the atmosphere of medieval Dubrovnik, to experience

the minds and thoughts of young girls, women, brides and grooms, fathers and church dignitaries. This view into the history in which facts lose significance and impressions gain it is that subtle glimpse into the past, the noblest portion of 'small history' that 'history from above' is unable to capture. The reader of this book will no doubt learn a new fact or two about Dubrovnik which cannot be found in the many historical surveys covering this subject-matter, and will most certainly experience something not easily encountered elsewhere—old Dubrovnik from the inside, the vibrations within the city walls, and a film instead of a 'snapshot'.

By telling the story of Maruša Butko, Zdenka Janeković-Römer has shown that brilliant interpretation turns small history into great, and more. She has shown that brilliant interpretation knows of no bounds, making the division into small and great history meaningless. She has demonstrated that historical science stands above fashionable trends, and that quality of interpretation dictates the only true trend. She has shown that the horizon of historical science is very broad and virtually limitless. This volume has infused the best methodological streams into domestic historiography, its interpretative strength reaching the peak of Croatian history, and beyond. Given the methodology, approach and innovation, the history written by Zdenka Janeković-Römer is among the paramount contributions to European historical writings.

Nenad Vekarić

*Med srednjo Evropo in Sredozemljem. Vojetov zbornik (Between Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Voje's Collected Papers)*, ed. Sašo Jerše. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2006. Pages 749.

The papers collected in a volume *Med srednjo Evropo in Sredozemljem. Vojetov zbornik* are dedicated to the fruitful career of the

historian and professor Ignacij Voje. Besides research, Ignacij Voje spent his career teaching at the Department of History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Ljubljana (Slovenia). The collected papers devoted to his historiographic work contain studies of the historians who focused on the same or affiliated historical phenomena as Professor Voje in the course of the fifty years of his scholarly and academic pursuits. *Vojetov zbornik* consists of two sections. The first (*Slovenica, Turcica, Balcanica, Ragusiana*) comprises historical studies of Slovenia and the Balkans as well as the history of Dubrovnik in the medieval and early modern period. The second section or *Miscellanea gratulabilia* comprises studies of Voje's colleagues and friends with whom, as noted by the editor Sašo Jerše, Voje shares historiographic interests but also the trials of everyday life. Thus three generations of scholars contribute to this collection, including exponents of different historiographic traditions who discuss a broad scope of the political, cultural and economic topics, emphasizing the coexistence between different political environments and cultures.

The volume opens with a chronologically arranged bibliography of Ignacij Voje, embracing his scientific and publicistic work from his early contributions in 1952. The number of bibliographic units devoted to the history of Dubrovnik, the Middle Ages mainly, is impressive.

The subsection under the title *Slovenica* begins with Andrej Nared's study of the privilege of Kranj, providing legal and historical background of this document, its transcription and translation (»Privilegij kranjskega plemstva iz leta 1338 – temelj stanovsko-monarhičnega dualizma«). In an essay entitled »Polica na Tolminskem – prva "čiganska" vas na Slovenkem?«, Andrej Pleterski reconstructs the historical setting of a gipsy migration, the memory of which has survived in oral tradition, arguing that in such a manner history can also be recorded in space. Dušan Kos examines the statute of the town of Izola from 1360 (»Simbolne in pomenske podobe statuta izolskega komuna iz leta 1360«). Robert Kurelić focuses