

*Nikše Ranjine* from diverse perspectives examine its literary dimension, evidently most inspiring, marked by numerous unsolved questions and attractive paths of research. Varying in topic, these contributions have raised fresh and intriguing questions, providing valuable answers about Ranjina's *Zbornik* from the viewpoint of contemporary literary history. Unfortunately, the cultural-historical contextualisation of the *Zbornik* remains neglected; in other words, Academy's project before us has completely ignored historical scholarship and what it should and has to say about the poets and poems of the *Zbornik* and their era. This fact clearly points to the lack of research on cultural history in Croatian historiography. Together with the wealth of the possible literary-historical studies, this flaw, too, can be understood as a path, direction of the future work on this invaluable literary but also cultural monument.

One of the initiators of the conference and editor of the collected papers, besides Dunja Fališevac, was Nikola Batušić. He fully devoted himself to this task with just as equal passion and scholarly zeal that had guided him in all of his previous projects. On this occasion I bid him farewell with my deepest respect.

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*Marin Držić: 1508-2008. Zbornik radova s međunarodnoga znanstvenog skupa održanog 5-7. studenoga 2008. u Zagrebu* [Marin Držić: 1508-2008. Collected volume from the international conference held from 5th to 7th November 2008 in Zagreb], ed. Nikola Batušić and Dunja Fališevac. Zagreb: HAZU, 2010. Pages 441.

On the 500th anniversary of the birth of Marin Držić, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU) organised a conference entitled "Marin Držić: 1508-2008". Held in Zagreb from 5th to 7th November 2008, it gathered eminent Croatian and international scholars from various disciplines such as history of literature, philosophy, teatrology, Croatology and history. The conference resulted in a volume edited by N. Batušić and D. Fališevac, consisting of some 27 articles dealing with various aspects of Držić's life and work. In terms of form, the volume has 441 pages, several illustrations, each article being accompanied by a summary in both Croatian and English.

In order to ease the reading, in this review—not in the volume itself—the articles are arranged in five provisional groups, each dedicated to one important aspect of Držićology. The first group of articles tackles the issues connected to Držić's biography and the general historical context of his life and work. Thus, M. R. Leto suggests that the unknown comedy in which Držić played in Siena in 1542, getting arrested thereafter, was actually the comedy *Aurelia* written by an anonymous author. In his biographical essay R. Bogišić follows the three final "steps" of Držić's life: the episode with the prohibition and eventual approval of *Hecuba's* performance by the Ragusan authorities; Držić's decision to leave Florence postponing the conspiracy; finally, his death in Venice. N. Vekarić proposes that Držić's famous comedy *Dundo Maroje* contains strong autobiographical elements, suggesting that *Dundo Maroje* might be Držić's father and Maro Držić himself, as well as finding possible references to other members of the family in the

play. Finally, starting from an anonymous epitaph to Pope Leo X found in the Ragusan archive, R. Seferović reconstructs this text's broad historical context, investigating the contacts between the Ragusans and the Medici Pope in the years of Držić's childhood.

Another group of articles deals with what could be labeled "ideological contextualization", relating Držić's work to the major values, attitudes and cultural traditions of the Renaissance Europe. Thus, D. Grmača explores the links between Držić's works and the discourse on seven deadly/cardinal sins, revealing Držić's peculiar Renaissance conception of sin as well as its important role in the construction of his plays. Having outlined the changing conceptualizations of necromancy from the Antiquity to the Renaissance, S. Paušek-Badždar traces the image of necromancer and homunculus in Držić's plays. Using the text of *Tirena*, M. Girardi-Karšulin reconstructs the Renaissance philosophical conceptualizations of the city present in Držić's opus, largely by comparing his work to that of the more or less contemporary philosopher F. Petrić. Focusing on the idea of *magnificentia*, Slavica Stojan investigates the rich references to luxury, consumption and crafts of sixteenth-century Ragusa in Držić's works, thereby reconstructing a specific Ragusan reception of this key idea of the Renaissance epoch. After an analysis of traditional understandings of Neo-Platonism in Držić's works, L. Rafolt offers a new interpretation, seeing it as a mixture of different philosophical and hermetic-esoteric traditions which can be best grasped from the prologues of his plays. M. Bošković Stulli examines the presence of folklore in Držić's works, pointing out the typical folklore theme of "rejuvenation" present in *Novela od Stanca*, in addition to the numerous other sayings, allusions and anecdotes taken from urban folklore. Finally, on the basis of the recent international research in the history of the book, primarily in the field of English Renaissance literature, D. Šporer illuminates Držić's understanding of authorship and his relationship to the printing of his works.

The third group of texts deals with literary issues in the narrower sense, such as stylistic or aesthetic analysis of Držić's opus and reconstruction of his fragmentary works. Thus, T. Bogdan reflects on the topic of Držić's amorous lyric poetry, somewhat neglected in favour of his more famous drama works, proposing new answers to traditional questions such as his indebtedness to Petrarchian canon and his relationship to the previous Ragusan tradition of vernacular love poetry. Based on modern narratological methodology, L. Čale Feldman rethinks and modifies P. Budmani's reconstruction of Držić's play *Pjerin*, thereby also touching upon the delicate question of Držić's originality and his indebtedness to other writers, in this case Plautus. Following the work of M. Medini, L. Paljetak reconstructs another fragmentary play, *Džuho Krpeta*, discussing its relationship to Aristophanes' comedy *Pluto* as well as relating it to several episodes from Držić's life. M. Tatarin goes beyond the traditional focus on the mythological parts of *Grižula*, usually read in an allegorical way as a conflict and reconciliation between Diana (Chastity) and Cupid (Desire), warning that there is a different, important but neglected part of the play dedicated to rustics which elaborates upon the universal topic of human desire and its limits. Dunja Fališevac analyses the types of dialogues and monologues in Držić's comedies, primarily *Skup* and *Dundo Maroje*, attempting to determine their function in the plot as well as comparing them with dialogues in the works of other Renaissance dramatists. Reading *Dundo Maroje* as a carnival text, Ivan Lozica interprets the famous myth about *ljudi nazbilj* and *ljudi nahvao* as a specific combination of local folklore, Neo-Platonism and learned mythology, and also suggests that these two kinds of "people" refer, among other things, to the two traditional types of masks, the "handsome" and the "ugly". Finally, István Lőkös engages in a comparison between the pastoral plays of Držić and his contemporary, the Hungarian poet Bálint Balassi, revealing several important analogies such as influence of Petrarchism, realism in depicting the shepherd life or the fact

that both incorporated parts of their lyrical poems into their dramas.

The next section is dedicated to the reception of Držić's opus after his death. Thus, S. Ereiz investigates the similarities between Držić and Molière on the one hand, and on the other the possible influences of Držić's opus on the so-called *frančezarije*, eighteenth-century Ragusan adaptations of Molière. Josip Vončina reveals another episode of Držić's reception, reconstructing his comparatively minor role during the nineteenth-century Croatian national revival whose protagonists favored I. Gundulić due to the purity of his literary language. N. Batušić attempts to reconstruct the first performance of Držić's plays after the sixteenth century, the 1895 Zagreb performance of *Novela od Stanca* and its reception. Finally, building on A. Šoljan's work on Držić, T. Jukić discusses the recent reception of Držić in Croatian culture and interprets several key topics of his plays in the framework of the recent European philosophy, mostly Foucault and Derrida.

The last group of texts is dedicated to the questions regarding the history of language. Pointing out the erroneous premise of the traditional scholarship that, unlike poetry, the prose works of the Renaissance reveal the spoken vernacular language, M. Moguš argues for a new methodological approach, since the prose works also followed the conventions of the written literary language. Josip Lisac analyses the appearances of foreign languages, various dialectical variants and foreign words in Držić's plays, noting the linguistic variety which depended on the provenience and social background of the characters in his comedies. Focusing on *Dundo Maroje*, Lj. Kolenić discusses the style and meaning of phrasemes in this work, bringing a comprehensive list of them. A. Kapetanović examines the linguistic features of Držić's *Pjesni ljuvene*, detecting the general Štokavian features, local features of Dubrovnik as well as a strong influence of Croatian Petrarchism. Finally, analysing a carefully chosen set of Držić's prose texts most

likely to faithfully reflect the organic idiom of his time, S. Vulić concludes that sixteenth-century Ragusan idiom still contained strong elements of archaic Štokavian dialect, but that the influences of New-Štokavian were beginning to appear as well.

Hopefully, this rough and necessarily laconic overview of the articles has made apparent the diversity of topics and methodologies which characterize this volume. Volumes occasioning certain anniversaries frequently run the risk of somewhat poorer quality, since the participants, despite good intentions, usually have to bend their own interests and texts in order to fit the prearranged topic. This is luckily not the case with the Batušić-Fališevac volume. It is a worthy successor of the well-known and oft quoted volume edited by J. Ravlić and published in 1967 on the 400th anniversary of Držić's death. In short, this book is one of the results of the most recent Držić's anniversary that is definitely here to stay.

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