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The Institutionalization of Expert Systems in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia

The Founding of the University of Zagreb as the Keystone of Historiographic Professionalization, 1867–1918

In this paper, I analyze the founding of the University of Zagreb as the “top of the pyramid” in an attempt to create a modern national educational system within the framework of the general process of building a modern social order in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia in the second half of the nineteenth century. I focus in particular on the founding of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb and its history chairs. The establishment of these chairs was crucial for the legitimate scientific grounding of Croatian national historiography. Through its sanctioned expert systems, these chairs then had the potential to exert a decisive influence on narratives of “Croatian” history and the creation and reproduction of discourse on the Croatian nation.

Keywords: University of Zagreb, nineteenth century, historiography, modernization, expert system

Introduction

The construction of the concept of a nation and its right to a given territory, a process which includes the general periodization of national history and the crafting of a shared interpretation of this history, the classification of groups of people into the categories “us,” “those close to us,” and “others,” or, put simply, the creation of nation-centric history, is doubtlessly linked to the fundamental transformation of the entire social order of the nineteenth century, which we usually call “modern.” The creation of an educational system with national characteristics is an exceptionally important component of the social order and forms of social organization, not only as a product of the prevailing order, but also as an important element of its (re)production and further symbolic construction, in which academia play an important role due to its halo of autonomy and claims of objectivity. In this paper, I consider the importance of the formation of modern national historical scholarship in Croatia (more
precisely Croatia and Slavonia) in the second half of the nineteenth century, the creation of narratives of national history, and the emergence of a discourse on the Croatian nation as a pivotal element of the organization of life in the past, present, and visions of the future. In doing so, I try to identify both the peculiarities of above mentioned processes in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia within the Habsburg realm and their congruence with general international social processes. Before undertaking the latter task, I must stress some interpretative and theoretical pillars of my inquiry.

John Burrow offers a provocative analysis of the process of the professionalization of historiography as a discipline as part of the broader process of professionalization and specialization, which is an inevitable response to the rapid growth of knowledge and which was in turn both the cause and effect of the ideal of research. The natural sciences were in the lead in this context, and other disciplines sought to follow their example. Despite being an ancient intellectual discipline, history lacked a solid foundation in university education until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when its usefulness in the education of statesmen and public officials and the promotion of patriotism, national consciousness, and national unity became apparent. At that time, history was adapted to the growing bureaucratization of society, which also influenced the organization of education and even research. Paid education and research professionals created, as was expected of men at their positions, a consensus on the research standards of each discipline (as a qualification for attaining academic positions) and the presentation of the findings of this research, and they also stressed that maintaining a serious and neutral tone was strictly necessary. Most historians considered these priorities self-evident, and it seemed that history, having received professional recognition and organization, had found its identity, which was expressed through the rhetoric of “science”: history, properly applied, was an objective and aggregate form of knowledge, the sum of the results of the work of professionals. It was reasonable to expect no further revolutions, since it is impossible to be more scientific than science, especially since history lacked an all-encompassing theory, apart from a general directive for critical rigor.

Burrow’s understanding relates to theoretical notions of Anthony Giddens, who emphasizes the distinctive and discontinuous character of modernity, its radical historicity, and the important roles of expert systems in it. In his view, with

2 Ibid., 455.
3 Ibid., 478.
the development of modern institutions “history,” as a systematic appropriation of the past in order to form a future, gains a fundamentally new impetus, and though it is subjected to various interpretations, through recombinations of time and space it constitutes a world-history framework for action and experience. As one type of uprooting mechanism intrinsically involved in the development of modern social institutions, “the expert system” is woven into a reflexivity characteristic of modernity. It constantly revisions social practices in light of knowledge of these same practices and continuously generates systemic self-knowledge, thus changing its subject matter.4 I believe that we can legitimately speak of the modern educational system as an expert system, with the university as its primary instance, based on the symbolic authority of science and forming “an established episteme.” We can also speak of an expert system and expert knowledge in the field of historical scholarship, based at modern universities, which participates on the one hand in the production of the distinctiveness of modernity and on the other in the representation of these distinctive social forms of modernity (e.g. the political system of a nation state, the nation) as rooted in history.

With all this in mind, one is perhaps hardly surprised by the fact that the question of institutionalizing the University of Zagreb was of the utmost importance to the group of Croatian intellectual and political elite which based its legitimacy on the goal of modernizing and uniting the Triune Kingdom, especially in view of the efforts to broaden the autonomy of Croatia and Slavonia in the 1860s. But this process was not at all straightforward, as it was situated in the complex context of the political, socio-economic, and cultural restructuring of the Habsburg space in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Development of the Modern Universities in the Habsburg Realm

After the collapse of the 1848 revolution, the government in Vienna tried to reform the Habsburg Monarchy, which on a basic level was a monarchic community, into a modern, strictly centralized state, held together by unified legal norms, as well as culture and identity. These centralistic undertakings, which also had elements of Germanisation, were likewise apparent in the field of historical scholarship. In 1848, a “history commission” was founded at the Imperial Academy of Sciences (Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften und

Künste), tasked with the systemic accumulation of sources that would serve as the basis for writing a “national Austrian history,” which would include the histories of parts of the unified Empire.\(^5\) Since the Academy, founded in 1847, was supposed to represent a central and supra-regional scholarly institution, the founding of local historical commissions on the level of the entire Monarchy was intended to complement it. However, the needs of the Monarchy’s leadership for historiographic legitimization of the political and social constitution of a modern state was not completely in line with the goals of provincial scientific societies, which were oriented towards the development of the sciences in national languages.\(^6\) For example, in the case of Transylvanian learned societies, Borbála Zsuzsanna Török explores how local scholarly life, organized principally along ethnic and political allegiances in the multicultural setting, at the same time encompassed adaptations of international trends and practices of scholarship to local conditions, as well as mutual communication, the circulation of ideas, and the transfer of knowledge. Yet, Török warns about the boundaries of knowledge circulation, particularly given the pressures of age of nation-state building (in the mid-nineteenth century), when patriotism and participation in more universal knowledge was reformulated with an emphasis on national cultural affiliations. In the scholarly sphere, this coincided with the reorganization of universities.\(^7\)

It was precisely in the period of neo-absolutism that the impulse to make historical scholarship more scientific appeared, originating from the center of the Monarchy. In 1854, the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung (Austrian Institute of History Research) was founded at the University of Vienna with the goal of serving as an institutional basis of the aforementioned “national Austrian history.” With its emphasis on the study of modern criticism of sources and the auxiliary sciences of history, it became the center of education for many professional historians throughout the Monarchy and an inspiration for the pursuit of research within national frameworks. The Institute is also a good indicator of the fundamental shift in higher education policy in the Habsburg Monarchy after 1848. Social, political, and technological changes demanded a reform of higher education. The Enlightenment ideals of the

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free-thinking, Humanist-educated individual also made an impression, so a far-reaching reorganization of the Philosophical Faculty was initiated, elevating it to the same level as the “higher” faculties (of Law, Medicine, and Theology). The Humboldtian model was taken as a point of departure, and the universities were reformed from functional places for training public officials, teachers, and priests to places of synergized general education and scientific research. Of course, these ideal goals were adapted to the needs of political and social control by the central state authorities, and this was reflected in the efforts to make the universities remain primarily Catholic, conservative, and loyal to the Monarchy. However, according to Jan Surman, it was precisely the inclusion of the faculties of philosophy into the university on equal terms that led to their cultural particularity and the intensification of national conflicts. Humanist disciplines were the basis for the process of cultural revival. This also changed the character of university education, which, through the implementation of an organic cultural-educational paradigm with universities as the pivotal institutions in the educational process, paved the way to cultural conflicts. A strong Humanist commitment changed the function of universities in the public sphere and they thus became the main producers of cultural norms, which potentially led to conflicts at a time when culture was becoming increasingly nationally codified. Universities started adopting this orientation with the fall of neo-absolutism, which did not bring an end to the efforts to transform the Monarchy into a functional modern state, but which did compel the Monarchy’s leadership to introduce some form of decentralization.

In an account of the Monarchy’s dualist conception of 1867, Robin Okey claims that the rationale on which it was founded combined dynastic loyalty with the principle of German liberal hegemony in Austria and Magyar liberal hegemony in Hungary. Yet, politics in the Monarchy was tied up with the

11 Ibid., 51.
nationality question in one way or another, and though German economic and cultural power influenced all parts of Monarchy, it proved unable to fashion a supra-national identity. So, integration failed and the history of Dualist Austria became a study in the erosion of German liberal hegemony and the emancipation of the non-German nationalities from it, which contributed significantly to the development of fully structured and culturally cohesive Slav communities increasingly resentful of their subaltern role. This does not mean that a series of fluid and manifold personal and collective identifications ceased to exist; various political and social conceptions of the Monarchy were an outgrowth of this phenomenon, making the distinction between monarchical and national anything but straightforward. However, a new type of politics was emerging, in which the language of national sentiment, political rights, and culture would become more and more common, directed (in the terms of social stratification) in the territorial units of the empire much more from “top down.” This process was also reflected at the universities, which acquired the dual role of educating loyal citizens and fostering their cultural identity. This often, though not necessarily, led to contradictions.

The process of building national cultural spaces in Cisleithania was reflected at universities first through the introduction of national languages and history, followed by the introduction of “national” languages at universities. However, only those universities with the prerequisite political and institutional basis could reach this level. For example, the universities in Cracow and L’viv in Galicia were Polonised in 1869 (though L’viv was bilingual until 1879, when Polish became the sole official language there). Both of them had a tradition stretching back to the Vormärz period and now also enjoyed the support of the factually autonomous status Galicia had within the Cisleithanian half of the Empire from the 1870s. The University of Chernivtsi was founded in 1875 with German as its official language and with the ideological goal of attracting the Ruthenians to the “political Austrian nation” and influencing education in the neighboring Romanian lands. Chairs in the Ruthenian and Romanian languages

14 Okey, The Habsburg Monarchy, 195.
16 Ibid, 84.
were established at this university. The University of Prague was, after a brief bilingual period, divided into two universities in 1882, with German being the official language of one and Czech the official language of the other.

Despite the ongoing process of concentrating on linguistic and cultural affinities as the main mechanisms of self-identification at Cisleithanian universities from the 1860s, which also resulted in more employees being drawn from the respective linguistic communities, attempts were made to maintain administrative, political, and “ideological” continuity with conservatism and Catholicism as the main ideological values within academic life. At the Germanophone universities (Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Chernivtsi) this was (alongside the general emphasis placed on the importance of criticism of sources as the methodological basis of scientific historical scholarship) characteristic of the chairs in Austrian history, which were interpretatively pan-Austrian, pro-Habsburg, and pro-Catholic. Chairs in Polish history were established at Galician universities (in Cracow in 1869, in L’viv in 1881) and became rivals in their interpretations of national history. Concentrating on the neuralgic spot of Polish national history (the disintegration and division of the Polish Commonwealth in the eighteenth century), the interpretation of the “Cracow school” implied that the loyalist pro-Habsburg discourse served as a guarantee that Polish nationhood would be preserved. Thus, the Cracow school earned itself the label “clerical-conservative.” On the other hand, the “L’viv school” considered itself more “progressive,” placing a greater emphasis on the influence of imperial geopolitics on the partition of Poland and thereby implying more emphatically the need for Polish independence. Thus, these two “schools” expressed general uncertainty about the definition of the Polish nation and its national territory, as well as any affirmation of the possibility of building a modern Polish state. The University of Prague was also becoming the central place for the professionalization of Czech national historical scholarship, especially after 1882, developing towards rigorous critical objectivity. Yet, intra-national turmoil and discussions on the position of Czech culture and the shape of the “national idea” found expression in historiographical national narratives derived from differing interpretations of essentialities, the turning points in Czech history, and their importance for the present.

18 Ibid, 155–57.  
19 Ibid., 214.  
20 Ibid., 311–12.  
21 Ibid., 281–89.
In the other part of Dualist Monarchy, the Kingdom of Hungary, from the dominant Magyar perspective there was no denying that the nationalities were a reality or that Hungary should be a national state, not an ethnic federation. Eventually, successes made in the name of the unitary Hungarian “political nation” had prevented an accommodation with national minority movements, which had become more embittered. In the scholarly realm, developments after 1867 were similar, reflecting general reforms with dominant national flavor. During the period of neo-absolutism, the University of Budapest underwent reforms similar to the reforms at the Cisleithanian universities, but from 1861 Hungarian became the official language of the university (it would also become the official language of the University of Cluj/Kolozsvár, founded in 1872, and the universities in Bratislava/Pozsony and Debrecen, founded on the eve of World War I). Together with other scholarly institutions (the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, various associations of historical scholarship), they represented the pillars of the professionalization of historical science, which went from the predominantly national romantic historiographic accounts of the Vormärz period to the more specialized, scientifically elaborate and methodologically source based historical scholarship of the later nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the majority of the Hungarian historiography was anchored in a national master narrative reflecting the dominance of the Magyar conception of the Hungarian national state.

Regarding the developments in the Transleithanian part of the Monarchy, the only exception to this general trend was the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia and the University of Zagreb. The development of its internal autonomy, scholarly institutions, and in particular historical scholarship is the topic of subsequent sections of this essay.

**The Making of the First Institution of Historical Scholarship in Croatia**

In Civil Croatia (Banska Hrvatska), the foundations for the construction of a Croatian nation as a modern political and cultural community were laid down in 1835–47. The basis of Croatian nationalism was broadened among various

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social groups (nobles, bourgeoisie, clergy, and military officers).\textsuperscript{24} This political movement managed to resolve (not without support from court policy in the 1840s) several decades-long disagreements and conflicts between the Hungarian and Croatian diets regarding Croatia’s municipal rights by adding considerations of cultural loyalties and inclinations and fashioning a program for the creation of an autonomous political entity (the Triune Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia) based on a liberal civil social order. The most important points of this program include demands for the introduction of the “national language” on all levels of education, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, support for education, and, specifically, the founding of the University of Zagreb.\textsuperscript{25} The effects of the turbulent events of 1848/49 and the short-lived unification of the Triune Kingdom in the person of the ban (vicery) Josip Jelačić (1801–59),\textsuperscript{26} which was effectively nullified by the introduction of Viennese centralism and the neo-absolutist system in the early 1850s, remained a useful source for visions of the nation state and the national community in the subsequent decades.

During the neo-absolutist regime, legitimation of national individuality was constrained to the cultural sphere, which was also strictly regulated and supervised by authorities. The foundation of the Society of Yugoslav History and Antiquities in 1850 represented the first systematic push towards scientific (source collection, critical approach) historical scholarship. The Society equally emphasized the need for the “pragmatic” aspect of historical scholarship, and it saw history as an ideological and scientific legitimization of Croatian national particularity and its South Slavic frame.\textsuperscript{27} As Society sponsor ban Jelačić remarked at a Society assembly in 1852, the history of each nation was to be considered its baptismal certificate and an indicator of its place among humanity. Similarly, Ivan Kukuljević (1816–89), the Society’s chairman, reminded his audience that one of the goals of the Society’s historical research was to awaken in the people

\textsuperscript{24} Tomislav Markus, \textit{Hrvatski politički pokret 1848.–1849. godine: Ustanove, ideje, ciljevi, politička kultura} (Zagreb: Dom isvijet, 2000), 47.


\textsuperscript{26} Ban Jelačić conquered Medimurje, the Hungarian Littoral, and Rijeka in 1848. The emperor named him the governor of Rijeka and the civilian and military governor of Dalmatia. With the introduction of the so-called Imposed Constitution of 1849, Rijeka and the Croatian Littoral were united with Croatia and Slavonia, and the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia and Slavonia was also promised. However, attempts to unite the Military Frontier with civil Croatia and Slavonia proved unsuccessful. Mirjana Gross, \textit{Počeci modern Hrvatske} (Zagreb: Globus, 1985), 15–16.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
a grasp of and yearning for their national heritage and, in doing so, to help them understand themselves and thus give them pointers for the future. He placed emphasis on Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia as the regions that were “closest” to the Croat nation, but he also noted the importance of the Yugoslav “homeland.” Therefore, the Society was forced by the authorities to make several changes to its regulations and was given final approval by the Ministry of Internal Affairs only in 1857.

Although the conditions for professional historical scholarship in Civil Croatia began to develop in the 1850s, reflecting general trends from abroad and also impulses from within the Monarchy, it was only in the 1870s that its organizational foundations were laid through the systematic publishing of historical sources and research findings and the creation of the institutional framework necessary for the education of professional historians. The former was made possible by the foundation of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences, which provided firm logistical support for professional scholarship. The latter was made possible by the foundation of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb.

The Construction of a Croatian National Historical Narrative and the Question of the Foundation of the University

After the collapse of neo-absolutism in the Habsburg Monarchy, the Croatian Sabor (Parliament) was convened in 1861. Many contemporaries believed it to be a continuation of the Sabor of 1848, which had laid the foundations of the legal basis of the post-feudal order. At that session, the Croatian state ideology had been systematically formulated. These formulations, with certain minor modifications, remained the ideological foundation of the right of the Croatian nation to statehood, even after the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise of 1868. This ideology was based on the notion that Croatian historical state rights had survived uninterrupted over the centuries and that the “constitution” of the Triune Kingdom had a historical continuity which could be traced to the time of the “national kings” in the early Middle Ages.

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29 Gross, Počeci modern Hrvatske, 427.
While the main interest of historical research in the first half of the nineteenth century was the defense of the nobility’s “municipal rights” in the kingdoms of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia, historical scholarship in the second half of the nineteenth century appeared as a modern discipline one of the goals of which was to further the efforts of Croatian politics to preserve political autonomy and encourage individuals to actively affirm Croatian identity as a modern nation.\(^{31}\)

One of the main initiators of this new direction was Franjo Rački (1828–94), a man who was also the main formulator of the basic tenets of the ideological foundation of the Croatian nation state in 1861. In his historiographic work, Rački devoted most of his energies to research on early medieval Croatian history in order to prove the historically deep-rooted nature of Croatian statehood, the distinctness of the Croatian people, and their strong connections with other South Slavs (as was typical for nineteenth-century Croatian historians). Following European role models in regard to the scientific writing of history, he nonetheless strongly linked it to national ideology. Called the first Croatian professional historian,\(^{32}\) this long-time president of the Yugoslav Academy and founder of several journals and editor of compilations of historical sources as important instruments of the professionalization of humanist disciplines can be placed within the main trajectory of the development of Central European national historiographies in the mid-nineteenth century. Having received an education in the auxiliary historical sciences in Rome, Rački, in addition to placing emphasis on the criticism of historical sources and unbiased writing, believed that history should construct national narratives with the goal of righting present-day injustices and accomplishing desirable political goals. As Monika Baár determined in her comparative analysis, historians belonging to that generation in East Central Europe were involved in promoting a unified national culture, ascribed an educational purpose to history, tended to depict the nation as a victim of historical injustices, and considered progress—which was usually linked to divine providence—inseparable from national freedom, which was proved through the study of history, i.e. by showing the antiquity, unity and uniqueness of the national community and the historical continuity of its culture, including its political culture.\(^{33}\) For example, Rački idealized the values of the old Croatian state and its alleged democratic institutions, which

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stemmed from the characteristics of the Slavic family of peoples, which were distinct from the Germanic or Romanic peoples. Feudalism, which was contrary to Christian and Slavic morals, was to blame for the weakening of Croatian statehood, because it separated the nobility from the people. The nobility thus fell prey to a foreign “spirit,” while the national consciousness of the peasant masses almost completely disappeared. Rački taught Croats that their very existence would be threatened unless they maintained their Slavhood, and he was convinced that the state union of Hungary and Croatia had separated the Croats from other South Slavs and thus ruined Croatian statehood. By encouraging the writing of overviews of Croatian history, Rački expressed his belief that a complete Croatian history could only be written by a nationally conscious individual (i.e. not a foreigner), and that “national consciousness, criticism and science should be married in a national historian.” He also warned that, for the survival and future development of the Croatian nation, work should have been undertaken immediately to elevate the arts and sciences in Croatia to a level comparable to that of the most developed nations of Europe, while at the same time maintaining the characteristics of intellectual endeavor among Croats which were an expression of the national “spirit.” Otherwise, the Croatian people, who according to Rački were exposed to the hegemonic aspirations of the culturally developed Germans and Italians, would in time disappear from the stage of history.

The beliefs of people like Rački were strongly present among the political class, which had by then clearly defined itself as “Croatian” and had clearly expressed its political goals and influenced the efforts of the Sabor to reform many areas of social life, including education. Their goal, frequently emphasized in the Sabor, was to secure both the “material” and “spiritual” development of “our people,” and the first steps towards this were the reorganization of the absolutist educational system in a manner appropriate to the “national spirit” and the founding of the University of Zagreb as the “crown of national education.” The bishop of Đakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905), offered public support for the founding of the University of Zagreb through his inspired speech in the Sabor, together with a monetary donation. Strossmayer was one of the leading members of the People’s Party (Narodna Stranka) and

34 Gross and Szabo, Prema hrvatskom e građanskom društvu 290.
36 Ibid., 107.
37 Gross and Szabo, Prema hrvatskom e građanskom društvu, 147–48.
the most important patron of cultural institutions in Croatia in the second half of the nineteenth century. His speech in the Sabor encompassed all the tropes and standard discursive motifs of the “Croatian” political, intellectual, cultural and scientific fields and their meeting points in the second half of the nineteenth century.\(^{38}\) Stressing the importance of enlightenment and education as “spiritual goods” more important than “material riches,” in his speech the bishop explicitly spoke of the challenges faced by the Croatian people, who found themselves in a peripheral area of a great empire which had the aspiration of casting itself as a national community. History, he said, had been unjust and merciless towards a community which had belonged to a circle of advanced nations. Its territory had been torn apart and estranged from its former cultural achievements, the Croatian nation had the historical right and spiritual capacity to restore its former glory. Its position on the periphery and crossroads of great empires gave it a chance to unite with its “brothers” and spread modern European Christian civilization to the southeast of Europe. An important role in this was to be played by education and science. The implicit tension in Strossmayer’s statement is the relationship between the “Croatian” and the “Yugoslav,” a relationship about which he offers no definitive conclusions. Also, as not surprising in the Habsburg context, he gave no clear indication of the aspirations of his “tribal” brothers “on the other side” for unity or connection, appealing merely to the tradition of the Croatian right to statehood and the potential of Zagreb as a modern cultural center of the Yugoslav world.

In the subsequent sessions of the Sabor, as the efforts to found a university became more concrete, Strossmayer’s enthusiastic words gave way to more prosaic formulations. Thus, Pavao Muhić (1811–97),\(^{39}\) when presenting the legal basis of the university formulated by a committee elected for that purpose, devoted most of this time to describing the inadequacy of higher education in Croatia, which was limited to the practical education of state officials, while higher education institutions would “be an instrument of all-round and thorough higher education, which is only possible at a university.”\(^{40}\) Muhić didn’t fail to mention how the founding of the university and the advancement of the sciences were imperatives in a world in which others had already achieved significant


\(^{39}\) Lawyer and professor of political-cameral sciences at the Zagreb Academy of Law (1850–71); member of the Sabor (1861–66).

\(^{40}\) Spomenica na svetčano otvaranje Kralj. sveučilišta, 13–14.
scientific-technological advancements, and he went on to repeat Strossmayer’s view of Zagreb’s university as a potential bridge towards the Ottoman lands, concluding that

[n]o matter how the legacy of the Sick Man of the Bosporus [the Ottoman Empire] is divided, whether some of the Yugoslav lands end up under the Croatian–Hungarian crown as we wish them to, or whether they are left to an uncertain fate, it shall remain our noble and most high duty to spread the culture and civilization of Europe, cleansed of the western mold, to the nations which are part of our body, blood of our blood.41

Strossmayer’s and Muhić’s geopolitical ambitions even found a place in the final address to the ruler, albeit in a somewhat humbler form.42 This also illustrates the liberal-minded nature of the 1861 Sabor, which was held at a time when the Habsburg authority had weakened, but not nearly enough to prevent it from dissolving the Sabor, which left most of the Sabor’s provisions, including those on the founding of a university, without the ruler’s sanction. The ruler’s permission for the founding of the two institutions, the Academy and the University, which the political and social elite in Croatia, particularly the part of it that advocated the unification of the Triune Kingdom and national autonomy with the characteristics of statehood, considered of special national interest and honor, had to wait until the crystallization of the new constitutional framework of the state, which appeared following the Austro–Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Apart from the Unionists, for whom this arrangement guaranteed that Croatia and Slavonia would have to define their relationship with the Kingdom of Hungary clearly on the principles of a relatively narrow provincial autonomy, the other political groups in Croatia were disappointed by this turn of events. However, it was only under these circumstances that the barriers to the founding of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences were removed. It was formally established in 1867, but, despite its name, was largely devoid of “Yugoslav” content. Its declared purpose at the 1861 Sabor was to support the arts and sciences on the “Slavic South” among Croats, Serbs, Slovenians, and Bulgarians, i.e. to offer a scientific interpretation of the state, social, and intellectual life of the “Yugoslav nations,” with the ambition of bringing together all the better

41 Ibid., 16–17.
42 Ibid., 18–20.
“minds” of the Slavic South into a single scientific organization. However, the rules that eventually were sanctioned changed these aims into mere stress on the general tendency to cultivate sciences and arts, especially the “Yugoslav” language and “Yugoslav” literature, while its ordinary members were to be “impeccable Austrian citizens,” i.e. not those living in Yugoslav lands outside the Monarchy. Similar political occurrences delayed the sanctioning of the legal basis of the founding of the University of Zagreb. While the ruler gave his sanction to the draft of the legal basis in 1869, political infighting between the Unionists and the People’s Party delayed the sanctioning of the final document until 1874. At this time, the People’s Party and ban Ivan Mažuranić were in power, and they intensified the modernization reforms with a liberal orientation. In the numerous declarations, from the Austro–Hungarian Compromise to the founding of the University itself, one no longer finds grand plans for a “Yugoslav” university in Zagreb as the central institution of higher education of all the South Slavs that would have fulfilled the visions of Strossmayer and Muhić. The rudiments of such a goal can be seen in some of Rački’s speeches, but the basic tone of all these discussions had a more pragmatic character, aimed at the eventual founding of an institution of higher education within the frame of the self-governing territorial unit of Croatia and Slavonia. Eventually, even the idea of calling the University “Yugoslav” was rejected in the name of pragmatism and realism. It was named the University of Francis Joseph I, i.e. the name became an expression of loyalty, not difference.

The Founding of the University as a Factor in the Development of Croatian Historiography

The reformist practices of Mažuranić’s government in the year in which the University was founded included the enacting of a law on primary education, which laid the foundations of the entire educational pyramid and created the conditions for the construction of an educational system which allowed functional differentiation in the field of education. It thus was an important step

43 Gross and Szabo, Prema hrvatskom e građanskom društvu, 149–50.
44 Ibid., 285.
45 Spomenica na svetlano otvaranje Kralj. sveučilišta, 45–47.
46 All important discussions and acts regarding the process of founding the University can be found in: Ibid., 30–76.
forward in the further creation of a modern civil society.\textsuperscript{47} Contemporaries saw the year 1874 as the final point at which “the progress of the Croatian nation was raised to such a level that, in the sense of education, they can rightly be counted not only among the first nations in the Slavic south, but among the most cultured nations in general.”\textsuperscript{48} During the opening of the University, its first rector, Matija Mesić (1826–78), who also became the first professor of Croatian history in the Faculty of Philosophy, expressed similar feelings in his long speech, in which he also spoke of the history of the Croatian people and their continued aspirations for the founding of a university.\textsuperscript{49} Mesić said that the Croats had settled in their current homeland as a national group that had already taken form, whose cultural transformation was marked by Christianization and Enlightenment in the Slavic spirit through the saints Cyril and Methodius. Slavic cooperation had been broken by the Christian schism, so “its [the nation’s] cultural life then followed two different courses: the Croats, together with their Slovenian kin, were left under the influence of the West, while their Serb neighbors stood under the influence of the Byzantine East.”\textsuperscript{50} Thereafter, Mesić limited himself to presenting the basic flow of Croatian history, which he did according to the interpretation which by then had become canonical. According to this interpretation, the Croats had been raising their level of education until the centuries-long caesura caused by the Ottoman conquests, when they were forced to devote their energies to the defense of the Christian world, neglecting the development of their education and science. The seed of institutions of higher education reappeared in the seventeenth century, but they did not reach acceptable levels of development until, “in the fourth decade of our century, the spirit of the times and the danger which threatened our homeland gave rise to a select circle of Croatia’s sons,”\textsuperscript{51} who awoke the “consciousness” and “pride” of the nation. After many decades of struggle, their efforts to found a university were fulfilled when Mesić held his speech, and now the university not only served as an institution for the education of government officials, but also was charged with the task of

\textsuperscript{47} Dinko Župan, “Pučkoškolstvo u vrijeme banovanja Ivana Mažuranića” (MA thesis, University of Zagreb, 2002), 107.

\textsuperscript{48} Spomenica o 25-godišnjem postojanju Sveučilišta Franje Josipa I. u Zagrebu (Zagreb: Tisak Kr. Zemaljske Tiskare, 1900), 2.

\textsuperscript{49} Mesić’s entire speech can be found in: Spomenica na svetčano otvaranje Kralj. sveučilišta, 80–104.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 84.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 94.
nurturing the general educational sciences, considering science to be an end in itself, [since] science is not only the characteristic of one nation, but the common treasure of all mankind, our university shall build upon the great achievements that have been made over the ages, especially in the recent times, thanks to the activity of man’s spirit. The duty of the scholar shall, however, be to refer to the individual nature and character of his nation, to research and test its people and its views on the world and man, and the conditions in which he lives.52

Mesić eventually returned to Strossmayer’s visions and expressed his hope that the newly-opened University, as “the shrine of science and education,” would spread its boons throughout the Balkans and thus fulfill the mission which history had accorded the Croatian people, “to be the intermediary between the progressive West and the backward East.”53

The University of Zagreb was divided into three faculties, the Faculties of Law, Theology, and Philosophy; the latter included two sections, one for the philosophical-historical sciences and another for the mathematical-natural sciences.54 Within the Faculty of Philosophy, chairs in universal history and Croatian history (with special consideration of Austrian and Hungarian history) were established. These chairs were completed by a seminar on the auxiliary sciences of history (a separate chair was founded in 1908). The chairs in history tried to implement the modern imperatives related to the organization of the curriculum and research, basing historical inquiry methodologically on the factual and source-oriented research ideal and epistemologically on the “genealogical concept.” Burrows’s theories on the organization and institutionalization of higher education as being congruent with the tendencies of the general construction of the modern social order explain quite well how this expert system was legitimized. Faculties became a place of instituting55 (creating new academics), but also of the selection and hierarchization of cadres in the educational pyramid. The rules prescribed the enrolment and duties of the faculty and students, and the evaluation committees reviewed dissertations, habilitations, and applications.

52 Ibid., 98–99.
53 Ibid., 101.
54 The Faculty of Medicine became active only in 1918, despite the fact that its legal basis was laid down in 1874.
55 In the sense of Bourdieu’s solemn sanctioning and sanctifying of a certain social difference, which is known and accepted by both the instituted agent and other members of the society and which permanently increases the value of the bearers of state credentials, the prevalence and intensity of the belief in its value. Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 119.
to fill vacant professorial posts. Thus, in the period before 1918, 17 doctoral
dissertations were written, the main topic of which was related to subjects from
general or Croatian history, and numerous dissertations were written dealing
primarily with the fields of philology, Slavonic studies, the history of philosophy,
geography, etc. This contributed to the creation of a Croatian cultural space
and Croatian history, situating it within a broader geopolitical and socio-cultural
context and forming and rooting contemporary Croatian identity.\textsuperscript{56} In addition,
university professors, as top-ranking experts, were also competent to serve on
commissions that appointed secondary school teachers.\textsuperscript{57} It could be said that
a “truly Croatian” historical scholarship was established only once it had joined
the general process of scientification and experts had emerged as agents of this
development.

Three Distinguished Historians

Three professors of history were particularly prominent in the 1874–1918
period due to their public activities, reputations, and influence. They were Tadija
Smičiklas, Vjekoslav Klaić, and Ferdo Šišić, and they still occupy prominent
positions in the Croatian historiographic canon. They are particularly significant
due to their overviews of Croatian history, which had a deep impact on the
approach to research, narrativisation, and interpretations of the history which
was understood as the history of the “Croatian people” and the “Croatian”
lands.

Through his academic path and public and political activity, Tadija Smičiklas
(1843–1914) represented a sort of role model of the Croatian national
bourgeoisie and scholarly elite, even to his contemporaries. Educated at the
Faculty of Philosophy in Vienna and having graduated in the field of auxiliary
sciences of history at the Austrian Institute of History Research, he chose the
right moment to appear on the intellectual and scientific scene with his long-
awaited synthesis, a two-volume \textit{History of Croatia} (1879–82). Fulfilling the

\textsuperscript{56} Stjepan Damjanović, ed., \textit{Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu: Monografija} (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet

\textsuperscript{57} Candidates who wished to hold history lectures had to display a good grasp of chronology, the
“pragmatic coherence” of the “major events,” and the “cultural-historical” value of the important periods.
They also had to incorporate into “general history” a “detailed and broad” knowledge of “the history of
the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy with special regard to Croatian history”. Hrvatski državni arhiv [Croatian
State Archive], fond 502: Ispitna komisija zapoštanje stručnih ispita za zvanje profesora srednjih škola
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general wish of the intellectual elite of every “emancipator” nation (to use Baár’s term) for a “complete history of the nation,” Smičiklas also presented the narrative of this history in a widely-desired “pragmatic” tone with the goal of educating the broader strata of society and presenting an account that resonated with current events.58 The work garnered him much attention, both among valued predecessors such as Rački, who lauded both his scientific merits and his patriotic spirit, and successors such as Šišić, who emphasized that few scholarly books were as widely read as this one, which “also strongly affected consciousness-raising and the desperate resistance and struggle of the people in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.”59 He also won other forms of recognition, such as honorary citizenship of Zagreb, Karlovac, and Varaždin.60 In addition, it was precisely this book that, together with his Viennese diploma, was of crucial importance for his appointment as professor at the Chair of Croatian History of the University of Zagreb in 1882.61 Until his death in 1914, Smičiklas served as a professor, president of Matica hrvatska, and president of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was also the person who set in motion the publishing of important historical sources in an edition known as the Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae. He also actively participated in politics as a parliamentary representative of the Independent People’s Party in the 1880s and 1890s, with the goal of opposing ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry’s Hungary-friendly regime. Smičiklas thus positioned himself among the top history experts of his time, and he became an important person for the cultural and political development of the modern Croatian nation, whose ideological outlooks on the era were in line with historiographic interpretations. Thus, in the tradition of the People’s Party of the 1860s and 1870s and led by the visions of Strossmayer and Rački, he developed a periodization of Croatian history from which the historical rights-based argumentation for the unification of the Triune Kingdom was derived on a political level and from which the distinctiveness of the Croatian people as a social whole, albeit ethnically substantially linked to

58 Baár, Historians and Nationalism, 53.
59 Ferdo Šišić, Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vlada (Zagreb: Tisak Narodnih novina, 1925), 20.
61 Arhiv Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu [Archive of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb], box 3 (1880–1882) - zapisnik IV. sjednice profesorskog zbora mudroslovnoga fakulteta Kr. Sveučilišta Franje Josipa I, držane 13. veljače 1881 [Report of the Fourth assembly of the professorial council of the Philosophical faculty held on February 13, 1881].
other South Slavs, was derived on a cultural level. In the more down-to-earth context of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Smičiklas’s synthesis was clearly seen as an argument for granting greater autonomy to the part of Croatia under the Hungarian crown. Therefore, his narrative of the fourth epoch of Croatian history (from 1700 on) and the dangers of German centralization efforts highlighted the negative role of Hungarian nationalism.

The Croats, being rather weak, found strength [in opposition to Hungarian nationalism] in the Slavic idea. If the Hungarians, seeing their tribe alone among great nations, strongly and bravely gave their people the goal of spreading as far as possible, then the Croats started to feel that they were a living part of a large nation, that they had brothers. It is through the Slavic idea that Croatia was reborn.

Smičiklas reaches the significant conclusion: “Researching the new contacts and conflicts that will be born of it, or whether we are approaching the fifth epoch of Croatian history, is not our goal.”

Smičiklas’s main rival for the position of professor at the Chair for Croatian history in 1882 was Vjekoslav Klaić (1849–1929). Another Viennese student, Klaić became a publically respected historian and geographer as a secondary school (gymnasium) teacher. In 1878, he replaced the deceased Matija Mesić as substitute professor at the Chair for Croatian History. Although he didn’t manage to attain a permanent position as professor in 1882, he was appointed professor at the Chair for General History in 1893, and in the meantime worked as assistant professor (Privatdozent) of the Geography of South Slavs. Active both in the field of historiography and geography and authoring a range of works, from syntheses to school textbooks and works intended for the broader public, Klaić strove to build the foundations of the historiographic and geographic imagination of the Croatian national space, extending it to Bosnia and Herzegovina more resolutely than his other colleagues. As a university professor and member of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences (1896), Klaić maintained his status of a distinguished scholar, occasionally feeling himself invited to participate in

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62 Tadija Smičiklas, Povijest Hrvatska (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1882), 1:xxxii.
63 Ibid.
64 For example Hrvati i Hrvatska (Zagreb: Dioničkatiskara, 1890); Pripovijesti iz hrvatske povijesti, 3 vols. (Zagreb: Društvo sv. Jeronima, 1886–1891).
political discussions, based on his authority as a historian. His outlook was grounded primarily in the traditional conceptions of the Party of Rights and the real position of Croatia, and he emphasized historical state rights as the basis for securing the autonomous position of Croatia within the Monarchy. Klaić was also preoccupied with Croatian historical state rights in his scientific work, which culminated in a five-volume *History of the Croats* (1899–1911), but only covered the period up to 1608. Despite the fact that Klaić never completed his overview of early modern and modern history, parts of his work which concern the High Middle Ages still attract the attention of historians today, but its contemporary mass reception was even more significant. His work was republished several times, and the editions from the 1970s are a ubiquitous feature of all second-hand book shops and an almost symbolic example of Croatian historiography present in many private libraries in Croatia today. His skillful narration, which follows the chronological line of history, and his discourse, which masterfully links major socio-political group identities with past times, have ensured Klaić a place as the ideal choice for historical dilettantes who lazily seek answers to questions about the geographic and social continuities of their national affiliation. From the perspective of this paper, Klaić is not only interesting because of his clear idea of the subject and goal of historiography, but also because of his clear vision of the importance of belonging to a nation, the importance of its continuity and—in inevitably in a world made of different nations which have their own interests and goals—its rivals and allies. In accordance with his general socio-political conceptions, he saw the Croats as part of the Slavic world, but he also insisted they had developed a distinct identity it. He contended that over the course of twelve centuries the Croat “remained defiant towards all that seeks to eradicate him and has through unfailing perseverance defended and maintained his name, his individuality and his territory.” Croats thus fought against both political and cultural invaders, preserving their independence and particularity within the framework of Christian civilization through their Cyrilomethodic heritage, while politically “[t]he Kingdom of Croatia never ceased living throughout all these centuries: they tore it apart limb by limb, trampled and stunted many of its rights, which had been guaranteed by oaths; but the core of the kingdom remained intact, so that its scattered or stolen remains would always return to

66 Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata* (Zagreb: Lav Hartman, 1899), 1:V.
The oaths to which he referred were given by both the Hungarian and the Habsburg king. The Ottomans invaded, but Klaić actually considered the time in which he was living of crucial importance:

But the nineteenth century, the century of nations, pushed the Croatian nation into the fiercest struggle in its history. The struggle is persistent and decisive, since it involves not only the living but also the dead. The knot has been tightened, and God knows what would have happened had it not been cut by the sword of ban Jelačić. The Croatian language was recognized as a diplomatic one only after two wars, and now reigns not only in the peasant’s cottage, but also in the Ban’s Court. Let all those who eat Croatian bread speak and create using the Croatian language [...] The power of the Croatian people to resist was best seen in the originally bloodless, but eventually bloody struggle for nationality. Little Croatia [...] showed the entire world that it lives and is worthy of living. Croatia again refused to fall, but emerged from the struggle stronger and greater than before [...] Dalmatia also ceaselessly calls for unification, which shall come to pass sooner or later; for this is not only the wish of all Croats, but a completely legitimate goal, guaranteed by the newest laws and oaths! Then the Croatian Kingdom shall once again encompass all the territory it possessed in the time of kings Petar Krešimir and Dmitar Zvonimir [...] A great Hungarian patriot at the beginning of our century said of his country: “Hungary was not, but it will be.” And let us say: “Croatia was, it is, and it must remain until the end of time.”

The influence of the third university professor who tried his hand at writing an extensive overview of Croatian history, Ferdo Šišić (1869–1940), has also persisted up to the present day. His work, An Overview of the History of the Croatian People, was first published in 1916, and it was reissued many times in the following decades. Šišić was already belonged to a generation which had graduated from the University of Zagreb. Although he had spent part of his time as a student in Vienna, he enrolled and graduated in Zagreb, where he also attained his PhD. He also became assistant professor there in 1902 and full professor in 1905, succeeding Smičiklas as the Chair of Croatian History. Unlike Smičiklas or Klaić, Šišić did not write school textbooks or popular history books. Rather, he made substantial contributions as an acclaimed expert in two apparently different

67 Ibid., 1:VI–VII.
68 Ibid., 1:VIII–IX.
areas: historiographic works on the period of “Croatian national rulers” in the early Middle Ages, which garnered him decades-long scientific relevance, and scientific efforts to study recent historical events focusing (with the unavoidable political implications) on Croatian-Hungarian relations, a field in which he was practically a pioneer. Of course, in accordance with his focus on “genetic” political history, to which Šišić had remained loyal, his research preoccupations were not contradictory and were actually skillfully combined in his synthesis, forming an interpretative academic and national canon that provided arguments for the continuity of the symbols of independent Croatian statehood. In doing this, Šišić followed in the path of Smičiklas, situating his contemporary political reasoning, which was based on historical arguments, within the context of the Habsburg Monarchy, but transcending its borders in a cultural sense, putting Croats in a broader South Slavic context. In the turbulent period of the crisis of Dualism, which was felt in post-Khuen-Héderváry Croatia (after 1903) and marked by political turmoil, Šišić, as a member of the Croatian-Serbian Coalition (winning four elections for Sabor in 1906–1913), remained a member of the Croatian parliament and a member of the delegation to the Hungarian Parliament where, according to the words of his contemporary, the student and later professor Viktor Novak, he spent more time working in the Budapest archives and libraries than participating in the activities of the parliament.

Conclusion

It is precisely this statement by Novak about Šišić that gives us a characteristic picture of professional Croatian historians in the second half of the long nineteenth century. Parallel to the imperatives of building modern scholarly institutions as constituent parts of the nation-building process in a world of chronic shortages of intellectual forces capable of building a complex national institutional infrastructure (a problem faced by most of the emerging nations of Central and Eastern Europe), the intelligentsia of these regions was inevitably involved in political processes not only on an ideological level, but often also operationally. The often-present discrepancy between the scholarly habitus of individuals and their practical political activities, which left its mark on their

69 Ferdo Šišić, Hrvati i Magjari od godine 1790. do 1873. (Zadar: Matica Dalmatinska, 1913); idem., Rijeka i riječko pitanje od godine 1790. do 1870. (Zadar: Matica Dalmatinska, 1913).

70 Ferdo Šišić, Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1916).

reception both in domestic and international circles, stems precisely from these circumstances. However, even in places where conditions for the greater independence of the scholarly and political spheres existed and which for the most part spared scholars from having to “dirty their hands” by wrestling with the contradictions of political work and allowed them to reach the public status of “experts” more safely, the processes of modern nation-building and the institutionalization and professionalization of the scientific and intellectual fields were interwoven. “Croatian” historiographers, under the institutional strength and the officialized authority of the Faculty of Philosophy, legitimizing themselves according to modern standards of research, succeeded in creating an “expert” template for the interpretation of national history, demonstrating (or at least alleging) the continuity of historical political rights and revealing the distinctiveness of the Croatian nation as a political, social, and cultural entity. The devotion to exact learning and the metaphysics which stood behind it were linked by the idea that a historian does not deal in abstractions, but in unique spiritual entities and individualities embodied in the form of states and nations and the condensed texture of their mutual relations. The character of the nation constitutes a space of experience that explains individual practical orientation and provides a framework for individual “free choices” to become articulated and socially coherent. However, this could not be done in a vacuum, but only in the “Croatian space of experience,” as derived in officialized and “expert” historical scholarship and molded in accordance with international scientific trends of historical scholarship intermediated by the political context of the Habsburg realm and its political and social conflicts, collective dissatisfactions, and divergent interests, but also by the transfer and emulation of scholarly knowledge. These kind of historiographic narrative constructs received their incentive from the basic characteristics of modernity, which I have adapted from Giddens and which allowed the construction of a discourse on the nation, the imagining of its borders, and the concept of belonging to a national community, as well as the derivation of the continuity of its culture and statehood in the context of comparisons of the past and present, in the terms of a unitary, “emptied” time and space, which allowed the clear “detection,” definition, and historical situation of the identity “us” and those who are close to us, as opposed to the “others” and enemies. Regardless of historiographic disputes about

certain matters and the differing ideological and political beliefs that adapted historiography to different political and social visions and plans, the template that I have striven to present in this paper has shaped the discursive constitution and institutional organization of the modern social order, into which more and more people were inevitably incorporated over time, and has remained the basis of political and social discourse and activity in the Croatian national space to this day, presenting life in the current political reality and social order as natural, normal, and historically-grounded.

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