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I. THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

Perhaps few questions related to the history of Croatia have been as controversial and difficult to resolve as that of the Croats’ ethnic origins and of their early ethnic development. Significantly, the difficulty may lie not only in the paucity of early literary evidence but also in the research methodologies used in the past. This impasse indicates that new approaches and the contribution of non-traditional disciplines are needed if scholars hope to unravel and understand this complex and elusive historical process. This article will address this very problem and will argue that it is necessary to rely on the insights of alternative disciplines and to restate the basic research questions and, in the process, I will also suggest new ways of thinking about the question and will seek to provide some preliminary answers to this perplexing problem.

In tackling the issue of the Croats’ ethnic development, a key consideration must be that the study of early Croatian history and the exploration of the Croats’ roots can only be conducted properly within the broader framework of general world history. One must always bear in mind that the Croats, or more precisely the Proto-Croats, arrived in their new homeland at the twilight of the great migrations of peoples, and it is this event which is the starting point both for the genesis of Croatian history and, at the same time, for the integration of the Croats into the shifting tides then rolling onto the world scene as part of a broader international phenomenon. It is here, on what came to be historical Croatian soil, that the assimilation of the conquerors and the indigenous population occurred. Eventually, the nation resulting from this coalescence was to accept a Classical-Christian civilization, adapting the adopted culture, as well as being changed by it, especially in their “mentality,” in a process which even today remains obscure to scholars.
The arrival of the Croats placed them geographically within the framework of today's "Balkans," but this political connotation imposed by the West at the beginning of the 19th century is not based on either valid historical or cultural criteria. Rather, a more appropriate term for a spatial definition of Croatian history (as well as for the history of the other Southern Slavic peoples) would be the old term "Illyricum." It is within the boundaries of this "Illyricum" area that the Southern Slavic peoples were generally molded and it is here that we can trace the processes continuing from time immemorial to the present. In the aftermath of these early migrations, conflicts were common within Illyrian society—whose cohesion was based on the exercise of violence—conflicts which were intended to establish control and to wield power, and which were characterized by pathological symptoms such as paranoia and projection identification. It is to this period, very likely, that one can trace the emergence of certain archetypes with a "continuing" impact, and of factors which have fueled violence up to the present time.

Since both written and archeological evidence clearly point to the unconscious of the ancestors of the present-day Croats, and since it was they who shaped the Croatian cultural "cradle," it is to psychoanalysis that one should look in order to help elucidate the genesis of the Croats. Within this context, the psychoanalytical term "matrix" (that is, a basic substance, source, womb, woof) can be of considerable assistance. This "matrix" is, in fact, a "hypothetical web" (cobweb or membrane) of communication and of relationships within a given group. In our effort to understand this Croatian matrix, it is important to bear in mind the cultural and sociological conditions within which this matrix was woven and, in particular, to understand how culture acts as a matrix in the process of socialization. In various ways, it was the family, religious fraternities, and monasteries which had the strongest impact and which were the pillars of the early Croatian matrix. In fact, their influence was all-embracing and, as institutions, they reflected the power of political opportunity, of culture, and of belief characteristic of those times. Beyond that, however, certain psychological features evident even today, which have been neglected in historic-centric approaches, can be traced back to this early period.
Today, history converges with many other disciplines (sociology, economics, etc.) and, in striving to understand all facets of human behavior, history needs to ally itself with psychology and insights based on Freud’s theories. "Psychohistory" as such should be part of an interdisciplinary dimension to historical analysis and its significance is that it can contribute an all-encompassing approach to the study of "mentality." In researching early Croatian history, in particular, it is this interdisciplinary path which must be followed. While this will involve what at first might appear to be irrelevant tangents, in the end this is the approach that is most likely to lead to meaningful research results.

II. CROATIAN ETHNOGENESIS IN ILLYRICUM: SEEKING SCHOLARLY SOLUTIONS

Thanks to Byzantine Emperor and chronicler Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-956 A.D.), we have a near-contemporary document on the migration of the Croats to their new homeland. In this saga, which provides an account of the violent society of the migratory age in which various ethnic groups would ally themselves to stronger ones, the most important fact that emerges is that the Croats linked their ethnogenesis to their victory over the Avars and to their conquest of the Roman area south of the Danube. This was, specifically, the moment of confrontation between a conquering element which would become part of the Croatian ethnogenesis (one typical for this migratory period), and the other elements which had already existed in Illyricum. It is the fusion of these components which would form the mainstay of the Croatian ethnogenesis. Porphyrogenitus’ account, apart from providing data on the Croats’ arrival, also highlights the mental state of the warrior in these violence-prone groups. The internecine warfare and slaughter depicted in his chronicle clearly mirror the archaic destructiveness stemming from deadly paranoiac projections which would incite members of warlike groups to defend themselves, fearing that otherwise they would be destroyed and massacred "cannibalistically."

The ethnogenesis of the Croats, in particular, is one of the most perplexing questions of the early Middle Ages in Central and South-East Europe, and has been ascribed variously to the Slavs, Iranians, or Avars, and traced to either the great migrations or to regional
developments attributed to Avar or Frankish influence. In fact, some of these hypotheses about the Croats’ ethnogenesis, even if not based on solid evidence, have been transformed into conventionally accepted ideology. What is important to remember, however, is that initially, during the period of the great migratory waves, the peoples arriving had a polyethnic structure and it is impossible to imagine that the Croats, any more than any of the other peoples, would have reached the South as a “pure” race. Moreover, the mistaken romantic notion of identifying the early Croats with the modern Croatian nation should be rejected. Inter-marriage, wars, migrations, and religious conversions were to change the ethnic situation considerably from that existing in the first centuries following the great migrations. In particular, in discussions of the Croatian ethnogenesis, the Vlah stratum, which is an important component of the present-day Croatian nation, has been neglected. Indeed, the ethnic picture was altered significantly shortly before the modern integration of the Croatian nation.

Although today much still remains at the stage of hypotheses, analogies from the migratory era permit us to at least sense something about those migrants who, along with members of other ethnic strata, constitute the ancestors of the present-day Croats. Even today there are still diverse views about basic issues relating to the early Croats’ identity (including about their social designations, such as whether they were the ruling class in the Avar khaganate, a mercantile political group, etc.) and there is no commonly accepted view.

The Illyrian-Romanic and, even more strongly, the preceding pre-Illlyric Mediterranean strata left indelible traces on the Croatian ethnogenesis, as the Croats assimilated the indigenous culture which had accumulated over the centuries. The Croats assimilated the Classical period and its culture in toto and made it their own and they alone, of all southern Slavic peoples, can be said to have had a continuity of urban civilization. It is an indisputable fact that there has been a continuity of culture in the area of Illyricum reached back to time immemorial through the Classical period and the early medieval Croatian era, and up to the very present (in such areas as national costumes, music, the continuity of settlement, navigation, etc.). Apart from the well-documented evidence of these native material components in the Croatian ethnogenesis, there are also other components
which relate to social organization and customs ("ideology," a patriarchal society, the notion of tribe, mentality, symbols, myths, etc.).

The native components of the Croatian ethnogenesis are so overwhelming, in fact, that recently some scholars have come to cast doubt that the Slavic migrations occurred at all and have instead pronounced the idea of the Slavic character of the native Illyrians,\textsuperscript{11} or have emphasized the role of the Goths on the Croats in the early Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{12} To be sure, linguists and archeologists, at least up to now, have not accepted the hypothesis of the Slavic character of the native Illyrians or of a significant role for the Goths. Nevertheless, this does not lessen the importance of the research questions addressed by the proponents of such hypotheses.

In discussions of the native components in the Croatian ethnogenesis, anthropological research must clearly be taken into consideration. As a case in point, it has been proved that there is anthropological continuity in the area of Roman Dalmatia from Roman times to the late Middle Ages. For example, although the length-width skull index value in the Illyrian area increases up to the period of the Slavic migrations,\textsuperscript{13} brachycephalization (i.e., Dinarization) soon rises again, indicating that the migrants did not destroy the indigenous population and that the migrants were not more numerous than the autochthonous population. In any event, the migrants in this area could not have been the more numerous element, as it is known that over the entire area of the Roman Empire migrants-federates represented warrior groups having only a relatively small number of members. If anthropological research is added to linguistic analysis of onomastic and toponomastic material (which suggests that a very great number of present-day names have been inherited from the Illyrians or from even older inhabitants), the picture of the Croatian ethnogenesis will be more complete. In addition, an analysis of the character of the Liburnian, Dalmatian, Ardyan, and other Illyrian societies about which we know little indicates that the influence of the indigenous population on the newcomers varied, another fact which must be kept in mind in all discussions of the Croatian ethnogenesis.\textsuperscript{14}

The Croatian ethnogenesis in the Illyrian area represents a long-term process. The Croatian medieval ethnia, for its part, emerged from a process of assimilation between the indigenous population and the settlers who had arrived during the era of the great migrations of
peoples. This process of assimilation, complemented by the Vlah stratum, had been completed by the time of the Turkish invasions of the 15th century, and a consciousness of a common language and cultural affinity had already taken root among the people who lived on historical Croatian soil at that time. To be sure, due to a paucity of written sources, it is difficult to reconstruct the relationship among the Croats, the Slavs, and the indigenous population. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Croatian nucleus had not quite spread over the entire area of the Trpimirović dynasty’s state (9th–11th centuries A.D.) and that the term “Croatian” was not the sole criterion for defining the Croatian area during the Middle Ages.\(^\text{15}\) That is, already by the 9th century, the terms “Slavic” and “Croatian” were being used interchangeably in certain sources. By the end of the 9th century, nevertheless, the term “Croatia” had started to predominate, becoming synonymous with the Trpimirović state in the 10th century, a state in which the “Croats” are the rulers and “Croatia” designates the territory under their jurisdiction.\(^\text{16}\) Conversely, the term “Slavic” is preserved in the region of “Slavonija,” which was integrated into the main corpus of the Croatian state by the 10th century. The name Croatia, therefore, was in use in the immediate area of the territory on which the ethnogenesis of the Croatian people had occurred, while the regional diversity of names used for the Croatian people testifies to the complexity of Croatian history.\(^\text{17}\) Art historians and literary analysts today confirm Filip Lukas’s idea that a national identity originally developed among the Croats primarily as a cultural idea.\(^\text{18}\)

Conditions for the creation of the modern nation such as was characteristic in modern Europe had been present among the Croats for a considerable time, and included such elements as an early use of the vernacular (alongside the use of Latin, which continued until the 19th century) and an awareness of the early royalty. Nevertheless, disintegrative factors did not permit an easy or immediate creation of a nation. The Ottoman invasions, for example, caused great upheaval and new migrations which triggered a shift in the dialectal picture from what it had been during the previous period, and which testifies to the threat posed to the preceding Croatian linguistic-cultural stratum.\(^\text{19}\) The new conquerors from the South drove out, killed, or sold into slavery much of the Croatian population which spoke the Čakavian dialect and, for example, in the Zadar area, the Croatian
nobility disappeared completely. This upheaval signaled the demise of Old Croatia which, in preceding centuries, had striven to constitute itself on a legal basis. From then on, the Old Croatia of Čakavian speech and Glagolitic literacy survived only in the area of Istra, the northern Adriatic coast, a restricted area of the Dalmatian coast, and on the islands.

Comparing the Croatian ethnogenesis as a process in the Illyrian area and its development toward a modern nation, it can be seen clearly that the modern Croatian nation has, indeed, little in common with those early Croatian conquerors of the 7th century. True, the latter gave their name to the Croatian people, but it was the fusion of other elements (various ethnic components, cultural influences, and native culture) as developed by all those who took the Croatian name which culminated in a more recent era in the creation of the “Croatian nation.” This said, the Croatian cradle which, in the 7th century, had swayed on a Classical-Christian base within a vibrant symbiosis of various ethnic strata, nevertheless still strongly reflects the “Croatian mentality” with all its diversity up to the present day.

III. CROATIAN STATE-RULE DURING EUROPE’S “DARK AGES”

During the period of Frankish domination, these lands in the old Illyricum, which had retained the old name of the Roman provinces, became the basis for the boundaries of new government organizations. In the middle of the 10th century, the Croats ruled the territory from the Drava River to the Adriatic, and from the Rasa River in Istra in the West to the Cetina River in the East, later expanding their control to include the Neretva River region as well. This unique dominion was called “Regnum Chroatorum” (The Kingdom of the Croats). Outside that dominion lay Byzantine Dalmatia, which had shrunk to the towns of Zadar, Trogir, Split, Dubrovnik, and Kotor, along with the islands of Krk, Rab, and Cres.

Although a medieval Croatian state had already existed in the 9th century, it did not embody—as was true of other contemporary European states—any distinctive feature, but in reality only encompassed the state’s rule (principatus, ducatus, regnum). That rule had nothing in common with the people; rather, it embraced only the ruler and his “state apparatus,” represented by the social structure based on everyday violence. Medieval states did not possess sovereignty as we know
it today. Rather, rulers were considered provincial governors or vassals of the Roman State, and it was from such embryonic states, characterized by a duke’s armed retinue, that the medieval state and its apparatus emerged. In the medieval period, the notion of “rule” or “governing” is the most applicable concept for the Croatian state.

The Croatian state became independent, in the sense prevailing at the time, during the reign of Duke Trpimir (9th century), who contributed to the development of Croatian culture by establishing a Benedictine monastery. Although Trpimir acknowledged the sovereignty of the Italian king, his contemporaries considered him an independent ruler, a status confirmed by his use of such titles as rex (King), dominus (Lord), and dux (Duke or Leader) which, according to analogous examples from the West, testify to his royal position (and this prior to King Tomislav, commonly viewed as the first Croatian king). Trpimir was, according to Frankish practice of the 9th century, a mediator between the župan-s (the heads of Croatian tribal territories županija) and the Frankish rulers, and occupied a royal position. Significantly, in order to highlight the embryo of Croatian independence, the Papal blessing was bestowed in 879 during Duke Branimir’s reign.

During the period of rule by the Trpimirović dynasty (9th–12th centuries), Croatia was characterized by a patrimonial type of rule, and vassal-župan-s later struggled to seize hereditary control of the županija. The state apparatus operating in medieval Croatia certainly has its origin in the military cohorts such as that of Borna (from the first half of the 9th century). These “Praetorians,” who arose out of the violence-based structure, became over a period of time “managers.” Aided and abetted by the latter, Trpimir became dux Chroatorum, “supported by God’s help” which, obviously, meant that the Croatian duke considered he was no longer dependent on some form of higher secular rule or even on the violence-based structure but that he had, on the contrary, established his own personal rule. However, the earlier structure was so powerful in Croatia that throughout these three centuries of early Croatian history conflicts raged persistently, conflicts which are referred to frequently in the extant documents. Despite their paucity, these sources are sufficient to portray the psychological state of people during that time.
The limited sources which survive from the 9th to the 12th century testify to the everyday violence present in the early Croatian state and one can discern the woof-matrix elements of Croatian society from them. The picture received from those sources is archetypal. This "violence" among the Croats, a phenomenon which bears all the characteristics common throughout Europe during those times, confirms the destructiveness and regressive behavior which restricts people in a superego transformation. Early Croatian society, to be sure, endeavored to promote social peace by means of legal customs. Within this violent environment, the Church struggled to civilize the barbarians in the Illyrian region. Despite the Herculean task it faced, in the end the Church's role was crucial in eventually triggering a shift in the warrior mentality. Notwithstanding the "Croatian violence," early Croatian history also shows signs of a superego transformation, as is demonstrated by the construction of small "freestyle" churches (Figure 1), which testify to the entry of the Croats into European culture. Architecture and pre-Romanesque art in general, together with the Croatian tri-lingual and tri-alphabetical literature, which emerged in the early Croatian centuries, bear witness to the gradual creation of what Fernand Braudel has termed the stable and sagacious Dalmatian world, a culture constructed patiently and homogeneously, and encompassing its own internal hierarchy and discipline.

A rapacious mode of economy had been predominant for centuries in Illyricum—i.e., looting and pillaging, accompanied by cruelty and decapitation—accounts of which can be found in the early Croatian sources. A deeply-rooted conflict, characteristic of the Mediterranean world, can be discerned within the framework of this pillage-based economy and patriarchal tribal community which was typical of the period of the early Croatian state and the following two centuries. This conflict reflected the confrontation between the coast—with its ordered life—and the violent patriarchal hinterland craving the wealth of the coast, a wealth accumulated painstakingly over the centuries.

In studying the history of the family in Illyricum, where seminomadic cattle-breeding prevailed, it is important to understand the behavior of the inhabitants of the area from the earliest times to the present. Early Croatian society, whose base was the extended family-home, was characterized, in fact, by patrilineal inheritance and by the
subordinate position of women, whose difficult position in early Croatian society is confirmed by solid evidence from archeological findings. In a patriarchal tribal family, the father symbolizes authority and it is he who inflicts physical punishment on his wife and children.32 An Oedipal clash develops from such relationships, as the ego and superego of the child are built not on the model of the parents but on the superego of the parents. The superego is thus always impregnated with the same content and becomes the carrier of tradition and values over time.33 The violence which formed the basis for tribal solidarity developed into a system of kinship which maintained a high level of cohesion but which, by its conservatism, simultaneously also impeded development.

An upbringing within the old violence-based system was anything but gentle and the system was preserved over the centuries up to recent times. A child’s riding spur from the 9th century, found in the Biskupija of Knin, testifies to the warlike upbringing of young Croats at the dawn of the early Croatian state.34 In these “wild times” which characterized the whole of Europe, the upbringing of children had to be belligerent, merciless, and cruel. It was into this harsh environment that Christianity shed its light, especially thanks to the efforts of the Benedictines, who taught the young reading, astronomy, singing, and theology, irrespective of their social background. In early Croatian society, the Oedipus complex was clearly delineated, with conflict between an authoritarian father and the son who, being unable to eliminate him, externalizes his aggression towards others.35 That is, the deep-seated desire to destroy the loathsome figure of the father could lead the son to kill an adversary who had become a substitute for the father. The “everyday violence” common in the medieval Croatian state offers ample proof of the externalization of such aggression.

Likewise, one of the most significant issues which has been neglected in Croatian historiography is that of the question of marriage and its subjection to church canons.36 The Pope, in fact, already in the distant past had represented a figure of great political significance in Croatia, providing the model of an organized Christian family which was meant to be the basis of Christian society.37 In order to wield more effective control over the area, it became necessary for the Church to organize family life in Illyricum in accordance to canon law
and to subjugate the unreliable dukes who ruled Croatia. For the Church, succeeding in having the family in Illyricum submit to canon law presented great difficulties, however, with the marriage of priests and the insecure position of widows and orphans posing additional problems. Many examples in the Croatian historical sources from the 9th to the 13th century point to precisely this phenomenon, which is revealing of the intrinsic nature of the early Croatian matrix. Contemporary historical sources also indicate that the early Croats married their close relatives, third or probably second-cousins, and that those incestuous ties, which were contrary to Church canons, were based on the organization of the extended Croatian family.

The Church, as one can gather from the contemporary documents, apparently had little initial success in introducing Roman and canon law into the Croatian area. However, transferring that task to the Croatian rulers, who would then oversee the organization of the family as a social nucleus, would have had major repercussions. The request by the Pope for them to do so was congruent to the pattern then prevailing throughout Western Europe, but interfering in traditional marriage customs could have revived old conflicts between the kinship structure and the rulers. The resulting unresolved status of the family probably embittered the lives of widows and orphans in Croatia as well as in the rest of Europe. It was the ruler who, in the West, accepted the responsibility for protecting widows, and sources for Croatian history (such as the inscription of Queen Jelena and King Zvonimir’s Donation) lead us to believe that Croatian rulers undertook the same function of protecting the helpless, obviously under pressure from Rome. However, the complex problem of organizing the Croatian family, i.e., in the sense of its legal acceptance, which was a pre-requisite for Roman rule in the area, could not be solved by the rulers of the Trpimirović dynasty. They obviously were not in a position to reach levels higher than that already prevalent during the early medieval period within the boundaries of their state and so were bound to disappear from the stage of history. Despite their helplessness in the new Europe, the influence of the Trpimirović rulers was, nevertheless, significant. Beginning with Trpimir himself, this dynasty began to guide the Croatian people towards a Christian Europe and the latter’s culture and enabled the Croats, on the basis of a Classical-Christian tradition, to develop their own autochthonous culture.
the Trpimirović dynasty, in fact, which can be credited with encouraging the process of uniting the Romanic coastal towns and the Croatian hinterland. Apart from political power, this process was strongly influenced by other factors (the Romanic-Croatian bilingualism, pre-Romanesque art, Church jurisdiction, personal relationships, etc.).

In the spirit of that time, the Pope embraced Croatia in his sphere, doing so by means of some judicious compromises which were necessary in order to thwart the eventual subjugation of this strategic area to the Byzantines. Among these compromises was the legal acceptance of the family and, even more importantly, also the retention of the Croatian liturgy using the Glagolitic texts.

The geographical location of Illyricum, with its Adriatic coastline, had already drawn people together in Classical times and, over the centuries, the region acquired significance as a transit area. The Croats, again in the tradition of the Classical period, were rapidly integrated into a world which was once more opening up and this area, after the period of migrations, would become a significant crossroads between East and West. Early testimony, however scant, bears witness of human connections from the earliest periods of Croatian history in both directions: from Croatia toward Western and Eastern Europe and Africa, and vice versa.

By accepting Christianity, the Croats, like other barbarian peoples, were thus integrated into the mainstream of European culture and became acquainted with the learning of that era. Henceforth, by accepting from Europe and drawing upon their own and the native Illyrian traditions, the Croats were to create a new autochthonous culture. At the same time, it is important to stress that Croatian Glagolitic literature was to become an important cultural medium between East and West. Following their migration, the Croats were extremely "progressive," as they accepted the main requirement of that era—that of becoming linked to the rest of the known world. Not surprisingly, the sea played a basic role in facilitating the Croats' becoming acquainted with the outside world, and various activities from trade to writing laws influenced a shift in the super-ego of the barbarian marauders. Thus, one should not forget that, along with all the barbaric traits of those "Dark Ages," there were also powerful positive psychological shifts in the Croats' cradle.
IV. SYMBOLISM AND CULTS

An interpretation of the symbols found in early Croatian art and an acquaintance with the cults of that period are indispensable components in understanding the early Croatian matrix-cradle.

For example, latticed decoration, characteristic of the Croatian area during this early period, has a deeply significant dimension which, when viewed in the context of the historical situation and of historical sources, can enlighten us greatly on the Croatian origins. A latticed web (Figure 2), in fact, can often be seen on pre-Romanesque monuments. Psychoanalysts consider the “web” a symbol which inhibits internal and external life, with its loops extremely difficult to unravel. The web, on the other hand, is also a symbol of communication and relationship in groups and, as a matrix, it represents the womb or collective cradle. Along with the web, one also finds the “knot,” symbolizing a state of tension, as well as a complicated and unclear situation. The knot also signifies linkage and separation as well as social connection. Otherwise, “interlacing” generally signifies internal confusion that is difficult to resolve.

Symbols on Croatian monuments linked to the web and lattice structure generally can easily be understood within the Croatian historical situation as it existed from the 9th to the 11th century. Projection, paranoia, and fear inhibit people, and the ensuing internal confusion poses problems. A recourse to violence is very often the outlet. The weapons which decorate the stone figure of a Croatian dignitary with a sword (Figure 3), for their part, suggest, in psychoanalytical terms, a phallic symbol which relates to the Oedipus conflict of archaic Croatian society. Violence, however, does not permit the whole to be developed. Rather, it is the “lattice” motif so often seen in pre-Romanesque art in Croatia, which, one could say, represents an invitation to enter the whole, a task which the Catholic Church had striven to accomplish throughout this period. In particular, by organizing the family on the basis of canon law, the Church was able to not only control the area and to strengthen the network of social-Christian links.

A bas-relief figure of a Croatian ruler (Figure 4) dating from the 11th century can also be very useful in this analysis. The image can be interpreted as representing victory by the ruler and his military en-
tourage (standing figure) over the kinship structure (horizontal figure). This relief is completely in harmony with written sources. Trpimir (9th century A.D.), for example, is described as “a Croatian duke supported by the will of God” (dux Chratoorum, iuvatus munere divino) and, therefore, does not depend on the people’s choice. The link of the ruler with God is symbolized by the lattice structure at the top of the relief reproduced here. It is here, too, that the nimbus symbol, signifying God’s presence, should be sought. The ruler on this relief is probably Peter Krešimir IV (1058-1074), who is portrayed as a just ruler (rex iustus). Apart from these political messages, the relief contains other symbols. The number three which is found throughout the relief (three-stranded designs, three figures, etc.) is, according to Georges Dumézil, a structured matrix of society and is probably of Indo-European origin (in view of the latter’s markedly tri-partite society).

Apart from that, three is a basic number, expressing intellectual and spiritual order, and, according to psychoanalysts, a number with sexual connotations (e.g., the Oedipus triangle of father, mother, and child). In Christian symbolism, three is a divine number related to the Trinity of the divine persons and to the resurrection of Christ, who spent three days in the tomb. The number four (cross and quadrangle) symbolizes fullness, the all-encompassing, and completion. Rulers, in this respect, are masters of the four sides of the world, i.e., the realm over which they rule, but also masters of their subjects. The quadrangle symbolizes the Earth and a state of rest, while the cross, along with many other meanings, also symbolizes the Earth. The number four also symbolizes the universality of divine revelation, which is represented by the four Evangelists. A crown on the ruler’s head has a sublime meaning, as this represents a gift which comes from above (very close to the lattice-nimbus, i.e., to God), and the throne on which the ruler sits is a base of glory and symbolizes human and divine greatness. The circle can be linked to the cult of fire, the hero, and divinity, while the symbol of protection and security can be found within the circle. This symbolism, confirmed by historical sources, testifies to the mentality of the kinship system, where danger from enemy groups was a constant threat. The crown symbolizes the power of the ruler and confirms that he no longer depends on the people’s choice. Thus, state-rule is created as an extension of the patriarchal
extended family with a ruler at the head who, in the spirit of the times, becomes *rex iustus*.

The conversion of the Croats, however, did little to curb pagan elements of their older religious tradition, which were instead integrated into Christianity. Christian cults in Croatia, in fact, formed part of a direct Classical legacy inherited from the indigenous population (e.g., the Marian cult, the cult of Saint Dujam, and others). In recent times, the comparative study of the ethnological legacy of various Slavic and other peoples, including the use of the latest insights from philology can lead us along the path to a better understanding of the old Slavic mythology. Attempts are being made, in particular, to reconstruct the mythological structure in which a significant place is occupied by the God of Vegetation Juraj. This entire structure was retained in the form of national customs (Christmas Eve, Christmas, the Christmas tree, Christmas carols, Easter, Saint John’s Day, and others) and, following the conversion to Christianity, the songs take on a Christian significance. In a comparative analysis, a cycle is revealed about Juraj, the God of Vegetation, whose life can be paralleled to the life of grain. Such studies on the transition of pagan customs into the Christian world can enable us to gain a more complete understanding of the persistence of old cults among the Croats and of the influence of those cults on Christianity, especially on the myths surrounding “Green Juraj” (George) and the Mother of God cult.

The old Croatian kinship-based society had its own religious practices connected to death and the graveyard. By means of a careful analysis of the inventory found in graves, we can glean the riches of the old Croatian cults and beliefs which will also deepen our understanding of the Croatian cradle-matrix. The lighting of fires on the grave, evident from the traces of such fires which have been found, and the burning of the dead symbolize a defense against demonic forces. Pieces of metal and glass objects or pierced Roman coins, as well as scattered pieces of broken ceramics over the grave, were probably meant to confuse demons and other evil forces. Various sharp objects, apart from the obvious practical meaning, can also be useful as protection against demons. The burning of corpses and the placing of stone tablets on the body of the deceased, on the other hand, represent vampirism, with the vampire being both the persecutor and the persecuted and symbolizing the turning of psychological
forces inwards on oneself. That is, the person accuses others for his failure and tortures himself until he discovers his own guilt for that failure. Accepting responsibility for himself, the vampire, as persecutor, vanishes. The remains of broken dishes on the grave represent the remains of a grave-funeral feast which was preserved by Serbs and Croats (although among the Croats it had just about died out early, while the Serbs were to observe this custom up to recent times), and which ensued from the belief in the afterlife where the deceased required food and drink. The old Croatian swords and other weapons, apart from their everyday warrior significance, can also have symbolic meaning. The weapon, for example, can be a phallic symbol, leading back to the Oedipus complex in Croatian society following the period of migrations.

V. IDEOLOGY

The Chronicle Sclavorum Regnum (Kingdom of the Slavs) by Dukljanin the Priest can be of significant assistance in shedding light on the ideology of early Croatian society. This work, written at the end of the 12th century, describes a society that had changed little from that of the previous centuries. This chronicle, filled with motifs of violence, is an excellent source for uncovering the old ideology of the Croatian patriarchal society. That ideology very clearly points to the Prince Mark syndrome (seen again later in the national songs during the period of Ottoman rule), which is synonymous with symptoms such as projection, a fear of castration, paranoia, narcissism, traumatic neurosis, and the externalization of aggression.

In the gloomy picture of Illyricum portrayed in this chronicle, the Church strove to shed some light and, in an effort to control the European continent, the Pope wishes to settle matters in Illyricum, where violent conflicts, and especially vengeance, thwarted the establishment of a “network” of social order. Therefore, the Church (represented by the Archbishop of Bar) through its moral principles and power of authority, intervened by mediating disagreements and preventing conflict. In addition, the Church also preached and provided models of good behavior, and taught that God punishes those who wander from the path of their ancestors and defile themselves by sinning. The Chronicle, for its part, is well acquainted with
the issues of organizing the family, and all the accompanying problems, from a Christian perspective.

However, can the ideology described in the Chronicle of Dukljanin the Priest be applied to Croatian society in general of that time?\textsuperscript{52} There is, in fact, ample evidence of the use of Croatian names and of the irrefutable fact of the adherence to Catholicism in the area east of Cetina, or in "Red Croatia" as it is called in the Chronicle (as well as proof of the area's musical legacy, pre-Romanesque architecture, use of the lattice structure, the presence of the Benedictines, and its literature which it shared with "White" Croatia). Despite red Croatia's uniqueness, there exists nevertheless a great deal in common in the cultural realm between that area and the area of Regnum Chroatorum, i.e., "White Croatia." Red Croatia's culture, even taking into account its Byzantine and autochthonous components, was oriented primarily towards the West and expressed all the aspirations of the Roman Church which endeavored, through the establishment of church organization and the canonization of the family, to control, in geopolitical terms, the extremely strategic area of Illyricum, especially what had been the old Roman province of Dalmatia. We should not reject Dukljanin's notion of Red Croatia, which is also supported by Byzantine writers, but that term simply refers to that area dominated by Rome. The Pope strove to canonize the family so as to ensure control of the area both in White and Red Croatia, but in this he had little success. Nevertheless, Rome, through the family, created in Illyricum a distinct matrix, which was symbolized by the lattice and especially by the lattice web as found on pre-Romanesque monuments. The creation of that matrix was clearly perceived by the region's neighbors, and it is not strange that people of that area were all called Croats by Byzantine writers. The symbolic designation of the area under the Pope's domination is clear. In this connection, it is quite in order, based on the Chronicle, that the ideology of White and Red Croatia be seen as a common one. Naturally, the ideology of other Southern Slavs was then no different from that of the Croatsians.

In defending the term Red Croatia, under no circumstances can demographic conclusions be drawn with respect to the nationality of the population, as has been attempted elsewhere, mainly by Serb historians.\textsuperscript{53} The Croats, of course, were present here, but so were others. In the end, the Croatian component and Catholicism were suppressed
by Eastern Orthodoxy, but accepting the term Red Croatia must be devoid of any nationalistic mythology or any type of yearning for domination.

VI. CONSTRUCTING A NEW SUPER-EGO AMONG THE CROATS

According to Sigmund Freud’s theory, the super-ego forms part of the personality and contains a codex of moral norms and behavior. The child’s super-ego is not formed in accordance with the parent’s picture but in accordance with the parent’s super-ego, with the latter becoming a vehicle for tradition and value judgments down through many generations. Of course, the super-ego of the Croatian warriors, following their arrival, was to undergo change under the influence of various influences found in the new environment, and in this “melting pot” of diverse influences, new social norms of behavior were forged.

Research into early Croatian culture and in the material evidence from ancient times provides us with the tools for outlining (even if not for defining completely) a shifting super-ego among the early Croats, thus supplementing our perception of the early Croatian matrix.

Stability, laws, and the legal organization of the populace along the Croatian coast encouraged a non-aggressive society, while retaining the possibility of shifting to malignant behavior (e.g., violent conflicts between Split and Trogir in the 13th century). Such behavior, of course, was not limited to Croatia but was a general European feature of those times. Nevertheless, it can be clearly observed that from the “everyday violence” which marks the history of the old Croatian state through the Middle Ages, a specific mentality surfaces in the new age, one whose key characteristic was that society accepted innovation without great stress. In contrast to this Mediterranean mentality, it was the syndrome of Prince Mark which was to dominate in the patriarchal cattle-breeding area, where people for centuries had been forced to be closely linked for protection in a kinship system. The Classical tradition and the Catholic Church had a stronger impact on the Mediterranean area while, in the hinterland, an ancient autochthonous spiritual tradition was maintained.

Written Croatian documents as well as Latin epigraphical monuments from the early Croatian period clearly testify to the prevailing Christian principles in the Illyrian area where, following the migrations, a symbiosis of immigrant and indigenous was to occur. The
warriors’ descendants became pious Christians who believed in God, the Mother of God, and the saints. They were concerned for the salvation of their souls and lived in fear of the Church’s damnation and of hell. Regardless of the fact that fear permeated the faith of that time and was accompanied permanently by old folk-based superstitions, that faith was to become the engine for a shift in the super-ego. This process was also facilitated by other church activities (music, literature, the work of the Benedictines and of other religious orders, etc.) as well by as the gradual formation of a stable legal system, artistic expression, and economic activities (maritime, trade, agriculture, etc.). Therefore, the components which fuelled a shift in the super-ego among the early Croats were unusually diverse and it is precisely this synergism which was to have such a powerful impact on the super-ego. Nevertheless, the process involving a shift in the super-ego was restricted by the warrior’s mentality and by the latent violence which continued to smolder in a violence-based society.

An alteration in the super-ego among the Croats had resulted in a vigorous expression for centuries, but the tragic events around 1500 A.D. changed all that. In the following years, the old indigenous Čakavian-speaking population was to disappear, and the ensuing repercussions were to cause the Prince Mark syndrome to prevail among the Croats in the traditional patriarchal area, where the characteristic tribal fears, anxieties, paranoia, and projections have lasted up to the present.

VII. CONCLUSION: THE END OF A RICH CROATIAN MEDIEVAL ERA

The previous analysis argues for an original Croatian cradle-matrix in the area of the medieval Croatian state-rule, a cradle based on the Croatian kinship system as well as on the Classical-Christian civilization. Additional research needs to be conducted in order to complete this outline with data which different disciplines, such as anthropology, musicology, and ethnology can provide. The research presented in this paper has shown that the Croatian cradle-matrix is characterized, on the one hand, by violence grounded in the unconscious of the kinship-based society and, on the other hand, by positive shifts in the super-ego, despite the elements of violence which can still be discerned, wrought in the early matrix by the leading role which the Catholic Church played by bringing faith and the Classical
tradition to the Croats. Although the Turkish invasions triggered a breakdown in this matrix in the traditional patriarchal areas (Lika, the Dalmatian hinterland, Bosnia and Herzegovina), thwarting efforts to suppress projections, fears, paranoia, and traumatic neuroses, the early Croatian matrix, has had a continuity up to the very present in other regions. A characteristic feature of the coastal population in the modern era has been its adaptability to a law-based system. This is the product of the continuity of a system which, following the traditions of Croatian law and the statutes of the coastal towns, was maintained by Venice when it held sway over the Croatian littoral. "The judicious and stable" world of the coast accepted from the earliest times laws and work (farming under difficult conditions, cattle-breeding, navigation, etc.) as the mainstay of its existence. The result of this development was a peaceful transition by the population to a framework created in the modern period. This population does not display psychopathological symptoms, unlike the case of the patriarchal areas after the collapse of the kinship system which was in conflict with the modern age.\textsuperscript{55} To be sure, northern Croatia, with its royal free towns, had also been moving toward a law-based society over the centuries.

The early Croatian matrix, accompanied by all its historical misfortunes, has continued to develop up to the present in its striving to change the super-ego. However, there is also ample psychic (unconscious) energy which, in critical, traumatic situations, reverts towards archaic, destructive everyday violence embedded in the tribal mentality.

This "long-lasting," if unfinished, early Croatian matrix allows for a different periodization of Croatian history to be proposed. In a sense, the term "medieval" in Croatian history could be extended, without any derogatory implications, up to the present time. Medieval Croatia was a time when a wonderful, original culture of a people (whose national principle had developed primarily as a cultural idea),\textsuperscript{56} ended—if we accept Jacques Le Goff's concept—\textsuperscript{57}only in our own times when an independent Croatia created the possibility for liberating the primary matrix from psychopathological symptoms. And, the establishment of genuine democracy should herald the end of a rich medieval Croatia. We can then move forward on the basis of this heritage and of the woof-matrix built up over so many centuries.
Figure 1
Church of the Holy Cross in Nin (pre-Romanesque)

Figure 2
Inscription: “The Great Prince” Držislav, with the latticed web symbolizing inhibition, but also communication.
Figure 3
Croatian aristocrat from Biskupija (11th century)
"Everyday violence—the destiny of Illyricum."

Figure 4
Figure of a Croatian ruler (11th century – Baptistry of the Cathedral in Split), representing the extended family of a patriarchal type (where authority is in the hands of the ruler), domination, and the numeral three as the basic structural matrix of society and of Indo-European beliefs.
NOTES

7. See Rendić-Miočević, *Zlo velike jetre*, p. 328, where the author cites Klain’s views on the behavior of extremist groups among the Serbs and Croats during World War Two.
8. See Pohl, p. 87, who in note 1 provides the bibliography related to the problem.
12. Želić, pp. 6-7.


24. Ibid., p. 17.


26. The term is taken from Karl Wittfogel’s work on management society. In researching oriental despotism, Wittfogel noted that it was the bureaucracy which made up the ruling class in such systems. Karl Wittfogel, *Orijentalna despocija. Uspoređno istraživanje totalne moći* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988).


31. This conflict, in many ways, can be said to have continued up to the present; see Rendić-Miočević, *Zlo velike jetre*, p. 101.


34. Stjepan Gunjača, Dušan Jelovina, Mladen Grčević, *Starohrvatska baština* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1976), Table 77 on p. 111.


36. Miho Barada, *Starohrvatska seoska zajednica* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1957), p. 115. Franjo Šanjek provides a short summary on marriage in medieval Croatia in his overview of early Christianity in the Croatian area, *Kršćanstvo na hrvatskom prostoru: pregled religiozne povijesti Hrvata (7.20. st.)*, 2nd ed. (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1996), pp. 246-249. However, in the bibliography, along with two previous articles, he cites only two articles by other authors. The paucity in the bibliography on marriage in early Croatia testifies to the unsatisfactory treatment in Croatian historiography of this extremely important problem.


39. Željko Rapanić considers that the term pupilli which appears in the sources belongs to the field of legal terminology, and that it has the meaning of “wards,” *Predromaničko doba u Dalmaciji*, pp. 142-144. Guardianship existed in the Roman period, in Justinian’s era, and in Frankish law.

40. For an assessment of rule by the Trpimirović dynasty, see Klaić, pp. 532-537.

41. Raukar, p. 23.

42. Ibid., p. 22.

43. Klaić, p. 61.

44. F. Bulić believes that it is Christ who is depicted on the bas relief, but the prevailing opinion is that it is a Croatian ruler. For a review of these opinions, see Ivo Petricioli, *Pojava ranoromaničke skulpture u Dalmaciji* (Zagreb: Društvo historičara umjetnosti, 1960), pp. 28-32, supplemented by Petricioli, *Od Donata do Radovana*. See also the longer and well-documented article by Igor Fisković, “Il rè creolo del bassoregno protoromanico di Spalato,” *Hortus aritum mediævalium*, v. 3, 1997, pp. 179-209. Fisković believes that the tablet portrays the figure of a ruler and that the other tablets found in the Split baptistry were originally from Split rather than from Solin.

45. Fisković, *passim*.


50. Rendić-Miočević, *Zlo velike jetre*, pp. 126-127. Prince Marko was an Ottoman vassal who, in a very strange twist, became the symbol of resistance of the southern Slavic peoples against the Turks.


53. Vladimir Ćorović, for example, claims that the Serbs, following their migration, lived in the area from Cetine to Vrbas, and that the Romanic towns of Dubrovnik, Kotor, Budva, and Bar were Slavicized from the Serbian hinterland, *Istorija Srba* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989), v. 2, p. 156.


56. Lukas, p. 60.