

BRANDING A PROVINCE: The Restorationist Dalmatia

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The Habsburg presence in the Eastern Adriatic imposed a new geopolitical paradigm, the one opposed to the previous Venetian and French imperial models. Vienna court made effort to make distinct Dalmatian identity and enable as efficient control from Vienna as possible in order to prevent unionistic wishes of Pest or Zagreb. Roman heritage, with Diocletian's Palace as one of the most significant monuments, was important basis for creation of identity of Dalmatia. The visit of imperial couple, Franz and Carolina, was marked by admiration of classic heritage of Dalmatia. Vienna created a myth that connected the emperor with things Roman and Christian in a new branding of the province that was based upon two important pillars: Christianity in the Roman times and classicism that achieved modern fulfillment through important state architectural undertakings during 19th century. The "creation" of Dalmatia involved most famous Dalmatian saints, whose Dalmatian character and specificity were specially highlighted. The period after Vienna congress was very important for Dalmatia for Vienna policy towards it did not change significantly until the end of the Empire.

Key words: Restorationist Dalmatia, Classicism, Habsburg's imperial myths

WITH THE FALL OF NAPOLEON, THE WHOLE OF Dalmatia became an Austrian borderland province and remained such throughout the century until the establishment of Yugoslavia in 1918. The Vienna Congress simplified Adriatic geopolitics with the Austria as the only local maritime power. However, the dynasty lacked the clear vision over the Dalmatia's prospective. Dur-

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ing the Metternich's period the Kingdom of Dalmatia was second to none among Habsburg lands in terms of economic backwardness. Yet, Dalmatia provided the Habsburgs with the imperial legitimacy of ancient Roman universalism as an essential content of the Austrian restorationist mentality.

The Habsburg presence at the Eastern Adriatic imposed a new geopolitical paradigm as opposed to the previous Venetian and French imperial models. The dominance over Dalmatian coast was essential for the Venetian early-modern maritime and commercial imperialism. When the Ottomans occupied the Dalmatian hinterland in the sixteenth century, Venice became the only power to resist their threat by conducting a policy of centralization of trade and politics (Mallet and Hale 1984, 434–454).¹ Venice, together with its Christian allies the Habsburgs and the Papal State, prevented the Ottoman penetration to the Adriatic and further into the Christian West (Setton 1991, 9). Despite the diplomatic un-consistency in regard to Turks, Venice remained unyielding in protection of the Adriatic Sea where the Habsburgs were perceived as a greater threat than the Ottomans. The Republic's claim to the Adriatic as its '*mare clausum*' had been asserted by Venice by the very end of the Republic.

With the final fall of the maritime Republic in October of 1797, its former eastern-Adriatic provinces Dalmatia and Istria were given to the Habsburgs in exchange for French gains in Belgium and Germany. Yet, the First Austrian Rule in Dalmatia (1797–1805) turned out to be short-lived and transitional. After the battle of Austerlitz and by the subsequent Treaty of Pressburg (Bratislava) signed on December 26, 1805, the victorious Napoleon decided to incorporate the provinces into his recently carved Kingdom of Italy (*Regno d'Italia*). The Napoleon's foreign politics and the military build-up changed early modern political environment. The ensuing Anglo-French struggle for power in the new arena was marked by relentless use of force but also by a French political ideology of liberal reformism and narrative. The French administration made modern improvements in administration, the judicial system, education and building roads, but it also carried an

1 Dependent on the bastion fortifications and fleet Venice pursued a defensive approach to the Turkish threat at the Adriatic. After the initial setbacks against the Turks, during the sixteenth century the maritime and the trade-oriented Republic became increasingly un-confrontational and dependant on commercial gains within the Ottoman Empire.

excessive cost of lives and material goods that had been unknown from Turkish wars.²

At the Vienna Congress in 1815 Dalmatia was given to the Austria on the ground of its historical claims over Dalmatia. The Habsburgs had claimed the mastery over Dalmatia for the very moment that Ferdinand I was crowned for the king of Hungary and Croatia in 1527. When in 1804 Francis II created the title of an Emperor of Austria for himself as Francis I, he also added a “King of Dalmatia” (*Dalmatiae Rex*) to it. In 1814–15, the Kingdom of Dalmatia was formed from the regained territories, now including the former Republic of Ragusa and stretching down to Budva in the southeast.

The new regime initiative in Dalmatia was bounded by the lack of geopolitical Mediterranean program. The Habsburg’s naval presence in the Adriatic was barely noticeable, before the founding of the Austrian Lloyd commercial fleet in early 1830-ies. Although Habsburg rulers, particularly Maria Theresa and Joseph II had expressed their political interest in the Adriatic, the land mentality in Vienna was further strengthened during the Restoration. After the Congress the Monarchy came out so enlarged that the continued efforts were needed to all parts of the country to melt in the whole. Metternich’s political legacy shows that gains in the Congress considered the maximum that could be held. As a continental power oriented toward the *status quo* in Germany and Italy, Austria lacked a maritime prospective. The Central European orientation conflicted with the Austrian initiative in the Balkans and at the Mediterranean. Metternich avoided any aggressive policy of the Monarchy which he perceived as a saturated state. The Chancellor protected the Ottoman Empire and condemned the Greeks’ revolution as a detrimental model of national uprising that could threaten the very existence of the Austrian multinational commonwealth as well.

He further isolated Dalmatia by preventing the unionist Zagreb and Pest bringing together the lands of St. Stephan crown. In order to withstand the union between Dalmatia and the Kingdom of Hungary–Croatia, Austria dismantled the Illyrian Provinces in 1822 and asserted the Dalmatia’s status of a crown-land (*Kronland*), a separate territorial unit within the Monarchy. The Kingdom of Dalmatia was governed directly from Vienna through imperial and royal governors

2 On French rule on the Eastern Adriatic, including the Illyrian Provinces, see: Bundy 1987; Zwitter 2010; Vrandečić and Marko Trogrlić 2011; Trogrlić and Vrandečić 2015, 264–276.

sent to Zadar, the provincial capital. The doctrine of the Austrian region-building substituted the revolutionary French concept of “nation” that would in due time gave bust to the state-sponsored regionalisms such as the Dalmatian autonomist that opposed the Croatian nationalism (Gross 1995, 270–292).

Such an isolationist perspective affected the Dalmatian common life. The Province remained an isolated customs territory with export-import levies in the trade even with the Austrian countries, as it was a foreign country. Moreover, the newly-acquired districts of Dubrovnik and Kotor enjoyed military recruitment exemption by 1869. During the period, the ruling elite in the province consisted mainly of Italian functionaries and German officers. The total population of Dalmatia numbered 298,000 in 1818 and almost 100,000 more in 1840. Austrian mercantilism, more interested in taxation than in trade and production, created famine in the 1820s, followed by epidemics in the 1830s. This resulted in hundreds of deaths and a drift of the surplus agrarian population to the tiny urban centers on the coast (Peričić 1980, 3–32). The province consumed twice much money in relief efforts and administrative expenses as it paid in taxes.

Resistance to the Austrian absolutist police state gave rise to nostalgia for the French period and support for the Italian Risorgimento. Police archives in the capital Zadar noted several Carbonari sections in Dalmatia such as the *Greci del Silenzio* and the Guelphs who linked the province into the international network of revolutionary liberalism. However the liberal opposition was limited to the few suspects that Supreme Court in Vienna in 1822 acquitted as drunkards rather than dangerous political radicals (Brunelli 1922–1923, 38–44). During the Austrian Restoration, the former Dalmatian Francophiles, the pillars of the former regime, denounced their Jacobin past by writing on the “immature democracy” of the fallen French government. They searched for state jobs and praised the restored Habsburg rule for reinstating law, morality and order, blaming the liberal optimism of the former administration for ‘arrogant liberty’ and being an ‘infamous democracy’ (Ivellio 1828, 23).

The new state-promoted ideology rested on the two pillars: classicism and ancient Roman Christianity. Dalmatian classicism of Enlightenment acquired European-wide glory in the works written by the French architect Charles-Louis Clérisseau, the Scottish architect Robert Adam and the Italian traveler Abbe Alberto Fortis. They had visited Venetian Dalmatia and collected antiquities and searched for Roman remains. The Roman legacy of the province loomed even larger in the

classical ideology of the Habsburg era. The conservative, a-national, yet multicultural Dalmatian legacy over the centuries resembled the Habsburg identification with ancient Mediterranean Rome. Although the Habsburg Emperor Francis II had to cede aforementioned title of Holy Roman Emperor in 1804, and took the more humble name of Francis I, Emperor of Austria, the Habsburgs continued to claim the allegiance of the ancient Mediterranean *imperium*. The Palace of Diocletian in Split, the ancient excavations in Salona, and the other time-honored monuments province-wide supported the Habsburg claims to supranational and integrative imperial power. In 1818, the imperial couple Caroline and Francis I visited Croatia and then Dalmatia to see its classical beauty. Francis was received by his subjects in Dalmatia as a long-awaited Emperor, with new epigraphic, commemorative monuments such as triumphal arches, sculptures, pyramids and, most frequently, with literary compositions in poetry, drama and prose. The artistic response invented various Imperial epithets for Francis I such as Titus Novus.³

Extensive excavations in Dalmatia started from the very beginning of the Austrian restoration and continued throughout the nineteenth century. Small wonder then, that Split, home of Roman monuments and, allegedly Roman descendants, assumed the most distinguished place in the Habsburg classicist ideology. The Palace in Split played a pivotal role in the commitment to classicism and fascination by the antique period. The Emperor visit triggered the studying and preserving the Diocletian's Palace by the local authorities. In 1821 was built the Museum of Archeology next to the eastern wall of the Palace.⁴

The militaristic Habsburgs incorporated the myths of emperor, Romans, and Christianity into the new Dalmatian canon.⁵ During the restoration, the theme of the “enlightened despot,” exploited by the Dalmatian enlightened writers, turned into the populist myth of the Austrian ruler as a “good father.”⁶ In 1814, in a speech to his fellow citizens, Carlo Lanza (1781–1834), the *podestà* of Split and the first

3 For more on the classicist representation see: Šikić 2012, 305–319.

4 The Archeological Museum was opened as the second in the Monarchy, after that in Vienna. During the 1830s, the museums of the family Danielli–Pellegrini and the public museum were opened in the Dalmatian capital Zadar.

5 On the canon see more in: Vrandečić 2009.

6 Apertura del Liceo di Zara celebrata il giorno 5.11.1806: Discorso recitato dal sig. B. Benincasa capo-divisione della pubblica istruzione presso la provveditoria generale, nell'atto d'installare i professori del Liceo. Zadar, 1806, 28–27.

director of the Archaeological Museum addressed Francis I as the “most merciful of our Fathers.”

Austrian dynastic classicism used Christianity as well as a great theme of the Restoration.⁷ In 1814, upon the entrance of the Habsburg troops into Dubrovnik, Urbano Appendini (1777–1834), a local piarist scholar, noted that the nineteenth century would be another “*secolo della religione*”. The classicism of the Restoration valued order and Christian morality based on charity, sacrifice, and piety (Ivacich 1837, 2–3). In his pamphlet *Trionfi della religione di Cristo* written in 1828, the complacent Dalmatian writer Nikola Ivelio (Niccolò Ivelio) denounced “arrogant Latin liberty.” To Ivelio, arrogance and liberty had been detected as the principal sources of the French Revolution: “The French armies full of impetuous fanaticism invaded the foreign states and prolonged anarchy which degenerated into atrocities” (Ivelio 1828, 23).

Ever since the fifteenth century, the Habsburgs had been regarded as “apostolic rulers,” e.g. protectors of the Catholic Church worldwide. Angelo Pietro Galli, the bishop of Hvar, looked to the doctrine of Tertullian, the ancient philosopher, to find a theocratic base for the dynastic rule of the Habsburgs. Thanks to the new ruler Francis I, Russian General Suvorov and the British fleet, the Italian states were finally liberated from the *infame democrazia* (Bonicelli 1802, 13–35). According to Bishop Galli, Francis I ruled as the guarantor of security and tradition against the “tyrannical yoke of passions” (Galli 1802, 88–90). For Nikola Jakšić (Niccolò Giachich), Emperor Francis I represented the “supreme *podestà*” who restored “national sentiment.” His final victory over Napoleon would herald the progress of national culture and social order based on a triple foundation of laws, customs, and religion (Appendini 1814, 23). The writer Rados Antonio Michielli-Vitturi regarded Charles V and Ferdinand II, the early modern Habsburgs rulers, as the standard-bearers of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Michieli-Vitturi respected the new, rational role of the Church and worshiped Maria Theresa as an “immortal lady” (Michieli Vitturi 1818, 17–23).

Yet, from the time of Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, the Habsburgs had changed course and followed the reformist Fabronius ideology similar to French Gallicanism, which advocated state control of the Church. Although Emperor Francis I hastened to renovate the Palace of Diocletian and to establish the

70 | 7 On the theme see: Zorić 1992, 339–457.

Archeological Museum in Split, the Habsburgs procured the reformist bull *Locum Beati Petri* (1828) which abolished a handful of Dalmatian bishoprics, closed the monasteries, and stripped the archbishop of Split of his medieval title, *primus totius Croatiae et Dalmatiae*.

The Dalmatian ideologues of the regime promoted the themes of regional historicism with a local proud. Numerous Illyrians, including Claudius II, Aurelian, Probus, Carus, and Diocletian, the Roman generals who acquired the imperial diadem, were extolled and romanticized as Dalmatian national heroes. Dalmatian classicists cherished their ancient monuments including temples and palaces as unique historic treasures. The best-known Dalmatians, St. Jerome, Marco Antonio de Dominis, Johannes Lucius, and Ruder Bošković, were extolled side by side with Leibniz, Newton, and Locke (Giovannelli 1789). Nikola Jakšić, the *poeta cesareo*, always apostrophized Emperor Francis as the “Austrian Titus,” in the context of Dalmatian historical features such as Illyrian navy and Dalmatian legions. In contrast to Napoleon, the vain Nabucco who – according to the writer Pietro Bottura – had gone with the one battle, the Austrian Emperor Francis I represented glory comparable with that of the Roman emperors – Augustus, Titus, Trajan, and the Antonines. The Habsburgs seemed the only legitimate heirs of Constantine the Great, Justinian and Charlemagne (Bottura 1835, 56–83).

In contrast to the pagan Illyrians who had provided a focus for “national” identification during the Enlightenment, the docile Illyrians – Romanized and Christianized – became role models during classicism. Whereas in the Jacobin mythology of the French, St. Domnius assumed the role of the populist protector of the entire *Dalmata gente*, under Austrian classicism he was added to the extended Pantheon of “Dalmatian national saints”. The cult of the *santi nazionali dalmati* included not only St. Jerome, St. Domnius, and St. Helena, the most famous Dalmatian saints, but a long list of other Illyrian martyrs. Andrija Ciccarelli, a priest from the island of Brač, enumerated all of them, in order to make Dalmatians proud of their “national saints” (Ciccarelli 1814, 34–66). The Dalmatian Pantheon of Ciccarelli included thirteen Salonitanian martyrs, most of them murdered at the time of Diocletian, such as St. Caius, St. Gabinius and his daughter Susana, and Maximus, Claudius, Prepedigna, Alexander and Cuzia, all relatives of Diocletian.

In the classical period St. Jerome (Hieronymus) was honoured as “the glory of the Dalmatian nation” (*slava dalmatinskog naroda*).⁸ His classical education, his use of reason, and his keen intelligence typified the Dalmatian virtues of zeal, temper and dedication. Yet, according to Ciccarelli, St. Helena, the mother of the first Christian Emperor Constantine the Great, who discovered the true Cross, became equal in virtue to St. Jerome. Although foreign scholars claimed Britain or Bithynia, an ancient Roman province in the northwest of Asia Minor, as Helena’s birth place, Ciccarelli praised the *amor nazionale* of Simon Begna, Rafael Levaković, and Andrija Kačić, native historians, who argued that the Dalmatian island of Brač (the Greek Brittanide) was St. Helena’s homeland (Ciccarelli 1814, 64). Ciccarelli turned the small village of Škrip, the presumed birth place of St. Helena, into the “Bethlehem of the Dalmatian church.”⁹

The examples of such gestures continued afterwards throughout the end of the Monarchy. Friedrich August, King of Saxony, had a holiday in Dalmatia in 1838, writing on a variety of provincial classical topics. Throughout the “long century” many members of European ruling dynasties as well as European celebrities visited the Palace. Yet, in 1909 the nationalist politician Thomas Masaryk stopped at Split and stated to the local sympathizers that he was more interested in going to see peasant’s huts in Dalmatian hinterland than in stopping at the Palace. The manifestation of modernism symbolically ends Austrian classicist Dalmatia and forecasted the social and national clashes.

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8 Josip Frane od Paule Novak po milosti bozjoj i apostolskog sidalista Arhibiskup Zadarski crkvenjancima i svemu puku pravovirnom pocinjuci vladanje 1823. Zadar, 1823, 4–11.

9 The myth of St. Helena was ‘Slavicized’ by the fifteenth century. According to the Slavic-speaking priest Serafin from Nin, St. Helena was born at the island of Brač. (*Sveta Giele u Brazu se rodi*). For more on the legend see: Capor 1831, 26–28.

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Rezime:

Brendiranje provincije: reformacijska Dalmacija

Habzburško prisustvo na Istočnom Jadranu je predstavljalo novu geopolitičku paradigmu, suprotnu prethodnom venecijanskom ili francuskom imperijalnom modelu. Dvor u Beču se potrudio da stvori poseban dalmatinski identitet i omogući što efikasniju kontrolu iz Beča, čime je onemogućio unističke želje iz Pešte ili Zagreba. Rimsko nasleđe, među kojim je Dioklecijanova palata bila jedan od najvažnijih spomenika, bilo je važna osnova stvaranja novog identiteta Dalmacije. Poseta carskog para 1818. Franca i Karoline obeležila je divljenje klasičnom nasleđu Dalmacije. Beč je formirao mit koji je povezao cara *Austrian Titus* sa dva najvažnija stuba: hrišćanstva još iz rimske epohe i klasicizma koji je imao svoju savremenu realizaciju kroz značajne državne arhitektonske poduhvate 19. veka. U „stvaranju” Dalmacije su „učestvovali” i najpoznatiji dalmatinski sveci, čiji su dalmatinski karakter i posebnost bili naročito isticani. Period nakon Bečkog kongresa veoma je značajan za Dalmaciju jer se politika Beča prema njoj nije značajno promenila sve do kraja Carstva.

Ključne reči: Dalmacija, Franc I, Split, klasicizam, habzburški imperijalni mitovi

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