

# Militia et Litterae

Die beiden Nikolaus Zrínyi und Europa

Herausgegeben von  
Wilhelm Kühlmann und Gábor Tuskés  
unter Mitarbeit von Sándor Bene

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Nataša Štefanec

## Zrinski Family in the Croatian Historiographic Discourse

A Case-Study of the Construction in National Identity

Numerous members of the Zrinski family are recognized as national poets, heroes and martyrs in both Croatia and Hungary. For such a status, they owe a great deal to the Croatian and Hungarian historiography. Researchers of national ideologies would say that historiography, possessing the knowledge of a nation's history, served as one of the most important means for the national homogenization. It was (and it still is) a medium for the distribution of ›verified‹, ›non-questionable‹ information and interpretation of a nation's history. A nation as a construct that shapes and re-shapes in comparison with other nations is in constant competition with neighboring nations, who are often perceived as invasive and dangerous. In opposition to complex and ambiguous realities of the past, a history of a nation has to be exemplified through simplified and adapted narratives, myths and symbols. A nation's history, if presented in such a way, should testify to the nation's long-lasting vitality and cohesiveness and it should safeguard its distant historical roots, embodied in heroism, martyrdom, and cultural uniqueness.<sup>1</sup>

All this was to a certain extent known to the 19th century intellectuals and historians who participated in the ›creation‹ of nations. Ljudevit Gaj, the leader of the Illyrian movement or the Croatian National Revival (*Hrvatski narodni preporod*) in the first half of the 19th century, was convinced that the political history as well as the history of Croatian and Illyrian famous men, learned people and rulers, was one of the main means for the revival and homogenization of Croatian people.<sup>2</sup> In 1850, the *Society for Yugoslav history and antiquities* as well as the

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Ithaca 1983; Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London 1991; Eric Hobsbawm: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge 1992; Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge 1992; Patrick Geary: *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton-Oxford 2002; Marc Ferro: *The Use and Abuse of History. Or How the Past is Taught to Children*. London 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Stjepan Antoljak: *Hrvatska historiografija do 1918* [Croatian historiography until 1918]. Vol. 1. Zagreb 1992, p. 384–386.

journal *Archive for Yugoslav history* were established. The journal was edited by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, the first representative who used the Croatian language in the Croatian Diet.<sup>3</sup> Both were established with the purpose of »research, collection and safekeeping of antiquities and objects related to the history of our people, [...]« and both were established with an aim to collect data on Croatian history and culture in domestic and foreign archives.<sup>4</sup> In the middle of the 19th century, Franjo Rački, a great historian, patriotically wrote that »history has an educational duty and a duty to present events and examples from the past in order to motivate generations for great deeds, sacrifice and love towards people, country and homeland.«<sup>5</sup>

In the Croatian case, the nation's ethnic and cultural vitality was demonstrated through the historical survival of Croatian ethnicity (Croatian nobility, Croatian Estates, Croatian intellectuals, poets, people and so on). It was also demonstrated through the Croatian language<sup>6</sup> – despite its three dialects, one of which is shared with Slovenes, and one with Serbs. The nation's political vitality was confirmed through the survival of *iura municipalia* – the Croatian right to elect a king, to have its Diet, its laws and freedoms of the Estates and to have its Ban validated – and a corroboration of the existence of the Croatian »state« from the early Middle Ages.<sup>7</sup> *Iura municipalia* were the basis for the Croatian national homogenization in the 19th century and an ideological basis for the Croatian Party of Rights' main argument for the historical right of the Croatian nation to its state. As an important part of the Croatian current constitution, they remained the strongest argument to date.

Such vitality of language, race and state in the highly turbulent early modern period was difficult to reconstruct in historical studies without the distortion of some basic facts. Moreover, from the Middle Ages, in a relatively small area of today's Croatia there already existed lands with diverse jurisdictions, political cultures, languages, and customs (Republic of Dubrovnik, Venetian Istria, Habsburg Istria, Venetian Dalmatia, the Croatian Kingdom, the Slavonian Kingdom, the Military Border comprising some of the mentioned political units). The

<sup>3</sup> Kukuljević researched the Zrinski family. See for example Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski: *Zrin grad i njegovi gospodari* [Castle Zrin and its lords]. Zagreb 1883.

<sup>4</sup> Antoljak, vol. 1, 1992, p. 427–428.

<sup>5</sup> Antoljak, vol. 1, 1992, p. 388.

<sup>6</sup> Nikša Stančić: *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću* [Croatian nation and nationalism in the 19th and 20th century]. Zagreb 2002, p. 30–42.

<sup>7</sup> Nikša Stančić explains how the ethnic identity or the popular proto-nationalism and noble political identity or the proto-nationalism of the nobility transformed into the Croatian nation. Stančić, 2002, p. 81–99.

Slavonian Kingdom was the most problematic for the Croatian homogenization since it endangered the impression of a unique Croatian area under the rule of the Habsburgs. The Slavonian Kingdom had its own Diet and Estates and its political identity throughout the early modern period. Still, its political identity, as well as its name and language were often avoided or neglected by Croatian historians – both in studies and translations.<sup>8</sup>

### The Zrinski Family

The political and military history of the Zrinski family was highly functional in the creation of a coherent national history, both on the Croatian and Hungarian side. The Zrinskis were incontestably of Croatian origin, stemming from the heart of the medieval Croatian Kingdom, descending from one of the most important Croatian noble families – the Šubići of Bribir.<sup>9</sup> They were a long-lasting kinship, surviving successfully for centuries in a highly contested military zone, overcoming every obstacle imposed by the king, neighboring kinships or the Ottoman invaders. In the Ferdinand-Szapolyai contest they opted for Habsburgs who were the winning party. They were a resourceful and strong regional player that spread its indisputable power from Croatia to Bosnia in the Middle Ages and to Slavonian Kingdom and Hungarian Kingdom in the early modern period. It provided them with a long-lasting political, military and economic power and a decisive influence in the region. Though Croatian noblemen, they were, for more than a century, powerful magnates in the Hungarian Kingdom. As personalities, numerous leading members of this aristocratic family were valiant and skillful warriors as well as educated, strong-minded and creative people.<sup>10</sup>

Due to numerous letters and sources historians could easily highlight the idea that Zrinskis never lost their sense of origin or forgot their

<sup>8</sup> Syntheses written from the 19th century nourished such an approach though historians were mostly aware of the problem. Often, the exclusive usage of the Croatian name aims at expressing the political attitude of the author. A recent exception is the syntheses of Neven Budak (Neven Budak: *Hrvatska i Slavonija u ranome novom vijeku* [Croatia and Slavonia in the Early Modern Period]. Zagreb 2007) who questions the mentioned issue and sets terminological standards.

<sup>9</sup> Damir Karbić: *The Šubići of Bribir. A Case Study of a Croatian Medieval Kindred*. PhD Thesis at Central European University, Medieval Department. Budapest 1999.

<sup>10</sup> See the monograph about the Zrinski family in the second half of the 16th century: Nataša Štefanec: *Heretik Njegova Veličanstva: povijest o Jurju IV. Zrinskom i njegovu rodu* [Heretic of His Majesty: history of Juraj Zrinski IV and his kinship]. Zagreb 2001.

Croatian language or their Croatian ethnic background. These were the crucial aspects of identity from the 19th century perspective and onwards so that it was rather easy for historians to project them backward – as the most important identity aspects in the early modern period as well. With a fairly small number of reductions and simplifications Zrinskis could be presented as one of the best representatives of Croatian ethnic and cultural vitality and an embodiment of Croatian *iura municipalia*, Croatian state and political autonomy.

For the purpose of this paper I would like to present several topics regarding the Zrinski family which were mostly elaborated in the Croatian historiography as well as several dominant schools of thought that researched the Zrinskis. I would like to demonstrate how the Zrinskis were employed and exploited by the historians and how discourse about them developed over time – setting departure points for further research.

First, from the 19th century, the history of the Zrinski family became increasingly intertwined with the history of the Croatian nation. The best traditional historians like, for example, Tadija Smičiklas, Vjekoslav Klaić and Ferdo Šišić wrote syntheses (political histories) of Croatian history, presenting a multitude of facts from the private and public life of the Zrinskis. Until the 1940s it went hand-in-hand with the unprecedented research about the Zrinskis. During the second half of the 20th century historical discourse became more and more mitigated by the development of social and economic history, demographic history, cultural history, and history of everyday life. Various new themes from the history of the Zrinski family came to the fore in new syntheses, discovering new motives, interests and preoccupations of the family's members. This research was also very valuable. Political syntheses resurfaced in the 1990s, with an emotional-nationalistic tone, abandoning the archival research and simplifying the narrative when compared to traditional political historians. Therefore, there were significant differences in the schools of thought and research phases regarding the research of the Zrinski family in Croatia.

Secondly, numerous studies investigating isolated aspects of the family's history appeared from the 19th century, along with the publication of sources. The Zrinskis were abundantly mentioned in historiography and in textbooks. They were also the subject of many popular publications and emotional pamphlets. Despite the status and influence of the Zrinski family in the region throughout the centuries, the number of topics about the Zrinskis reiterated in mentioned writings was quite small. The Zrinski family was hardly researched *per se*. It was mostly researched in several contexts where it could be used as a symbol of national resistance to the foreign oppressor or where it could

serve as an example in explaining the wider socio-economic and political processes. Croatian historians and literary historians focused on three main topics: the Battle of Sziget in 1566, the printing house in Nedelišće and the anti-Habsburg Conspiracy in 1666/1670. The battle of Sziget and the Conspiracy were events of European importance at the time when they happened. They were presented by a number of contemporary pamphlets, chronicles, woodcuts, engravings, epic songs, and narratives.<sup>11</sup> The printing house was less so, but gained unprecedented importance as a rare and treasured cultural enterprise in 16th century Croatia-Slavonia.<sup>12</sup> Research into the economic functioning of the Zrinski estates was also made to the certain extent though it was rarely used in political syntheses. Members of the Zrinski family who did not participate in the mentioned three events did not obtain similar attention in Croatian history and historiography.<sup>13</sup>

Still, even the three mentioned topics have not been adequately researched and interpreted in Croatian historiography, though each of them would deserve a monograph. In fact, the Zrinski family's history obtained no research based a monograph throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. What were the reasons behind this?

<sup>11</sup> Along with many contemporary leaflets, woodcuts and works on the siege of Sziget written by Brne Karnarutić or Pavao Ritter Vitezović, it should be mentioned that in 1866, H. C. G. Stier published a book in Colberg, dedicated to the memory of Nikola Zrinski IV. It contained a German folk song from the 16th century about the brave knight, count Nikola, the reprint of the history of the siege published for the first time in Vienna in 1568 and a reprint of the history of the siege by Abraham Hossman, published for the first time in Magdeburg in 1617. Popular songs about Nikola Zrinski IV were found in Burgenland and published by Fran Kurelac. Ferenc Črnko, young Nikola's assistant described the siege in 1566/67 in Croatian, and in 1568 his work was translated into Latin by Samuel Budina. Conspirators Nikola and Petar had even wider European reception.

<sup>12</sup> Surveć in Štefanec, 2001, p. 199–235; Stanko Jambreč: Hrvatski protestantski pokret u XVI. i XVII. stoljeću [Croatian Reformation Movement in the 16th and 17th Centuries]. Zagreb 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Croatian ban Juraj Zrinski V died rather young after fighting bravely in the Thirty Years War. One initial research on him was made by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski: Borba Hrvatah u tridesetoljetnom ratu [The participation of the Croats in the Thirty Years' War]. In: Arkiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku XII (1875), 1–47. After that time, Rudolf Horvat made an additional several page summary of his life based mainly on 17th and 18th century authors such as Josephus Bedekovich (Natale solum [...] s. Hieronymi [...]. Neostadii Austriae 1752) and Georgius Rattkay (Memoriae regum et banorum regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Sclavoniae. Viennae 1652). Information about Juraj V was reiterated on the basis of these two studies for more than a century. Recently, a study was published that contributed to the Kukuljević's research (Nataša Štefanec: IV. és V. Zrínyi György [György IV and V Zrínyi]. In: A Zrínyiek a magyar és a horvát históriában. Ed. by Sándor Bene, Gábor Hausner. Budapest 2007, p. 87–112.

### Ethnic and Political Identity of the Zrinski Family

In order to use the Zrinski family as a national symbol their ethnic identity should be proven unambiguous or should be presented as such. One part of Croatian historiography employed various tactics in order to present it as such and part of it was less concerned with the issue.

In order to exemplify various approaches, I will use the examples of Nikola Zrinski IV (1508–1566) and Nikola Zrinski VII (1620–1664) as the two most famous family members. Both were considered as Croatian and Hungarian national heroes. Ethnically they were Croats, politically they were magnates of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom. Both spoke and wrote Croatian and Hungarian. Nikola IV had died famously on Hungarian soil fighting for a Hungarian fortress and Nikola VII had led Hungarian and Croatian magnates in the anti-Habsburg Conspiracy.

Two main directions could be discerned in the interpretation of those two Zrinskis. First, interpretations based on historical research and, secondly, the simplifications for popular, political and educational purposes.

1. Historians from the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries treated the Zrinski family in the syntheses of Croatian history and Matija Mesić wrote a study on Nikola IV. Additionally, Franjo Rački, Tadija Smičiklas, Baltazar Bogišić, Vjekoslav Klaić, Ferdo Šišić, Radoslav Lopašić, Emil Laszowski and others inserted huge effort into the publication of studies and sources in various languages about the Zrinski family.<sup>14</sup> Such efforts remain unique to this date and still offer an abundant number of facts, observations and interpretations. Their chronological descriptions and narratives were intertwined with numerous observations on personal motives and the characters of family members especially M. Mesić's. All the mentioned historians were Croatian patriots having a large esteem for both Nikolas. Still, for these historians, the Zrinskis were first and foremost defined by their social identity. They were magnates.

In his works Šišić tended to present straight facts, with only implicit interpretation.<sup>15</sup> Klaić wrote in similar way. He extensively described Zrinski family's interests and strategies. He explained how Nikola IV abandoned the office of Croatian Ban because it was a financial burden for him. After leaving the rest of his Croatian possessions to the Otto-

<sup>14</sup> The first extensive collection of articles in various disciplines on the Zrinski family was: *Posljednji Zrinski i Frankopani* [The last Zrinskis and Frankopans]. Zagreb 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Šišić, 1962 (1916), p. 278–279.

mans he no longer needed the office so he sought the position of the Captain of Sziget in Hungary to defend his Hungarian possessions, especially his new Hungarian possession – Međimurje. Along the way, he married a Czech Protestant noblewoman and developed an inclination towards Protestantism.<sup>16</sup> Such facts were not at all desirable in the syntheses of Croatian national history. Still, Klaić, as well as almost the entire older generation, did not conceal Zrinski's motives nor ignored the political situation and power relations in the region. They were aware that, in the early modern period, social and confessional identities were prior to the ethnic identity. For them, Zrinski was loyal to the king and acted bravely and consequently in accordance with the noble code of behavior. They narrated the story in detail, restrained from explicit interpretation, revealed the content of all documents they had collected, not concealing or withholding any of the various complex aspects of the Zrinski identity.

Yes, one could notice a national agenda in their writing but it was not the sole aim of it. Rudolf Horvat often introduced emotional interpretations, over-emphasizing Croatian patriotism of the Zrinski family members as one of the main motives of their actions. Still, even he was a historian whose work was based on the meticulous and critical use of the sources.<sup>17</sup> Klaić, as a patriot, also did not miss the opportunity to emphasize that Nikola was undeniably a Croat, defending Hungarian ground with his prevalently Croatian troops in Sziget (the later was also mentioned by Šišić). Though his family interests often diverged from Croatian historical interests, Klaić would mention that, in the long run, Nikola acted to the benefit of the Croatian interests as well.<sup>18</sup> On reading Klaić and Mesić, one could say that Zrinski died defending family possessions, the king and the law, Christianity and the Croatian homeland – in that order. Later on, especially in the 1990s, this order would be rearranged.

The conspirators are treated in a similar, rather complex way by this older generation of historians that also published numerous source editions and studies about the Conspiracy.<sup>19</sup> Šišić, as one of the most important authors took into consideration the various personal and

<sup>16</sup> Klaić, V, 1973 (1911–20), p. 253–254, 260–263, *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Rudolf Horvat: *Poviest Međimurja* [History of Međimurje]. Zagreb 1944, p. 60–82, 89–145

<sup>18</sup> Klaić, V, 1973 (1911–20), p. 327, 329–332, 263.

<sup>19</sup> After large editions of sources about the Conspiracy, made by Franjo Rački (1873) and Baltazar Bogišić (1880), historians such as Ivan Kukuljević (1865), Rade Lopašić (1883, 1891) and Aleksa Ivić (1939) published some additional sources on the same topic. *Historija naroda Jugoslavije* [History of Yugoslav people]. Zagreb 1959, p. 754. Rade Lopašić published a study on the Conspiracy (Rado Lopašić: Peter grof Zrinji i Franje grof Frankopan. In: *Leptir. Zabavnik*

family motives as well as the interaction of the Zrinskis with numerous noble families and ruling houses of the wider region. For him, Nikola VII was one of the strongest Hungarian magnates. He assembled the most powerful »Hungarian and Croatian magnates« against Habsburg centralism in order to defend the interests of »Hungarian and Croatian Estates« and their political, military and financial autonomy. Šišić elaborated on how neither Nikola nor Petar managed to include Croatian Estates in the Conspiracy. To him the Conspiracy was the Hungarian-Croatian issue. In accounts offered by Šišić, Nikola and Petar defended their family interests and interests of their Estates against the rival dynasty. In Šišić's synthesis there was no mention of their ethnic or patriotic motives in the modern sense of the word.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up, research made in the 19th century resulted with syntheses in the form of narratives discovering many data about Zrinskis, especially in the fields of political and military history. The Zrinskis were investigated and treated extensively though the research which could have produced a comprehensive monograph of the Zrinski family was not done. In addition to the complex parts of their narratives, the mentioned historians introduced some eye-catching facts and implicit patriotic interpretations that were welcomed by politicians and public and found an easy way in collective memory of the Croatian people – as was envisaged by Ljudevit Gaj and exposed in theory by Anderson, Hobsbawm, Geary and others.

2. From the 1850s onwards, political parties, cultural societies and individuals started to select from the knowledge and interpretation provided by historians. Some adapted it for political purposes. Some aimed at the cultural identification of Croats with tragic and heroic destiny of the Zrinski family through literature or music – it also had a »hidden« political agenda. The most famous were the novel by Eugen Kumičić about the Conspiracy and the first Croatian opera »Nikola Šubić Zrinjski« (1876) by Ivan Zajc.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, in the 19th century textbooks, Nikola IV was treated as an unsurpassed Croatian hero whose actions were mainly motivated by patriotism, as was researched by Charles Jelavich. Only Nicola Jurišić gained a similar mythological place in textbooks. Nikola IV was pre-

za godinu 1861, p. 113–170) as well as Ferdo Šišić: *Zavjera Zrinsko-Frankopanska, 1664–1671* [Zrinski-Frankopan Conspiracy]. Zagreb 1926.

<sup>20</sup> Šišić, 1962 (1916), p. 299–307.

<sup>21</sup> Eugen Kumičić (1850–1904) wrote a novel: *Urota zrinsko-frankopanska* [Zrinski-Frankopan Conspiracy]. Zagreb 1894. It run into the disapproval of politicians and intellectuals of Yugoslav or Pan-Slavic orientation, who opposed excessive glorification of the Zrinskis and Frankopans, which Kumičić strongly rejected in a special brochure. Antoljak, vol. 2, 1992, p. 324.

sented as a brave, honorable hero, admired even by the Ottomans, who had epitomized the centuries' long resistance of Croatian people to the Ottoman invasion at the bulwark of Christendom (*antemurale Christianitatis*) – dying for his Croatian homeland and Christian faith as well as for the Habsburg king and Europe. Interpretations should awake national pride and a sense that Croats were honest and brave, god-fearing, hardworking people, loyal to their rulers – during their history Croats gave and suffered much more than was just and much more that it was ever recognized by those whom they defended. Such romantic and idealized presentations of its own nation were standard in Europe at the time. Nikola could perfectly epitomize these ideals after »Hungarian« elements of the story were carefully left out so as not to interfere with the message.<sup>22</sup> Conspirators Nikola and Petar were presented as martyrs who always provided honest and loyal help to Hungarians and Habsburgs, fighting mercilessly against the Ottomans. Still, according to textbook interpretations, they were systematically mistreated by the Habsburgs, their efforts were discarded and they gained nothing in return for their sacrifice but betrayal and death which doomed Croatia to annihilation – again a common occurrence in national mythologies.<sup>23</sup> Though it cannot be examined in this paper, textbooks from the 20th century functioned in a similar way.

The uses and abuses of historical facts about the Zrinskis in political life started in the 1860s. Some political parties in Croatia promoted the Zrinskis and some opposed their promotion for »nationalist purposes«. In 1861, Ante Starčević, a nationalist politician and a leader of the Party of Rights expressed his first public thoughts about the huge importance of the Zrinski and Frankopans on national history. In the same year, Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić began to publish *Croatian history* in the school journal *Napredak* in order to provide material about Croatian history for schoolteachers. The state attorney confiscated parts of it referring to the »Zrinski-Frankopan Conspiracy«. The problem was solved only after his friend Ivan Kukuljević involved Eugen Kvaternik (representative of the Party of Rights), who submitted an official protest in the Diet, after which the issue was hushed up and the book was printed. In 1866, on the 300th anniversary of the death of Nikola IV, historians and politicians prepared for the commemoration.<sup>24</sup> Histor-

<sup>22</sup> Charles Jelavich: *Južnoslavenski nacionalizmi. Jugoslavensko ujedinjenje i udžbenici prije 1914* [South-Slavic Nationalisms: Unification of Yugoslavia and textbooks before 1914]. Zagreb 1992, p. 120–122, 167, 224–226, 252, 264.

<sup>23</sup> Jelavich, 1992, p. 227–228.

<sup>24</sup> Towards the 300th anniversary of the Zrinski's and Frankopan's execution, Rački began to prepare an edition of sources on the event from various archives. It was published in 1873. He asked Baltazar Bogišić to collect and prepare some addi-



ians published studies and sources. Politicians organized a large public celebration. The Zrinski cult began to be created by Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik. For them, Nikola IV was a somewhat dubious figure because he was defending Hungarian ground, but the conspirators, although collaborating with the Hungarians, deserved the highest place in the patriotic pantheon because they led a rebellion against the Habsburgs – against Austria.

On the April 30th 1871, Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik organized a celebration of the 200th anniversary of Zrinski's and Frankopan's deaths. The celebrations included a holy mass in the Zagreb's Cathedral to honor and remember the two most important Croatian martyrs and patriots. Celebration of a holy mass on the 30th April became a tradition for supporters of the Party of Rights in all Croatian cities, whether approved by the government or not. Disagreement with such activities appeared in political and intellectual life. For example, during one session of the Croatian Diet, Tomislav Maretić, a leading Croatian researcher of Slavic literature, university professor and director of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, declared that history should be presented as it happened and not in the way the representatives of the Party of Rights would like to present it. Moreover, according to Maretić, historians should not portray Nikola and Petar as if they were the members of the Party of Rights.<sup>25</sup>

In 1907, *Braća hrvatskoga zmaja* (Brethren of the Croatian Dragon) took over the mission of maintaining the Zrinski cult as one of its most important goals.<sup>26</sup> According to its initiators, it was a cultural society but with a defined political stance, close to that of the Party of Rights. It assembled (and still assembles) historians, archivists, clerics, intellectuals, and important public figures with the aim of safeguarding Croatian cultural and natural heritage and the survival of the Croatian people and state.<sup>27</sup> In cultural life there was also *Matica Hrvatska* (Croatian Cultural Society). All of them emotionally emphasized Croatian virtues, the Croatian ethnic background of the Zrinski family, their martyrdom and their opposition to the oppressive Austrian rule as well as their symbolic, cohesive value for the Croatian people. Elements

tional material from Parisian and Viennese archives to be published. It was done with delay in 1880. Antoljak, vol. 2, 1992, p. 112–113; 427–438. On the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Sziget, Matija Mesić wrote a study on Nikola IV, with which he was not completely satisfied. In the opinion of Rački, it was the most complete study on Nikola IV to that date (Matija Mesić: *Život Nikole Zrinjskoga, sigetskoga junaka* [Life of Nikola Zrinski, the Hero of Sziget]. Zagreb 1866.) Antoljak, vol. 2, 1992, p. 86.

<sup>25</sup> Jelavich, 1992, 65.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.braca-hrvatskoga-zmaja.hr> (12. 3. 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

of the Zrinski family history were selectively used and presented in a highly reduced form as a symbol of resistance to all that which is foreign, and a symbol of the vital and brave Croatian spirit which cannot be broken by foreign infringement and evil destiny.

In 1907, the Croatian ›Dragons‹ initiated the removal of Zrinski's and Frankopan's bones from Wiener Neustadt to Croatia which had been forbidden by the Habsburgs. It was only in 1919, under new political circumstances, that a memorial tablet was installed next to the place of the Zrinski's and Frankopan's execution in Wiener Neustadt and their bones were transferred to Zagreb's Cathedral in the presence of tens of thousands of people. It was followed by the installation of numerous memorial tablets all over Croatia (whether Zrinski had any connection to the area or not) and with the printing of pamphlets and booklets in the memory of national martyrs. In 1944, the ›Dragons‹ also organized the transfer of the remains of Adam Zrinski from Graz to Croatia.

Between the two World Wars such types of popular interest in the Zrinski family did not make the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes concerned. They did not mind the emphasizing of Croatian virtues in opposition to Austrian and/or Hungary. April 30th was at that time a holyday in Croatia. On the contrary, in 1946, the Brethren of the Croatian Dragon was abolished and such appropriation of the Zrinski family changed since the Zrinskis became dangerous to the Yugoslav unity. The celebration on April 30th 1971 in Čakovec organized by *Matica Hrvatska* (in which intellectuals and historians such as Zvonimir Bartolić and Jaroslav Šidak participated) was watched by the Yugoslav secret service and perceived negatively by the authorities.<sup>28</sup> The Croatian ›Dragons‹ re-established their work in the 1990s.<sup>29</sup> All in all, the appropriations of the Zrinski cult for political purposes changed over the two centuries and still await a proper research.

*Matica Hrvatska* and the Brethren of the Croatian Dragon developed a rich printing activity which was not easy to classify. Books,

<sup>28</sup> The year of 1971 was a year of numerous events dedicated to the Zrinski family all over Croatia – despite the disapproval of political authorities. For example, a great exhibition was organised in the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb resulting with the catalogue: Miljenko Pandžić, Milan Kruhek: *Hrvatski knezovi Zrinski i Frankopani: katalog izložbe* [Croatian counts Zrinskis and Frankopans: Exhibition Catalogue]. Zagreb 1971.

<sup>29</sup> Data on the activities of the Brethren of the Croatian Dragon from: <http://www.braca-hrvatskoga-zmaja.hr/Zrinjsko%20Frankopani/SlikeDesno.htm> (12. 3. 2008); Horvat, 1944, p. 137–138; Dragutin Feletar – Tomislav Đurić: *Navek on živi ki zgine pošteno* [He who dies honestly lives forever]. Čakovec 1971, p. 48–52.

booklets and pamphlets about the Zrinski family are still published by these societies today. Initially, from the period when they started their activities, their members, who were often not historians, printed many booklets and pamphlets following various social occasions and political events. These were reiterated basic facts, simplifications and myths about the Zrinski family, in accordance with their purpose. Then there were and are historians (Anđelko Mijatović, Dragutin Feletar to name a few) who printed various knowledgeable and informative studies about the Zrinski family but based on limited archival research and aimed at the promotion of Croatian national idea through the early modern history of the Zrinski family.<sup>30</sup> Next, there were historians who were dedicated to the Zrinski cult and the promotion of the Croatian national idea but in their professional work they contributed greatly to new knowledge of the Zrinski family with numerous studies and editions of the sources, like Emil Laszowski<sup>31</sup> and Rudolf Horvat.<sup>32</sup>

### Social Identity of the Zrinski Family

Research-based interpretations of the Zrinski family's history continued from the 1950s when socio-economic history began to develop under the strong influence of European historiography. From the 1950s until the 1980s, the dominance of political history was replaced by the socio-economic history in the works of Josip Adamček, Nada Klaić, Jaroslav Šidak, Ivan Erceg, Igor Karaman, Bogo Grafenauer and others. As the most powerful magnates, the Zrinskis were researched more than other noble families.<sup>33</sup> Still, in the domain of social and economic history the nobility was foremost investigated as a social category and a dominant social layer in the early modern society and

<sup>30</sup> Feletar-Đurić, 1971; Anđelko Mijatović: *Zrinsko-frankopanska urota* [The Zrinski-Frankopan Conspiracy]. Zagreb 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Emil Laszowski: *Urbar vinodolskih imanja knezova Zrinskih* [Urbar of the Vinodol Properties of the Zrinski Counts]. Zagreb 1915; Emil Laszowski: *Izbor isprava velikih feuda Zrinskih i Frankopana. Građa za gospodarsku povijest Hrvatske u XVI. i XVII. Stoljeću* [Selection of sources on the Zrinski and Frankopan estates. Materials for the economic history of Croatia in the 16th and 17th centuries]. Vol. 1. Zagreb 1951; Emil Laszowski: *Gorski kotar i Vinodol. Dio državine knezova Frankopana i Zrinskih* [Gorski Kotar and Vinodol. Part of the estates of the Zrinski and Frankopan]. Zagreb 1923; Emil Laszowski: *Grad Ozalj i njegova okolina. Mjestopisne i povjesne crtece* [Town Ozalj and its surrounding. Topographic and historical contributions]. Ozalj 1993.

<sup>32</sup> See for example Horvat, 1944.

<sup>33</sup> See for example Vaso Bogdanov: *Likovi i pokreti* [Personalities and movements]. Zagreb 1957, p. 5-47.

economy of the Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian Kingdom.<sup>34</sup> Though the Zrinskis were not researched from a family history perspective, it was a huge step further. Historians reconstructed the spatial distribution of noble estates, the ways of the economic functioning of the estates and cities and collected data on incomes, quantity and quality of possessions. They explored the participation of the Zrinski family in the early modern accumulation of capital, its contribution to early industrialization and manufactories, and the development of trade in the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom and many other topics.

A generation of socio-economic historians publishing a synthesis in 1959 praised the importance of the Battle of Sziget and the Conspiracy (B. Grafenauer, N. Klaić, J. Šidak) but it also introduced numerous new interpretations.<sup>35</sup> The Zrinskis were presented as members of the noble class, closely intertwined with the Hungarian nobility. It was apparent that nobility dominantly defended its own private interests and the interest of the Estates it belonged to, whether Hungarian or Croatian or both. Interests of the nobility were no longer equalized with national

<sup>34</sup> Josip Adamček: *Agrarni odnosi u Hrvatskoj od sredine XV. do kraja XVII. stoljeća* [Agrarian relations in Croatia from the middle of the 15th century until the end of the 17th century]. Zagreb 1980; Josip Adamček: *Bune i otpori* [Rebellions and resistances]. Zagreb-Ljubljana 1987; Josip Adamček: *Zrinsko-Frankopanski posjedi u XVII. Stoljeću* [Zrinski and Frankopan estates in the 17th century]. Zagreb 1972; Ivan Erceg: *Izveštaj o ekonomskom položaju i mogućnostima unapređenja proizvodnje na veleposjedu plemićke obitelji Zrinski (-Frankopan) na sjevernojhrvatskom primorju godine 1675* [Report on the economic position and possibilities of production advancement on the estates of the Zrinski(-Frankopan) family in northern Croatian Adriatic in 1675]. In: *Acta historico-oconomica*, 20 (1993), p. 7-117; Nada Klaić: *Društvena previranja i bune u Hrvatskoj u XVI i XVII stoljeću* [Social riots and turmoils in Croatia in the 16th and 17th centuries]. Beograd 1976; Nada Klaić: *Ostaci ostataka' Hrvatske i Slavonije u XVI. st.: od mohačke bitke do seljačke bune 1573* [Remnants of the remains of Croatia and Slavonia in the 16th century: from the Battle of Mohach until the Peasant Uprising in 1573]. In: *Arhivski vijesnik* 16 (1973), p. 253-325; Jaroslav Šidak: *Prilog pitanju odnosa Petra Zrinskog prema kmetovima u doba urote, 1670* [A contribution to the relationship of Petar Zrinski towards serfs during the Conspiracy, 1670]. Zagreb 1961; Rajka Modrić: *Povijesni spomenici obitelji Zrinskih i Frankopana monuments. Vol. 1. Popisi i procjena dobara, 1672-1673* [Historical sources of the Zrinski and Frankopan families. Vol. 1. Inventory and estimation of goods, 1672-1673]. Zagreb 1974.

<sup>35</sup> Bogo Grafenauer, Nada Klaić and Jaroslav Šidak wrote chapters relevant for this paper, in: *Group of authors: Historija naroda Jugoslavije II* [History of Yugoslav people II]. Zagreb 1959. Chapters referring to Croatian history introduced numerous source-based interpretations in the fields of socio-economic and cultural history and included new complex interpretations in the fields of political history. The synthesis is highly relevant even today.

<sup>36</sup> Jaroslav Šidak published a rich review of historiography with his own comments on numerous approaches to the Conspiracy. Jaroslav Šidak. *Urota Zrinsko-Fran-*

interests, though their military importance in the opposition to the Ottomans was highly valued.<sup>36</sup>

A synthesis in the form of articles sampled by Mirjana Gross in 1981, presented results of extensive research of early modern social stratification in the area of today's Croatia. The Battle of Sziget and the Conspiracy were not elaborated in special studies but the peasant's uprising in 1573 was. Still, the Zrinski family was not neglected. It was a part of almost every text in this synthesis.<sup>37</sup>

All in all, the shift in the interpretation of the main heroic events from the Zrinski history did not mean that the Zrinskis were considered less important. For example, extensive research of Josip Adamček on noble estates or the research of Igor Karaman on economic history verified and emphasized that the Zrinskis were the crucial link for the long-lasting economic integration of early modern Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia. For them, the Zrinskis significantly influenced the transition from medieval economies to early capitalism. Their economic importance in the modernization processes and integration of various Croatian historical lands that led to the Croatian national integration was accentuated by social and economic historians. The Zrinskis were also considered as a counterweight to the destructive effects of the establishment and functioning of the Military Border along the historical Croatian lands.<sup>38</sup> For this generation of historians, the downfall of the family was destructive because the cohesive power between various Croatian lands was lost, and modernization could be conducted from above, from Vienna – which left Croatian lands on the periphery. Moreover, with the downfall of the Zrinskis, Croatian nobility lost its magnates and a chance to influence, not national politics, but higher politics in the region. Without them, huge possessions from the River Drava to the Adriatic Sea were bound to remain on the economic, cultural and political periphery of Central Europe.

kopanska kao historiografski problem [Conspiracy of Zrinski and Frankopan as a historiographic problem]. In: Radovi, vol. 2., 1972, p. 5–21; Jaroslav Šidak: Kroz pet stoljeća hrvatske povijesti [Through five centuries of Croatian history]. Zagreb 1981, p. 148–167.

<sup>37</sup> Mirjana Gross: Društveni razvoj u Hrvatskoj od 16. stoljeća do početka 20. stoljeća [Social development in Croatia from the 16th century until the beginning of the 20th century]. Zagreb 1981. Synthesis included authors like Josp Adamček, Fedor Močanin, Miroslav Bertoša, Tomislav Raukar and others.

<sup>38</sup> For example: Igor Karaman: Privredni život Banske Hrvatske od 1700. do 1850 [Economic life of the Ban's Croatia from 1700 until 1850]. Zagreb 1989; Igor Karaman: Industrijalizacija građanske Hrvatske, 1800–1914 [Industrialization of civil Croatia, 1800–1914]. Zagreb 1991; Igor Karaman: Jadranske studije [Adriatic studies]. Rijeka 1992.

Even in this period the Zrinski family was still not researched from the aspect of a family history, anthropology and everyday life. Research and interpretation emphasis was on phenomena and processes; social riots, social stratifications and the economic functioning of the noble estates, cities, economic processes in various parts of historical Croatian historical lands, the modernization process, based on extensive archival research and the adequate use of European historiography. The Zrinskis were presented as an integral and important part of Croatian early modern history but they were no longer the main actors or the main theme of interest. The nobility also obtained a somewhat negative social role as a suppressor of the freedoms of serfs and the peasantry. The advance in the research was noticeable, but it did not produce a focused holistic investigation of the Zrinski family.

### Cultural Identity of the Zrinski Family<sup>39</sup>

The Zrinskis could be seen as a rare example of cultural and literary activists in the territory of today's Croatia in the 16th and 17th centuries when this region was rather unstable, involved in military activities and small war. The literary and printing activity in 16th and 17th century continental Croatia was mostly connected with the Zrinski family. The printing houses on the Zrinski properties were such an important cultural phenomenon, in absence of others, which needed to be researched and interpreted. Due to a period of Protestantism that lasted until the 1620s, Juraj Zrinski IV, a Protestant, was interpreted as being a barbarous and difficult person, especially by the authors participating in the Counter-reformation. Cultural historians such as Franjo Bučar and Rudolf Horvat proffered such evaluations.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, historians researched the printing houses of Rudolf Hofhalter and Johannes Manlius in Nedelišće and Varaždin as well as the literary circle in Varaždin that were all supported and sponsored by Juraj Zrinski. Literary historians such as Zvonimir Bartolić, Alojz Jembrih, Valentin Putanec

<sup>39</sup> Research of material cultura from the early modern period was mainly devoid of political and symbolical baggage so that archaeologists and art historians have greatly contributed to our knowledge of the material culture on the Zrinski properties. One should mention a few most proliferate researchers in this field such as Milan Kruhek, Zorislav Horvat and Anđela Horvat who researched Zrinski topics amongst others.

<sup>40</sup> See for example Horvat, 1944; Franjo Bučar: Povijest hrvatske protestantske književnosti – za reformacije [History of Protestant literature – during the Reformation]. Zagreb 1910; Franjo Bučar: Povijest reformacije i protureformacije u Medimurju i susjednoj Hrvatskoj [History of the reformation and counter-reformation in Međimurje and neighbouring Croatia]. Varaždin 1913.

and others presented studies with great knowledge of books, dialects and language but often without proper historical context.<sup>41</sup> The activity of the Protestant printing houses on Juraj's Hungarian estates was rarely mentioned. Juraj IV was considered an aberration from the Zrinski Catholic norm, though the Zrinskis were officially Protestants for more than 50 years.

As far as the rich literary activity of the 17th century Zrinskis and the entire literary circle around them was concerned, there existed a problem in interpreting the Zrinski's identity within the Croatian nationalist paradigm. The Zrinskis mostly intermarried with Hungarian, but also with Austrian and Czech noble families. Their social ranking intertwined them with Hungarian, Croatian and Slavonian magnates rather than Croatian nobility.<sup>42</sup> Politically they preferred to attend the more influential Hungarian Diet and neglected the Croatian-Slavonian Diet. By speaking Hungarian and writing letters and various literary works in Hungarian from the 16th century the Zrinskis were tainted too much with the Hungarian language and aristocratic culture. If approached through a national discourse, Nikola VII was an integral part of the Hungarian early modern literature and culture while Petar wrote works in Croatian and lived in Croatia.

Literary historians mostly researched about Petar although emphasizing that he was only an average poet. Some such Vjekoslav Jagić researched Nikola more and some less like Krešimir Georgijević who dedicated most place to Petar.<sup>43</sup> Nikola and his work were not adequately presented and researched by Croatian literary historians but all of them acknowledged, without problems or hesitations, his Hungarian preferences and his cornerstone place in Hungarian culture. For

<sup>41</sup> Zvonimir Bartolić: Hrvatske tiskare u Nedelišću u doba Zrinskih [Croatian printing houses in Nedelišće during the Zrinski period]. In: Zbornik pedagoške akademije u Čakovcu. Čakovec 1972; Zvonimir Bartolić: Sjeverno hrvatske teme [North Croatian topics]. Vol. I-III. Čakovec 1980-1985; Zvonimir Bartolić: Za vuglom provincija [Behind the corner of provinces]. Čakovec 1978; Ljudevit Ivančan: Knjiga gatalica Katarine Zrinski [Book of predictions of Katarina Zrinska]. In: Vjesnik Zemalj. Arkiva 8 (1906), p. 42-104; Alojz Jembrih: Antun Vramec i njegovo djelo [Antun Vramec and his work]. Čakovec 1981; Valentin Putanec: Poriijeklo moslavačkih Pergošića i povezano s tim porijeklo kajkavskog pisca Ivana Pergošića [The origin of Pergošić's from Moslavina and the origin of the kajkavian writer Ivan Pergošić]. In: Čazma u prošlosti i danas. Čazma 1979; Valentin Putanec: Jezik »Decretuma« (1574) Ivana Pergošića [The language of »Decretum« (1574) of Ivan Pergošić]. In: Hrvatski dijalektološki zbornik 6 (1982).

<sup>42</sup> Štefanec, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> Krešimir Georgijević: Hrvatska književnost od XVI. do XVII. stoljeća u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj i Bosni [Croatian literature from the 16th century until the 17th century in northern Croatia and Bosnia]. Zagreb 1969.

a literary historian with an agenda to research Croatian culture Nikola was a person from a foreign compartment, left to Hungarian literary historians and historians.

For a Croatian historian or a literary historian with a national agenda, systematic research on Nikola Zrinski, no matter how great a poet and writer he was, would be politically and ethnically problematic. He would have to justify Nikola's language preferences, his overt functioning within a Hungarian political, social and cultural system. If he would have to write a monograph on Petar, he would have to justify Petar's negotiations with the Ottomans that could hardly be of Croatia's interest at the time. He would also have to take a stance on his naïve political strategies. When historians and literary historians in Croatia elaborate on Nikola VII it is always much shorter than on Petar and they often mention one line. He was writing in Hungarian but in 1658 he wrote: »I did not forget my origins, I am aware that I am a Croat and that I am a Zrinski.«<sup>44</sup> Such approaches did not and could not result with a quality and comprehensive study since the Zrinskis were a far too complex cultural phenomenon to be interpreted within a domain of one national culture, Croatian or Hungarian.

#### Syntheses from the 1990s

Dragutin Pavličević and Trpimir Macan, as authors of the most dominant and bestselling syntheses from the 1990s, did not conduct any new research when writing about the Zrinskis or the early modern period. Moreover, they neglected much of the research accomplished by then. Since they intended to prove the nation's millennial vitality, every complex interpretation would interfere with the constructed ethnic/national purity of Croatian-Slavonian aristocracy. Macan made a selection of data that should fit into the linear interpretation of Croatian history, emphasizing Croatian contributions to European culture and the martyrdom of Croats throughout the centuries. According to Macan, Zrinski and Frankopan rebelled protecting their own interests and the Croatian state interests against the Habsburg absolutism: »Therefore, the Zrinskis and Frankopans were carriers of Croatian state tradition and the aspiration to a complete Croatian independence.«<sup>45</sup> Macan and Pavličević were selecting data that could fit into their interpretation of

<sup>44</sup> »Ego mihi conscius aliter sum, etenim non degenerem, me Croatam at quidem Zrinium esse scio.« Letter to Ivan Ručić, the great County Mayor of Zagreb, in 1658. Georgijević, 1969, p. 92-93; Šišić, 1962 (1912), p. 300.

<sup>45</sup> Trpimir Macan: Hrvatska povijest [Croatian history]. Zagreb 1995, p. 110.

Croatian history, that is, the state oriented millennial political history. They did not question the Zrinski's motives in their complex socio-cultural setting. They highlighted heroic deaths and emphasized the Zrinskis' Croatian ethnic background, their Croat troops and so on. An entire set of data was left out. The tradition of complex, research-based storytelling of traditional political historians like Klaić and Šišić who refrained from the interpretation (or even the tradition of Rudolf Horvat) was neglected.

For Pavličević, Croatian political history has also been linear and state-oriented for centuries. For example, a chapter about the Conspiracy titled »Rebellion and liquidation of the Zrinskis and Frankopans«, finishes with these lines:

Although brothers Zrinski and Krsto Frankopan, did not succeed in international politics, though they were not competent in contemporary European diplomacy and did not succeed in uniting anti-Habsburg forces in Hungary and Styria nor all forces of internal Croatian resistance, their attempt was still an attempt of magnates to rebel against the king and it had national characteristics leading towards the creation of the independent Croatian state.<sup>46</sup>

A fact that conspirators negotiated with France and the Ottoman Empire was not questioned along the ethnic/national lines but excused with incompetence. Pavličević finished the chapter about Nikola IV and the Battle of Sziget with an interesting interpretation. After establishing that Hungarians and Croats are proud of Nikola, that the Turks had to return to Istanbul after the Battle of Sziget and that Zrinski is the second Croat who saved Vienna and Sziget, Pavličević continued:

On the other side, there stood Sokolović, an Orthodox boy, [...], who built a bridge over Drina at Višegrad (Ivo Andrić: *Na drini ćuprija*) opening a path for Islam and Orthodoxy (over the Patriarchy of Pecs) to the West. Croatian people barely survived the consequences of both invasions, losing a part of its national body in lives as well as in territories. The collapse of Yugoslavia and Patriotic War (1991–1995) were the end of this eastern aggression. The European army of Maximilian (II) of Habsburg stood at the side, hesitating, almost disinterested, typically Western-European. Zrinski remained alone.<sup>47</sup>

The Zrinskis were used as a symbol – their history was reduced to several events – events were further reduced in their interpretation.

In the 1990s, numerous new archival investigations on the Zrinski family began. The Zrinskis started to be researched as a family and not as an agent of national political or socio-economic history.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Pavličević, 2000, p. 198.

<sup>47</sup> Pavličević, 2000, p. 163–164.

<sup>48</sup> New studies on the Zrinski family were presented in: Jadranka Damjanov (ed.): *Zrinski i Europa* [Zrinski and Europe]. Zagreb 2000; Hrvoje Petrić, Dragutin Feletar, Peter Feletar (eds.): *Novi Zrin. Zrinska utvrda na Muri, 1661–1664*

Furthermore, the syntheses of Croatian history written by younger historians, appearing from 2000 till today, started to combine the knowledge of political, cultural and socio-economic historians, as well as some new research on the family's history, offering less partial interpretation of the Zrinski family's role in the Croatian history.<sup>49</sup> Although some »linear« interpretations remained, these new syntheses introduced various disciplinary perspectives and contributed to a more complex understanding of Croatian history than presented above. A contribution of such approaches to the Croatian national identity remains to be evaluated.

## Conclusion

This paper has presented the main research tendencies from the historiography on the Zrinski family until the year 2000 as well as dominant trends in the political usage of the Zrinskis' history. It has also outlined directions for some further research.

The Zrinski family today is omnipresent in every synthesis of the national history. Historiography on the Zrinski family as well as the editions of sources are numerous. From the 19th century, the best Croatian historians researched the Zrinski family in various contexts and from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. Two facts remain. The Zrinskis, as one of the most important phenomena in Croatian and Hungarian histories are still surprisingly inadequately researched. Serious, complex research results are scarcely used in public or politics.

[New Serinwar. Zrinski fortress on the Mura river, 1661–1664]. Donja Dubrava, Zagreb 2001; *Povijest obitelji Zrinski*. Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa održanog u Zagrebu, 8.–9. studenog 2004 [History of the Zrinski family. Papers from the conference held in Zagreb, November 8–9, 2004]. Zagreb 2007.

<sup>49</sup> New syntheses of Croatian history from 2000: Ivo Goldstein: *Hrvatska povijest* [Croatian history]. Zagreb 2003. Goldstein treats Nikola IV in three short paragraphs and conspirators are treated in a special long chapter that introduced various facts and interpretations from socio-economic and cultural history but was still titled »Suppression of Croatian self-consciousness: Conspiracy of Zrinski and Frankopan«; Mirko Valentić – Lovorka Čoralić (eds.): *Povijest Hrvata 2: od kraja 15. stoljeća do kraja prvoga svjetskog rata* [The History of Croats 2: from the 15th century until the First World War]. Zagreb 2005. Nikola IV and the Battle of Sziget are mentioned in two lines by Mirko Valentić and the chapter on the Conspiracy, written by Miroslav Kurelac and Zoran Ladić is extensive and intricate; Neven Budak (Zagreb 2007) mentions Nikola IV briefly and conspirators are interpreted in a rather complex way in the chapter »Conflict of nobility and court«.

The popular image of the Zrinskis as national martyrs and heroes rests much more on simplified emotional interpretations than on the research-based accounts. Due to political exploitation of selected historical facts and interpretations and due to biased studies and syntheses, simplified stories about the Zrinskis found a way in every home and textbook. Their importance in the national consciousness is vivid in the fact that most cities and villages in Croatia – from Dubrovnik, along the Adriatic coast to Istria, Međimurje, central Croatia and eastern Slavonia – have a street or a square named after Zrinski and Frankopan. Though these were often areas that were in no way connected with the Zrinski family, the Zrinskis as a national emblem and a symbol of the Croatian nation unite all those regions.

The Zrinskis are still a useful motive for ideologies and mythologies. This was and it is largely due to the ways in which the professional historiography functions – compartmentalized nationally, disciplinary and methodologically. It was and it is also due to the political usage of history and to the educational adaptations and simplifications of historical facts required by political ideologies. Still, I am convinced that a complex and unrestrained story about the historical experience of the Zrinski family would be a much better textbook, both for political elites and for the people.

*Sándor Bene*

## Miklós Zrínyi in Post-World War II Scholarly Literature in Hungary

The Past and Present of Interdisciplinary Research

Researchers from Western Europe trying to get their bearings in Hungarian scholarly literature treating the fundamental issues of history and intellectual history of the mid-17th century will notice a rather peculiar phenomenon – namely, the great number of bibliographic entries regarding the Hungarian-Croatian politician, general and poet, a man who has almost been totally forgotten in Europe, Miklós Zrínyi. This discrepancy between his lack of international recognition and his high level of regional representation is all the more peculiar since in his day, in the middle of the 17th century, Zrínyi was perhaps the best-known figure from this region in Western European press, diplomacy and contemporary historical literature. He was a candidate during the Turkish war of 1663/1664 to become the supreme commander of the allied Christian armies. His unexpected death in 1664 which coincided with the conclusion of this war – the outcome of which had been assessed negatively as well as positively – is generally regarded in historical works treating the events of the second half of the 17th century in Hungary as the beginning of the »Hungarian troubles«. This troubles culminated in an anti-Habsburg conspiracy known as the Wesselényi-Zrínyi-Frangepán conspiracy in which his brother, Péter played a significant part as well as in the war of independence which Péter Zrínyi's grandson, Ferenc Rákóczi led against the Viennese government (1703–1711).<sup>1</sup> In essence we have here a malfunctioning of historical memory:

<sup>1</sup> An essential review of the press and the historical literature of the day is given by Béla Köpeczi: *Staatsräson und christliche Solidarität. Die ungarischen Aufstände und Europa in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Budapest 1983. For newly released periodical material see Nóra G. Etényi: *Hadszintér és nyilvánosság: A magyarországi török háború hírei a 17. századi német újságokban* [Seat of war and publicity: The news of the Turkish war in Hungary in the 17th century German newspapers]. Budapest 2003. On contemporary material and its correlations see Sándor Bene: *A Zrínyi testvérek az Ismeretlenek Akadémiáján* (Vclncei karnévál) [The Zrínyi brothers at the Academy of the Unknowns (Carneval in Venice)]. In: *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 97 (1993), p. 650–668; id., *Od kupovine knjiga do kupovina pisaca: Braća Zrinski u međunarodnoj propagandi (1663–1666)* [From Purchasing Books to Purchasing Writers: The Zrínyi Brothers in the International Propaganda (1663–1666)]. In: 400. obljetnice Nacionalne i