MONUMENTA
SERBOCROATICA

A BILINGUAL ANTHOLOGY
OF SERBIAN AND CROATIAN TEXTS
FROM THE 12th TO THE 19th CENTURY

Thomas Butler

MICHIGAN SLAVIC PUBLICATIONS
It is characteristic of the Adriatic Sea that its western or Italian coastline is flat and has few good ports, whereas its eastern or Yugoslav shore is generally rocky and has many natural harbors. Dubrovnik (Ragusa), on the southeastern shore of the Adriatic, was especially favored as a trade center during its approximately one thousand years as a city-state, because it was the last major port between the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Not only was it the last secure stopping point and haven for ships proceeding from Venice to the Levant, North Africa, and Western Europe, but it was also the terminus for land routes to the interior of the Balkans: to Hercegovina (Hum), Serbia (Raška), Bulgaria, and Constantinople.

The city of Ragusa is said to have been founded in the seventh century A.D., by the Romanized inhabitants of Epidaurus, a former Greek colony some ten miles distant, which had been destroyed by a marauding band of Avar-led Slavs. The Byzantine Emperor and historian, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who was the first to write of the city, in 949 A.D. (De Administrando Imperio, chapter XXIX), says that it got its name from the Latin word for the original site, luus ("cliff"), which became lausaioi ("those living on the cliff"), then rausaioi, and finally ragusa. The Slavic name for the city, "Dubrovnik," probably developed from a derivative of the word for oak (dub). The earliest known use of the name "Dubrovnik" was in a commercial treaty between the city and Kulin, the governor of Bosnia (1189), which would indicate that by the twelfth century the descendants of the original Latin settlers had begun to merge with the Slavic population dwelling on the outskirts of the walled city. The coexistence of the names Ragusa and Dubrovnik throughout much of the city's history symbolizes her combined Latin and Slavic roots, as well as her dual orientation, both westward and eastward.

Unlike the other cities of the Dalmatian coast, which were overcome by foreign armies and navies, Dubrovnik, whose motto was "Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro" ("freedom is not to be sold at any
price”), managed to maintain her independence, while acknowledging the suzerainty at various times of the Byzantine Empire, Venice, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Her internal government, which had earlier been of the communal type, gradually was taken over by a wealthy noble class, which jealously guarded its privileges, allowing only its own members to be elected to the great council (consilium major), small or executive council (consilium minus) and the senate (consilium rogatorum). This mercantile oligarchy also appointed the prince or rector, who was titular head of the city for a term of one month (after 1358). The remaining population of Dubrovnik, largely composed of craftsmen, merchants, and seamen, was concentrated in guilds (esnafi) and trade associations (bratovštine). When most of the Dubrovnik senate perished during the calamitous earthquake of 1667, the surviving nobility invited some leading merchant families to join it.

Because of her unique and often precarious position as a “middle-man” between the Christian West and the Moslem East, as well as her role as a flourishing trading nation (in the middle of the sixteenth century she had a larger merchant navy than England), the city-state of Dubrovnik maintained an intensive commercial and diplomatic correspondence with representatives as far apart as London, Istanbul, and Goa. Much of this correspondence, as well as the deliberations of her three governmental bodies, has been retained in the precious state archives, which have documents dating from as early as the eleventh century. The seven thousand volumes and one hundred thousand separate acts of the archives are a mine of information about the political and economic situation in Europe, North Africa, and the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Since Latin was the official state language, the majority of the documents are in that language, although a significant number are in Italian, Slavic, and Arabic. The earliest documents concerning Dubrovnik’s relations with the Balkan Slavic states are in Latin, one being a peace treaty with Stefan Nemanja and his brothers Stracimir and Miroslav (1186), and the other the already-mentioned trade agreement of 1189 with the Bosnian leader Kulin. The Dubrovnik Slavic documents excerpted in this anthology refer to trading rights and other privileges granted to merchants by local rulers in Serbia and Zeta (Montenegro); they were originally published by Franz Miklosich in his Monumenta serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae Bosnae Ragusii (Vienna, 1858).

An inventory of the types of documents in the Dubrovnik archives can be found in Francis W. Carter’s comprehensive work: Dubrovnik (Ragusa): A Classic City-State (London/N.Y.: Seminar Press, 1972; 601-661). Bariša Krekić has published a small but excellent book, Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries: A City between East and West (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1972), while Dr. Anton Kolendić has written a fine handbook, Dubrovnik (Beograd: “Jugoslavija” Pub. House, 1965; transl. Dorian Cooke). There have been some specialized studies of
Dubrovnik, as well, including Konstantin Jireček's work on her medieval trade (Die Bedeutung von Ragusa in der Handelsgeschichte des Mittelalters) (Vienna, 1899), Jovan Radonić's superbly annotated volumes of Dubrovnik's diplomatic documents (Dubrovačka akta i povelje, I-II, Beograd, 1934-35).

COAT OF ARMS OF THE REPUBLIC OF DUBROVNIK
† И Балша, милостивожеланный Дяка драчке и циц, нынешний и настоящий, ежели есть в сведениях всякого человека, как с его стороны покаешьается Мате Журковичь, вспомянув свою речь и за трольгию и за свободу и за повеление господина ми и брата ми Георге и моего, и видалъ нынешнюю добротную речь принятия моихъ властей (града) Дубровника холенок, що есть людомъ старымъ нами, паче потрясенною (поколениемъ) брата ми Георге и моего, какъ да съ терьды и непокойными, и какъ да ходы нынѣ трольгию по моей земли, да свободно купля и продажа безъ никого за каба; и ако (ибо) кто вмьет це любо силомъ, вида плачую яда моего кукед, а и да нынѣ (кривца);

I Balsa, by God's mercy Duke of Drac and elsewhere, do desire, write, and command that it be known to every man that there has come to me the messenger Mate Žurković from the city of Dubrovnik, and he talked to me about business activities and about merchants and about freedom, and about the charters of my lord, and of my brother George, as well as my own, and I having taken note of his good discourse, which comes from my friends the lords of the city of Dubrovnik, and wanting that there be love between us as of old, so do I once more confirm the charters of my brother George as well as my own, that they be firm and unshakeable, and that their merchants may go throughout my land, and that they may buy freely and sell without any interference whatsoever; and if someone takes anything [from them] by force, I shall pay for it from my house, and I shall look for [the guilty party]; and merchants
and merchants, come and sell in the Danj, and pay nothing, neither will they pay... tariffs nor ferry taxes which were not in effect with Emperor Stefan nor with George; and if it should happen that I owe the Dubrovnik merchants something, I will straighten it out with them; and if it should happen that a Dubrovnik ship be shipwrecked on my territory, no one is free to take anything or to destroy it, and whoever should dare to do any of the above, let such a one pay 600 perpera, and let him be regarded as unfaithful to me; and likewise I give my pledge and that of my lords that I will not alter this writ while I am alive. And this charter was written in the 1385th year after the birth of Christ, on the twenty fourth day of April, at Tuzi, near Pluća. And the witness to this was the treasurer Filip.
By the ineffable mercy and charity of my sweet Christ, and by his ineffable and most merciful tutelage which, along with the grace of the Holy Spirit, he has lavished on my kingdom, as he did on that of the first holy and Orthodox emperors, and he appointed me lord of the Serbian land and of the coast and of the Danubian regions. I in Christ God the faithful and autocratic by God’s mercy Stefan Prince Lazar and lord, holding all that which God wills, and now whereas the governors and lords of the city of Dubrovnik have sent to my government their lords named Nikola Gundulić and Jakov Bavželić, and they have asked my government that just as the first all-Serbian lords had written down for them the rules and laws, so might my government confirm them for them: and my government
Тврди, како ји су имали законы 8 првог господара српскога и ћаре Стјфана, ткш закони да имају 8 господарства ми, да ком се не потвори ни за једнога и ђака имају српскога, како се њиме и првага имају. И ако се њима коме прведи руковачани српскога, да се постави половине србина деброквачких и половине српскога, да се прведи коме у деброквачанога његовом држава, — конопицом, на ком се нагов деброквачан 8 нанаважених месте; ако ли деброквачани свидочни, ком се прведи, да постави половине деброквачани и половине српскога; а шта свидови свидови да не колк то баче по дубровачким, ако ли дубровачкима коме прведи саси деброквачани, таковери да се сведи како и српскога, половине саси сведи и половине деброквачани, да не позива сврежен деброквачани на сведи никако ткако прведи свидови сврежени, таковери да се прведи свидови свидови, да се не маже прведи господарство ми ни прведи кефалино. И ако коме деброквачаним виши конци, и свидови конци ако уната сврежени коме виши сведи, и рече: врховини ли њу коме виши, да се шакаже деброквачани, како неко свидови виши конци ни виши ни татке, ни га њу виши; ако виши дребан сврежени has confirmed them; and just as they had laws under the first Serbian lords and Emperor Stefan, so let them have these laws under my government, and may they not be changed for any reason. And my government has granted them another privilege that they had before. And if there should be some dispute between citizens of Dubrovnik and Serbs, let half of the appointed judges be from Dubrovnik and the other half Serbian, and let it be argued before them, and let the jury for a Dubrovnik person be his own people, Dubrovnik citizens who are from that place or from the nearest location; if both of the contestants desire testimony, let half of the witnesses be Dubrovnik people and the other half Serbs; and let none of these witnesses be free to run off. If Saxons should become involved in a dispute with Dubrovnik people, let them be judged as with the Serbs: one half of the judges will be Saxons and one half will be natives of Dubrovnik. And let no Serb summon a Dubrovnik citizen to court except before these judges. Also, a Saxon should plead complaints before such judges. And let them not be tortured before my government nor before the kefâltiga [head magistrate]. And if some Dubrovnik citizen should buy a horse, and if a Serb or a Saxon should seize that horse and say: it has been stolen or rustled from me, let the Dubrovnik citizen swear under oath that he was not aware that the horse had been stolen or rustled and that he had bought it; if he got the horse from
some Serb or Saxon, let that person return to him what he has given for the horse, and let him not be free to keep his own horse. And where a Dubrovnik citizen stays in a dwelling place, if he has previously dwelled in that place, then no Serb is free to stay there without his permission. And whatever Dubrovnik citizen goes with [his merchandise] or with another's through the markets of my kingdom and my land, just as the law was for them before, under the first lords and under Emperor Stefan, so let the law be now. And if a Dubrovnik person should give his property in trust to a Serb, and if that Serb should withhold it from him, saying: "you didn't give it to me", let the Dubrovnik person swear by his faith and by his soul, and let whatever property he gave him be paid to him. And wherever Dubrovnik people travel through my kingdom with merchandise, and if a robber should kill him [sic] or rob him in a village, then let the locality pay what the robber has taken from them and what has been stolen from them; and if the locality doesn't pay, then my government will pay what has been taken from them. And any Dubrovnik citizen that acquires a residence in Novo Brdo should build a wall around it and should take care of it; but those Dubrovnik citizens who are guests,
and who have not acquired a residence, are free to go as they please.

And if a Dubrovnik ship should be shipwrecked on the coastal territory under the jurisdiction of my government, whatever law was in effect for such a circumstance under the first lords and under Emperor Stefan, let that law hold now, too. And whoever wants to go from my land to Dubrovnik, whether he be Serb or Vlah or whatever, in order to trade, let each one go freely, and let not my government nor my chief magistrates prevent them, and what the law was for them under Stefan so let it be now. And as for the coastal markets which are under the jurisdiction of my kingdom, and the salt concessions, where there were markets under the first lords and where there were salt concessions under Emperor Stefan, let there be such now, and let there be none anywhere else. And if Dubrovnik citizens should have a dispute among themselves, whether it be about something that happened in Serbia or in Dubrovnik, let it be tried before the Dubrovnik consul and before their own judges, and let them agree to abide by what the consul and judges decide: if a Dubrovnik citizen is unwilling to accept such a judgment, then the consul is free, as are the judges, to tie that person up and to detain him until such time as he pays the judgment against him. And let it be that neither the chief magistrates nor the ruler are free to change this law. And if death should befall some citizen of Dubrovnik while in my kingdom,
let not my government nor the chief magistrates of my government nor anyone else have anything to do with his property, but let it belong to whatever Dubrovnik citizen he leaves it at his death. And let it not be a gift for Dubrovnik citizens. And if my government should happen to quarrel with Dubrovnik, then I should advise them four months in advance, so that all Dubrovnik people may leave my kingdom freely, with their property, in as much as my kingdom is at war with them. And I beseech whomever God chooses to be lord of the Serbian land after me, whether it be one of my sons, or a member of my family, or someone else whom God chooses, that what is written above not be changed, but rather that it be confirmed, just as we did not change what was written by those before us. And this order of Lord Lazar was written down in the month of January, on the ninth day, in the glorious city of my kingdom, Krusevac, in the year 1387, and the witness to this order of my government is chancellor Nenad and count Petar and chieftain Miho and chief magistrate Gojislav.