

# **The old-Iranian origin of Croats**

## **BOOK DIGEST:**

### **The old-Iranian origin of Croats**

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## **BOOK SUMMARY:**

### **THE OLD-IRANIAN ORIGIN OF CROATS**

**(Proceedings of symposium, Zagreb, June 24, 1998; 526 pages)**

#### **Editors:**

**prof. Zlatko TOMICIC and dr. Andrija Zeljko LOVRIC**

This book includes the proceedings of an international scientific symposium presented in the Cultural centre at the Embassy of I.R. Iran in Zagreb, June 1998. The book is subdivided in 9 main topics & 32 chapters of the earliest Croatian history and ethnogenesis, including the held presentations and some reprints of earlier articles from hardly accessible periodicals, useful for completing the topics of this symposium.

#### **1. Inaugural part and preface**

The initial part includes the inaugural greetings to the symposium by its sponsors: excellence M. J. Asayesh - Zarchi (Ambassador of I.R. Iran in Zagreb), and mr. Sevko Omerbasic (Muphtia of the Islamic community in Croatia). Then follows the editor's foreword about the symposium and the contents of proceedings.

#### **2. Introductory considerations**

This book starts by basic informations on the preexisting literature, on the main earlier investigators, and on the recent problems in the study of early Croats. The initial text is ***Bibliographia Irano-Croatica from 1797 to 1999***, presenting the first alphabetic and chronological survey of all accessible papers related to the Pre-slavic protohistory and Iranian ethnogenesis of early Croats, published in the earlier books and periodicals. Till now a comparable bibliography was lacking because of the earlier censure in Yugoslavia, where all Croats were violated to be exclusively Slavs of a medieval origin. Till recently the slavists insisted that there are only few and not scientific papers on the Iranian origin of Croats. On the contrary, actual bibliography confirms the

scientific studies and reports on the Iranian origin of Croats date 2 centuries ago, but they were stopped in Yugoslavia. So far even **120** professors, doctors and some academicians in Croatia and elsewhere published at least **249** original and review papers in different books and periodicals on the earlier Preslavic history of ancient Croats, and on their origin from the Old Orient, mostly from the ancient Persia. Thus the real existing literature on the Old Iranian origin of ancient Croats is also extensive as the reputed one on the medieval origin of Slavic Croats - bearing in mind that any use of all this iranistic literature in ex-Yugoslavia was strongly forbidden and neglected as unexisting.

The next report is on the establishing of first Iranian studies in Croatia two centuries ago by the pioneer **Prof. dr. Joseph MIKOCZY - BLUMENTHAL**: He published an early theory on the old Persian origin of recent Slavic Croats from the ancient Medians (West Iran), presented in his doctoral dissertation ***Croats of Slavic group originated from Sarmatians descending from Medians*** (Royal Academy of Zagreb 1797). After the establishing of Yugoslavia in 1918, all specimens of this thesis in the archives of Yugoslav Academia disappeared and were eliminated by extreme fanatized slavists *Vukovians*, to delete the Persian origin and Preslavic history of early Croats - then only its summary published in the reports of Yu. academia 1938 persisted. The third paper presents the most prominent Croatian iranologist **Prof. dr. Stjepan Krizin SAKAC** (1890-1973), ex-director of the Oriental institute in Roma. He published 19 studies on the Old Iranian origin and Preslavic ethnoculture of ancient Croats, but due to slavist persecutions in Yugoslavia, his studies were made mainly abroad.

Then ing. S. BUDIMIR presents the earlier police reports on the Yugoslav persecutions against the iranistic studies and related scientists from 1918 to 1990, when the medieval Slavic origin of Croats became an obligatory verity. In ex-Yugoslavia during 70 years any studies on the Iranian origin of Croats were strongly forbidden as a crime, all iranistic literature was confiscated and burnt as hostile texts, many investigators of Persian origin were imprisoned in political camps, and 4 scientists who studied Preslavic history of ancient Croats were even killed by the secret police: **Prof. dr. Milan SUFFLAY** (1979-1934), **dr. Kerubin SEGVIC** (1867-1945), **dr. Ivo PILAR** (1870-1933), and **prof. Mihovil LOVRIC** (1897-1976). Therefore this new Slavic origin was inculcated to many Croats literally by? the sword and fire?, and so its scientific credibility is very disputable. The next paper by dr. M. Rac and S. Budimir presents the anthropology of Croats: **3/4** of population by their biogenetic types are quite divergent from other Slavs and the closest to Kurds and Armenians. Therefore the majority of Croats physically cannot descend from Slavs. The old cattle races in Croatia e.g. the domestic horses, sheep's and goats, and also the old plant cultivars as wheat, onion and wine in Croatia are divergent from other European cattle and cultivars i.e. they were domesticated from Oriental Asian ancestors. It suggests the old Croatian farmers and cattle breeders came mostly from Old Orient.

### 3. Old home and migration of Croats

This part includes the general surveys of the Indo-Iranian origin of ancient Croats. The paper of the late prof. M. Lovric lists the main ancient documents on the Pre-Slavic origin of ancient Croats: the royal cuneiforms of **TUSHRATTA MITANNI** in 1375 BC, mentioning his people and language as **Hurrwuhé** - that is close to the own Croatian ethnonym **Hrvati**. Then follows in 6th to 4th century a twenty royal inscriptions of the ancient **Persian ACHAEMENIDS** mainly by Darius I, and Xerxes I, quoting the eastern Persian province **Harauvatya**, and its early Croatian people as **Harauvatish, Harahvaiti** etc. The Pre-Slavic Iranian Croats at Black Sea are registered by two Greek inscriptions in 2nd and 3rd cent. AD under the ancient name **Horouathos** and **Horoathoi**, as well as by **OROSIUS** in 418 AD as Aryan **Horites**, and by **ZACHARIAS RHETOR** in 559 AD as the Aryan riders **Hrwts** at Azov and Crimea. Croats were registered as Slavs only from 8th cent. Then follows a reprint of the last paper of Prof. dr. S.K. Sakac on the foundation of Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. Prof. Z. Tomicic gives a general essay on the protohistory and Iranian origin of ancient Croats, and dr. E. Pascenko offers a short digest from his recent book on the Iranian Croats in medieval Ukraine. Mato MARCINKO presents his detailed survey on the origin and gradual evolution of Croats from the earliest Indian homeland, and their migrations across the ancient Persia and Caucasus up to the recent Adriatic. The original name of Croats may descend from the early Vedas after the next sequence: Vedic **Sarasvati** --> **Harahvaiti** and **Harauvati** in ancient Iran and Afghanistan --> **Hurrwuhé** and **Hurravat** in Armenia and Kurdistan --> **Horouathos** at Azov and Black Sea --> medieval **Harvati** and **Horvati** --> now **Hrvati** in recent Croatia.

### 4. Early links: Protoslavs - Iranic Croats

Here are discussed the available data on the first contacts of the ancient Iranic Croats with the early Protoslavs, and the process of lingual Slavonizing of Croats during the medieval times. The starting article of Prof. dr. Eduard KALE is a theoretical discussion on the false contrast between the early Iranian origin of Croats, and of their actual Slavic language: this bias is not exclusive, and it is quite possible that ancient Croats were Iranic in old Persian Empire, and then by subsequent migration in Europe they accepted also a Slavic language. The following text of K. KROCH describes the first Croatian state in Europe: the **Red Croatia** in Ukraine from 374 to 992 AD, where ruled the Sarmatian **Horites**. The early Iranic Croats in this state had their first contacts with early Protoslavs, and then in 6th cent. around this early Croatia aroused the extensive Antic federation of some Slavic vassals, led by non-Slavic Sarmatian emperors **Ardagast**,

**Piregast** and **Dauritius**. Prof. M. Lovric et al. proposed a possible response from where and whence descend the Protoslavs and concluded that in the ancient times they were heterogenous unrelated tribes across eastern Europe. Then the arrival of Iranic Croats connected them in a cultural and lingual community. The process of connecting and unifying of these pre-Slavic tribes started in 4th cent. AD, firstly by the Red Croatia and the related Antic federation under the Sarmatian Horites, and then from 6th cent. also around the Carpathians within the Large or **White Croatia** under the Iranic Croats, whose slavonizing progressed due to this Slavic environment. The southern coastal Croats (**Ikavians**) at Adriatic descend mostly from Red Croatia in Ukraine and also actually they are less slavonized with a majority of Iranic Croats. The northern continental Croats (**Kaykavians**) in Pannonia descend mainly from White Croatia in Carpatians, and they are mostly slavonized including few Iranic Croats.

## 5. Iranistics and old Croatian language

This part analyzes the process of the evolution of Croatian language. The early Croatian was an Oriental tongue of the Indo-Iranian group, and then from the medieval times it was gradually slavonized up nowadays. The prominent iranologist **Prof. dr. S.K. SAKAC** (Oriental Institute, Roma) gives an instructive description how was completed the oppressive slavonizing of Croats, and their final transformation in the Slavs of Yugoslavia. This initiative was created by the old Serbian nationalist Vuk KARADZIC, who in the middle 19th century invited in Vienna by his proclamation "*Serbs always and everywhere*" the extreme dogmatic slavists from future Yugoslavia for a lingual-cultural unification, and after him these extremists then have the epithet "*Vukovians*". After this Vukovian conspiracy, from 1890ies started the actions of these dogmatic Vukovians for the elimination of all cultural and lingual differences between the Serbs and Croats: it became almost the negation of the complete Preslavic history of Croats, and the elimination and prohibition of all Indo-Iranian words of the precedent Croatian language lacking in Serbian. These "reforms" above Croats then were completed violently and systematically in the new Yugoslavia after 1918. Due to this, then a new "official" history and the colonial hybrid language in Croatia became quite divergent from the related ones before 1918.

Then M.H. MILEKOVIC and A.Z. LOVRIC present the chronological evolution of the original Croatian language before Yugoslavia, and the actual abundance of Indo-Iranian archaisms in Croatian rural dialects. Among the northern **Kaykavian** dialects of Pannonia, the most abundant Indo-Iranian archaisms are conserved in the **Baegnjunaska** tongue of northern Zagorje county. The southern **Chakavian** dialects in Adriatic coast and islands include even more Indo-Iranian and some Akkadian archaisms within the relict tongues in extinction: **Brayska besyda** in Istra peninsula, **Kyrska beseda** in the coastal



valley of Vinodol, **Komiska Cakavica** in Vis island, and the most archaic **Veyska-Zayk** in Krk island - with only 49% Slavic vocabulary and **19%** of Pre-Slavic archaisms from the Old Orient. The initial ancient Croatian was an Indo-Iranian tongue of Old Orient, and its slavonizing started from 7th cent. AD, and was completed in 20th cent. in Yugoslavia, where the dogmatic Vukovians eliminated and prohibited nearly all Indo-Iranian archaisms in public Croatian: they survived only in some rural dialects, and in Croatian emigration. Then dr. S. MURGIC et al. offer a more detailed comparison of two archaic Pre-Slavic tongues conserved in Croatia, very rich in archaisms and with less than a half of Slavic vocabulary. **Veyska-Zayk** in Krk Island is the richest one by Indo-Iranian archaisms, and **Rumeri-Kuvinta** in Istra peninsula is partly romanized, but it includes many protohistoric traces of the Mitanni-Hurrian vocabulary from the Old Orient. Up to 16th cent. these Pre-Slavic tongues were spoken in larger areas of eastern Adriatic coast, but then by the Turkish invasion they were pressed in the actual residual refugia, and recently as non-Slavic tongues they were not studied and are abandoned to extinction. The last article of dr. Z. Grubisic lists some lexic similarities of the modern Iranian and neo-Croatian, including both the connecting true iranisms, and also more recent turcisms and technical neologisms.

## 6. Masdaim, mythology, old Croats religion

Beside the lingual archaisms, some old Iranian traces persist also in the rural ethnoculture of Croats, e.g. in Pre-Christian myths and legends with many items from the old Iranian masdaim. These local Iranian traditions were more abundant in the medieval religious movements: **Bogumili** (patarens) in Bosnia, and the similar **Glagoljasi** in Adriatic coast and islands. Prof. Z. TOMICIC in two papers extensively discusses the origin and peculiarities of Bosnian patarens, being a transition from old Persian Masdaim to the European Christianity. By means of these patarens and by Manicheism, the Old Iranian Masdaim partly influenced also the recent European philosophy. Z. YOSAMYA and M. YOSAMYA by two detailed texts present the conserved Indo-Iranian traditions in the Croatian folk myths and legends of Pre-Christian origin, containing the ancient and medieval events. This early folk tradition is conserved only in the mentioned archaic dialects. The old Pre-Christian legends are found in the northern Zagorje county (near Zagreb), and similar ones occur also southwards in Poljica coast and Duvno valley. In the naval tradition of Adriatic Croats a rich archaic cosmogony is conserved, including also the numerous folk names for **117** different stars, and that is the most abundant folk astrognosy in Europe, after the Arabians who named more than 300 stars.

The richest and oldest mythological cyclus in Croatia is "**Veyske Povede**"

including **9** major folk legends conserved in Krk Island (its domestic Pre-Yugoslav name is **Khârk**). The style, volume and imagination of these legends are well comparable to the Nordic Sagas and to old Greek Iliade and Odysseys, including a picturesque description of the early Croatian prehistory from the divine World origins and the vanished early Paradise of "**Yndrah**" (= India), then the ancient wars of **Korynthia** and old Croats naval migration from the Orient to the Adriatic. Then follows a medieval adventure of 7 ships led by admiral **Harwâtje Marjakyr** crossing the West Ocean up to **Semeraye** (Westlands), and all narrative ends by the Venetian war in 15th century. These Croatian legends include also their Pre-Christian pantheon **Seune-Nebesniki** of an Oriental-dualistic type, divergent from Protoslavic religion. The positive splendid deities there are **Sionbog-Sewysna** (superior Lofty God), **Khulap** (Sea-god as Poseidon), **Semera** (Goddess of beauty and felicity), **Sion-Macaan** (Divine fire-sword), **Hayebay** (Rainy spirit), **Macyc** (Fishing spirit), **Ulykva** (Olive-spirit), **Vyntja** (Fertility-spirit as a crane); and against them struggle the negative black daemons led by **Sionvrag-Sayta** (Giant-Satan), and **Tohor** (Daemon of ice and death), **Tjarmaal** (Daemon of war and earthquake), **Syuun** (Daemon of shipwreck and drowning), **Stryguun** (Daemon of storm and adultery), **Bakodlak** (Arianic sacred bull), **Orkuul** (Sea-monster as Leviathan), and **Mantratja** (100-headed dragon as Vedic *Mantritya* and Avestian *Mathrasca*).

## 7. Origin of old Croatian tribes

This part deals with the age and origin of the old tribal names and ancient surnames of medieval Croats. M.N. CURIC presents a condensed digest of his recent book (1991) on the Iranian origin of Croats from the ancient **Harauvatya** in Afghanistan, including a special analysis of 190 Croatian surnames comparable or someones identical to the ancient Persian names and toponymes. Then follow I. RAMLJAK and A.Z. LOVRIC by the onomastic comparison of recent Croatian surnames with some tribal and family patronymes of Old Orient, chiefly in the cuneiform archives of Ebla including a hundred of Mitanni-Hurrian patronymes similar or nearly identical to the Croatian surnames. Prof. dr. B. GUSIC presents a detailed study on the name origin of some medieval tribes in old Croatia: e.g. **Kasici** (*Kasazi, Kasogi, earlier Cassegi, Cassithi*) are of a protohistoric Oriental origin perhaps from the early Cassites (Cossaei), and **Cudomiri** (*Cudomiric, old Tjudomeri*) are of the old German origin probably from Goths, but **Mogorici** (*Mogori, Mogorovici*) may be of a northern Hungaro-Fennic origin. The last article of prof. Z. Tomicic deals especially with the origin of the old Croatian tribe **Buzani** descending from the Carpathians.

## 8. Other Iranic-Croatian topics

In this part other indicators of the early cultural links of Croats to the Old Orient are added. **Prof. dr. M. JAPUNDZIC** gives a critical discussion on the age and origin of the special Croatian script **Glagolica**, where the dogmatic slavists - Vukovians insisted that it is created only for the christianizing of Slavs in 9th cent. by the Byzantine missionaries Kyrillos and Methodios. But a dozen of older Glagolitic inscriptions, and also other Glagolitic texts with style and contents related to the early ancient events, all suggest that Glagolica must be of an early Oriental origin, probably from the ancient Crimea, Azov, or Caucasus. The late ethnologist **prof. Marijana GUSIC** (Ethnographic museum of Zagreb) analysed in detail the lore of **Ljelja** in northern Croatia. Beside certain old Slavic elements, it includes also many Pre-slavic items, the nearest to the old Persian lores during Sassanids dynasty: the feminine costumes and decorations in this Croatian lore are nearly identical to the costumes in Sassanid presentations of Persian empresses.

The late captain G. Milazzi and M. Yosamy discussed the origin and age of Croatian naval traditions and rejected the slavistic dogma of Vukovians, that Slavic Croats were not navigators and that they learned the sailing later from the middle age in contact with Italians. Justly due to the early and well developed navigation, Croatian ethnoculture was basically divergent from all other continental Slavs. Many indications that early Croats sailed long before Protoslavs exist there. E.g. the early texts in southeastern Europe of 6th and 7th cent. noted Croats sailing in Adriatic, Peloponnesus, Crete, and Bosphorus, where their navy allied to Persian emperor Khosrov II attacked Constantinople from the seaside. The large medieval empories of Croatian navigators persisted in Moorish Spain and Sicily. In 16th cent. Croatian captain **Vice BUNE** sailed from India into Pacific, explored Melanesia and the first discovered New Hebrides and Salomon islands, and then went to Mexico becoming its viceking. Different indicators suggest that Croatian medieval navigators at least twice crossed Atlantic and reached Americas before Vikings and Columbus: Viking reports on early **Hvirtamanna** people and **Hvortaland** country (then **Croatans** in east USA), early Indios legends with Croatian names and related American names in old Adriatic legends, Iranic-Croatian symbols in Yucatan temples, Iranic-Croatian emblem in early Andean kings, American cactuses in medieval Dalmatia, etc. The joint Croat-Moorish sailings from Spain across Atlantic to America iteratively describe some old Arabic texts and old Croatian epic legends: in Old-Croat **Semeraan & Semeraye** = West Ocean and Westlands, in Old-Arabic script "Dark Ocean" and **Ard-Majkola**. These expeditions in 11th cent. probably organized Moorish generals **Wadha EL-AMERI** and **Zohair AL-AMERI**: isn't America's name from them? The last study of ing. H. Malinar et al. analyses the big hillfort of old naval city **Uri-Kuoryta** (recent Korintija) in Krk Island, the largest ruins of Adriatic to 2,5 km wide, but it was not studied because it was developed justly during the Croatian immigrations there, and some non-Slavic cultural

indicators in these ruins were contrary to the Vukovian dogmas on the Slavic origin of Croats.

## 9. Editorial concluding epilogue

At the end are the main connecting conclusions from all preceding texts, completed by the last archaeological findings on the early Croatian history, published after this symposium in 1998 and 1999, up to the last correcture of actual book. The main one is announced in February 1999, concerning Indus pictograms from 33rd to 28th cent. BC. In connexion to this is the earliest tribal names of **Haraxvati - Haraqvati**, that after S. WHITTET may be the earliest protonyme for the ancient **Harauvati** of Afghanistan, and probably of the recent **Hrvati** (Croats) at Adriatic. The similar estimates on these early Iranian Croats presented also R. Carrera, S. Nasto and others in 1999. Another also important discovery is from Paraguay, where **Prof. dra Branka SUSNIK** and collaborators in 1990ies registered even **61** stone inscriptions from 6th to 14th cent. comparable to the old Croatian Glagolica, and the most ones are found in **Sierra de Amambay**. This discovery, together with other cultural indicators in precedent chapter, all together corroborate the probability of the early sailings of medieval Croats across Atlantic to Americas before Vikings.

From all data collected and compared in the actual book, one may now really conclude that Croats evolved gradually during some millenia in different cultural steps. The first appearing of the initial Croatian name of an early Indo-Aryan tribe had been at Pakistan-Afghanistan border before 5 millenia, but now in Croats a very scarce heritage of that initial period persisted, except the similar ethnonyme and some Vedic words in dialects. The second and most important period in ancient Persia and southern Transcaucasia was the main demographic and cultural formation of the Croatian people (chiefly of southern Adriatic **Ikavians**), including their national symbols mostly from Persia, and the prevailing Dinaric biotype of Croats divergent from other Slavs. From this Persian period evolved the most specific Croatian words, divergent from all Slavic languages - but then in Yugoslavia they were mostly eliminated except in dialects. In medieval period, this Iranic-Croatian people with well defined ethnoculture and anthropology migrated to Europe, partly mixed with Slavs (northern Pannonian Croats from Carpathians) and their language gradually slavonized. Some early naval Croats then crossed Atlantic and reached medieval Americas. All terminated recently by the oppressive total slavonizing of Croats in Yugoslavia. Then a medieval "Slavic" origin of Croats by the dogmatic Vukovians was defined exclusively from this colonial hybrid language of creole type now imposed, but all other non-lingual indicators of Croatian Preslavic ethnoculture and Non-Slavic anthropology were consequently rejected and neglected.

[Hrvati, Croats: Proto-language and Sarasvati Civilization ca. 5750 - 4200 BC](#)