

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH WORKSHOP

# THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN TRAVELOGUES

INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY – CVITO FISKOVIĆ CENTRE IN SPLIT

# THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN TRAVELOGUES

International Research Workshop

May 22 – May 24, 2025

Institute of Art History – Cvito Fisković Centre in Split  
Kružićeva 7, Split

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Travelogues  
Dalmatia



Project TraveloguesDalmatia

International The Adriatic Islands  
Research Workshop in Travelogues

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The aim of this workshop is to reassess the role played by islands in the artistic and urban history and historiography of the Adriatic and Mediterranean region. Islands are significant spaces for the exchange and location of ideas and people, functioning like molecules in a wider system, that contain specific cultural products in art and space. The Adriatic Sea hosts more than 1.300 islands and islets, predominantly along its eastern shores, with Croatia accounting for more than 1.200, including 50 that are permanently inhabited. Our focus in this workshop are those islands of the region whose important roles at various historical periods have been recorded through artistic or urban production. Simultaneously networked and contained, these islands are key historical fixed or transitory points in the Adriatic Sea, functioning variously as colonies, cities, and harbours. Historically, these islands have attracted travellers of diverse profiles, leaving a rich and varied record of their political and cultural significance.

The artistic and urban history of the Adriatic has been studied in detail with reference to the mainland, but only a few projects have focused primarily on maritime routes as cultural infrastructure, and the islands. The islands – as a separate phenomenon within the overall system of cultural production in the Adriatic region – have yet to become a significant focus of scholarly research.

Research into the art, architecture, and urbanism of the Adriatic through travelogues and intercultural exchanges poses islands as distinctive phenomena that deserve to be the focus of a separate study. Islands have played a key role in the history of Europe and the Mediterranean – as colonies, launching points, sites of secret meetings, and the location of forced or self-imposed exile. These various roles have influenced a distinctive insular history of exceptional artistic production and spatial organisation developing under the influence of mixed cultures and physical surroundings.

Island public spaces, shaped by marked spatial limitations, exceptional durability of form, and close community ties, represent particularly significant examples of public space formation. In addition, the isolated nature of islands renders each of them a highly-specific system within which external cultural influences have developed uniquely. Islands are inherently linked to and by the concept of travel. To begin to understand and conceptualise the distinctive phenomenology of the Adriatic islands, we turn to the records of those travelers who,

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### International Research Workshop

throughout history, visited the islands and engaged in creative dialogue with them, often within a Mediterranean context.

This workshop aims to provide a platform for the systematic exploration and evaluation of the Adriatic islands as unique focal points of artistic and urban achievements across a broad historical timeline. Reflections on the artistic and spatial heritage of the Adriatic islands through travel narratives in various media, with an emphasis on the period from the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries form the central, but not exclusive, research focus of this workshop.





# PROGRAMME



PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, MAY 22  
Institute of Art History – Cvito Fisković Centre

10:00 – 11:30

Elke Katharina Wittich: *TRIFOLIUM MUTABILE* – ON THE RELEVANCE OF ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF BOTANY IN THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

Mara Marić: THE SPLENDOUR AND DECLINE OF THE GARDENS ON LOKRUM THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVEL WRITERS

Sanja Žaja Vrbica: THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE ELAPHITES IN NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY TRAVEL LITERATURE

11:30 – 12:00

COFFEE BREAK

12:00 – 13:30

Marijana Dlačić: THE ISLANDS OF CRES AND LOŠINJ IN THE EYES OF ALBERTO FORTIS

Joško Belamarić: THE ADRIATIC OEUVRE OF EUGEN VON RANSONNET-VILLEZ

Katrina O’Loughlin, Ana Šverko: “WHERE THE WEALTHIEST MERCHANT LIVED”: THE DALMATIAN ISLANDS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF CLARA E. SIPPRELL

13:30 – 15:00

LUNCH BREAK

16:00 – 18:00

STUDY WALK THROUGH DIOCLETIAN’S PALACE

FRIDAY, MAY 23  
Institute of Art History – Cvito Fisković Centre

9.30 - 11.00

GUIDED VISIT TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM including the Island and Saints exhibition, led by curator Luka Donadini

11:00 - 12:30  
Mateo Bratanić: RECOLLECTING LISSA: THE ISLAND OF VIS IN BRITISH TRAVELOGUES

Milan Balaban, Irena Balaban Cakirpaloglu: CZECHOSLOVAK TRAVELLERS AND THEIR REFLECTIONS ON THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Nataša Urošević: MAPPING THE ROUTES OF MODERN TOURISM IN EUROPEAN TRAVEL WRITING – THE CASE OF THE BRIJUNI ISLANDS

12:30 - 13:00

COFFEE BREAK

13:00 - 14:30

Tatjana Petzer: THE MEDITERRANEAN LEGACIES OF YUGOSLAV INSULAR TRAVELOGUES

Milica Vuković: TOPOGRAPHY AND POETICS OF THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN MILAN MILIŠIĆ’S *OTOCI*

Silvia Stecher: “MENTAL INSULARITY”: PARANOIA AND NOMADIC WRITING IN BEKIM SEJRANOVIĆ’S *MISS MISERY NA OTOKU SUSKU*

14:30 - 15:30

LUNCH BREAK

16:00 – 18:00

VISIT TO THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

SATURDAY, MAY 24  
Institute of Art History – Cvito Fisković Centre

9:30 - 13:30

FIELD TRIP TO TROGIR

13:30 - 14:30

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING REMARKS

14:30 - 16:00

CLOSING RECEPTION

The background of the slide is a topographic map. It features numerous thin, wavy contour lines that represent elevation changes. A prominent vertical red line runs down the center of the image, likely indicating a specific geographical feature or a section line. The map is printed on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.

# THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN TRAVELOGUES

# TRIFOLIUM MUTABILE – ON THE RELEVANCE OF ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF BOTANY IN THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

Elke Katharina Wittich  
Leibniz Universität Hannover

The islands of the eastern Adriatic have attracted unusual travellers since the early eighteenth century; in addition to architecture and urban planning as well as the rural population and customs, geological peculiarities were of interest early on. Already around 1800, natural scientists such as the Austrian botanist Franz Elder von Portenschlag-Ledermayer travelled to the islands in search of previously unknown plants to classify and compile in an herbarium, then store them in a scientific collection for display. Portenschlag-Ledermayer's wife kept a travel diary which informs us about their stops in Dalmatia and special features of the travel programme during their search for unknown flora. As a special honour for scientific reputation, Portenschlag-Ledermayer accompanied the Austrian imperial couple to Dalmatia in 1818 and was able to introduce samples of around 200 new plant species, many of which only grow on the islands, into the Imperial and Royal Natural History Cabinet in Vienna.

The limestone soils of the islands, which have produced geologically interesting formations and many fossils, also provide very special flora and fauna, which were collected and scientifically studied over decades by several botanists, including Franz Petter, who is among the first scientists publishing on Dalmatian botany already in the first half of the nineteenth century, and later by Lujo Adamović, the leading botanist in the field of flora and fauna of the islands and Dalmatia around 1900. From the perspective of the history of science, these activities can be placed in a longer history of the institutionalisation of the so-called earth sciences in the Habsburg universities, triggered firstly by the reports of Alberto Fortis in his *Saggio d'osservazioni sopra l'isola di Cherso ed Osero* from 1771, but especially by his travelogue *Viaggio in Dalmazia* from 1774, taken up and continued by Portenschlag-Ledermayer and others.

Intensive botanical research was likely already underway from the 1730s onwards, triggered by Carl von Linné's *Systema Naturae*, but there was still no established debate at universities on the connections between geology and botany, let alone meteorology. This will only happen in the second half of the nineteenth century and will be built up so solidly that the discipline will also survive profound political disruptions such as the reorganisation of Europe after the First World War unscathed. Such institutionalisation was triggered in the Habsburg Empire precisely by the diversity of Alpine and Mediterranean phenomena. Despite all the criticism of colonial characteristics, this resulted, among other things, in a pooling of scientific knowledge about the lands of the Habsburg Empire and the diversity of their botany that would have otherwise hardly been possible.

\*This study has been supported by the scientific project *Travelogues Dalmatia* (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-8676), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.



Prof. Dr. Elke Katharina Wittich studied Art History, Classical Archaeology, German Literature, and Historical Musicology at the University of Hamburg. She completed her doctorate at Humboldt University in Berlin with a thesis titled *Knowledge and Methods in the Architectural Discourse of the Early 19th Century*. Elke Katharina Wittich was founding President of the state-recognised private University for Design AMD in Hamburg and holds a professorship on the Theory and History of Architecture and Design. She is currently serving as the Managing Director of the Centre for Continuing Education at Leibniz University Hannover. Elke Katharina Wittich authored numerous publications on architecture and architectural theory, as well as on design and conducted the research project *Textile Identities*, focusing on the discourse about folk costumes in Dalmatia since the sixteenth century.

# THE SPLENDOUR AND DECLINE OF THE GARDENS ON LOKRUM THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVEL WRITERS

Mara Marić  
Department for  
Mediterranean Plants,  
University of Dubrovnik

The island of Lokrum near Dubrovnik is organically connected to the historic core of the city of Dubrovnik, its lush greenery complementing the stone-built old town. Over the centuries, the landscape of Lokrum was first cultivated by Benedictines, who established olive groves, vineyards, and useful gardens. The most significant changes to the island's landscape occurred after it was purchased by the Austrian Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg and his wife, Belgian Princess Charlotte in the mid-nineteenth century. During this period, alongside the expansion of agricultural areas, ornamental gardens were created to test exotic plants, in line with the contemporary aesthetic standards of the time. The splendour of Maximilian's gardens from the second half of the nineteenth century is documented in the travel writings of British, Austrian, and Croatian authors, as well as by contemporary scientific travel reports. In addition to archival records, travelogues provide valuable historical records and perceptions of the gardens. They clearly bear witness to Maximilian's interventions in the landscape of Lokrum. After the tragic death of Maximilian, and then the abandonment of the island by the Habsburgs, the Lokrum gardens shared the fate of their previous owners. Travel writings reveal the extent of the island's decline and the almost complete disappearance of Maximilian's gardens. Only faint traces of the once-imperial gardens have remained noticeable to the present day.

Associate Professor Mara Marić is an expert in the field of landscape architecture, specifically in the restoration and preservation of historical landscapes and gardens. Before joining the University of Dubrovnik, at the Institute for Mediterranean Plants, she worked at the Croatian Civil Engineering Institute in Zagreb. She is the author of a considerable number of scientific papers. Her book *Island of Lemons in Bloom. The Gardens of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg on the Island of Lokrum* was awarded by Matica hrvatska and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.



# THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE ELAPHITES IN NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY TRAVEL LITERATURE

Sanja Žaja Vrbica  
Arts and Restoration Department,  
University of Dubrovnik

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The Elaphites are a group of small islands located west of Dubrovnik, parallel to the mainland. They consist of the inhabited larger islands of Šipan, Lopud, Koločep, and the uninhabited islands of Jakljan, Tajan, Ruda, and Daksa, as well as Crkvina, Kosmeč, and Sv. Andrija. Koločep, Lopud, and Šipan are characterised by their rich architectural and artistic heritage from the Antiquity to modern times, which is why they are often mentioned in travel literature. The modern historical role of the Elaphites in the Napoleonic wars drew the attention of researchers to these isolated oases of untouched nature. Most Dalmatian travellers mentioned this archipelago only in connection with the history of the territory of the Dubrovnik Republic, such as the British travelogues of John Gardner Wilkinson from 1848 and William Wingfield in his 1859 work *A Tour in Dalmatia, Albania and Montenegro*. Austrian travel writers such as Franz Petter in his 1857 work about Dalmatia also mentioned the Dubrovnik archipelago from the perspective of recent historical events and provided a contemporary demographic and economic overview of the islands. A little later, T. G. Jackson gave an overview of the monumental heritage of the island of Lopud in his extensive 1887 work on Dalmatia. During a stay of several days in the parish church, he had the opportunity to become acquainted with the sacral architecture of the island, the furnishings of the churches, valuable examples of goldsmithing which were later transferred to the reliquary of the Dubrovnik Cathedral, as well as the religious paintings of several churches on Lopud. He completes the chapter with numerous drawings of the heritage and bases his reflections on historical sources by British and Dubrovnik authors. This remains the most comprehensive overview of the monumental heritage of the Elaphites, which was later repeatedly mentioned in a number of travelogues and is attractive precisely because of the authentic rural atmosphere that was preserved during the period of general modernisation.

\*This study has been supported by the scientific project TraveloguesDalmatia (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-8676), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

Sanja Žaja Vrbica is an art historian and museologist and works as a full professor at the Department of Art and Restoration at the University of Dubrovnik. Before joining the university, she worked for 10 years as a curator at the Dubrovnik Museum of Modern Art. She has organised many monographic, retrospective, and collective exhibitions, and her academic interest lies in nineteenth and twentieth century art. She is a collaborator on the scientific projects “Where East meets West”: *Travel narratives and the fashioning of a Dalmatian artistic heritage in modern Europe (c. 1675 – c. 1941)* and *Representation, Development, Education, Participation - Art in Society in 19th – 21st Centuries*.

# THE ISLANDS OF CRES AND LOŠINJ IN THE EYES OF ALBERTO FORTIS

Marijana Dlačić

Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts,  
Institute for Historical Sciences in Zadar

In my research, I investigate the relationship between centre and periphery using the example of Osor, the seat of the Osor commune during Venetian government, as well as Veli Lošinj and Mali Lošinj, settlements that were under Osor's administration. In the Early Modern period Osor lost its maritime importance, which led to the general decline of the settlement, although it retained its role as an administrative centre until the end of Venetian governance. In contrast to Osor, Veli and Mali Lošinj are of much younger origin and began flourishing from the seventeenth century. In the case of Osor, Veli Lošinj, and Mali Lošinj, the distinctions between centre and periphery are vague, but none of these settlements had unmistakable characteristics of either category.

When considering the relationship between centre and periphery, it is indispensable to examine the cultural influence of a particular settlement on other island communities, in which Osor held a dominant position – not only over Veli and Mali Lošinj, but also over Cres, which, like Osor, has an Ancient tradition. In their comprehensive urban transformations, both Osor and Cres acquired representative Renaissance buildings which remain highlights of their cultural heritage today. However, their further development diverged significantly: Osor declined from the fifteenth century onward, while Cres began to progress. Nevertheless, due to its former importance, Osor remains ideal for other island settlements, and its numerous ancient monuments attracted the attention of European researchers. Among them, Alberto Fortis offered a vivid portrayal of the archipelago, and although he expressed admiration for Osor's former splendour, he referred to the town as a "cadavere di Città" (corpse of a city), but on the other hand he showed little sympathy for the inhabitants of Mali Lošinj, despite the visible prosperity of the settlement.

Marijana Dlačić was born in 1985 in Rijeka. In 2004, she enrolled in the courses of History of art and History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka, and in 2010 obtained the title of Professor of history of art and history. In the academic year 2021/2022 she enrolled in the joint doctoral study of history and geography *Adriatic – a link between continents* at the University of Zadar with the research topic *The relationship between the centre and the periphery: the example of Osor and Veli and Mali Lošinj during Venetian government (1409 – 1797)*. From September 2010 to November 2012, she worked as a history teacher at the "Mario Martinolić" elementary school in Mali Lošinj, and from December 2012 to the end of September 2023 as a curator at the Lošinj Museum. In 2021, she obtained



the title of Senior curator. Since October 2023, she has been working at the Institute for Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zadar as manager of the Maritime Collection. She is also active in the civil sector: from 2010 to 2016 she was a member of the Centre for Sustainable Development “Gerbin”, and since 2017 she has been president of the association Rural Island Group – The Sheep Breeding Museum – Cres. She is also a member of Katedra Čakavskog sabora CresLošinj (Chair of the Čakavian Council of Cres – Lošinj). She actively speaks English and Italian.

# ADRIATIC OEUVRE OF EUGEN VON RANSONNET-VILLEZ

Joško Belamarić

Institute of Art History

Cvito Fisković Centre in Split

Baron Ransonnet (1838–1926) was a fascinating individual of many interests – a painter, diplomat, and globetrotter who travelled throughout the Near and Far East, including Palestine, Egypt, India, Ceylon, and Japan. He is particularly notable as a pioneer of underwater illustration. He invented and built the diving bell. Considering earlier experiments with the diving bell were technically demanding and expensive, Ransonnet developed a simpler optical device – a type of underwater telescope or periscope – which he used to observe the sea-floor and create realistic sketches of Adriatic flora and fauna, which possess extraordinary documentary and historical value today.

In the year 1884, he discovered the Blue cave on the island of Biševo. The discovery resulted in a strong response from the Viennese and European public, causing the arrival of hundreds of members of the Viennese tourist club as soon as next year, marking the beginnings of organised tourism in Dalmatia.

As part of his research into the artistic and documentary legacy of Eugene von Ransonnet-Villez preserved at the Oceanographic Museum in Monaco – one of the most important institutions of its kind on the Mediterranean – as well as research in several departments of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, the author focused on material concerning the Adriatic. This material will be presented and interpreted in this presentation, alongside an argument for its exceptional potential as a basis for a monograph about this part of Ransonnet's opus and the possible organisation of an internationally relevant exhibition.

\*This study has been supported by the scientific project Travelogues-Dalmatia (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-8676), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

Josip (Joško) Belamarić is a Scientist Emeritus at the Institute of Art History in Split and is a Professor at the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Split. Between 1991 and 2009 he served as the director of the Regional Conservation Institute of Dalmatia. He received his MA and PhD degrees from the University of Zagreb. He has published a number of books, studies, and articles on the urban history of art, architecture, and urbanism of Early Modern Dalmatia. He has directed conservation works in Dalmatia and worked on the creation of a number of exhibitions.



“WHERE THE WEALTHIEST  
MERCHANT LIVED”:  
THE DALMATIAN ISLANDS  
IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF CLARA E. SIPPRELL

Katrina O’Loughlin  
Brunel University London

Ana Šverko  
Institute of Art History  
Cvito Fisković Centre in Split

The early twentieth century saw a growing curiosity about the Adriatic coast and its islands on the part of women travellers including Maude Holbach, later Rebecca West, and Simone de Beauvoir. Among these visitors was Canadian-American photographer Clara Estelle Sipprell (1885–1975). Sipprell was renowned for her evocative landscapes and portraits of prominent figures of the twentieth century, very often other artists, and a range of public figures including Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert Frost, Malvina Cornell Hoffman, and Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović.

Sipprell’s aesthetic was grounded in pictorialism and the nuanced expression of her subjects’ individuality; this intensity characterised her representation of both people and place. Her photograph *New York City, Old and New* became, in 1932, the first work by a woman artist to enter the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Sipprell maintained long-standing personal and professional relationships with several women, including Irina Khrabroff and Phyllis Fenner, with whom she both lived and travelled. In 1924, Sipprell and Khrabroff visited the Adriatic coast and islands. Two years later, they returned to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, where Sipprell produced another series capturing village life and its people. This presentation considers Sipprell’s Adriatic photographs within her broader oeuvre—examining the Adriatic island motifs in a geographic context and their broader significance in her body of work. The research forms part of a larger study of Sipprell’s travel photography, with a focus on the territory of the former Kingdom of SCS.

\*This study has been supported by the scientific project *Travelogues Dalmatia* (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-8676), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

Katrina O’Loughlin is a literary and cultural historian, and the author of *Women, Writing, and Travel in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). She completed her PhD at The University of Melbourne, and was Research Associate at the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions at the University of Western Australia. She is now based in London and is a Reader in English at Brunel University. She is a team member on the project “*Where East meets West*”: *Travel narratives and the fashioning of a Dalmatian artistic heritage in modern Europe* (c. 1675 – c. 1941).

Ana Šverko is an architect and historian of architecture, currently serving as a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Art History – Cvito Fisković Center in Split, and an Associate Professor at the University of Split. She is currently leading the Croatian Science Foundation project “*Where East Meets West*”: *Travel Narratives and the Fashioning of Dalmatian Artistic Heritage in Modern Europe* (c. 1675 – c. 1941). Her publications contribute to the fields of architectural history, cultural heritage, and visual culture, with a specific focus on the Mediterranean region.

# RECOLLECTING LISSA: THE ISLAND OF VIS IN BRITISH TRAVELOGUES

Mateo Bratanić  
University of Zadar

The island of Vis, or Lissa, as it was referred to during Venetian and Austrian periods, remained as a particular topos in British travelogues of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the Napoleonic Wars, this island was for several years under the control of the British Navy and thus emerged as the control point of the entire sea, named “the Malta of the Adriatic” when referring to its strategic position. The British successfully disrupted the French continental blockade and maritime trade of the people under French control. Their control of the island left significant architectural and cultural traces that were imprinted not only on locals but also within the British cultural and travel writing tradition. Besides the naval battle of 1811 and construction of several forts on the island, their presence is also evident in the cemetery where British soldiers were laid to rest. Substantial economic progress marked with the import of colonial and industrial merchandise significantly improved the situation of the local population and introduced the island to British fashion, customs, and sports.

After the end of war and the withdrawal of the British Navy the island of Lissa was frequently visited by British travellers who seized the opportunity to recall the British presence on the island. Thus, the island remained a particular topos in their travelogues, a scene of British presence discovered in the forts, places named after the British king and officers, and the cemetery. Whether the travellers passed by or disembarked on the island and spent some time there, it was always an occasion to remember the British possession of the island. This presentation will discuss the travelogues recollecting Lissa and explore which themes were employed when building the topos of Lissa as a British stronghold in the Adriatic.

\*This study has been supported by the scientific project Travelogues Dalmatia (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-8676), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

Mateo Bratanić is an Associate Professor of Maritime History and Modern History at the University of Zadar. His research interest mostly lays in the transition from the sailing ship to steamship era and the modernity of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and how it influenced eastern Adriatic societies. He is also interested in the British perspective on Dalmatia during the long nineteenth century and early twentieth century. He wrote several articles and a book about maritime transition of the island of Hvar in the nineteenth century. He is currently the principal investigator of the project *East Adriatic sailing ships trade in the 19th century – peak and decline* and a team member on the project “Where East meets West”: *Travel narratives and the fashioning of a Dalmatian artistic heritage in modern Europe (c. 1675 – c. 1941)*.



# CZECHOSLOVAK TRAVELERS AND THEIR REFLECTIONS ON THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Milan Balaban

Tomas Bata University in Zlin,  
Bata Information Centre

Irena Balaban Cakirpaloglu  
National Pedagogical Institute  
of the Czech Republic

The Adriatic islands have long fascinated travellers, serving as nodes of cultural exchange, artistic inspiration, and political discourse. While numerous travelogues by Western European visitors have shaped the region's historiography, the perspectives of Central European travellers—particularly those from Czechoslovakia—remain an underexplored aspect of Adriatic travel literature. This paper examines how Czechoslovak travellers from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century perceived and documented the Adriatic islands, analysing their narratives within broader intellectual, political, and cultural frameworks. Drawing on published and unpublished travelogues, newspaper articles, and personal diaries, this study explores the motivations behind these journeys, the travellers' engagement with the material and artistic heritage of the islands, and their interpretations of insular spaces as sites of historical memory, economic activity, and cultural hybridity. Special attention is given to how these narratives reflected contemporary debates on national identity, Mediterranean connectedness, and the Adriatic's role as a frontier of exchange between Central Europe and the Mediterranean world. By integrating these Czechoslovak accounts into the broader discourse on Adriatic travel writing, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how the islands were perceived beyond the dominant Western European gaze. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of travelogues as historical sources that offer valuable insights into transnational encounters, the persistence of insular traditions, and the evolving cultural geographies of the Adriatic.

Milan Balaban was born on July 3, 1981 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Banja Luka and pursued his master's and doctoral studies at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. In his doctoral dissertation, *Yugoslav-Czechoslovak Economic Relations between 1918 and 1938*, he examined economic interactions between the two countries in the interwar period. He previously worked at the Department of History at the University of Banja Luka and, since 2015, has been a researcher at the Bata Information Centre at the Tomas Bata University in Zlín. His main research interests include the history of the Bata Company and Czechoslovak-Yugoslav economic relations. He has published extensively in Czech and international academic journals and authored and co-authored three books.

Irena Balaban Cakirpaloglu was born in 1979 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. She completed her master's studies at Palacký University in Olomouc and pursued doctoral research in Anthropology. Her dissertation, *Comparative Anthropological Study of Czech and Macedonian Adolescents*, focused on cultural and developmental differences between youth in the two regions. She has worked at universities in Zlín, Olomouc, and Wrocław, engaging in teaching and research in multiculturalism, diversity, and intercultural communication. She has published numerous articles in domestic and international academic journals.

# MAPPING THE ROUTES OF MODERN TOURISM IN EUROPEAN TRAVEL WRITING – THE CASE OF THE BRIJUNI ISLANDS

Nataša Urošević  
Juraj Dobrila University of Pula

The paper presents a current project which deals with the role of travel infrastructure, state policies, and promotion in the development of modern tourism on the example of the Brijuni Islands. In the period of intensive industrialisation and democratisation of travel in the nineteenth century, when the infrastructure for the development of modern tourism was created, state agencies also promoted tourism by publishing the first tourist guides, travelogues, and tourist magazines, shaping tourist accessibility and mobility, as well as interpretation and promotion of unique Adriatic cultural landscapes. The expansion of railway networks and steamship routes in the second half of the nineteenth century opened the Northern Adriatic to an increasingly broad range of visitors, from aristocrats to middle-class tourists seeking seaside leisure. The paper will focus on the Brijuni Islands and the development of modern tourism, by analysing the interplay between infrastructure, state policies and tourism promotion in shaping economic and cultural landscapes.

A key innovation of this project is its use of digital humanities tools to reconstruct historical travel routes. Previous research has pointed to the wealth of tourism publications and rare travel materials in special collections of libraries and archives in the Adriatic and Central Europe; however, the majority of this material is not visible and publicly available. The digitisation of archival materials, including the first modern guidebooks and travelogues, tourist magazines, and personal diaries will enable visibility and accessibility of rare special collections as well as the creation of an interactive digital map to visualise historical travel patterns. The project will illustrate the movement of tourists and their changing experiences over time, providing a dynamic perspective on the evolution of travel networks.

Nataša Urošević is associate professor at the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Interdisciplinary Study Programme of Culture and Tourism, where she teaches courses on Croatian and European cultural history, identity and heritage as well as travel writing and cultural routes. She participated in several EU projects, (co)organized several conferences (including the *Borders and Crossings* travel writing 2018 conference in Pula and Brijuni) and edited post-conference publications. She received the Richard Plaschka Fellowship from the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research as well as the Thesaurus Poloniae Fellowship from the Polish Ministry of Culture for her research projects. She is currently a visiting fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.

# THE MEDITERRANEAN LEGACIES OF YUGOSLAV INSULAR TRAVELOGUES

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Although South Slavs are attested to an Adriatic turn by anthropogeography as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, that is, with the modernisation of mobility in the Mediterranean and with the growth of Adriatic metropolises of the legendary K. & K. Riviera, we can identify two phases of maritime and insular intensity for the twentieth century. In the 1920s, the eastern coastline of the Adriatic Sea was at the core of Italian and South Slavs' national identity and space discourses.

The paper will focus on the *Jadranska straža* (Adriatic Guard) publishing, one of the activities of the eponymous network with pro-Yugoslav sentiments based in Split and the Adriatic hinterland, as well as on other pre- and post-war maritime magazines. Using the example of Ivo Rubić and Nikola Bartulović, I will investigate the entanglement of scientific and literary writings of local islanders which were reconnecting awareness to Mediterranean legacy. Moreover, the opening to maritime transport and tourism was accompanied by new forms of travel documentation such as amateur films.

In conclusion, the paper will discuss ruptures and continuities from the interwar to the postwar period through Vicko Krstulović's essay collection *The Adriatic Orientation of Socialist Yugoslavia*, Titoist insularity, and the tourist utopia of the Adriatic.

Tatjana Petzer is full professor of Slavic literary and cultural studies at the University of Graz and deputy head of the Department of Slavic Studies. Her studies, research, and university teaching have taken her from Germany to Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Russia, and Switzerland, where she was granted the *Venia legendi* for Slavic literature and cultural studies by the University of Zurich. Before accepting the call to the University of Graz in 2023, she had been acting professor at the Slavic department of the Martin-Luther-University of Halle-Wittenberg for five years.



# TOPOGRAPHY AND POETICS OF THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS IN MILAN MILIŠIĆ'S *OTOCI*

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This paper explores the interplay between poetic language and spatial representation in Milan Milišić's *Otoci*, a travelogue situated at the intersection of literary cartography, autobiographical narration, and Adriatic insularity. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks developed in *Geopoetiken* (ed. Marszałek/Sasse) and Sigrid Weigel's reflections on the topographical turn, the analysis positions *Otoci* as a geopoetic articulation of island space that resists dominant geopolitical and touristic imaginaries. Rather than approaching the Adriatic islands as fixed geographic entities, Milišić constructs them as heterogeneous spaces of affect, memory, and epistemic potential. The text enacts what Marszałek and Sasse term a geopoetics of transformation, wherein literary writing does not merely reflect space, but actively produces it as a performative and symbolic construct. In this context, the topographical is not limited to descriptive functions; it emerges as a narrative operation that inscribes meaning into landscape through linguistic and structural devices. Special attention is given to the poetic logic of insularity in *Otoci*, which unfolds through discontinuous movement, repetition, and reflective circularity. Islands function as mnemonic and cultural surfaces—topoi of both historical sedimentation and existential openness.

The analysis further draws on Weigel's emphasis on topography as a site of cultural inscription, reading Milišić's island narratives as spatial figurations of political ambivalence and autobiographical localisation within a destabilised Yugoslav context. Ultimately, *Otoci* is interpreted as a literary project of geopoetic world-making: one that maps the Adriatic not according to territorial sovereignty, but along the lines of aesthetic experience, intersubjective memory, and poetic epistemology. Through this lens, Milišić's work contributes to a broader Central and Eastern European geopoetics, in which literature becomes a medium of spatial critique and cultural re-orientation.

Milica Vuković has a background in Comparative Literature (BA and MA, University of Vienna) and completed additional coursework in Slavic and Mediterranean studies. Her academic work centres on transnational literary dynamics and cultural theory. She is enrolled in the PhD program at the University of Graz, focusing on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav island narratives, approached through a literary-topographical lens that highlights questions of identity, space, and cultural memory. Alongside her postgraduate studies, she gained editorial experience.

“MENTAL INSULARITY”:  
PARANOIA AND NOMADIC  
WRITING IN BEKIM SEJLANOVIĆ’S  
*MISS MISERY NA OTOKU SUSKU*

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Bekim Sejranović, who unexpectedly died in May 2020, left two late short stories: *Miss Misery na otoku Susku* and *Sto trideset sati bez sna*, which, according to Agata Jawoszek-Goździk, frame his oeuvre generally seen as autobiographical and dealing with post-traumatic issues and non-belonging. The term “autobiographical” emphasises the author’s self-constitution through the act of writing, entangled in reading and traveling, as well as his self-destruction, that emerges on a meta-level in *Miss Misery na otoku Susku* (Miss Misery on the island of Susak).

This last text written and published during his lifetime, in the anthology *Autorske bure* (2020), which collected works by various writers about places in the Kvarner Gulf, is a literary travelogue on the Croatian island of Susak, where Sejranović indeed went in 2019 on a residency within the framework of the European Capital of Culture Rijeka. Recalling a variety of topoi of “island” (quoting a *pustinjač* (hermit) tested by god, place of longing, folkloric and language specifics, religiosity, authenticity, tourism), Sejranović is inverting them, nihilistically and auto-ironically, through the lens and reflection of mental illness, especially paranoia – which evokes the metaphor of “mental insularity”, a mental isolation that doesn’t allow for the formation of a congruent life according to a standardised explanation, but leaves one with no option but to just fake it through the day, as the guiding theme-song *Miss Misery* by Elliott Smith implies.

Sejranović’s “nomadic writing” (in the sense of Diana Hitzke) emphasises the movement of thought, its cycling, and in this story seems to be an inner journey with no inner development, but a journey from one “heterotopos” (psychiatry) to another (island) and back, while taking drugs “to be normal” reveals the actual paranoid circumstances. Against this background, my further examination wants to focus on the paranoid scenario on the island of Susak within the context of paranoia in post-Yugoslav literature.

Silvia Stecher was born 1984 in Graz, Austria. She is currently employed at the Department of South Slavic studies at the University of Graz. She is active in the field of literary translation, editing, and writing. From 2015 to 2022, she was the editor of the contemporary literary magazine *perspektive – hefte für zeitgenössische literatur*. In 2021, she edited the multilingual literary journal *Transletter* (created through the cooperation of Graz-based magazines *ausreißer*, *Lichtungen* and *perspektive*). She received the Promotional Award for Literature by the city of Graz in 2020. She is also a member of the editing collective *der/die/das Joghurt*: [www.dddj.at](http://www.dddj.at).

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