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BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION IN THE MIROSLAV KRLEŽA INSTITUTE OF LEXICOGRAPHY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Filip Hameršak and Nataša Jerman

Founded in 1950 by the Federal Government of Yugoslavia, the Institute of Lexicography in Zagreb, later named after erudite Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža, its initiator and first director, is one of the key places for biographical research in Croatia.¹

Nevertheless, interest in biography, and even interest in biographical dictionaries of a sort, is of much older date, if we consider the territory of what is today the Republic of Croatia.² For instance, already in 1518, a poet and philosopher from Split, Marko Marulić, compiled a manuscript *De Veteris instrumenti viris illustribus commentarium* containing biographies

¹ “Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža,” *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013–2024), accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/leksikografski-zavod-miroslav-krleza>; see also *Radovi Leksikografskoga zavoda Miroslav Krleža* 10 (2001), special issue on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institute, accessed February 8, 2024, https://www.lzmk.hr/images/RadoviLZMK/LZMK_radovi_10.html.

² The starting point for this review was “Biografske zbirke i leksikoni u Hrvata” by Žarko Domljan published in *Forum* 27, no. 5–6 (1988): 474–484, but we also drew the data from the prefaces and content of individual editions as well as from other sources that we refer to. See also Igor Gostl, “Od glagolskih lucidarija do ‘Hrvatske enciklopedije,’” *Radovi Leksikografskoga zavoda ‘Miroslav Krleža’* 4 (1995): 81–94, accessed February 9, 2024, https://www.lzmk.hr/images/RadoviLZMK/LZMK_radovi_4.html; Aleksandar Stipčević, *Priča o Hrvatskom biografskom leksikonu: pokušaj ubojstva jedne knjige* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1997), 9–15.

of Old Testament personalities (printed only in 1979).³ In 1541, a Dominican priest from Dubrovnik, Ambroz Ranjina, published almost two dozen short biographies of the Dominican friars of the Dubrovnik region, at that time an independent city-state, now a part of southern Croatia.⁴ In 1605, a Dubrovnik polymath and bishop Ambroz Gučetić, followed suit, publishing a volume with biographies of 790 Dominican friars from all around the world who were noted for their literary work, sixteen of them being from Dubrovnik and another six from historic Dalmatia, i.e. southern Croatia.⁵

In the 17th and 18th centuries, this was followed by several authors making their own collections of short biographies of men-of-letters and other notable individuals from Dubrovnik, Split or Dalmatia, but most of them were printed only in the 19th century or later, save for the volume published in 1767 by a Dubrovnik theologian and writer Sebastijan Slade Dolci, which consisted of 272 biographies of Dubrovnik writers.⁶ A bit later, since the mid-18th century, similar endeavours were undertaken by north-Croatian scholars such as historian, theologian and jurist Baltazar Adam Krčelić,⁷ Latinist, bibliophile and polymath Adam Alojzij Baričević,⁸ and writer, translator and publisher

³ Bratislav Lučin, “Manulić, Marko,” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon, mrežno izdanje* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2024), accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/manulic-marko>.

⁴ Ambroz Ranjina, “Epistola,” in Klement Ranjina, *Quodlibet declamatorium* (Venetiis: arte necnon perugili diligentia ad ipsius correctionem probi viri Nicolai Bascarini, Sumptibus illustrium dominorum Ragusi, 1541).

⁵ Ambroz Gučetić, *Catalogus virorum ex familia Praedicatorum in litteris insignium* (Venetiis: apud Franciscum Barilettum, 1605); cf. Stjepan Krasić, “Gučetić, Ambroz,” in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 5 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2002), 285–286, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/gucetic-ambroz>.

⁶ Sebastijan Slade Dolci, *Fasti litterario-ragusini* (Venetiis: excudebat Gaspar Storti Praesidium Facultate, 1767); cf. “Slade Dolci, Sebastijan,” *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013–2024), accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/slade-dolci-sebastijan>.

⁷ Baltazar Adam Krčelić, *Historiarum cathedralis ecclesiae Zagrabienensis partis primae tomus I* (Zagrabiae: typis Antonii Jandera, 1769); Baltazar Adam Krčelić, *Scriptorum ex regno Slavoniae a seculo XIV. usque ad XVII. inclusive collectio* (Varasdini: typis Joan. Thomae nobilis de Trattnern, 1774). Cf. Teodora Shek Brnardić, “Krčelić, Baltazar Adam,” in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 8 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013), 91–95, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/krcelic-baltazar-adam>.

⁸ Adam Alojzij Baričević, *De scriptoribus Pannoniae Saviae. Collectanea*, manuscript R4292, Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu, Zagreb; cf. Elizabeta Palanović, “Baričević, Adam Alojzij,” in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1983), 460–462, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/baricevic-adam-alojzij>.

Tomaš Mikloušić,⁹ ever increasingly taking into account not only local and regional clergymen but also lay writers.

The early 19th century was marked by biographical compendiums of historian, philologist and poet Franjo Marija Appendini,¹⁰ a Piedmont-born citizen of Dubrovnik, and of horticulturist and publicist Mihal (Mihovil) von Kunič,¹¹ a Slovakian-born citizen of Zagreb, Varaždin and Karlovac. The first one published mostly in Italian, on Dalmatian writers, and the latter mostly in German, on illustrious people from all over the Habsburg Monarchy, including those from Croatian lands. In fact, Kunič's work was later recognised as a direct precursor to the renowned Wurzbach's biographical lexicon,¹² the first volume of which was published in 1856.¹³ In addition, in the 1820s, historian Petar Matija Stanković published a three-volume biographical dictionary entitled *Biography of Distinguished Men of Istria*.¹⁴

Exposed to conquests for centuries and brought together only in the early 19th century under Habsburg rule, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Istria were in many ways behind the development trends in Western and Northern Europe, where multivolume encyclopedias and dictionaries had often been printed already in the 18th century. Still, despite the more or less pronounced

⁹ Tomaš Mikloušić, *Izbor dugoványh vszakoverztnéh za haszen, y razveszelénye szluséchéh* (Zagreb: Pritzkan vu Novoszelnzokoj Szlovarnicze, 1821); cf. "Mikloušić, Tomaš," *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013–2024), accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/miklousic-tomas>.

¹⁰ Franjo Marija Appendini, *Notizie storico-critiche sulle antichità, storia e letteratura de' Ragusei*, 2 vols. (Ragusa: dalle stampe di Antonio Martecchini. Con licenza de' superiori, 1802–1803); Franjo Marija Appendini, *Memorie spettanti ad alcuni uomini illustri di Cattaro* (Ragusa: presso Antonio Martecchini, nella stamperia privilegiata, 1811). Cf. Miljenko Foretić, "Appendini, Franjo Marija," in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1983), 213–215, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/appendini-franjo-marija>.

¹¹ Mihal von Kunič, *Biographien merkwürdiger Männer der österreichischen Monarchie*, 6 vols. (Grätz: gedruckt bey den Gebrüder Tanzer, 1805–1812); cf. Iva Mandušić, "Kunič, Mihal von," in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 8 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013), 393, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/kunic-mihal-von>.

¹² Karl Glossy, "Wurzbach, Constantin von," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 55 (Leipzig: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910), 135–138, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119532522.html#adbcontent>.

¹³ Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, 60 vols. (Wien: Verlag der Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von L. C. Zamarski, 1856–1891).

¹⁴ Petar Matija Stanković, *Biographia degli uomini distinti dell'Istria*, 3 vols. (Trieste: presso Gio. Marenigh tipografo, 1828–1829), accessed February 10, 2024, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/search?filter=volumes%3A%22bsb10071011%22FVB001686954%22>.

expressions of the hegemonic strivings of Vienna and Pest, from the 1830s the legalist insistence on centuries-long state continuity became increasingly intertwined with broader cultural-political activity, which, in the sense of national integration, continued to be linked to the real, though sometimes disputed, subjectivity of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia and the symbolic subjectivity of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia until the end of World War I. There were also thoughts about expanding this Croatian core into a broader “Illyrian” or, later, “Yugoslav” integration as well as about winning over the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslims.¹⁵

Besides newspapers and journals financed through relatively small but well-established subscriber circles, who were, along with patronage, the main source of new civil associations such as the Matica hrvatska (Matrix Croatica), and the Society of St Jerome, there was a strengthening of state institutions such as the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, the University of Zagreb, and gymnasiums (high schools), especially after the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement of 1868.

Within the frame of such increased interest in a national identity-based conception of the past, already in the 1850s and 1860s, historians Šime Ljubić and Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski published biographical compendiums of limited extent: *Biographical Dictionary of the Renowned People of Dalmatia*,¹⁶ *Dictionary of Yugoslav Artists*,¹⁷ and *Famous Croats of the Past Centuries*.¹⁸

Speaking of Dalmatia, we should also mention poet and librarian Giuseppe Ferrari-Cupilli and his son Simeone, both natives of Zadar, who authored several biographical works, the most notable one being *Biographical Notes of Some Illustrious Men in Dalmatia*.¹⁹

¹⁵ Filip Hameršak, “Moderna hrvatska enciklopedika između struke, države i društva,” *Studia lexicographica* 14, no. 27 (2020): 9–14, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://studialexicographica.lzmk.hr/sl/article/view/329>.

¹⁶ Šime Ljubić, *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri della Dalmazia* (Vienna: Rod. Lechner Librajo dell’I. R. Università; Zara: Battara e Abelich Libraj, 1856).

¹⁷ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Slovník umjetnikah jugoslavenskih*, 5 vols. (Zagreb: tiskom Narodne tiskarne Dra. Ljudevita Gaja, 1858–1860).

¹⁸ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Glasoviti Hrvati prošlih vjekova* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1886).

¹⁹ Simeone Ferrari-Cupilli, *Cenni biografici di alcuni uomini illustri della Dalmazia* (Zara: Tip. edit. S. Artale, 1887), accessed February 10, 2024, <https://www.openstarts.units.it/entities/publication/f2f330e9-a8b5-46d4-ad33-0ac8e37908a2/details>; cf. Ivan Pederin and Editorial Board, “Ferrari Cupilli, Giuseppe,” in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 4 (Zagreb:

In the late 1890s, journalist and writer Milan Grlović compiled an impressive *Album of Worthy Croats of the 19th Century*²⁰ for a private publisher in Zagreb, containing 150 biographies, sometimes written in a rather free style, but covering the entire area of the Triune Kingdom, with much data and politically balanced, including even the biography of Eugen Kvaternik, a rebel against the then ruler, Francis Joseph I. Almost at the same time, also in Zagreb, historian Andra Gavrilović published a similar volume on 216 renowned Serbs of the same period.²¹

During the initial years of the 20th century, librarian Velimir Deželić, Sr started collecting data for a *Croatian Biographical Dictionary* (Hrvatski biografički rječnik). In addition to publishing some biographies in the popular press, he strived for wider support, but following the generous donation of retired general Marko Crljen, the Zagreb seated Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts opted instead for a national encyclopedia that would also include Slovenian, Serbian and Bulgarian topics, and was supposed to have been made in cooperation with the respective national academies or matrices. However, the plan was abandoned because of the Second Balkan War and World War I, and work on the *Croatian Biographical Dictionary* was continued under the auspices of the Yugoslav Academy until early 1920s, when it was finally stopped, most probably because of the political situation in the newly formed Yugoslav state.

Consequently, in 1925, on the occasion of the thousandth anniversary of the founding of the Croatian kingdom, most of the Deželić's material was included in one huge, privately published volume, *Famous and Meritorious Croats and Noteworthy Figures in Croatian History from 925 to 1925*,²² the first Croatian large-scale national biographical lexicon, consisting of approximately 2200 entries. The introductory historical overview was critical towards the way in which the common South Slav state had been established, but also optimistic because Stjepan Radić, the leading Croatian politician of the time, had recently recognised the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty. A significant part

Leksikografski zavod *Miroslav Krleža*, 1998), 184–185, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/ferrari-cupilli-giuseppe>.

²⁰ Milan Grlović, *Album zaslužnih Hrvata XIX. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Naklada i tisak Matičevog litografskog zavoda, 1898–1900).

²¹ Andra Gavrilović, *Znameniti Srbi XIX. veka* (Zagreb: Naklada Srpske štamparije, 1903).

²² *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati te pomena vrijedna lica u Hrvatskoj povijesti od 925–1925* (Zagreb: Odbor za izdanje knjige “Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati 925–1925,” 1925).

of the introduction was devoted to Istria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the publication included a number of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslims. The author of these entries, orientalist and poet Safvet Bey Bašagić, published his own biographical dictionary in Zagreb in 1931, entitled *Famous Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats in the Turkish Empire*.²³

From the mid-1920s to the mid-1940s, several general- or national-type encyclopaedias or lexicons were published, also covering topics involving Croatian themes, including biographies that are well worth analysing, especially in the terms of their, so to say, positivistic objectivity in spite of the wider social and political context. From 1925 to 1929, Serbian historian Stanoje Stanojević published four volumes of the *Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian National Encyclopedia*²⁴ in Zagreb. This encyclopedia included, for example, neutral biographies of Austrian-Hungarian generals who fought against Serbia and Montenegro. *Lexicon Minerva*²⁵ was published in 1936 by Minerva publishing bookstore (under the editorship of the Germanist Gustav Šamšalović); it represented the first general-type lexicon in the Croatian language also covering “scientific and cultural workers” from the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Lexicographer and publicist Mate Ujević, director of the Croatian Publishing and Bibliographic Institute (Hrvatski izdavalačko-bibliografski zavod), was the initiator and editor-in-chief of the *Croatian Encyclopedia* (1941–1945), the first modern Croatian national and general encyclopedia, which was originally planned in twelve volumes but, due to wartime circumstances, only five were ultimately published.²⁶ The *Encyclopedia* was largely unaffected by wartime propaganda and included neutral biographies of Allied political and military leaders (e.g. Winston Churchill and Dwight Eisenhower), in spite of the pro-Axis alignment of the Independent State of Croatia.²⁷

²³ Safvet-beg Bašagić, *Znameniti Hrvati Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u turskoj carevini* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1931).

²⁴ Stanoje Stanojević, *Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka*, 4 vols. (Zagreb: Bibliografski zavod d.d., 1925–1929).

²⁵ *Leksikon Minerva: praktični priručnik za modernog čovjeka u jednom svesku* (Zagreb: Minerva nakladna knjižara, 1936).

²⁶ *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, 5 vols. (Zagreb: Naklada konzorcija Hrvatske enciklopedije (vol. 1); Naklada Hrvatskog izdavačkog bibliografskog zavoda (vol. 2–5), 1941–1945), accessed February 10, 2024, <https://hemu.lzmk.hr/>.

²⁷ Cf. Mladen Švab, “Iz povijesti hrvatske enciklopedike – Hrvatska enciklopedija,” *Radovi Leksikografskoga zavoda “Miroslav Krleža”* 1 (1991): 79–83, accessed February 10, 2024, https://www.lzmk.hr/images/RadoviLZMK/LZMK_radovi_1.html; Mladen Švab, “Mate

When founded in 1950, the Institute of Lexicography in Zagreb got the official primary task to publish a multivolume *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia*, which was achieved from 1955 to 1971.²⁸ Some of the included larger biographies were grounded in dedicated research and remained basic reference sources for decades. Some combined research or at least general information with Yugoslav-Marxist ideological verdicts that were later abandoned or revised even before the fall of communism. However, albeit on a limited scale, even so-called negative historical personalities were included.

In the 1950s, a more neutral bibliographical project was also completed, giving a long-lasting basis for biographical research.²⁹ By effort of around 700 hundred contributors and a very skilled editorial staff, led by Ujević – at the time Krleža’s deputy – practically all available South Slavic (less-Bulgarian) periodicals, including newspapers, from the late 18th century to 1945 were processed, excerpting approximately 2.2 million units of reference, that were later copied onto 10 million cards (Catalogue of the Retrospective Bibliography of Articles).^{30,31} Therefore, every unit or text could be found according to its author, thematic keyword, or field or genre. Some 100 000 authors have thus been discerned, while the anonymous texts were listed according to title. In order to identify authors hidden behind pseudonyms and codes many of the still living pre-1945 newspaper editors and other intellectuals were consulted, although some of them were blacklisted by the Communist authorities.³²

Ujević, utemeljitelj suvremene hrvatske enciklopedike,” *Radovi Leksikografskoga zavoda “Miroslav Krleža”* 2 (1992): 9–73, accessed February 10, 2024, https://www.lzmk.hr/images/RadoviLZMK/LZMK_radovi_2.html.

²⁸ *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 1st ed., 8 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ (vol. 1–5) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod (vol. 6–8), 1955–1971); *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 2nd ed., 6 vols. (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod (vol. 1–3) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod “Miroslav Krleža” (vol. 4–6), 1980–1990).

²⁹ Jasna Ivančić, “Katalog retrospektivne bibliografije članaka Leksikografskoga zavoda Miroslav Krleža: ustroj i povijest nastanka,” *Studia lexicographica* 1, no. 1 (2007): 129–150, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://studialexicographica.lzmk.hr/sl/article/view/13/12>.

³⁰ Mate Ujević, *Bibliographie rétrospective des études, des articles et des belles-lettres parus dans la presse périodique yougoslave* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ, 1957).

³¹ Charles Jelavich, “The importance of the Leksikografski zavod to the Scholar,” *Slavic Review* 21, no. 2 (1962): 330–335.

³² Digitised Authors’ catalogue and Catalogue of resolved pseudonyms, codes and initials are available online: “Digitalizirani katalog,” Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://katalog.lzmk.hr/>.

As a result, mostly devoid of any ideologically driven selection key, many lesser-known individuals were saved from oblivion thanks to this virtually unique project, while more complete corpuses were established for the better-known ones, including texts about them, reviews, and biographical contributions, from which basic data such as occupation and dates of birth and death were also recorded. Between 1956 and 2004, a select 20 percent of these units of reference, up to the year 1940, were published in 16 volumes on various fields.³³

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, biographical entries were also present in other publications of the Institute of Lexicography, in a way analogous to the *Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia*, but generally in a shorter form. Some of these biographies, especially those in the multivolume *Maritime Encyclopaedia*³⁴ and the *Encyclopaedia of Music*,³⁵ also had a research component. Moreover, in 1955 Ujević prepared a single 860-page volume containing only quotations on various matters from the works of famous Croatian writer Antun Gustav Matoš.³⁶

Not willing to renounce his support for the *Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language*, in 1967, Krleža resigned from the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, and his public presence was reduced to a certain degree.³⁷ Although Krleža did not overtly participate in the Croatian Spring movement, it seems that at that time he became more and more wary about the possibility of the so-called Yugoslav synthesis. In 1972, the finances of the Institute of the Lexicography were relegated from the federal to the Croatian republican level. Also, in

³³ *Bibliografija rasprava, članaka i književnih radova*, 14 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ (vol. 1–6) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod (vol. 7–12) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod “Miroslav Krleža” (vol. 13–14), 1956–1986); *Bibliografija rasprava i članaka – Kazalište u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini 1826–1945*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2004).

³⁴ *Pomorska enciklopedija*, 1st ed., 8 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ (vol. 1–7) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod (vol. 8), 1954–1964); *Pomorska enciklopedija*, 2nd ed., 8 vols. (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1972–1989).

³⁵ *Muzička enciklopedija*, 1st ed., 2 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ (vol. 1) / Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod (vol. 2), 1958–1963); *Muzička enciklopedija*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1971–1977).

³⁶ Mate Ujević, *Misli i pogledi A. G. Matoša* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod FNRJ, 1955).

³⁷ Velimir Visković, “Životopis,” in *Krležijana*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1999), 586, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/clanak/zivotopis>.

that year Director Krleža publicly spoke to Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito about the aforementioned 10 million bibliographical cards, stating that they would be a great basis for a “bibliographical dictionary.”³⁸

Obviously following Krleža’s instructions, already in 1973 philologist and philosopher Kruno Krstić, one of the leading experts of the Institute, prepared a plan for a multivolume Croatian biographical i.e. bibliographical lexicon. Arguably by no accident, it was the first and only project of the Institute until the 1990s that held the attribute “Croatian” and covered only Croatia-related topics. Initially, eight volumes were nominally planned, but soon it became obvious that a dozen or more would be more realistic, especially following the idea of both Krleža and Krstić that many of the so-called “little people” should also be included, and that the so-called “negative persons” were not to be excluded.

In 1977, the first editor-in-chief, literary historian Nikica Kolumbić, was appointed, refining the general concept, article content and structure, and leading a group of employees that searched through around 300 published sources as well as library catalogues, thus preparing a list of approximately 25,000 individuals. During this preparatory phase, the project was known as the *Biobibliographical Lexicon of Croatia*, and it was also decided that living persons were to be included, if born earlier than 1946. Also, around 2000 entries and questionnaires for the terminated 1916 *Croatian Biographical Dictionary* were acquired from the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts as a good starting point.³⁹

In 1978, a well-prepared and well-attended consultative meeting was held, attended by respected members from the political and cultural scene. Every participant was given extensive written explanations, lists of sources etc., and there were no objections recorded. After that, work intensified, including 20 or more permanent staff members and 273 contributors.

As a result, the first volume, covering the letters from A to Bi, including 1763 articles on 800 pages, was published in December 1983, under the title

³⁸ Vlaho Bogišić, “Ujević, Mate,” in *Krležijana*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1999), 462–463, accessed February 10, 2024, <https://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/clanak/ujevic-mate>.

³⁹ The early phase of this project is well-covered by various documents stored in the archives of the Institute of Lexicography. See also Stipčević, *Priča o Hrvatskom biografskom leksikonu*, 16–25.

Croatian Biographical Lexicon (CBL).⁴⁰ Dying in 1981, Director Krleža was in no position either to approve or disapprove of its final content. Be it as it may, in the foreword, the scope of the dictionary was defined to include “prominent Croats (individuals and families) or people of Croatian origin, living and acting all around the globe, prominent members of other nations and nationalities born on the territory of the Socialist Republic of Croatia as well as foreigners that lived and acted on this soil.”⁴¹ Although not stated in the foreword, as a practical rule, the earliest persons included were those who lived in post-Migration Period (early Middle Ages) and, apart from some exceptions, neither the individuals nor the families were explicitly described in terms of their ethnicity.

However, soon after the book launch, serious attacks started in the press. The first blow was given by writer Goran Babić who stated that such a pro-right and clerical book such as the CBL could have been published only because Krleža was dead. The Praxis-school philosopher Milan Kangrga followed suit, stating that it would be unacceptable for him to be included in the same volume as some negative personalities.⁴² Other authors objected to having too many clergymen and too few workers or revolutionaries, that not stating ethnicity equates the role of Croatian Serbs to that of Italians or Hungarians, that the language editing was too archaic and even too puristic, reminiscent of that used in the Independent State of Croatia. One of the most common, but also one of the most unclear objections was that the dictionary is not Marxist enough. On the other hand, direct allegations of Croatian nationalism were rare, and practically reserved for radicals such as Babić, who in fact himself wrote at least one rather nationalistic poem during the Croatian Spring. To be sure, some of the more technical remarks were founded to a certain degree, and soon it became obvious that the core of the state and Communist Party officials did not really want the volume to be banned. In mid-1984, a round table discussion was organised by the League of Communists of Croatia Centre for Ideational and Theoretical

⁴⁰ *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1983).

⁴¹ Editorial foreword to *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 1, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, accessed February 10, 2024, https://media.lzmk.hr/hbl/PDF/HBL_1%20predgovor.pdf.

⁴² Bibliographic references for these and other critical texts are given in Stipčević, *Priča o Hrvatskom biografskom leksikonu*, 38–56.

Work, resulting in a curious publication named *Aporias of the Croatian Biographical Dictionary*.⁴³

Conclusively, the work on the second volume was continued, with a new foreword, and under the supervision or, perhaps more likely, a covering body of respected scholars, called the Council. Under the new editor-in-chief, archaeologist and librarian Aleksandar Stipčević, the list of persons was revised, and enlarged with a number of minor communist political workers and Yugoslav People's Army officers, resulting in a total of 1829 articles, which were supposed to be ready for print in mid-1988. However, according to Stipčević, who later wrote an entire (previously already cited) book on the subject, afraid of another scandal, the management of the Institute decided to stall with its printing, which was over only in December 1989, in the wake of the introduction of political pluralism.^{44, 45}

After that, from the third volume, published in 1993, to the eighth volume, published in 2013, work was continued under the third editor-in-chief, historian Trpimir Macan, in more stable circumstances.⁴⁶ Macan's vision of the CBL rightly put more emphasis on the research and interpretative components, requiring, for instance, the contributors to read, record and retell as many works authored by the subjects as possible, to note the location of their manuscripts and letters, any controversial opinions about them, and even their possible reception in arts, such as literary works, paintings, medals and so on. As a result, the standard number of entries per volume fell from 1700 or even 1800 to 1200, individual articles being longer and more time-consuming to write. All in all, those planned 25,000 articles, including possible supplements, will need around 20 volumes, and a time span of another 40 years to be published, which is the price to be paid for such a dense biographical covering of the past population of Croatia. For instance, the *Biographical Lexicon of Italians*,⁴⁷ published from 1960 to

⁴³ *Aporije hrvatskog biografskog leksikona* (Zagreb: Centar za idejno-teorijski rad GK SKH Zagreb, 1984).

⁴⁴ Stipčević, *Priča o Hrvatskom biografskom leksikonu*, 82–181.

⁴⁵ *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod "Miroslav Krleža," 1989).

⁴⁶ *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 3–8 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1993–2013).

⁴⁷ *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 100 vols. (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–2020), accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.treccani.it/biografico/>.

2020 includes some 40,000 biographies, while the online British *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*⁴⁸ has around 60,000 articles. Given the proportions, i.e. relative size of the population and the history of literacy, a Croatian biographical dictionary of a similar type should have no more than 3000 articles.

Moreover, Macan was the head of the Institute's multidisciplinary research project "Croatian Biobibliographic Heritage," funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports from 2001 to 2006, whose research results were implemented in the CBL as well as in the project's collected papers *Biobibliographica*.⁴⁹

During those twenty years of Macan's leadership only three or four negative appraisals were recorded, the one in 2003 closely resembling the discourse of Babić and Kangrga. In that case, all members of the editorial staff were called out by name for not including one film director and one actress on the grounds of not being good enough Croats, while on the other hand Ustasha leaders were given space.⁵⁰ The appraisal also criticised the Croatian government for financing such projects. However, having later been warned that the real reason for not including those two was the 1945 birthyear limit,⁵¹ as stated in the foreword, this author reacted with a sincere apology.⁵²

Available on the Internet since 2008,⁵³ the CBL has continued to publish new articles, reaching a total number of 12,547 with its ninth volume (Lo-Marj), printed in 2021 under the fourth editor-in-chief, Nikša Lučić, also a historian, and additional 104 online-only biographies (Mark-Ž).⁵⁴ During this time, the key challenges have also changed. First of all, general public interest in such publications has fallen, even if they are available online. Many CBL articles were used by the Croatian Wikipedia, but often altered without permission, or at least without proper attribution. Borrowing whole

⁴⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>.

⁴⁹ *Biobibliographica: zbornik znanstveno-istraživačkoga projekta Hrvatska bio-bibliografska baština*, 4 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2003–2014).

⁵⁰ *Feral Tribune*, February 22, 2003, 4.

⁵¹ *Feral Tribune*, March 1, 2003, 4.

⁵² *Feral Tribune*, March 15, 2003, 4.

⁵³ *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr>.

⁵⁴ *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 9 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2021).

sentences without specifying the source is regular practice of Google info panels, not to mention ChatGPT and other AI systems. Secondly, digitisation projects were of uneven scope and quality, opening vast but hardly searchable material on the one hand, and on the other hand not eliminating the need to physically go to archives or libraries, where material could be unavailable due to being sent to the outsourced digitisation company, or simply because it is in too bad a condition. Furthermore, some fields, especially medicine and natural and technical sciences have limited interest for their past and earlier developments, which makes contributors hard to find. Even in the fields of history and literary science, biographical and bibliographical research remains a kind of unattended foster child, the term biographical turn hasn't yet been heard of. Having also in mind that contributors' fees have for years been almost symbolically small (one cent per one character), their average number per volume has dropped to 200, while the permanent staff has grown to around 24 editors and associates.

However, in terms of approach, Macan's vision is still being realised, albeit with one difference. Because the leadership of the Institute thought the project to be too slow and not visible enough, in 2013 it was decided to make an Internet only supplement that will include one hundred of the most prominent biographies all the way to the letter Ž. It was a bold move, not yet completely realised, having also a side-effect of slowing the work on the ninth volume for at least two years.

Furthermore, the CBL and the Institute joined several digital biographical projects such as Znameniti.hr. – a thematic portal containing digital material on the leaders of Croatian culture, science, arts and public life from different collections/repositories,⁵⁵ a DARIAH-ERIC project Cooperation Framework of Digital Infrastructure in the Region: Opportunities and Needs in the Case of Material Concerning Famous People in Science and Culture, and a Horizon 2020 project In/Tangible European Heritage: Visual Analysis, Curation and Communication – InTaVia, one of whose goals is to develop a methodology for harmonising, structuring, and integrating data from European national biographical databases.⁵⁶ Also, in order to

⁵⁵ "Znameniti.hr," accessed February 14, 2024, <https://znameniti.hr/>.

⁵⁶ INTAVIA: In/ Tangible European Heritage: Visual Analysis, Curation and Communication, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://intavia.eu/>.

foster future research, an even larger Croatian Personal Database has been in development since 2001, containing 52,000 notable persons without any limit regarding their year of birth.

The newest challenge is certainly the General Data Protection Regulation, which gave some persons ideas to try to forbid anyone writing about them in a way they do not approve of, though it is still a moot point how far can this right go until some balance is reached.

At last, it is worth mentioning that several monographs and collected papers were published at the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography on the margins of the CBL, treating the themes of biography in a more extensive way or publishing manuscripts that were found during research.⁵⁷ In addition, the Institute's scientific periodical *Studia lexicographica*⁵⁸ is preparing an issue dedicated to biography (foreseen for 2024). Also, in the last 20 years or so, several so-called personal encyclopedias were published, dedicated to Krleža,⁵⁹ Matoš,⁶⁰ the 16th century writer Marin Držić⁶¹ and the 18th century scientist Ruđer Bošković.⁶²

⁵⁷ "Bibliografija izdanja Leksikografskoga zavoda Miroslav Krleža," Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://bibliografija.lzmk.hr/>.

⁵⁸ *Studia lexicographica*, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://studialexicographica.lzmk.hr/sl>.

⁵⁹ *Krležijana*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1993–1999), accessed February 14, 2024, <https://krlezijana.lzmk.hr/>; *Bibliografija Miroslava Krleže*, vol. 3 (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1999).

⁶⁰ *Leksikon Antuna Gustava Matoša* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2015).

⁶¹ *Leksikon Marina Držića* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2009), accessed February 14, 2024, <https://leksikon.muzej-marindrzc.eu/>; *Marin Držić: bibliografija, literatura* (Zagreb: Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu; Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2009).

⁶² *Leksikon Ruđera Boškovića* (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2011).

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