

# MARINOV ZBORNIK

Papers in Honour of Professor Emilio Marin



HRVATSKO KATOLIČKO SVEUČILIŠTE

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# *Laudatio* by an Oxford's All Souls College Quondam Visiting Fellow

Baron HERMAN VAN DER WEE  
Catholic University of Leuven  
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During the second semester of the academic year 1984-1985 I shared with Emilio Marin a visiting fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford. I knew already some of his excellent archaeological work but the Oxford semester gave me the opportunity to go deeper into the different aspects of his scientific research. My friendship with Emilio Marin became a marvelous experience. I was impressed by the scope and depth of his research. During his stay at Oxford Marin was working in the field of epigraphy, studying in particular the Hellenistic onomastics of Dalmatia. It was part of a major project of the British Academy: *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. Later Marin became involved in other projects of scientific collaboration with British colleagues and institutions, *inter alia* with the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford when the marble portrait of Livia at the museum could be joined with the Livia torso excavated in Narona (Croatia). The torso was preserved in the town of Opuzen (Croatia). In 2004 the reunited sculpture was displayed with others excavated by Marin in the Augusteum of Narona at an exhibition in the Ashmolean Museum.

Marin's interest in British archaeology is, of course, much older than his Oxford experiences of the 1980's and 1990's. Already at the time of his studies at the University of Zagreb he became involved in archaeological excavations organized by the University of Durham (UK). During his stay at Durham he participated in an archaeological project at the Hadrian Wall (England) and at the Antonine Wall (Scotland). During our stay at All Souls College (Oxford) Marin had also the opportunity to meet two famous British ancient historians, Professor Sir Ronald Syme FBA and Peter Fraser FBA, Fellow of All Souls College: both were specialists of ancient history of South-Eastern Europe, in particular on the history of Hellenistic and Roman Dalmatia. Both scholars were enthusiastic about Marin's recent research.

In 2018 Marin published a new important book: *'Mursa: Colonia Aelia at the Limes of the Roman Empire'*. The book is not only a history of a single Roman colony, but at the same time a comprehensive synthesis of the Roman Empire from its northern Roman Wall in Britain to its eastern borders at the Danube and its southern borders at the Mediterranean. In other words, it is a reading of the Empire's history as viewed and understood from one of the Empire's colonies at the Pannonian *limes*. Mursa was an excellent point of view for following the destiny of the Roman Empire at its centuries of agony. Mursa, indeed, was involved in the Roman battles in the region for military and religious purposes. The most important battle was the one of Mursa Major in 351 AD, admirably described by the great British historian of Antiquity Edward Gibbon.

Marin's organizational talents were acknowledged when he was invited to organize in September 1994 at Split and Poreč (Croatia) the XIII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Early Christian Archaeology. He also was the editor of the Proceedings of the Congress in three volumes: the volumes published the papers of scholars from 29 countries (Rome-Split, 1998). Marin's international reputation was established still more, when in 2007, at the occasion of a meeting of the European academies in Paris, he was invited to give the History lecture at the *Institut de France*. Finally, let me emphasize that Marin has the particular merit not to limit his research to Antiquity

only but to extend it to the Middle Ages. Moreover, from a methodological point of view, as far as the archaeological and epigraphical disciplines are concerned, Marin's ideas can be applied usefully during research on Modern and even Contemporary History.

Marin's scientific approach is inspired by two specific methodologies. The first methodology was elaborated during Marin's research on the Augusteum of Naronia and was specified in a publication at the occasion of the Oxford exhibition *The Rise and Fall of an Imperial Shrine*. The methodology consists in confronting the detailed analysis of the excavated monuments of Naronia with the still available written historical sources and to integrate them into a synthesis. The second methodology is characterized by a specific epigraphical approach and was elaborated during his project of editing the '*Corpus of Salonitan Inscriptions from the Early Christian Period*'. Thanks to Marin's publication the huge collection of inscriptions is now available to all scholars, involved in the research on the subject. The publication makes possible for ancient historians to combine the study of historical monuments with the study of archival and epigraphical material, facilitating substantially the writing of a synthesis on the ancient history of Dalmatia.

To conclude my laudatio I would like to quote a number of national and international personalities and scholars who expressed their admiration for Marin's scientific research on the archaeological and epigraphical history of the Hellenistic and Roman Period.

Michèle Boccoz (*Les projets franco-croates et les savants français qui se sont illustrés dans la recherche et la valorisation du patrimoine croate*, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, 2016, p. 20): 'le professeur Marin incarne, depuis de nombreuses années, l'excellence de la coopération scientifique franco-croate'.

Professor Pierre Gros (*ibidem*, p. 39): 'E. Marin a retracé (dans le livre sur les fouilles de Naronia) le long et passionnant itinéraire scientifique, auquel il a pris une part prépondérante, qui en une décennie a conduit de la découverte... (du site) de l'Augusteum de Naronia à son identification, sa préservation, sa restauration et sa magistrale mise en valeur... Il a su reconnaître l'importance du corpus iconographique... il a puissamment contribué à l'heureuse issue d'une des belles aventures scientifiques de la fin du siècle dernier et du début de celui-ci'.

Professor Rajko Bratož (reviewer of the book *Mursa: Colonia Aelia at the Limes of the Roman Empire*, Zagreb-Osijek, 2018, p. 11) emphasizes that Marin's book 'shows his extraordinary erudition which covers many areas of ancient history, all the relevant fields of archaeology as well as political, military and religious history. It also shows superb knowledge about extensive, sometimes rather distant, parts of the Roman Empire: the Danubian region, the Balkans and Italy, as well as Hispania, Gaul and Britannia'.

Professor Pavao Rudan, secretary-general of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, quoting an assessment of Marin's scholarship by Jean Leclant, Egyptologist, *secrétaire perpétuel* of the French *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (in the introduction of the book '*Mursa: Colonia Aelia at the Limes of the Roman Empire*', p. 13): 'Should we make a list of the world's most important active scholars, whose studies have contributed considerably to the enhancement of our knowledge in various areas of ancient history, especially in Early Christianity, the name Emilio Marin would immediately appear with utmost clarity. It is incredible rare and fortunate how he truly excels in so many disciplines, each of which forms a unit within itself'.

Finally, in the book on Mursa Marin concludes on page 279 with a significant question: 'Is an archaeologist, in fact, not instructed to discover the secret of a temple or of some other monument in that small piece of a broken column or in another element of the monument, which he himself revealed and which he is studying? Should a historian, to the extent scientific postulates allow, not be invited to tell the story of a temple or of some other monument he is studying?'