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Montenegro's Gulf of Kotor as a historical border region: Political rivalry, cultural competition, and local co-existence in a long-term perspective

This essay argues that Boka Kotorska, Montenegro's Gulf of Kotor region, can be conceptualised as a political, cultural, and religious border region where 'East' and 'West', the Orthodox and Catholic worlds, encountered each other and overlapped over a long period of time. There were various political and economic actors involved in this historical process of rivalry and co-existence, including Byzantium, Venice, Serbia, the Ottoman Empire, and Montenegro and its predecessors Duklja and Zeta. The Gulf of Kotor became a region where a large number of Catholic and Italian-influenced settlements sprung up, although the Orthodox population appears to have constituted a majority of the population even in Venetian and Austrian-controlled territory between the Late Middle Ages and the early twentieth century. Patterns of co-existence in the town of Kotor and elsewhere did not prevent the emergence of religious and political conflict on many occasions. But these contradictory aspects of rivalry and co-existence balanced each other during most of the long period that the Gulf of Kotor region had a certain political, economic, and cultural importance. This may contribute to our understanding of the dynamics of larger and smaller European border regions and of European history as a whole. In a micro-region like Boka Kotorska destructive confrontation and constructive interpenetration can be observed as a long-term process.

Key words: Gulf of Kotor; *longue durée* history; border regions; cultural competition; religious identity; political rivalry

In present-day Montenegro the region of Boka Kotorska, which in English is usually referred to as the Gulf (or Bay) of Kotor and which constitutes a Mediterranean 'fjord' system penetrating inland over a length of almost thirty kilometres, is often described by local inhabitants as a place that must be seen as different from the rest of the country. Visitors to Boka Kotorska are told that the region is 'not the same as Montenegro', is 'actually not a historical part of Montenegro', is 'different from the real Montenegro', and so on, although there are no negative feelings about Montenegro. Boka inhabitants point to the maritime and international traditions of the Gulf of Kotor, the greater openness or even 'cosmopolitanism' of the people, and to the fact that the local population is of mixed religious identity, containing a substantial percentage of Roman Catholics alongside an Orthodox majority. There are also people who refer to the existence of a Croatian national minority in the city of Kotor and other places of the Gulf region, with some ethnic Croats regretting the fact that the percentage of Catholics is allegedly 'rapidly declining' and the

number of Croats even faster. Other Boka inhabitants deny this and claim that the percentage of Catholics is still considerable in the region as a whole. According to the census of 2011, the proportion of Roman Catholics in the Kotor District was almost 12%,¹ but it is not easy to ascertain what are the precise proportions of religious or national allegiance in specific localities in the Gulf of Kotor region at the present time and the stories that are told to the visitor from outside are often vague, tendentious, and contradictory.

It is clear, however, that the relative size of the Catholic population decreased considerably during the past 250 years and especially during the past eighty years or so; the position of the Croatian minority in present-day Montenegro is even weaker. In 1748, when the first reliable census data were collected for twenty localities in Boka Kotorska, there were 7,289 Catholics (almost 42% of the total population) and 10,113 Orthodox believers in the Venetian-administered territory. In 1890, there were 11,825 Catholics (more than 34%) and 22,794 Orthodox inhabitants in the region; in 1921, 10,497 Catholics (less than one-third) and 21,739 Orthodox. In 2003 the proportion of Catholics in Boka Kotorska had declined to a pitiful 11.3%, the proportion of Croats to 8.2%. It is remarkable that the percentage of Croats in Boka Kotorska actually reached a high point of some 24% in 1961, but then began to rapidly decline towards a level of less than 10% in 1981 and some 8% in 1991. We must leave the precise interpretation of these figures to the experts – perhaps migration and other demographic factors on the one hand and national-political factors on the other hand – but it is clear that the Catholics and, even more, those that dare to report themselves as Croats are in a weak position in the present-day Montenegro and Gulf of Kotor region. According to the census of 2003, the Croatian minority had a slightly better than hopeless position in only two towns: Kotor (7.8% Croats) and especially Tivat (19.7%). The percentage of people that report themselves as Catholics is somewhat higher, but only one-third of what it was some eighty years ago, in 1921.² While some people are pessimistic about the future of cultural diversity in Boka Kotorska because of Orthodox and nationalist Montenegrin pressure, others stress the unchanging character of a regional tradition of tolerance, multicultural co-existence, and religious diversity. It is in fact this historical tradition of religious and cultural co-existence and creative interpenetration (the dynamics and effects of long-term mutual influences) which is seen by some historians and more casual commentators as typical of the Gulf of Kotor region. This is certainly correct to some extent, as this essay hopes to show, but on the other hand it is also true that there was an impressive level of almost incessant political conflict and cultural competition going on as well, which is equally characteristic of the long history of Boka Kotorska during a period of 1500 years or more.

An investigation of ethno-cultural, religious, socio-economic, and political features and trends in the Gulf of Kotor region over the long term (*longue durée*, as French historians would say) could be a useful contribution to our attempts to understand the complexities of European history and of different European regions, in particular border regions. It may show how both conflict

¹ POLÁČKOVÁ, Zuzana and VAN DUIN, Pieter, 'Montenegro Old and New: History, Politics, Culture, and the People', *Studia Politica Slovaca*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (2013), pp. 60-82, here p. 79.

² PASINOVIĆ, Milenko M.: *Hrvati u Crnoj Gori, s posebnim osvrtom na Boku kotorsku i drugu polovicu XX. stoljeća* (Kotor/Rijeka, 2005), pp. 10, 16-22, 25, 44; PASINOVIĆ, Milenko M.: 'Tripundanske obredne svečanosti – dio nematerijalne kulturne baštine', *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru*, Vol. LVII-LVIII (2009-2010), p. 197. In the latter essay Pasinović notes that the celebration of St Tryphon's Day in the Croatian milieu in Kotor is negatively influenced by the 'changes in population' since the 1990s.

and co-existence, both competition and cultural interpenetration, were significant features of what we may call political-civilisational and cultural-religious 'border regions'. It might be argued that almost all regions – or at least very many of them – of the culturally, linguistically, and politically diverse and fragmented European continent could in one way or another be described as border regions. However, there is a difference between some European regions and others as far as the long-term significance and impact of certain crucial differentiating aspects is concerned, especially with regard to religious, linguistic, and cultural cleavages and in terms of political or economic rivalries resulting from the influence of geographic and strategic factors. The political and cultural factors that determined the formation of border regions in this more distinct sense of the word were, above all, the following (we will distinguish four of them). First, the renewed deepening of the divide between the West Roman and East Roman empires, between the Latin and the Greek world. Secondly, the continuation of this cleavage in the form of escalating rivalry between the Catholic and Orthodox Church traditions. Thirdly, the growth of trade and the appearance of newcomers in smaller 'sub-regions' or micro-regions that lay astride this 'borderline' roughly separating different cultural worlds (for example, Slavs, Venetians, or Ottoman Turks in the western Balkans or Boka Kotorska). Fourthly, the rise of new political, cultural, and national conflicts in regions which suffered endemically from the problematical consequences of political instability, new and old imperial ambitions, complex demographic movements and ethno-linguistic structures, and religious rivalries closely associated with the ups and downs of successive political entities. The micro-region of Boka Kotorska, one – and certainly not the least interesting – of these border regions in the Mediterranean, Adriatic, and south-east European worlds, became a theatre of rivalry between Venice and Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire and different Christian principalities, and between the ambitions of the Roman Catholic Church (and local Catholic bishops) and those of different Orthodox churches (Byzantine, Serbian, Zetan, etc.). There was a remarkable degree of cultural co-existence and religious interpenetration in the Gulf of Kotor region through the ages. But there were also many long-lasting rivalries and forms of cultural competition in what really looked like a civilisational and international political border region. This border region was characterised by a combination of structural friction and creative mutual influences, of problematical differences and peaceful cultural interpenetration, of political conflict and forms of local co-existence. The history of Boka Kotorska as a political and cultural border region can be followed during the astoundingly long period from at least the fifth century up to the present time. What follows below is an interpretative outline of this *longue durée* history, illustrated by some of the more interesting and significant evidence we have at our disposal. This article does not try to present a theory of border regions in European history,³ but wants to show the usefulness of analysing the rather unknown history of Boka Kotorska in terms of a 'border-region approach'. It follows in the form of an hypothesis, the observation made by

³ Elements of such a theory, encompassing both conflict and co-existence, can be found on the regional level of the Balkans, of the Adriatic, of Europe as a whole, and in terms of the comparative history of the world, to mention a few dimensions. See for example, HUPCHICK, Dennis P.: *The Balkans: from Constantinople to Communism* (New York, 2002); CABANES, Pierre (ed.), *Histoire de l'Adriatique* (Paris, 2001); BARTLETT, Robert: *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350* (London, 1993); ROBERTS, J.M.: *The Penguin History of the World* (London, 1995), esp. Book Four.

the Montenegrin cultural historian Milenko M. Pasinović, who writes that in the Boka Kotorska region ‘two types of civilisation, West and East’ used to meet.⁴

In the course of the fifth century the Western and the Eastern Roman Empire were increasingly growing apart, with the Western Empire collapsing completely but the Eastern Empire evolving into a major political and cultural factor in the eastern and central parts of the Mediterranean world and on the Balkans. In Rome, however, the local bishop – later called the Pope – succeeded in proclaiming himself and having himself accepted as the principal bishop of the Christian Church, claiming to be the successor to St Peter himself. Even the Eastern Church had to acknowledge the special status of the Pope in Rome, but his ecclesiastical power was restricted in the Eastern Empire by the claims of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the political status of the Byzantine Emperor. Both political and ecclesiastical rivalry and a growing divergence in terms of ecclesiastical organisation and Christian ritual caused that the Church of Rome and the Eastern Church were growing apart until the moment in 1054 when both sides had to accept that a ‘Great Schism’ had taken place.⁵ As far as it was possible at all to draw a clear geographic line across the western Balkans region (and this was by no means always the case, especially before the thirteenth century) it appeared that the region of present-day Montenegro lay exactly astride this religious divide. The Gulf of Kotor and most of the Dalmatian coastal lands to the north – but for a long time, not some of the areas south of the River Neretva – were largely dominated by the church administration and religious culture of the Roman Church. The south-eastern part of Montenegro (Duklja) was mainly influenced by the Church of Constantinople and belonged during most of the period until the late twelfth century, to the Byzantine Empire. Since the Montenegro and Boka Kotorska micro-regions were parts of the larger civilisational and political Latin-Byzantine border region, which embraced the Adriatic Sea and its western Balkans hinterland,⁶ ambitious local rulers could try to exploit the East-West rivalry and to establish themselves as autonomous princes manipulating the question of ecclesiastical allegiance. Although as late as the tenth century there had not yet emerged a formal split between the Eastern and Western Churches, there were by that time distinct ecclesiastical camps which competed for adherents in a border region like the future Montenegro. Along this region’s seaboard the religious orientation of the local population was uncertain and shifting: there were relations with Rome as well as Byzantium, reflecting the ambivalent religious climate of the area.⁷

The first autonomous political entity created by the mainly Slavic population of medieval Montenegro was the principality of Duklja (Dioclea). This also had consequences in cultural and religious terms. The eleventh century, for example, saw the rise of the cult of St Vladimir, an early Duklja ruler. On the one hand this could be seen as an illustration of the Slavic Orthodox tendency to turn indigenous rulers into ‘national-church’ saints. But on the other hand the cult of St Vladimir also became an example of religious syncretism, because both Orthodox, Catholic,

⁴ PASINOVIĆ, Milenko M.: *Kotor: Patrimoine mondial culturel et naturel*, Trans. Khédidja Mahdi-Bolfek (Zagreb, 2007), p. 26.

⁵ See for example, NORWICH, John Julius: *A Short History of Byzantium* (London, 1998), pp. 229-30.

⁶ The French historian Jacques le Goff uses the term ‘fracture line’ and writes: ‘L’Adriatique est sur la ligne de fracture entre Occident et Orient jusqu’à aujourd’hui’. See his Preface (p. 9) to CABANES (ed.), *Histoire de l’Adriatique*. See on the special character of the Adriatic also BRAUDEL, Fernand: *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York, 1975), Vol. I, pp. 124-33.

⁷ ROBERTS, Elizabeth: *Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro* (London, 2007), pp. 43, 47, 49-50.

and even Muslim believers in the Montenegro region participated in it from the later Middle Ages. It was perhaps one of the early examples of how in Montenegro and Boka Kotorska local people and early polities were able to create their own versions of the Christian cult, without completely submitting themselves to either the directives of Rome or those of Byzantium, to either the Latin rite or the Orthodox one. But during the eleventh century the coastal towns of Duklja came increasingly under Latin influence, which meant the religious influence of Rome but also the economic and political influences of Italy and Venice. The region continued to belong to the Byzantine Empire in a formal political sense, but the Roman and Byzantine ecclesiastical organisations and practices began to overlap. This demonstrated and was perhaps the most tangible example of the character of Duklja and Boka Kotorska as a border region, and it soon became clear that the ecclesiastical loyalty of one local tribe or ruler or another, of one town or local community or another, or even of one bishop or religious figure or another could change from one moment to the next. In the 1070s the ruler of Duklja petitioned the Pope for his own archdiocese in the coastal town of Bar and for a royal crown, which demonstrated that the religious and the political sphere were inseparable. This action was probably directed against the stifling influence of Byzantium and a good example of how the emerging polities in the region were trying to exploit the East-West rivalry. By becoming a papal vassal the Duklja prince widened his political options, and by marrying a Norman Catholic woman from southern Italy he eventually secured his archdiocese of Bar in 1089. This Catholic archdiocese extended its jurisdiction into previously Orthodox territory and established a tradition of administering church communities even in the inland Serbian lands. It seemed as if the Catholic Church was making progress in the Montenegro region and becoming a serious competitor to Byzantium, but there were several problems that continued to make the situation rather unpredictable. It was not clear how much resistance from the Byzantine or the Slav Orthodox believers and institutions could be expected and to make matters worse, the already existing Catholic archdiocese of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) regarded and treated the new archdiocese of Bar as an unpleasant upstart and competitor on the Dalmatian coast.⁸ Thus the ruler of Duklja, after c. 1100 usually known as Zeta, was operating in a complex political and religious constellation, which was further complicated by the rise of the Serbian principality of Raška in the interior.

In the second half of the twelfth century the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the western Balkans region suffered a set-back when the new ruler of Raška, Nemanja, was re-baptised into the Orthodox faith (he was born in Zeta and had originally been baptised as a Catholic). Around 1190 Zeta was incorporated in the expanding Raška state, but it maintained a degree of autonomy and separate identity. The Orthodox Serbs were under pressure from both Byzantium and the Catholic world and shortly after 1200 the Hungarian king Imre even planned to convert them to Catholicism. Like the rulers of Zeta, those of Raška had to manoeuvre in all sorts of ways to preserve their independence and to choose the type of religion and ecclesiastical organisation that suited them best. The religious politics of the Raška Serbs had also consequences for Zeta and the region of Boka Kotorska. In 1217 the Serbian ruler Sava – who later became a monk and a Serbian saint – requested a papal crown for his brother Stefan, who succeeded him as prince of Raška. In a manoeuvre that looked like the earlier events in Duklja/Zeta, King

⁸ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 52, 54-6; HARRIS, Robin: *Dubrovnik: A History* (London, 2003), p. 42, but dating the foundation of the archdiocese of Bar a century later.

Stefan married a Venetian Catholic woman. However, it soon became apparent that this did not ensure a strong Catholic religious influence, but only a limited degree of political influence in the Balkan political hornets' nest. The western card was played to outmanoeuvre Byzantium and wrest concessions from it, and in 1219 the Byzantine ecclesiastical authorities agreed to give the Serbs an autocephalous Orthodox Church. This in turn meant that more distance could be taken from the Catholic Church, that the Serbs and the Raška state became more purely Orthodox (in a national Serbian way), and that the Serbian Orthodox influence in Zeta increased as well.

For Montenegro and in particular the Gulf of Kotor region it even meant that an Orthodox bishop was installed on an island near the Prevlaka peninsula in the Bay of Tivat, the central part of the Gulf of Kotor. On the island of Ostrvo, indeed, an old Benedictine monastery from the ninth or the tenth century⁹ was turned into the Orthodox monastery of St Michael Archangel, and here the new Orthodox bishop of Zeta now established his seat. (In 1453 the Orthodox monastery was apparently destroyed by the Venetians and around this time the Franciscans established themselves in a monastery on another nearby island, known as *Gospa od Milosti*, Our Lady of Mercy.) The inclusion of Montenegro in the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church undermined the Catholic influence in Zeta, but the coastal cities retained a large percentage of Catholics alongside the Orthodox believers. The Catholics in the town of Kotor had many privileges that were protected by the Raška and Zeta rulers, and there was even a degree of tension between the rather independent Kotor Catholics and the Catholic archbishop of Bar, who felt that their affairs belonged to his jurisdiction. Kotor became increasingly important as a centre of local and international trade and was the starting point of a long-distance trade and communication route leading into the interior to Serbia and Byzantine territory. The route was used by both the Venetians (who called it the *Via di Zenta*, the 'Zeta Road') and the Ragusans, the merchants of Dubrovnik, who were the principal competitors of the Venetians and Kotor. The competition between the local Catholic ecclesiastical institutions continued as well, which demonstrated that the region was not only affected by religious (Catholic-Orthodox) rivalry but also by various forms of power struggle, both secular and ecclesiastical. During the thirteenth century the Bar and Dubrovnik archbishops fought with each other over the rights of their respective archdioceses in the coastal and inland areas. At the same time the economic competition between Dubrovnik and Kotor became more intense, with Kotor being the object of Ragusan machinations and violence, and not much later, pirates from Perast in the Gulf of Kotor attacking ships from Dubrovnik. To make matters even more complicated, the bishop of Kotor managed to put himself under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Bari (not to be confused with Bar) in Italy while retaining jurisdiction over the Catholics in Kotor's immediate hinterland. The Catholic influence in Zeta was by no means completely eliminated and could be increased again by unexpected developments. Thus in the second half of the thirteenth century Jelena, the widowed mother of the Serbian king but herself a pious Catholic from Hungary, was given control of the partly autonomous Zeta and established Franciscan mission centres in Kotor, Bar, and Ulcinj. The Franciscans and the Dominicans were to play an important part in the efforts of the Catholic

⁹ See for the Benedictines and their early history in the Boka region, MILANOVIĆ, Jozo: 'Benediktinci u Boki Kotorskoj', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 55-65; BUTORAC, Pavao: 'Osnutak opatije Sv. Jurja – posveta crkve 1247. godine,' *ibid.*, pp. 183-8 for the foundation of the Benedictine monastery of St George on the island of the same name near Perast, one of the oldest and most impressive in Boka Kotorska; also BUTORAC, Pavao: *Opatija Sv. Jurja kod Perasta* (Perast, 1999) for a complete and well-documented history of this monastery.

Church to root out 'heresy' and to reduce the influence of the 'schismatic' Orthodox Churches. A particularly dangerous heresy was believed to be that of the manicheistic sect of the Bogomils, which infiltrated from Bosnia and some traces of which have been documented in Kotor, although its influence there and in Zeta (and even in Bosnia) was probably exaggerated.¹⁰

By the fourteenth century the influence of the Catholic Church began to decline more seriously, at least in the interior. After the foundation of the influential Serbian archdiocese of Pécs (in Kosovo, 'Old Serbia') in 1346, the Catholic Church in Zeta began to lose ground and was increasingly confined to the coastal areas, whose political, economic, and cultural character further diverged from the inland regions. In the coastal towns, both along the Gulf of Kotor and the Adriatic seaboard (Budva, Bar, Ulcinj), there continued to be a strong penetration of Catholic and Latin culture. These towns had an autonomous status and even had their own laws, which were quite different from the Serbian and Zetan legislation and more and more influenced by the rising Adriatic Power, Venice. In the fourteenth century the custom emerged in the coastal region for the urban elites – and sometimes even non-urban local rulers – to be enrolled as patricians of Venice, truly a hallmark of an expanding imperial and maritime social culture. The increasingly important city of Kotor managed as yet to retain its autonomous political institutions and for some decades even its complete independence, but it was vulnerable to the growing political chaos in its hinterland following the disintegration of the Serbian empire after its defeat at Kosovo Polje by the Ottomans (1389). The chaos and the violence of the magnates, clans, and tribes would force Kotor and other towns to seek the protection of Venice as the lesser evil, which thus could strengthen its grip on the region despite the many conflicts in which it was involved itself. Kotor also continued to be enmeshed in its long-standing rivalry with Dubrovnik, a dangerous rival of Venice, and the city was threatened by the political claims and the rising power of the Balšić clan in Zeta. In 1362 Venice had already helped to reach a truce between Kotor and the Balšići, insisting on the right to protect the city even if it remained independent. The leader of the Balšić clan converted to Catholicism in the apparent belief that this would make his family and his aspiring dynasty more acceptable to the population of Bar (which was usually loyal to the Zeta and Serbian rulers) and of the other coastal towns. In 1382 Kotor received again support from Venice and also from Hungary, this time against the ambitious Bosnian king Tvrtko, who encroached upon the Gulf of Kotor from the north and established a new settlement on its northern shore which later became the town of Herceg Novi. In the late fourteenth century the chaos further increased when another Montenegrin clan, the Crnojevići, began to expand its power in the region as a serious rival to the Balšići. Venice now began to follow a policy of permanently establishing itself on the coast and, so to speak, to replace its old system of indirect rule with one of annexation and direct rule.

The interesting thing about the Crnojevići was that although they accepted the status of actual vassals of Venice as did the Balšići, they nevertheless remained loyal to the Orthodox faith. This may have been the expression of a new resolve to regard religious identity as a serious matter of honour and cultural loyalty and to move away from the stage of confessional opportunism. It did not mean that in other respects the Zetan clans could not be realistic in their assessment of the

¹⁰ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 59-65; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, pp. 5, 61; HARRIS, *Dubrovnik*, pp. 67, 114-5, 439n; OGNJENOVIĆ, Stevan: *Montenegro: your guide*, Trans. Marko Šundić (2nd ed., Budva, 2010), pp. 144-5, 164, 176; KOVIJANIĆ, Risto: *Kotorski medaljoni* (Perast, 2007), pp. 57-60; MALCOLM, Noel: *Bosnia: A Short History* (London, 1996), Chapter 3.

structure of power, even if they tended to engage in fighting and plundering whenever there was an opportunity. The Venetian policy of rather heavy taxation of the local population and of intervening in the various power struggles led to disaffection and occasional revolts, but the absence of anything that looked like an effective political and administrative centre in Zeta at this time made it relatively easy for the Venetians to prevail after 1400. In the early fifteenth century the last Balšić ruler in Zeta made himself impossible vis-à-vis the Venetians, not only by suddenly becoming Orthodox again and strengthening the Orthodox Church but also by trying to acquire the ownership of the economically important salt works in the area of Grbalj south of Prevlaka and Kotor. The area had a strategic importance in addition to being one of the major attractions for the Venetians. When the Balšić chief died in 1417, Venice occupied several coastal towns – though apparently not yet Budva and Bar – and incorporated them in its maritime empire. In 1420 Kotor, the major economic and cultural centre in the Boka region, placed itself under Venetian sovereignty as well, but Venice allowed the city and the other coastal towns to continue to enjoy a substantial degree of autonomy. This political concession and the old Venetian policy of bribing the local elites brought many of them over to the Venetian side as the obvious lesser evil under the prevailing circumstances. One factor that seems to have been crucial in this context as well was the role of Dubrovnik, which was doing all it could to interrupt the commercial development of pre-1420 independent Kotor, thereby – perhaps against its own interests – practically forcing the Kotor citizenry to seek the protection of Venice.¹¹ However, both Serbia (although seriously weakened by the Ottoman onslaught) and the leading Montenegrin clans remained important actors in the equation as well. The Boka Kotorska and wider Zeta region therefore continued to be a theatre of friction and religious competition as well as of economic, political, and cultural co-existence on the level of urban and village communities that were seeking peace and stability. Some educated citizens of Kotor managed to make a career in the Latin chancellery of Orthodox rulers that maintained contacts with the west. Nikola Arhilupis, for example, became Latin notary and chancellor of the Serbian ruler – now called ‘despot’, despite or because of his subordination to the Ottomans – during the years 1423-40. He mediated between the Serbian despot and the Venetian authorities in Kotor.¹²

In the mid-fifteenth century the rise of the Crnojević clan and its rivalry with Venice over control of the coastal towns led to a tougher Venetian policy in several ways, including religion. The town of Budva, which had thus far been left alone, was occupied and the independent Orthodox metropolitan of Zeta residing there was displaced (apparently he had moved his residence at one point from the Prevlaka area to Budva). Venice’s reticence in occupying Budva in 1417 may have had to do with its desire not to offend the local Orthodox Church as long as its position of domination in the region had not been ensured. The city of Bar, with its Catholic archbishop, was occupied as well, as was the Zetan portion of the Adriatic seaboard further south. It would seem that this more aggressive Venetian policy had certain consequences in terms of religious policy and confessional attitudes in the region. The Orthodox presence along the coast was weakened, and especially Kotor set about expelling Orthodox clergy and appropriating Orthodox Church lands in the area. Apparently there were no Orthodox monks left in the Gulf of Kotor region

¹¹ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 69-70, 74-5, 79, 86-90; BUTORAC, Pavao: *Kotor za samovlade (1355.-1420.)* (Perast, 1999); DABINOVIĆ, Anton St.: ‘Predaja Kotora Veneciji’, *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 197-204 for the surrender of Kotor to Venice in 1419-20.

¹² KOVIJANIĆ, *Kotorski medaljoni*, pp. 129-30.

by 1455. There were obviously tensions, mutual mistrust, and a growing degree of rivalry and power struggle between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, possibly encouraged by the declining influence of the Serbian and Zetan principalities after a period of Serbian Orthodox glory and, of course, by the rising power of Venice. Such periods of change in power structure could evidently lead to a decline in religious tolerance, which benefited especially from a condition of relative political stability and Catholic-Orthodox equilibrium. Religious friction, which inevitably was an aspect of the multi-confessional situation, could be intensified by political motives (power and status), economic motives (church property and revenue), and psychological factors (symbolic and cultural dominance in the public domain). Thus in the city of Kotor, the principal centre in the Gulf region, the Catholic elite and the local Catholic Church tried to use the new situation of apparent security created by Venetian protection to eliminate the Orthodox Church institutions. While behind this action there were undoubtedly political and economic in addition to purely religious factors, cultural and religious competition must have been an important motive in its own right. However, the uncertainty and unpredictability of the political situation in the Zeta region made it necessary for all sides to manoeuvre in a cautious and pragmatic way. A policy of religious intolerance and cultural repression was hardly an option in the long run, because it might generate an atmosphere of hatred that could turn against those who had dominated the situation yesterday but the next moment saw their position weakened by new developments.

Shortly after 1455, indeed, a pact was concluded between Venice and Stefan Crnojević, who had become the new strong man in Zeta or what was left of it and who was keen to act as the protector of the Orthodox Church. This guaranteed the rights of the Zetan Orthodox inhabitants in the Venetian-controlled territory and the autonomy of Orthodox bishops vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, which looked like a situation of shared sovereignty. The fact that the position of Venice – and also that of Crnojević – began to be threatened by the advancing Ottoman armies may have been another reason for the two Christian sides to avoid mutual conflict. In 1482 the Zetan ruler Ivan Crnojević was routed by an Ottoman military offensive and decided to move his administrative centre and the Zetan Orthodox Metropolitan from a site near Lake Skadar up into the mountains to Cetinje, just above Kotor. The link with Kotor enabled the Crnojević political centre to continue seeking Venetian or other outside help and to introduce a number of practical and cultural improvements. Masons were brought from Dubrovnik to build a new Orthodox church in Cetinje and the next Zeta ruler Djuradj Crnojević, who had enjoyed some education, commissioned the first Cyrillic South Slav books with the help of Venetian book printers. But at the same time the Ottoman onslaught continued and helped to put an end to the old Zetan secular power and Crnojević rule, with only the local Orthodox bishop retaining a measure of effective and symbolic authority. In 1496 Djuradj Crnojević left Cetinje for good and went to Venice, where he died not much later. Zeta, or Montenegro (Crna Gora) as the territory was now increasingly called, was formally incorporated in the Ottoman Empire, although some of the Montenegrin tribes managed to maintain a factual degree of autonomy as did the bishop. This ensured that Montenegro survived as an autonomous tribal and theocratic entity, which succeeded in gradually strengthening itself in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But Ottoman power became a new reality after 1500, which also had serious implications for Venice and the

position of the Gulf of Kotor population. In the early sixteenth century the Ottomans captured the Grbalj salt works, a serious setback for Venice and its allies, and Montenegro was declared an Ottoman Sandžak (administrative district).¹³ A new period in the history of the Gulf of Kotor and Montenegro had begun and while a degree of tension between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches continued to exist, the threat of their common Turkish enemy ensured a renewed measure of mutual toleration, co-existence, and cultural interpenetration. The brief episode of Venetian and Catholic intolerance of the mid-fifteenth century did not become a long-term trend, even if religious friction and separation remained a notable feature of the 'multicultural' situation.

Kotor and the other towns in the Gulf region and along the southern Adriatic seaboard were in Venetian hands from the fifteenth century until 1797. The struggle between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (which did not prevent their trade relations), between the rebellious Montenegro principality and the Muslim armies, and the complex and ambiguous relationship between the Montenegrins and the Venetians were the principal factors determining the uncertain political situation in the region. It is within this political, military, and economic context that the trend of cultural and religious developments has to be seen, although it would be wrong simply to reduce local cultural phenomena and patterns of religious relations to the geopolitical sphere. The world of culture and religion obviously had its own dynamics and its own meanings, for all the influence that political realities could exert on cultural trends. The coastal Montenegro region had had for centuries a special profile as far as religious expressions and different cultural activities were concerned. The 'Greek painters' of the southern Adriatic coast and Kotor were a reminder of the Byzantine past and of the old influence of Orthodox traditions, with Greek Orthodox motifs influencing Catholic religious painting and vice versa. Perhaps especially at Kotor, a rich cultural life characterised the zone of Catholic-Orthodox encounter and overlapping. Some local saints were venerated in both the Catholic and the Orthodox traditions, as can still be seen on church walls which also display inscriptions in Latin as well as in Old Church Slavonic, probably one of the most impressive examples of religious co-existence and interpenetration. Thus in the fourteenth century some of the 'Greek painters' in Kotor painted frescoes in the Cathedral of St Tryphon (Sv. Tripun, the patron saint of Kotor) showing saints whose names are written in Cyrillic and in Latin, which suggests among other things that both the Catholics and the Orthodox venerated St Tryphon as a crucial saint. The same phenomenon can be seen in the church on the artificial island of *Gospa od Škrpjela* (Our Lady of the Cliff) near Perast, in the Church of St Basil in Stoliv with its Latin and Cyrillic wall paintings from the late fifteenth century, and in other churches and monasteries across the Boka region. The impressive Cathedral of St Tryphon in Kotor was built in the twelfth century, but on earlier foundations of a church from the ninth or tenth century. These foundations were rectangular (perhaps suggesting an early Romanesque structure) and not circular as claimed by the Byzantine emperor and author Constantine Porphyrogenitus in one of his works from the tenth century. The smaller Catholic Church of St Lucas, also in Kotor, demonstrated that the co-existence of Catholics and Orthodox could be a living reality at a later stage, however. The church was built in the late twelfth century, a period of intense East-West interaction and mutual cultural influences. Its architecture was influenced by that of southern Italy as well as Serbia, and the church can therefore be seen as an emblem of

¹³ FINE, John V.A.: *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 533-4, 560-1, 600-3; ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 92, 94, 97-9, 105; POLÁČKOVÁ and VAN DUIN, 'Montenegro Old and New', pp. 63-4.

the multicultural Kotor region. From 1657 to 1812 the Church of St Lucas was used by both Catholics and Orthodox, evidence of a remarkable degree of tolerance and mutual understanding in a city in which the Catholics were nevertheless the dominant element. On the other hand the Venetian conquest of Kotor meant that the native artists were marginalised following the arrival of Venetian and other Italian artists and also by new – perhaps more ‘purely Catholic’ – influences. But this did not mean that the autochthonous traditions entirely disappeared or that the Venetian influence had only negative consequences. A field of cultural endeavour like the new humanist literature showed that this was certainly not the case.¹⁴

The interaction and mutual dependence of the local Catholic and Orthodox population also had a migration and demographic side: part of the population of Ottoman-occupied Montenegro moved to neighbouring Venetian-controlled territory to escape Muslim rule. In addition there was a downward movement from the mountains in the Boka region itself and from autonomous Montenegro and Cetinje to Kotor and the coastal areas. This happened mainly for economic reasons given that life in Montenegro and in the mountains generally was one of bare subsistence in contrast to the more affluent conditions in a ‘sophisticated’ place like Kotor. Especially during the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, large numbers of mountain stock-farmers and marginal peasants moved to the shores of the Gulf of Kotor. Many of them, or the next generation, became seamen, benefiting from the opportunities that the Venetian Empire had to offer in terms of employment and relative social advancement. New ideas and cultural features were entering the Gulf of Kotor region and the minds of the people who were transformed from peasants to seamen, which generated a new outlook. As in the region around Dubrovnik, the possibility to become a seaman undermined the system of serfdom or any tendencies in that direction and helped to create a freer existence for the coastal population. A town like Perast, to the north of Kotor, became increasingly populous and important because of its strategic position and its opportunities in terms of trade and maritime employment. Prčanj was an example of a village of seamen who in the seventeenth century were granted some statutory privileges including exemption from the duty to perform physical labour for the Venetian state. The special social character of the Boka world did not mean that all connections between the coast and the inland Montenegro region were cut off or that developments in Montenegro were irrelevant to the *Bocchesi*, the inhabitants of Boka Kotorska, many of whom were bilingual (Slavic-Italian). On the contrary, the people of Kotor and other towns and villages sometimes benefited from the anti-Ottoman struggle of, or the support provided by, autonomous Montenegro. When in 1538 Kotor was besieged by an Ottoman army, the city managed to survive partly because of the provisions delivered by the Montenegrins. Other towns were less lucky. In 1570 Ulcinj and Bar were taken by the Turks after Herceg Novi and a section of the northern shore of the Gulf of Kotor had already been occupied by Ottoman forces in 1483. The function and significance of the region for both the Venetians and the Ottomans was graphically illustrated by the fact that in the famous Battle of Lepanto in 1571 seamen from the Gulf of Kotor and experienced pilots from Perast

¹⁴ PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, pp. 8, 17, 20, 35, 42, 50, 83, 89; STJEPČEVIĆ, Ivo and KOVIJANIĆ, Risto: ‘Grčka slikarska škola’, *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 217-26 for the ‘Greek school of painters’, particularly in the fourteenth century; MAJIĆ, Srećko (ed.), *Pani ze Skaliska. Závětní svatině námořníků*, Trans. Tomislav Heršak (Zagreb, 2007) for the island and the remarkable church of *Gospa od Škrpjela*; NORWICH, *Short History of Byzantium*, 180ff for Constantine Porphyrogenitus; POLÁČKOVÁ and VAN DUIN, ‘Montenegro Old and New’, pp. 77-8 for other examples of Catholic-Orthodox co-existence in coastal towns.

played a prominent role, helping to ensure a Venetian/Christian victory against the Ottoman fleet. The Christian maritime victory was not decisive, however. In 1572-73 there was another Ottoman siege of Kotor with the Montenegrins again bringing in supplies. Kotor survived once more, but for the time being Kotor and Budva were the only major towns in the region that remained in Venetian hands, while the previously important Bar – though still containing a Catholic archbishop – fell into decay.¹⁵

During this difficult period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – which was at the same time a period of economic and cultural development for towns like Kotor and Perast – the mutual dependence of the Christian coastal towns and the autonomous Montenegrins may have grown stronger. The Montenegrins were dependent on Kotor for many of their textiles, ceramic wares, and weapons, while Kotor was dependent on Montenegro for its meat, cheese, timber, and other basic supplies. There were also many Orthodox Montenegrins from the Cetinje area and elsewhere who worked as domestic servants in Kotor and other coastal centres in the region. Numbers of Montenegrin women found employment in Kotor, Perast or other places, married there with Catholic men and became Catholics themselves, as did their children. This helped to maintain the relative size of the Catholic population and ensured that a large minority of more than 40% of the population in the Boka region as a whole continued to be Roman Catholics, with concentrations in towns and villages that were largely Catholic like Kotor, Dobrota, Perast, Stoliv, Tivat and several other places, according to the data from 1748.¹⁶ These data also show something else that is of great significance: it was very unusual for a locality to have a balanced Catholic-Orthodox population. A town or village was either predominantly Catholic or largely Orthodox, and only the figures for Kotor betray the presence of a religious minority (in this case the Orthodox) which made up more than 20% of the total population, the other localities showing a situation in which the size of the non-dominant religious community was absolutely marginal. This suggests that the ‘co-existence’ of the two Christian communities was in fact a question of spatial and social separation more than anything else, the only (partial) exception being Kotor. The Orthodox majority in the Boka region as a whole gradually increased, mainly because of immigration and despite some losses in terms of women who married Catholic men. The size and composition of the Orthodox population may also have been relatively unstable because of fluctuations in the migratory movements, but this did not change the general trend. Although a high degree of cultural and spatial separation thus seemed to characterise the social and demographic situation in the Gulf of Kotor, there was considerable demographic, economic, political, and military interaction between different actors in Boka Kotorska and Montenegro. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the Orthodox men of Boka were not involved in the Venetian maritime and military activities. While the Catholics were undoubtedly dominating the higher ranks of the occupational structure, there must have been many Orthodox sailors among the total number of ordinary Boka seamen.

The Venetians also employed Montenegrin messengers who travelled to Ottoman territory, into the Balkan interior, and even along the land route to Constantinople. At times of war or in-

¹⁵ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 101, 107-10; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, pp. 22, 91; ČORALIĆ, Lovorka: “‘U slavu prejasne republike’: peraški ratnici-čuvvari duždevog stijega”, *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 23-33 for Perast and its military personnel in Venetian service between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century; HARRIS, *Dubrovnik*, p. 218.

¹⁶ PASINOVIĆ, *Hrvati u Crnoj Gori*, p. 17.

tensifying religious activity the Kotor or 'Zeta' route into the interior was also used by papal and European emissaries who called on the mountain tribes to participate in war activities against the Turks. An example of this was the period of the Fifteen Years War of 1591-1606, when the Austrians played a role of some significance in this respect by seeking contact with potential allies in the western Balkans, which might be seen as a prelude to their later role as an Adriatic and Dalmatian Great Power. The year 1657 saw yet another massive Ottoman siege of Kotor, but again the city survived and could be relieved. Ten years later, in 1667, Kotor suffered an even greater catastrophe (as did Dubrovnik) when the worst earthquake in the history of the city occurred. The surviving inhabitants managed to rebuild the town and it is an intriguing question what the social and psychological consequences of this unprecedented natural disaster may have been.¹⁷ Perhaps it – and other dramatic events in the region – contributed to a greater sense of Catholic-Orthodox Christian solidarity. Indeed, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, especially during and after the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were seeking a new rapprochement in the struggle against the Turks, with the Montenegrins being used as intermediaries. The Pope made an effort to contact the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch in Peć through the Montenegro *Vladika* (the prince-bishop in Cetinje) and the Catholic Archbishop of Bar, who had apparently been tolerated by the Ottomans ever since their conquest of the city in the 1570s. In 1684 the historic town of Risan in the Gulf of Kotor, not far from Perast, was recaptured from the Ottomans by a band of hajduks, irregular fighters and mercenaries from the nearby area. The following year the same hajduk chief who had taken Risan was sent by the Venetian governor of Kotor to help Cetinje and Montenegro against an Ottoman attack. In 1687 the Venetians captured Herceg Novi, supported by the Montenegrins; it had been held by the Ottomans for two centuries. This meant that by the end of the seventeenth century the Ottoman forces had almost entirely been removed from the Gulf of Kotor and that the position of Venice was strengthened after a period of Ottoman supremacy in the region. A period of peace now ensued during which a larger number of coastal towns could begin to flourish again, although the relationship with Montenegro remained erratic. In 1692 the Montenegrins were supported by the Venetians when they had to defend Cetinje against another Ottoman attack, but the episode ended in a (temporary) Ottoman victory and a deterioration in Venetian-Montenegrin relations. It was the last attempt at close military co-operation between Montenegro and Venice, both of whom had their own interests and tended to follow their own policies.¹⁸

The long period of war and Ottoman supremacy in Montenegro and a part of the Boka Kotorska region did not mean that towns like Kotor or Perast were just suffering. On the contrary, their role as strategic outposts of the Venetian maritime empire meant that they could benefit from new economic and cultural opportunities. Many men found employment on the Venetian fleets or were employed in Venice itself, which had some interesting consequences. Indeed, it has been argued that the maritime and Venetian links led to a growing influence of 'cosmopolitan ideas' in Kotor and the Boka region.¹⁹ The Venetian incorporation of Kotor brought its inhabitants and seamen in close contact with the metropolis Venice itself and with its wide horizons. Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries a substantial number of Boka Kotorska emigrants lived in

¹⁷ For Dubrovnik an analysis has been made by Harris; see his *Dubrovnik*, Chapter 13.

¹⁸ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 111-3, 121, 124-7.

¹⁹ MAŽIBRADIĆ, Anita: 'Boka Kotorska u ozračju kosmopolitskih strujanja kroz vjekove', *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru*, Vol. LVII-LVIII (2009-2010), pp. 91-117.

Venice either temporarily or permanently. They played a prominent part in the Brotherhood of Sv. Juraj (St George) and Sv. Tripun (St Tryphon) in Venice, which largely consisted of Slavic seamen from Dalmatia who banded together for the purpose of charity, mutual assistance, and the preservation of their linguistic and cultural identity. In Kotor and the Boka region itself seamen organised a Fraternity (*Mornarica*) as well, which seems to have had both practical and representative functions and which served to strengthen local pride and self-consciousness. But Kotor also had to give up some of its privileges, for example the right to mint its own money (in 1640) and the right of noble or other prominent families to display their coats of arms and the like in the public domain (in 1691), which may have been seen by the Venetians as potentially or symbolically undermining their sovereignty.²⁰ An interesting and important way in which especially Kotor was influenced by Venetian culture was the introduction and successful development of humanist intellectual and literary culture. A Latin School must have existed in Kotor as early as the late thirteenth century, and from the fifteenth century students from Kotor began to visit and attend Italian universities. Educated men of the Catholic Church in Kotor wrote some important manuscripts on local church affairs, for example bishop Darša Meliciaka in the fourteenth century and Petar Gizda, the abbot of the monastery of St Francis in Kotor, in the fifteenth century. The oldest document in Latin in the Kotor Archives is from 1309, the oldest Cyrillic document from 1539. The sixteenth century is usually seen as the high point of the new Latinate and humanist culture in Kotor and also as the age that produced the best poetry and other forms of literature. Among the remarkable poets and famous authors from Kotor were Bernard Pima, Ljudevit Paskvalić (Lodoviko Paskvali), Đorđe Bizanti, and Kamilo Drago, all from the sixteenth century and by no means an exhaustive list. Another member of the noble family Pima from Kotor, Ljudevit Pima, became pro-rector of the University of Padua in the seventeenth century. Although Latin and the Venetian dialect of Italian were dominant in Boka literature in the sixteenth century – and Italian in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – the seventeenth century also saw the rise of the Slavic vernacular in some literary and educated circles.²¹ An example of this may have been theatre plays, about which we know more in the case of Dubrovnik, however.

Another aspect of the ‘identity’ of Kotor, the most interesting and powerful city in the Boka region, was its intense competition and apparently rather bad relationship with Dubrovnik. It has been argued that the two cities were actually rather similar, and that this was a major reason for their rivalry and mutual problems, as was of course the fact that Kotor was under Venetian protection from the first half of the fifteenth century or even earlier, which also helped it to survive as an economic (if subordinate) entity. Both cities, Kotor and Dubrovnik, were dominated by Catholic culture and had a ‘Catholic identity’ while surrounded by a large Orthodox population in their hinterland. Dubrovnik followed a policy of rather aggressive Catholicisation of the Orthodox peasants and fishermen in its territory, something that the smaller and weaker Kotor could not do

²⁰ ČORALIĆ, Lovorka: ‘Bokeljski, paštrovski i budvanski iseljenici i mletački arsenal (XV-XVIII stoljeće)’, *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru*, Vol. LVII-LVIII (2009-2010), pp. 17-27; SAULAČIĆ, Marija: ‘Prisustvo Bokelja u bratovštini Sv. Jurja i Tripuna u Veneciji i platno Vittora Carpaccia sa prikazom čuda Sv. Tripuna’, *ibid.*, pp. 375-89; MARTINOVIĆ, Jovan J.: ‘Grbovi i inicijali mletačkih rektora i providura u Kotoru’, *ibid.*, pp. 29-65; PASINOVIĆ, Kotor, p. 49; MILOŠEVIĆ, Anton: ‘Bokeljska (Kotorska) Mornarica’, *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 173-82.

²¹ KOVIJANIĆ, *Kotorski medaljoni*, pp. 71-2, 153-4, 157-70; SBUTEGA, Antun: *Ljudi iz Boke* (Kotor, 2012), pp. 85-93; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, pp. 20, 39, 49.

to the same extent for various political and economic reasons, even if attempts in this direction were made on several occasions (in the city itself, but also in its immediate hinterland). We may read the identity of Kotor from its competitive relationship with Dubrovnik and from the ways in which Dubrovnik stories and theatre plays ridiculed and denounced the *Kotorani* – as if the caricature ‘Kotor’ was what the Ragusans feared to be or tried to avoid happening to them (and presumably vice versa). Of course, Ragusan caricatures of Kotor were the result of economic competition and other forms of rivalry, but there was also a strong cultural and psychological aspect to it. Revealing was the existence of a Ragusan cult known as the ‘Three Martyrs of Kotor’, which stressed the short-sightedness of the *Kotorani* and the Venetians in contrast to the wisdom of the Ragusans. According to this legend, three men (Petar, Andrija, and Lovro Sagurović), Catholics living in Kotor around 1200, had been put to death by the local Orthodox inhabitants and their bodies had been buried somewhere on the coast between Kotor and Herceg Novi. Some years later a devout woman had a vision of where this was and brought it to the attention of the Venetian governor, the *Provveditore (Providur)* in Kotor. (That there was no Venetian governor in Kotor around 1200 is just one incorrectness, and in fact it was Dubrovnik that was ruled by Venice during the period 1205-1358). The Kotor governor refused to believe her and therefore she went to Dubrovnik, where the reaction was different. The Ragusan authorities sent a ship to the place she described, ‘where a light from heaven pinpointed the grave.’ The Ragusans brought the holy relics to Dubrovnik and placed them in the cathedral. They had understood what the *Kotorani* were unable to understand. The cult of the Three Martyrs of Kotor was flourishing by the fourteenth century and remained alive for centuries. Another example of negative stereotyping of the Kotor people by the Ragusans can be found in the literature and theatre plays of Dubrovnik, especially in the comedies of Marin Držić from the sixteenth century. The inhabitants of Kotor are represented as a lot of buffoons, ridiculous characters; their patron-saint St Tryphon is not to be taken too seriously and certainly less so than the Ragusans’ St Blaise. Because the *Kotorani* were ruled by Venice they were always interjecting Italian phrases in their language, which are translated by Držić for his Croatian-speaking audience in Dubrovnik.²² The question of language and ‘national identity’ thus played a role as well. The Dubrovnik patriciate used the Italian language as an official and administrative language, but during the period 1500-1800 the Slavic language gradually became more important in cultural life and by the early seventeenth century the Ragusans and other Croats ‘were fully conscious of belonging to the Slavic race.’²³ The same conditions and developments could be seen in Kotor, but Kotor’s submission to Venice could be used to represent the city as having no independent, respectable or indeed ‘Slavic’ character when compared with Dubrovnik. Meanwhile in Dubrovnik the Slavic language was generally seen as socially inferior to Italian the same way it was in Kotor, but authors like Držić could play their own game with these questions.

²² HARRIS, *Dubrovnik*, pp. 240-1, 248, 258, 457. A dowry document from Prčanj of 1791 is interesting from a linguistic point of view, showing how the Venetian dialect used in the Gulf of Kotor region was interspersed with Slavic terms. See PEJAKOVIĆ-VUJOŠEVIĆ, Mileva: ‘Príja Kate Luković iz 1791. godine’, *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru*, Vol. LVII-LVIII (2009-2010), pp. 249-55.

²³ HARRIS, *Dubrovnik*, p. 268. See also BIEGMAN, N.H.: ‘The Turco-Ragusan Relationship’, Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden (The Hague, 1967), p. 44, who describes the Ragusans as ethnic Slavs who were culturally Italian. It is problematical what Slavic consciousness was supposed to be under these circumstances.

But all of this, however interesting, was especially important in the context of competition between similar cities. The coastal region of Montenegro had become a ‘fracture zone’ between the Venetians and the Ottomans, which seemed to reduce the significance of the friction between Catholics and Orthodox and between the Venetian-controlled towns and autonomous Montenegro around Cetinje. A seventeenth-century Catholic archbishop of Bar, Andrija Zmajević (1624-94), tried to build links between the Orthodox and Catholic worlds and composed a church chronicle written in Slavic and Latin. The Archbishop of Bar also possessed the old title of ‘Primate of Serbia’, which was reminiscent of the days when the Catholic Church had enjoyed some influence in the interior and the Serbian lands were placed under his jurisdiction and Catholic communities were administered from Bar.²⁴ This historical tradition and the archbishop’s tolerant attitude to the Orthodox Church continued to give him a certain legitimacy in the eyes of Orthodox believers, and perhaps even more importantly, in the eyes of the Ottoman administration which treated the Orthodox as a tolerated community and, possibly for this reason, left the archbishop where he was even though he was a Catholic. But as always, religious trends were rather unpredictable and contradictory, and alongside mutual tolerance in some places there was also growing intolerance in other places. Around 1700 a tendency became apparent for religious identities in the region to become less ambiguous and more inflexibly defined. Although this was first of all a question of Montenegrin Orthodox identity vs. ‘Turkish’ but also Slav Muslim identity, there was also a potential for Orthodox-Catholic relations to be negatively affected. In the political and strategic sphere this was not yet a problem. In 1698 Venice decided that seventeen Russian officers that had been consigned to the city as naval apprentices by Tsar Peter the Great should be trained by Captain Marko Martinović at the Venetian naval school at Perast. Other Russians followed and one of them (P.A. Tolstoj) wrote about the Orthodox population along the coast of the Gulf of Kotor. Matija Zmajević, a relation of the Archbishop of Bar, even became an admiral of the Russian Baltic fleet.²⁵

It would seem, therefore, that the growing contacts between Montenegro and Russia around 1700 and in the early eighteenth century were encouraged by the incipient naval and maritime links and common anti-Ottoman position connecting Russia and Venice, which acted as a mediator between Russia and Montenegro. The Russian connection and the increasingly implacable attitude to Islam also may have led to a more assertive attitude of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church to the Catholic Church in the Gulf of Kotor and along the Adriatic coast. In 1717, indeed, the question of the religious and institutional allegiance of the Gulf population became a source of conflict between the Montenegrin Church and the local Catholic Church. The Vladika of Montenegro, Danilo Petrović, had begun to pursue a policy of proselytising among the population of the Venetian territories, which now led to complaints even by the otherwise flexible Catholic archbishop of Bar. Apart from the simmering but not always explosive religious competition between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, it was probably also a question of extending the

²⁴ KOVIJANIĆ, *Kotorski medaljoni*, pp. 135-6; SBUTEGA, *Ljudi iz Boke*, pp. 115-23 for a biographical essay on Andrija Zmajević; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, p. 83, where Zmajević is described as ‘a Serb dignitary’ who became Archbishop of Bar, which may be one way to refer to the Serbian dimension of the historical archdiocese.

²⁵ PASINOVIĆ, *Hrvati u Crnoj Gori*, pp. 13-14; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, p. 80-83, where the Perast school is described as ‘the first Slav naval academy’; MARTINOVIĆ, Jovan: ‘Kapetan Marko Martinović – pomorac i pomorski pedagog’, *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 67-75; SBUTEGA, *Ljudi iz Boke*, pp. 149-58 for Marko Martinović, and pp. 161-9 for Matija Zmajević.

political influence of the tiny Montenegrin state, whose ruler was after all both a secular and an ecclesiastical prince.²⁶ The growing claims and ambitions of the Montenegrin leadership had an increasingly intolerant religious dimension, a political-ideological ('Greater Serbian') dimension, and even a historical or mythological dimension. However, pragmatic considerations and ideological claims did not exclude each other. Around 1750 the Montenegrin ruler Vasilije, then in the position of a Co-Vladika, wrote to Maria Theresa seeking a Habsburg protectorate, a step that apparently had to widen Montenegro's options in terms of security policy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. In this connection it was seen as important to impress her with the historical credentials of Montenegro. In his letter Vasilije maintained that, 'since the time of Alexander the Great', Montenegro had been a separate Republic with its own Metropolitan.²⁷ This bizarre historical claim is interesting evidence of the prevailing historical mythology among South Slav intellectuals and would-be national prophets. The myth of the relationship between Alexander the Great and the ancient Slavs – often propagated in the form of the so-called 'Privilege of Alexander the Great for the Slavs' – was one of the ways in which the historical importance and the prestige of the Slavic peoples could be increased. In Central Europe – including Slovakia – the same kind of ideological dynamics was going on among intellectual figures as well.²⁸ Needless to say that in other parts of Europe similar national-historical myths were cultivated.

Maria Theresa refused to consider proclaiming a protectorate over Montenegro, but the Habsburg interest in Montenegro was growing. This interest was not only of a purely strategic, military, or political kind, but also religious, cultural, and 'ethnographic', especially after 1797. An Austrian report from the late eighteenth century noted that the Montenegrins were rather vague on religious doctrine and that their religious practices were heavily influenced by traditional beliefs and local superstitions, including belief in demons, spirits, and so on. Their priests were described as poorly educated and more like fighters than religious men. It was clear that, in Austrian eyes, the Montenegrins and the Orthodox people of the region were rather primitive and that the 'Enlightenment' as educated Central Europeans understood it had not reached them yet. It is possible that this image of Balkan and Orthodox 'primitivism' also existed among Catholics in the region itself, which may have been one reason why they preferred Venetian, Austrian, or even French rule to the sovereignty of Montenegro, not to speak of the Muslim Ottomans. In 1797 the Habsburg Empire displaced Venice as the major Power in Dalmatia and the Gulf of Kotor. What this meant in terms of the cultural and economic situation in Boka Kotorska is something that requires more research, but one fact that can be noted for the period is that in 1804 a primary school with Slavic as the language of instruction was founded in the village of Morinj. This may be an indication that the Austrians were willing to pursue an enlightened and progressive cultural policy. The first Austrian regime lasted until 1806, when France displaced the Habsburg Empire in the Adriatic region, but the Austrians returned eight years later to stay there until 1918. When the French arrived in the Gulf of Kotor, the Orthodox groups in the area – including the Montenegrins, some Hercegovinians and others, supported by Russian war ships and Russian sol-

²⁶ See for political developments in Montenegro around this time, POLÁČKOVÁ and VAN DUIN, 'Montenegro Old and New', pp. 64-5.

²⁷ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 129-30, 139, 144, 146, 148; BANAC, Ivo: *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), p. 274 for Vasilije's historical claims.

²⁸ TIBENSKÝ, Ján (in collaboration with Gašpar Sedlák and Ján V. Ormis): *Chvály a obrany slovenského národa* (Bratislava 1965), p. 45.

diers who had occupied Kotor and other places – proclaimed their intention to resist the French and join independent Montenegro. However, the Catholic Bocchesi were averse to substituting Montenegrin rule even for French revolutionary rule, probably seeing both of them as being in conflict with their traditions. The Catholic population seems to have preferred the continuation of Austrian rule, but as long as this was not possible they tended to stand aside. Thus a new antithesis was born: a pro-Austrian attitude among the Catholics that was not, or only partly, shared by the Orthodox population, a cleavage that could only be bridged by a common Slav identity or political movement independent of religious tradition. In 1806 the Montenegrin Vladika Petar I demanded the surrender of the Austrian coastal positions to the Montenegrin-Russian Alliance and the Orthodox Bocchesi. When the French arrived they were attacked by this alliance, but later that year the French defeated them, to the relief of the Catholic population; Kotor was given up by the Russians only in 1807. The French stayed until 1813-14, when the British arrived in the Gulf of Kotor and were confronted with a renewed demand for unification with Montenegro. Petar set up a Commission of Montenegrins and Bocchesi to unify both territories with Kotor as capital. Montenegro wanted access to the sea, which would make it a more viable state and contacts with the Russians easier. The Austrians and others fiercely opposed this, while the Russians were not willing to sacrifice their good relations with the other anti-Napoleonic Powers for the sake of Montenegro. Russia then secured Montenegro's withdrawal from the Gulf of Kotor, which was incorporated in Austrian-administered Dalmatia. The French had left a legacy of religious toleration and equality before the law and the Orthodox population had come to enjoy an unprecedented degree of religious liberty thanks to the Napoleonic laws of 1806-1813, which were not revoked by the Austrians. This weakened the pressure for conversion exerted by the Catholic Church and served to protect the Orthodox community during the nineteenth century. The Orthodox majority in Boka Kotorska was able to retain its separate identity and majority position while benefiting from the educational progress under the Austrian regime.²⁹

The arrival of the French and the fighting in 1806 between them and the Montenegrin and Russian forces had been bloody and ferocious, not only in Boka Kotorska but also near Dubrovnik. The French represented modern secular ideas including disdain for old religious ideologies and for the 'barbarian' or primitive people that continued to be influenced by them, while the Montenegrins and the other Orthodox groups seemed to persist in a mode of thought derived from the age of religious antagonism. In a battle near Dubrovnik between the Ragusans and the French on the one side and the Montenegrins and the Russians on the other side, the Montenegro Vladika fired up the 'Orthodox forces' against the 'Catholic enemy' as if it was another Holy War. They bombarded Dubrovnik killing more than 100 people and destroyed Catholic churches outside the city walls. When later in the year the French defeated the alliance of Russians, Montenegrins and Orthodox Hercegovinians, the French general Auguste de Marmont noted that he had showed 'the barbarian peoples' his 'superiority over the Russians'. Dubrovnik he called 'an oasis of civilisation in the midst of barbarianism'. The French secular outlook was not necessarily shared by the Ragusans or the Catholic Bocchesi if it meant downplaying the significance of religion or religious identity, but they probably agreed that the Orthodox people were more primitive than the Catholics in non-religious (and perhaps religious) terms. In 1803 the Dubrovnik

²⁹ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 161, 168-70, 175-7; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, p. 23 and p. 86 for the school in Morinj.

Senate had expelled two Orthodox priests at the Russian consulate, inspired by a prophecy of St Francis, evidence that the Ragusans had not quite arrived in the 'new age'. Under the French regime the Dubrovnik and Kotor regions were joined to form a distant southern district of the Illyrian Provinces (1809-13), which could be seen as a Slavic proto-national entity. It is unclear how inspiring this short-lived Slovenian-Croatian-Dalmatian construction was for the people of Boka Kotorska. The Orthodox had a pro-Montenegrin and pro-Russian orientation and were anti-French in a political sense despite the Napoleonic toleration and equality legislation. The Catholics were rather conservative as well and began to see themselves as Croats only at a later stage, after the disintegration of the rather impotent 'Illyrian' movement of 1848-49. This 'pan-South Slav' movement began to exert some influence in Boka Kotorska in the 1830s and 1840s, but it is unclear how far there were precedents in the French-Illyrian period.³⁰ A broader Slav identity feeling had the potential to bridge the gap between Catholic and Orthodox Slavs, and in a traditional linguistic or vague historical sense such a consciousness certainly existed. But the building of a modern national-political consciousness was a different matter, as was a political Serbian or indeed a Croatian national consciousness.

As yet state-political affairs seemed more important than questions of modern nationality. The consolidation of the Austrian regime in the Adriatic region and in Boka Kotorska involved trying to establish a stable relationship with autonomous Montenegro and thus weakening Montenegrin or Russian influence, a constant fear of the Austrian administration in the nineteenth century. In 1842 a frontier agreement was concluded between Montenegro and the Austrians, which included the stipulation that Montenegro had to give up its claim to provide a spiritual leader for the Orthodox population on the coast. The Orthodox believers and Church institutions in the Austrian territory were not to be directed by the Vladika in Cetinje, which may have been seen as a political quid pro quo for the maximum religious liberty they were allowed to enjoy. The French had abolished the legal distinction between nobles, burghers, and common people, and Austria left the situation as it was, also in this respect. This did not mean that there was no social discrimination against the Orthodox believers – whose proportion of the population in the Kotor District was estimated by one source at an intimidating 73% in 1871 – or that there was no political disaffection among those that wanted to get rid of the Habsburg regime. But there were hardly serious problems before the revolution of 1848. Kotor, centre of the transit trade to Montenegro, was a wealthy town with 2,000 inhabitants in 1848, but other sections of the Boka population were in a less advantageous position. The advent of the steamship led to the impoverishment of many seamen and growing emigration. Another problem was the endemic insecurity and criminality. In 1844 the English traveller J.G. Wilkinson described the frequent robberies in the Boka Kotorska region by men from Montenegro and complained about the surprising Austrian indifference to the activities of these criminals who seriously harmed 'the industrious

³⁰ HARRIS, *Dubrovnik*, pp. 389, 395; MAŽIBRADIĆ, Anita: 'Osvrt na povijest Boke Kotorske početkom 19. stoljeća. Povodom 200 godina od ulaska Napoleonovih trupa u Boku Kotorsku', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. II, No. 2-3 (2006-2007), pp. 100-112 for the French army in 1806-14 and General de Marmont, who became the first French governor of Dalmatia including the Boka region; TANNER, Marcus: *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (3rd ed., New Haven/London, 2010), pp. 69-71 for Marmont and the French regime in Dalmatia; BIEGMAN, 'The Turco-Ragusan Relationship', p. 23 for the Dubrovnik episode of 1803; CLEWING, Konrad: *Staatlichkeit und nationale Identitätsbildung. Dalmatien in Vormärz und Revolution* (Munich, 2001), pp. 25, 51-2, 54; MILOŠEVIĆ, Miloš: 'Odjeci Ilirskog pokreta u Boki Kotorskoj', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 9-21 for the influence of the Illyrian movement in Boka Kotorska in the 1830s and 1840s.

community'. The robberies around Kotor affected entire village communities and their economic life.³¹ Austria may have felt powerless vis-à-vis these criminal activities or may have been afraid to act against those who came from Montenegro, which might trigger political tension.

March 1848 not only brought a new form of national-revolutionary activity – and national-conservative counter-revolutionary activity – but also new moves by Montenegro. The Gulf of Kotor region was confronted with an 'Appeal' from Montenegrins who had moved into the region to fight the Austrians. In May there followed a Montenegrin 'Letter' threatening the population of Kotor and Dubrovnik with an invasion 'if they were not loyal to their nationality' and to Jelačić, the anti-Hungarian but pro-Austrian Ban of Croatia. Apparently it was feared that the inhabitants of the two cities with their historic 'Italian' orientation might support the Italian national movement, which had become a notable feature of the revolutionary process in the Adriatic region. Given the Habsburg-Croatian collaboration there was no immediate cause for inciting the population against the Austrians, but this did not reassure the Kotor administration or the Catholic population of Boka Kotorska. The Montenegrin threats apparently had a considerable psychological impact as especially older people remembered the terrible devastation accompanying the Russian-Montenegrin invasion of the Gulf region in 1806. According to the Austrian administration the Montenegrin Vladika, who followed Serbian policy, continued to have a great influence on the Orthodox majority in the Boka region and therefore had to be seen as playing a major role in the unfolding events. In Boka Kotorska there were also a number of men who sympathised with the Illyrian movement of Ljudevit Gaj, and according to Mavro Broz, a Croatian student who had visited the area, they might be willing to join an Illyrian uprising. This, at least, is what he wrote in April 1848 in a letter to Gaj, but it was not clear against whom such an uprising should be directed and in fact the Illyrian movement behaved quite cautiously. In 1848 an uprising of armed peasants broke out in a part of the Boka Kotorska region which lasted for months, but it had little to do with political demands and was mainly a protest against taxation even if national (Slavic, pro-Serbian or whatever) feelings played a role in the background. The elections for the Austrian Imperial Parliament in June-July could not be held in the Kotor District – reportedly containing a population of 35,000 – because of the unrest, and the Austrian district head reported that the 'raw masses' seemed to believe that the Monarchy had disintegrated. It was feared that such rumours might encourage a part of the population to rise against the Habsburg regime, but what followed was rather innocent. In Kotor an assembly of self-styled 'representatives of the people' passed a resolution calling on the South Slavs under Austrian domination to unite in one state. Apparently this was as far as the Illyrian or Croatian political element in the region dared to go. The resolution seemed to stress they were concerned with the Austrian Slavs rather than with a Greater South Slav perspective and the event did not lead to further political unrest. What it generated by the end of 1848, however, was the foundation of a number of cultural societies in Kotor and other places in the Boka region. They seem to have had a relatively broad social basis, extending beyond the old urban elite but mainly consisting of Catholics. The Orthodox were hardly represented among the urban educated group and an

³¹ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 210; CLEWING, *Staatlichkeit und nationale Identitätsbildung*, pp. 52, 59, 63-4, 79, 82; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, pp. 23-4; GRGUREVIĆ, Tomislav: 'Boka Kotorska u Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 237-46 for a description of life in Boka Kotorska in the Habsburg era (but especially after 1867).

unwilling part of anything called 'Dalmatia' or 'Croatia'. But while they generally had a lower level of education they also had a proto-national Serbian or Montenegrin consciousness.³²

Indeed it soon appeared that the 'Illyrian' perspective had only been an intermezzo, and that the Catholic-Orthodox cleavage was reproduced in the form of a Croatian or Austro-Slav perspective vs. a Greater Serbian perspective. With the disappearance of the all-Slav Illyrian movement the ideal of Croatian-Serbian unity was in danger of being replaced with separate Dalmatian/Croatian and Serbian/Montenegrin perspectives. This development could be observed in the Gulf of Kotor as well. Between 1848 and the 1880s the trend of all-Slav solidarity continued to some degree, which was expressed by a form of national consciousness simply defined as 'Slavic' and by the foundation of a cultural centre in Kotor called the 'Slavic House'. But by the 1890s there was a 'Croatian House' in Kotor and a number of 'Croatian' associations among the Catholic population of Boka Kotorska in places like Kotor, Budva, Herceg Novi, and elsewhere. These included freemasons, various social clubs, musical societies, Catholic cultural associations, and gymnastic ('Sokol') clubs.³³ They were the expression of the rise of a Croatian ethno-national identity and Croatian national consciousness instead of a broader non-confessional South Slav consciousness. At the same time the Orthodox population further developed its sense of Serbian and Montenegrin national allegiance, with 'Serbian' identity providing an alternative to 'Croatian' identity and Montenegrin orientation an alternative to Austro-Slavic tendencies. Many Orthodox priests were educated in Sremski Karlovci, the seat of the Serbian Metropolitan on Habsburg territory just north of Belgrade, and therefore not necessarily anti-Austrian in outlook. Nevertheless this was an important factor behind the intensifying Greater Serbian idea propagated in Montenegro, Boka Kotorska, and other parts of the 'Serbian' Orthodox world. The emerging Croatian-Serbian divide did not mean that there was no interaction or collaboration between Catholic ('Croatian') and Orthodox ('Serbian') people in Boka Kotorska. There were certainly attempts to bring the two groups together on a common South Slav or bicultural platform. An example of this was the local weekly newspaper *Boka*, which was published from 1908 and contained articles both in Latin and Cyrillic script.³⁴ But such efforts encouraging cultural co-existence could hardly change the deteriorating political situation in terms of the Austrian-Montenegrin and Austrian-Serbian relationship. In 1870 a rebellion broke out in the Boka region against Austrian rule, which was supported by the Montenegrins but not by the Catholic minority. It was largely an affair of Orthodox and pro-Montenegrin elements and the Montenegro army. The Austrians were initially defeated and forced to conclude a disadvantageous peace with Montenegro, but this did not change the political or strategic situation in the Gulf of Kotor region. In 1880, after the Balkan wars of the late 1870s, the towns of Bar and Ulcinj – taken from the Ottomans, not from Austria – were incorporated in the expanding Montenegro. As a result

³² CLEWING, *Staatlichkeit und nationale Identitätsbildung*, pp. 231-2, 241-3, 258, 267, 291, 340, 342; PASINOVIĆ, *Hrvati u Crnoj Gori*, pp. 14-5; PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, p. 24; MILOŠEVIĆ, 'Odjeci Ilirskog pokreta u Boki Kotorskoj'.

³³ PASINOVIĆ, *Hrvati u Crnoj Gori*, p. 15, also quoting Anton MILOŠEVIĆ, *Prosvjetno-kulturna društva u prošlosti Kotora* (Cetinje, 1947); OBAD, Stijepo: 'Hrvatska društva u Boki Kotorskoj do Drugoga Svjetskog Rata', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. II, No. 2-3 (2006-2007), pp. 71-99 for the rise and development of 'Croatian' associational life in Boka Kotorska until the Second World War. Obad's essay tries to describe this process in terms of different phases, with a Catholic 'elite phase' prior to 1848 being gradually replaced with a more modern phase of broad-based 'Croatian' social organisation and ethno-national identity in the region.

³⁴ GRGUREVIĆ, Tomislav: 'Zapisi iz lista "Boka" – glasnika za opće interese Bokelja. Prvi tjednik u Boki Kotorskoj', *Bokeški Ljetopis*, Vol. I, No. 1 (2005), pp. 247-54.

they lost up to half of their population, mainly Albanians, a certain percentage of whom were Catholics. The Montenegro Constitution of 1905 proclaimed religious freedom, but the reality was different, in particular with regard to Muslims. It would be interesting to compare in detail Orthodox-Catholic-Muslim relations in Montenegro around 1900 – especially in the territories annexed in 1880 and in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 – with those in the Austrian territory, which included Budva and its hinterland as well as Kotor and the Boka region.³⁵

The last year of the First World War saw a revolt of sailors of the Austrian Navy in the Gulf of Kotor (more specifically, the Bay of Tivat) in February 1918. It was perhaps the most spectacular event in Boka Kotorska during the War, which would transform the whole political situation in the region and in the western Balkans. In the new Yugoslavia after 1918 neither the autonomy of Montenegro nor the specific character of the Boka region was politically recognised. In 1929 the Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska regions were both included in a new ‘Zeta Province’, which led to disaffection in Dubrovnik – its Croatian identity was ignored and the proud city was subordinated to an administrative centre in Montenegro – but also in Montenegro since Belgrade centralism and Serbian authoritarian policies continued and even worsened. Only after the Second World War did the situation change again, this time to the advantage of Montenegro but perhaps not to the benefit of the religious and national minorities in the Gulf of Kotor. Indeed, the Montenegrins were ‘rewarded’ for their important role in the Partisan struggle against the Italians and the Germans ‘with recognition of a separate nation and the status of a republic within Yugoslavia’, as Kenneth Morrison describes it. At least as important was the fact that its territory was enlarged by incorporation of Boka Kotorska and half of the Sandžak region in the north. Montenegro’s securing possession of the Gulf of Kotor may have been against the expectations of many, but Montenegro had long coveted it and the local Orthodox population constituted by now two-thirds or more of the total population of the Boka region. The rather outrageous ambitions of the new Montenegrin (at the same time Communist and nationalist) leaders were expressed by their desire even to annex Dubrovnik, Hercegovina, and western Kosovo.³⁶ These wishes were not satisfied but may provide an explanation of why the Montenegrins were keen to participate in the Yugoslav War of the 1990s against Dubrovnik and in other places. These tragic recent events in the history of Montenegro and the wider region have probably not contributed to a better understanding between the Orthodox and the Catholic population of Boka Kotorska, which also included a Croatian national minority. However, the position of the Catholics in the Gulf of Kotor had already been weakened during the decades before 1990, as we have seen at the beginning of this essay. While this may have been in part the result of other than political reasons, a degree of national and cultural tension may have played a role as well. Boka Kotorska was a region in which Catholics had historically been the dominant element but in which the Orthodox preponderance was progressively on the rise. It now remains to be seen what the further development of the national-political and multicultural situation will be like. Our best hope is that the European framework will guarantee the survival of the non-Orthodox minority, a remnant of an impressively long history in one of the most interesting micro-regions of Europe.

³⁵ ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 238, 270-1; POLÁČKOVÁ and VAN DUIN, ‘Montenegro Old and New’, pp. 70-2, 80-1 for the expansion of Montenegro between the 1870s and 1913.

³⁶ PASINOVIĆ, *Kotor*, p. 24; ROBERTS, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, pp. 341, 397; MORRISON, Kenneth: *Montenegro: A Modern History* (London/New York, 2009), p. 66.