

Anna Boguska
Instytut Slawistyki Polskiej Akademii Nauk,
Warszawa
anna.boguska@ispan.waw.pl
ORCID: 0000-0001-5307-2241

Data przesłania tekstu do redakcji: 03.06.2018
Data przyjęcia tekstu do druku: 04.09.2018

The sources of rationalism in Croatia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A study of less obvious cases (physics, theology, and politics)

ABSTRACT: Boguska Anna, *The sources of rationalism in Croatia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A study of less obvious cases (physics, theology, and politics)*. “Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne” 15. Poznań 2018. Publishing House of the Poznań Society for the Advancement of the Arts and Sciences, Adam Mickiewicz University, pp. 33–50, ISSN 2084-3011.

The paper is an attempt to describe the reception of the idea of rationalism in order to represent its reworking in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Croatia in three areas – physics, theology and politics. The authoress reveals how the method developed by Newton in the field of natural sciences has found an application in other disciplines of knowledge, and most of all in theology. In Croatia, this resulted in the application of the category of Kantian reason to ethical considerations. As a rationalist project in the field of politics, cameralism is indicated, an economic doctrine popular in the German and Austrian territories which was closely connected with the development of the enlightened monarchy and bureaucracy in the early modern period.

KEYWORDS: rationalism; Enlightenment; Croatian rationalism; Croatian Enlightenment; intellectual history

“Tako se gospodo, ljubav prema vrlini, ljudskosti reda, domovini, prema općem dobru javne korisnosti uvijek miješa u srcu prosvjetljenog i senzibilnog čovjeka”¹ – these words were written about 1793 by Dubrovnik noble Tomo Basiljević (1756–1806) in his essay entitled *Ra-*

¹“Well, gentlemen, love to virtue, society of order, homeland, to the common goodness of the public utility always mingles in the heart of the enlightened and sensible man” – all translations from Croatian to Polish by the authoress of the text, from Polish to English by A.M. Skibska.

sprava o javnoj koristi. Known as a liberal, polyglot, and erudite having democratic and progressive views, Basiljević was a representative of the Croatian Enlightenment² what is manifested in the further passages of the quoted text, in which he stated directly that the era of reason had already started, and all the constituted laws and activities should have been submitted to the human mind (Basiljević, 2003, 261). The trends emphasized by Basijlević gained popularity in Europe in the end of the seventeenth century, and seemed to render a manner of thinking shared at least by the part of then exponents of the Croatian elites. The commented manner was revealed in the ideas of aspiration to the common utility of taken actions, and of occurrence of the society based on the principle of general order. The evidence of both the ideas might be found in the exponents' indifferently numerous theoretical dissertations undertaking at least marginally, or in the context of considerations devoted to the other issues, problems of rationalism along with rational arrangement of the world, and – probably most affected – analytical evaluations of the proposed activities. These problems – a peculiar outline of the reception of rationalism among the Croatian elites – I tend to highlight throughout a concentration on the selected indications of the depicted phenomenon appearing in the

²From the perspective of historical-literary monographs regarding the Enlightenment, Tomo Basiljević was a rather rarely presented activist and writer from Dubrovnik of the eighteenth century, where he spent his childhood and performed the functions of public supporting the Republic development in the spirit of the Enlightenment ideas. In 1781 under the influence of the Venetian writer and traveller Alberto Fortis, he went to Bern in Switzerland in order to study law where he remained to 1783. He continued his studies in Göttingen in Germany where he stayed to 1785 yet his education was never accomplished. Next he was traveling around Italy, Germany, Czech Republic and Austria. In the meantime, he found himself interested in natural history and the Enlightenment concepts, and made contact among others with the physicist Alessandro Volta, mineralogist Grigorij Razumovsky, scholar Jacob Samuel Wyttenbach, and with the representatives of Italian school of natural law and political economy, especially with Gaetano Flangieri whose works were already known in Dubrovnik. All of them shaped the intellectual background of Basiljević. As a liberal noble, great speaker and savant, he knew Italian, and spoke fluently French and German, even his English was of a relatively good level. He was an owner of the great library of which book collections were also known outside Dubrovnik. As an avid reader, Basijlević reached for works written above all by Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montaigne. He wrote in French what is proved by his main (although unfinished) work entitled *Plan de réforme de la constitution de la République de Raguse* which contains a plan of social, economic and cultural reforms provided for the Republic of Dubrovnik (Foretić, 1983).

times when the Croatian language did not operate a professional terminology in this area.³ All the traces of the idea's influence on Croats might be, therefore, found in the texts written in Latin or Italian, sometimes in French or German, but I would like to mark that the proposed frame of the subject (according to my knowledge so far not developed by the researchers) is a peculiar intellectual experiment which does not lay claim to be a "canonical" attempt of the exhibition of Croatian history in the perspective other than the geopolitical one or based on the literary studies' considerations, attempt in order to implement the country into a reflection on the mental history of Europe⁴. The article shall be unobscured – in its content, I recall the selected thinkers from the history of Croatia whose names are rather rarely exposed in the context of the enlightenment ideas' development, names related with the North as well as with the South of the country, and representing various fields of activity and/or interests – physics (Josip Zanchi, Benedikt Stay Stojković, Ruđer Bošković, Franjo Dolči de Vicković), theology (Grga Čevapović), and theory of the state and of the law (Nikola Škrlec Lomnički). The approved method belongs to the positivist outlook, however, a new contextualization of the recalled thinkers' views allows me to verify the fixed convictions as for the Croatian modernity in order to reveal it as a sphere of aporia.

³ Croatian scientific terminology of which formation might be related with the idea of conceptual rationality that is in other words, with demands of precision, clarity, accuracy, and efficiency of communication, was mainly created in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was Bogoslav Šulek who took pioneering actions in this regard, his work was continued by Franjo Rački (philosophy, chemistry, psychology), Vinko Pacel (philosophy), Franjo Marković (philosophy), and Matija Mesić (history).

⁴ It appears that Theodora Shek Brnardić has taken an analogous path in her research. As the Croatian historian, Shek Brnardić is an authoress of a number of works devoted to the intellectual history of among others Croatia and Czech Republic in which she articulates her disapprobation for the stereotypical representations of the so-called Eastern Europe. She points out that most authors studying this region invariably reach for the geopolitical, nationalist or modernization perspective what isolates this part of Europe from research on the mental history. In the article entitled *The Enlightenment in Eastern Europe: Between Regional Typology and Particular Micro-history*, she considers the presence of a tendency to describe the Enlightenment as a "great narrative" attributed, so to say, to the phenomena taking place only in the West. Shek Brnardić suggests, therefore, to analyse the Eastern Europe in the social-cultural context what would enable, according to the researcher, to "appreciate" the region's intellectual achievements in order to implement it into the mental history of Europe (Shek Brnardić, 2006).

1. Physics: a victory of Newtonianism

It is not easy to indicate clearly in which moment rationalism gained popularity in Croatia⁵ or rather among its intellectual elites who often lived and acted abroad. It is certain that in the eighteenth century human mind (or reason) as a term became a central idea although it was defined in a different way than the contemporary manner of thinking, and if one wanted to find traces of the Croatian interests in this matter one should have taken into consideration a historical change course of the concept's meaning. For the great metaphysical systems of the seventeenth century and their creators – René Descartes, Nicolas Melabranche, Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz – human mind itself was perceived as a an area of “eternal verities” common for the human and divine spirit throughout which one could have seen what was revealed by the “power of one's mind” that is in other words, a communion with the truth in God himself. In the eighteenth century, as Ernst Cassirer stated in his well-known *Philosophy of Enlightenment*, the mind “is no longer the sum total of ‘innate ideas’ given prior to all experience” (Cassirer, 1979, 13). The representatives of the commented epoch stopped treating the mind as “a sound body of knowledge”, and on the contrary it was interpreted “as a kind of energy, a force which is fully comprehensible only in its agency and effects” (Cassirer, 1979, 13). It became indeed a kind of indispensable device in the process of obtaining the truth. The method itself which served the above-mentioned process was elaborated by Isaac Newton and his predecessors (primarily by Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler) on the ground of science, and subsequently about the middle of the eighteenth century it was accepted by the most considerable thinkers, and transferred to the other than mathematical-natural fields of knowledge including metaphysics⁶.

⁵This issue has been already and partially elaborated by Anna Boguska in *Leksykon idei wędrownych na słowiańskich Balkanach XVIII–XXI w.* in the commentary written under the address of rationalism (Boguska, 2018, 171–181). In this article, the problems of Croats' interest in Newtonianism are represented in the broader context of the intellectual background of then Europe.

⁶In the chapter entitled *The Mind of the Enlightenment*, Cassirer states directly that “The philosophy of the eighteenth century takes up this particular case, the methodological pattern of Newton's physics, though it immediately begins to generalize. It is not content to look upon analysis as the great intellectual tool of mathematical-physical knowledge; eighteenth

It is also certain that in the very same century there was a discussion between Dalmatian and Dubrovnik proponents of the philosophical issues presented by Descartes in his *Discourse on the Method* (1637) and the followers of Newton's conceptions submitted in his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687). What is more, this discussion was analogous to the previous one that occurred a bit earlier in France between the Jesuits, adherents of Descartes' manners of thinking and materialists who promoted Newtonianism. An objection against Aristotelian philosophy of nature was reported among others by a Jesuit, philosopher and theologian Josip Zanchi (1710–1786) from Rijeka who also worked as a lecturer at the universities in Gorica, Graz, and Vienna. As an original follower of Descartes' philosophy, Zanchi switched to Newtonianism and became a main exponent of this standing in Austria. Descartes' philosophy was also a starting point for Dubrovnik scholar Benedikt Stay Stojković (1714–1801) who studied mathematics, philosophy and theology in Rome where in he joined the Jesuit Order. As a lecturer at the pontifical Roman university "La Sapienza", he also worked for Vatican and collaborated with the pope Benedict XVIth. At the instigation of the pope, Stay managed to publish a philosophical masterpiece which appeared in 1744 in Venice under the title *Philosophie versibus traditae libri VI*. The work was interpreted among others in Dubrovnik in the property belonging to Marin Orsatov Sorkočević (1692–1761) around whom the society of well-educated inhabitants of the city was concentrated. Under the influence of the stay in Rome and of the conceptions of the other Dubrovnik thinker Ruder Bošković (1711–1787), Stay wrote with time another work entitled *Philosophiae recentioris versibus traditae libri X* (vol. 1–3, 1755, 1762, 1790) in which he illuminated Newton's philosophy of nature. The recalled masterpiece was equipped with a supplement containing notes and remarks by Bošković himself who turned out to be a recognizable scholar at the time. The traces of analogical considerations might be seen in the correspondence between

century thought sees analysis rather as the necessary and indispensable instrument of all thinking in general. This view triumphs in the middle of the century. However much individual thinkers and schools differ in their results, they agree in this epistemological premise. [...] All these works [by Voltaire, d'Alembert, and Kant – A.B.] represent the true methods of metaphysics as in fundamental agreement with the method which Newton, with such fruitful results, introduced into natural science" (Cassirer, 1979, 12).

the sixteen-year-old Julij Bajamonti⁷ (1744–1800) from Split and the priest Šimun Ostoja (?–?). Both of them were originally interested in the option elaborated by Descartes, yet they had a different point of view as for the metaphysical question concerning God’s ability to create the void. In his letters, Bajamonti proved perfect knowledge of the thought developed by the experimental physicist Jean-Antoine Nollet (1700–1770), and of the work of Newton himself whom he started to follow after his medical studies in Padua (where Bajamonti defended his doctoral dissertation in 1773).

Among the researchers of Croatian origin, the greatest contribution to the development of then science was undoubtedly given by the inhabitant of Dubrovnik Ruđer Josip Bošković (1711–1787) who was a philosopher, physicist, astronomer, poet, member of French and English Academy of Sciences. In Bošković’s lifetime (that is, between 1761–1773), his theories were included in Austrian academic textbooks written by the Jesuits (Pálo Makó, Karl Scherffer, Leopold Biwald, Sigmund von Strochenau). In his scientific works entitled *De virbus vivis* (1745), *Theoria philosophiae naturalis* (1758), as well as in *De Solis Ac Lunae defectibus* (1760) belonging to didactic poetry, the author tended to overcome Aristotelian system in order to exhibit philosophy of nature under the sign of Newton.

The manifestations of interest in novelties from the world of science might be also found in literary works written by non-scientific authors such as Franjo Dolči de Vicković (1742–1805) who was a catholic priest born in Dubrovnik and for twenty years acted as a personal counsellor of the Montenegrin sovereign Petr the First Petrović Njegoš. In the essay *Sustav svijeta* which is a fragment of the larger work entitled *Misli* (the eighteenth century), Vicković elaborated on the “new world system” according to which the Earth and other planets were to revolve around the Sun. With reference

⁷ Julije Bajamonti was a one of the leading intellectuals of the Central Dalmatia at the end of the eighteenth century. As a writer, physician, polyhistor, musician of very broad interests (besides music and medicine, he also studied history, mathematics, physics, meteorology, linguistics, ethnography, and agronomy), Bajamonti wrote among others poetry, historiographical works, and travelogues (he was often visiting Venice and Padua, and took a trip around Dalmatia in the company of Alberto Fortis and Frederick Harvey, about 1780 was traveling around Bosnia, Dubrovnik, Herceg Novi, and Kotor). He translated to Italian works from Latin, Greek, English, French and Croatian. Bajamonti participated in organization of the Split Economic Society (*Splitsko gospodarsko društvo*), and was a follower of the idea of economic progress and social equality.

to this, the author was wondering whether this movement was based on the force of gravity (as was claimed by the followers of Newton's theory) or revealed itself as a result of the planets' seating in some fluid mass revolving around the Sun along with carrying the star within itself (in accordance with the beliefs of Descartes's adherents). The Dubrovnik thinker did not adjudicate admittedly which theory he was to support, yet he noticed an important compliance of Newton's ideas with his own observations what is proved in the following words: "Ta rasprava možda nikad neće završiti. Sigurno je kako Newtonov sustav savršeno usklađen s prirodnim fenomenima i nije protivan iskustvu"⁸ (Dolci, 2003, 272).

The Croats were thus taking then popular issues of methods of philosophy as such, and, alike the rest of the enlightenment Europe of the eighteenth century, they ultimately indicated the one derived from the manner of thinking presented by Newton which allowed them to accentuate weight of analysis and experience that was to overcome finally the tradition of hypothetical considerations often taken by the philosophers of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Newton's system served the Croats as a device of cognizance not only in the mathematical-physical sphere, but also in the metaphysical problems made by Voltaire, Jean le Rond d'Alembert or Immanuel Kant⁹.

2. Theology: Kantian reason in Christian ethics

As is stated by Franjo Zenko, a definitive reception of Newtonianism mediated through the theory of the absolute dynamism compiled by Ruđer Bošković made up in Croatia during the time of activity of the old Zagreb university (the Jesuit "Neoacademia Zagrabiensis") – this reception itself

⁸"This discussion will probably never end. For sure, the system of Newton is perfectly consistent with the natural phenomena, and it is not antithetical to experience" – trans. from Polish by A.M. Skibska.

⁹Ernst Cassirer notices that particular thinkers' results were different, however, they had similar cognitive-theoretical foundation what is manifested by a significant coherence of their works such as for example *Traité de métaphysique* (1734) by Voltaire, *Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie* (1751) by d'Alembert, and *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und Moral* (1863) by Kant (Cassirer, 1979, 13).

was the one from the two components which shaped the newer Croatian philosophy.¹⁰ The other decisive component, according to the recalled researcher, was a settlement of the Croatian philosophers-theologians with Immanuel Kant¹¹ wherein this stage was preceded by depth studies on the theory proposed by Christian Wolff.¹² In 1797, Johann Baptiste Horvath (1732–1799), Croat from Gradišće, in his work known under the title *Declaratio infirmitatis fundamentorum operis Kantiani Critik der reinen Vernunft* made a critical analysis of the legitimacy of Kantian absolute

¹⁰In Croatia, the significant influence of Newton took place in the second half of the eighteenth century. As is revealed by Erna Banić-Pajnić and Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, who base on the work published in 1669 in Vienna and written by a professor of philosophy in Zagreb Academy Franje Jambrehović (1631–1703) under the title *Philosophia perypatetica*, in which the author presented his lectures on logic, physics and mathematics, a dominant trend of teaching in the first higher school in Croatia of the second half of the seventeenth century was Aristotelianism, and in lectures on physics (as a discipline of philosophy) there was no sign of the influence of any newer physical and cosmological conceptions. Copernicus' theory for the first time in Zagreb was defended in 1758. At this time that is, in the second half of the eighteenth century Newton's cosmology appeared. In Zagreb society, the departure from Aristotelian scholastic tradition was related, as is emphasized by Ljerka Schiffler, however, with the simultaneous criticism of "godless" rationalism and empiricism (Schiffler, 2003, 327). On the other hand, according to Banić-Pajnić and Girardi-Karšulin, another important source of knowledge as for the state of Croatian philosophy (besides the local higher schools' curricula) were manuscripts (predominantly made by the Franciscans) stored in the monastic libraries in Croatia which were analysed only partially. Though these manuscripts' dominant trend was associated with the scholastic peripateticism nevertheless, as the researchers claim, among them one may also find texts which prove their authors interest in the new natural-philosophical dissertations (Banić-Pajnić, Girardi-Karšulin, 2003, 325).

¹¹Franjo Zenko notices that only then theologians were "professionally" studying philosophical problems which were secularized only after 1874 at the already reorganized University in Zagreb where Franjo Marković (1845–1914) became a professor of philosophy at the Philosophical Faculty (Zenko, 1990, 92).

¹²In Croatia, the corrosion of the scholastic philosophy corps began in the first half of the eighteenth century. Somewhere about the years 1740–1750 in the whole Hapsburgs Monarchy, Wolffian philosophy gained popularity due to its scientific methods applied in the Bible interpretation and as an attempt to bringing harmony between human reason and the revelation doctrine. Christian Wolff was promoted mainly by the Benedictines and Piarists who practiced his philosophy at the Catholic universities. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the centre of the Catholic theologians' interests moved from Wolffian thought towards Kant's philosophy whose works were considered valuable in the fight against atheism. This process was running concurrently with the assimilation of modern theories from the field of physics, and next from the political, legal, and moral philosophy which earned respect in the society of Zagreb University thinkers (Zenko, 1990, 91; Lehner, 2010, 56).

apriorism of cognitive forms. Under the influence of Kant's philosophy, Simeon Čučić also remained (1784–1828) who was a Greek Catholic clergyman and philosopher, pupil and subsequently lecturer at the Royal Academy in Zagreb, author of the significant work entitled *Philosophia critica elaborata* (1815). The effects of the “spirit of modern philosophy” is clearly visible in the thought of Franjo Rački (1828–1894), a historian, politician, and linguist who as a young theologian made a decision to reform the Christian theology – due to this, he was rejecting scholasticism in order to reach the modern “speculation” of which sources, according to Rački, were located in the realm of “self-consciousness” (Zenko, 1990, 92).

This environmental context remained important for the intellectual work of Grga Čevapović (1786–1830), a Franciscan from Slavonia, who was known as a chronicler and Church writer, linguist, editor and publisher of the first and complete Croatian edition of the Bible made by Matija Petr Katančić. Čevapović's activity, however, relatively rarely was associated with the “serious” theological-philosophical literature concerning Kantian modern thought whereas he, as is emphasized by Franjo Zenko, was an author of a moral-theological work written in Latin (and remaining in a form of manuscript) and entitled *Introductio in Ethicam Christianam*. This work was finished in 1820¹³ and might be perceived as an expression of the nineteenth century writer's collision with a situation of the new relation's occurrence between theology and philosophy. In the aforementioned dissertation, Čevapović absorbed principles of the Enlightenment spirit namely, he recognized the mind, a central category of Kantian philosophy (based on the aspects represented in *Critique of Practical Reason*), as a principle (or foundation) of autonomous morality. What is more, he accepted Kantian formula of “moral law of practical reason” substantially in a literal way (*lex moralis rationis practicae*). From Kant's philosophy, Čevapović primarily took an

¹³ In order to be more precise, the work was finished on the 25th of January 1820 in Vukovar, where it has been still stored in the Franciscan monastery. Its genesis is probably related with Čevapović's activity as a lecturer of philosophy and moral-pastoral theology in the Franciscan schools in Slavonia. This activity was begun by Čevapović in 1807 after he defended his doctoral thesis in Buda, and lasted in 1820. The work (containing 388 pages) is composed from the extensive introduction and from the next three parts respectively entitled: *Ethicae Christianae Universalis, Praxeologia moralis de actu humanorum natura, regulis et moralitate, Aretologia Generalis* (Zenko, 1990, 86).

accentuation of subjective character of moral principles of practical reason, he also followed the philosopher's conviction about a lack of connections between this subjectivity and external pressure instance. Kantian subjectivity was, therefore, interpreted as a consequence of the individual's respect for the moral imperative of reason. Kant's philosophy foundations were merged by Čevapović with theology what made him to redefine the conditions of the latter one. On the one hand, the author highlighted that reason together with moral philosophy were *true principles* or *sources* of moral theology. On the other, reason as theology's foundation was regarded as a prior element namely, precedent over remaining pillars of theology that is, the Holy Scripture (*Scriptura Sacra*) and Divine Tradition (*Traditio divina*). Zenko admits that this structure of hierarchy regarding theology's foundations allowed Čevapović to get close to Kant's work published in 1793 and entitled *Die religion innerhalb der blossen Vernunft* in which the thinker put his idea of "philosophical theology": the idea itself was determined by reason (understood as its inner base) namely, philosophy as such. The author of *Introductio in Ethicam Christianam*, according to Zenko, made an attempt to reform the field through which he navigated. It was manifested among others by a modification of the field's designation – from the traditional "moral theology", comprehended in the scholastic manner, to more philosophical "Christian ethics" which was blessed as science: Čevapović also managed to establish two criteria of its scientific character that is, systematizing ability and specific way of discourse.

Awareness of the existence of this type of works in the achievements of the Slavonic Enlightenment, perceived by many researchers as a poor, conservative variant of the "real Western-European Enlightenment",¹⁴ allows us not only to redefine its character in order to appreciate the local thoughts and accomplishments. Furthermore, an inseparable compound of then philosophy with theology and the religious background of the eighteenth century intellectuals might be also strongly enhanced – the very background, as Ernst Cassirer points out, turns out to be for them a supplier of strongest impulses (Cassirer, 1979, 127). One may essentially say about a kind of

¹⁴An attempt of deconstruction regarding this stereotype is made by Anna Boguska in the article entitled *Oświecenie w Chorwacji – zmiana paradygmatu? Od zubażającego monomitu do wyzwalającej polimityczności* (Boguska, 2017).

feedback loop between philosophy and theology – theological issues are the main subject of philosophical considerations whereas the latter one’s methods previously taken from the field of physics are applied to theology. The above-mentioned dissertation by Čevapović and the other Croatian intellectuals’ achievements who adopted Kantian philosophy play a significant role on the local ground especially that only in Austria at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century there was a clear resistance against the thought of the author of *Critique of Practical Reason*. Zenko claims that Kant in his subjective philosophy which favoured a conception of the self-concentrated thus liberated and autonomous reason offered intellectual foundations for construction of the modern individual and national subjectivity what was essentially important in the times of intensification of various national liberation movements in the Hapsburg Monarchy. This manner of thinking was indeed a potential thread for the existing Austrian country (and later Austrian-Hungarian one) nevertheless it created a sphere of desirable outlook facilities for the arising nations which were inspired by the fields of philosophy and theology (the idea of rationalism) along with their political-social dimension (the idea of liberalism).

3. Politics: cameralism as an ideal foundation of the state rational order

The Enlightenment challenge in the sphere of the modern state construction was in turn a renewed rethinking of the question posed once by Plato in his famous dialogues *Gorgias* and *The Republic*, question which concerned the relationship between law and power. In order to find an answer, the Greek philosopher took into consideration the “nature” of justice, and also asked whether in logical and ethical terms one might express something really existing and objectively determined. In the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius referred to Plato’s conceptions with approbation yet he decided to conjoin his theory of law not with ethics, alike the ancient philosopher, but with mathematics. One of his followers Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz with regard to Grotius’ considerations stated that legal science belonged to those disciplines which were not determined by experience or facts but by definitions and strict logical proofs. Samuel von Pufendorf

added in turn that certainty of principles of natural law was analogous to certainty of mathematical axioms. In the eighteenth century, Montesquieu in his philosophical treatise entitled *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) announced in the following words that “Laws, in most extensible meaning of the word, are necessary relations which flow from the nature of things” (Montaigne, 1977, 104). Due to this, the eighteenth century intellectuals were looking for a certain systematics of law, some permanent, universal, and “natural” principles located in the sphere of pure reason which was regarded as independent of omnipotence of God as well as of the state¹⁵. As Ernst Cassirer states, an attempt of defence of the spiritual self-reliance of law against the theological dogma along with the establishing stiff borders between “a clear sphere of law” and the state activity in order to protect its differences and values against the state absolutism became the essential goals of the Enlightenment (Cassirer, 1979, 221).

In the Hapsburg Monarchy and Croatia, the Enlightenment goals were not realised in a rigorous manner. As for the problems regarding the state’s and its laws’ functioning, one might say about a local creativity which manifested itself in the process of connecting seemingly contradictory current thoughts along with their dependence upon the real conditions of life in this poor and economically delayed region. Formulated in the German-speaking area and based on eudaemonism, a conception of country bliss assumed the existence of the strong bureaucratic apparatus in the state acting on the ideas of the Enlightenment absolutism of which philosophical foundations were constructed through the synthesis of the natural law and the social contract – this perspective turned out to be an attractive one also for Croats. On this ideological ground, the foundations of cameralism were built. Cameralism was an economical doctrine and as a local variation of mercantilism it was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth century mainly in Germany and Austria.

In the Croat scientific descriptions, there is a clear tendency of deriving cameralism from rationalistic philosophy, idea of the social contract, and the Enlightenment concepts (Vranjican, 2007, 5). The main representative

¹⁵The commented views of the selected philosophers do not exhaust the problems of natural law, they only suggest a certain line of thought on this issue. For more information, see Cassirer (1979, 217–253).

of this line of thought on the state and its economy was Nikola Škrlec Lomnički (1729–1799), among others a member of the Royal Council for the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia (Kraljevinsko vijeće za kraljevinu Hrvatsku i Slavoniju, 1767–1779) of which he presided in the works regarding the administrative, economic and educational reforms. He also acted as a higher administrator for education issues (1776–1785) who contributed to the political-cameralism studies' emergence in Varaždina and in the Royal Academy of Sciences in Zagreb (Kraljevska akademija znanosti u Zagrebu).¹⁶ His project of the economic-political reforms purposing an acceleration of backward economy development was introduced above all in his two works – *Projectum Legum motivatum in Objecto Oeconomiae Publicae et Commercii perferendarum* (1791) and *Descriptio physico-politicae situationis Regni Hungariae relate ad commercium pro deputatione commerciali elaborate* (the second edition comes from 1802, the first one was probably published during the lifetime of Škrlec) which were a coherent elaboration regarding the necessary, according to the author, directions of the state development. In the commented works, one might come across a series of detailed and pragmatic postulates. Škrlec thus believed that “koristnost najjači [je] poticaj narodnom gospodarstvu i jedino učinkovito sredstvo za razvoj i usavršavanje industrije”¹⁷ (Škrlec, 1802, 91). He was writing among others about a need of the state economy improvement, modernization in the respect of stock raising, upgrading sheep breeds through a Spanish breed introduction, race horse breeding, professional restoration of beekeeping, development of the abandoned lands, diversification of the agrarian production through new species implementation (he suggested among other a stimulation of the production of potatoes, sunflowers, plants enabling colours' acquisition, and the raw materials production in order to get natural silk as well as tobacco what he considered a profitable business). He also voted for a more dynamic development of the state craft and industry through the downloading foreign entrepreneurs who would have accelerated the state improvement by dint of new

¹⁶Nikola Škrlec Lomnički belonged to the third group of the youngest cameralists who declared views similar to those earlier announced by Johann Friedrich Gottlob von Justi (1705–1771) and Joseph von Sonnenfels (1731–1817) (Vranjican, 2007, 6–7, 9).

¹⁷“Usefulness is the strongest stimulus for the state economy and the only effective means serving the development and the industry improvement”.

technologies and fresh financial capital. Škrlec also was an advocate of a series of liberal ideas such as a demonopolisation of industry, free market existence, healthy competition, facilities for entrepreneurs. He remained, however, an adherent of the state interventionism in the respect of the economic development's stimulation what was caused by life conditions in the poor countries of the Hapsburg Empire. In the following words, he stated: "Štogođ će zakonodavstvo ili javna uprava učiniti za napredak industrije, neće biti dostatno za ostvarenje željenog cilja ako te mjere nisu zasnovane tome [korisnosti – A.B.]"¹⁸ (Škrlec, 1802, 94). According to Stjenko Vranjican, Škrlec cannot be regarded a rigorous cameralist, "follower of the overwhelming state interventionism" or "dogmatic believing in the state regulations' omnipotence"¹⁹. The researcher claims that the specifics of the lands belonging to the Hapsburg Monarchy – their state and economic particularity, autarkic economic systems, domination of agriculture along with its backwardness, depopulation caused by the long-drawn wars and epidemics, feudal-monarchical political system, weakness of the middle class powerless against the existing fossilized structures, lack of conditions for the stronger influence of the industrial revolution and capitalism – ultimately determined the character of the ideas promoted in the Hapsburg Monarchy. Vranjican perceives, therefore, cameralism as a remarkably rational concept adapted to local realities:

Zato po našem sudu kameralistički pogledi na državne funkcije u gospodarstvu, na ulogu ekonomskih zakona i samoregulirajuću funkciju tržišnog mehanizma predstavljaju specifičnost koju valja tumačiti bitno različitim uvjetima i karakteru problema s kojima se njemačko-austrijska regija suočavala. Utoliko državni paternalizam spregnut s idejama prosvjetiteljstva, brižljivo planiranim modernizacijskim reformama provedenim autoritetom apsolutnog monarha, te marginalna funkcija tržišnog mehanizma nisu poslje-

¹⁸ "Whatsoever the legislation or the public administration makes for the industry development it will be not enough to achieve the desired goal if those means are not based on [usefulness]".

¹⁹ Vranjican underlines that Škrlec was not inward-blind in the cameralists' theories what was proved by his favourable attitude towards the social contract conception generating separate opinions in Joseph von Sonnenfels (the main theorist of cameralism in the monarchy in the last stage of its development) and other cameralists who were sharp opponents of the theory by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, since they followed the positivist assumptions as for the independent rise of the state community (Vranjican, 2007, 13).

dice rigidnog konzervatizma i nevjerice u moć nevidljive ruke i načela laissez faire, već racionalan teorijski concept prilagođen autentičnosti uvjeta primjene [bold – A.B.]²⁰.

A similar position is taken by the one of the greatest Croatian experts on cameralism Eugen Pusić who regards this doctrine among others as a result of the new rationalist thought orientations' influence²¹ (Pusić, 1967). In fact, in the realm of politics, theory of the state and law, rationalism inscribed itself in the dimension of the pragmatic realism of the local activists and thinkers who attempted to optimize the state conditions of existence, and voted for the state interventionism, yet they never relinquished the chosen elements of the classical economic liberalism and physiocrats' assumptions.

4. Instead of conclusion

In the Croat public discourse, the signals of disapproval for the idea of rationalism were observable somewhere about the half of the nineteenth century, and they came especially from the church environment as a manifestation of anxiety that the commented ideological current hit in religion. An example of this manner of thinking was at least a letter *Pastirska poslanica nadbiskupa zagrebačkoga o slobodi* written by the cardinal Juraj Haulik (1788–1869), originally published in the magazine “Katolički list” and subsequently reprinted among others by the newspapers “Narodne

²⁰“That is why, in our opinion, the cameralistic manner of perceiving the state functions in economy, role of economic regulations and self-regulating function of the market mechanism represent the specifics which should be understood in the aspect of the significantly different conditions and character of the problems with which the German-Austrian region struggled. The paternalism coupled with the Enlightenment ideas, carefully planned modernization reforms in the spirit of the absolute monarch's authority, and marginal function of the market mechanism **are not the effects of the rigorous conservatism and disbelief in the power of the invisible hand and the principle of laissez faire, but a rational theoretical concept** adapted to the real conditions [bold – A.B.]”.

²¹A slightly different position is represented by Slobodan Štampar who regards cameralism as an “old-fashioned theoretical current,” although the idea of the state interventionism into the economic issues, common for mercantilism and cameralism, which aims the economics' stimulation in order to gain the state complacency, is attributed by him, however, to the modern macroeconomic theories and to the fiscal politics (Štampar, 1969, 67).

novine (1868, vol. XXXIV, No 37) and “Novi pozor” (vol. II, No 130), which contained a whole passage placing rationalism and Christianity on the two contradictory worldview poles. A peculiar paradox was, however, the fact that adoption of particular assumptions resulted from the specified ideological current of the modernity not necessarily announced the local imaginarium’s destruction or its radical reconstruction. Tomo Basiljević, mentioned in the beginning of the article as the intercessor of rationalism, ideas of public usefulness, and natural law, tended to write in one of his dissertations that human laws and liberty were lying in human nature as its birthright attributes in order to call them at the same time a “seal of good divine will” (Basiljević, 2003, 265–266) what allows us to conjecture that Haulik’s allegations reported after decades under the address of Basiljević’s dissertation were exaggerated. Yet the cardinal’s attitude was also confirmed by the other authors of that time who were connected for example with the pedagogical magazine “Napredak”. A similar contradiction appeared in the context of rationalism’s reworking within politics and law, which were not “liberated” from the state authority, but on the contrary – the Croats recognized the state interventionism as the necessary one along with its rational solutions.

All the issues illuminated in this article prove with less than or greater accuracy that the countries considered the peripheral ones not necessarily blindly accepted categories of thinking elaborated in the West, but they incorporated them into the local paradigms after the previous reconfiguration of particular senses. The well-known “universals” to which the idea of rationalism undoubtedly belongs seem to lose their “common dimension” since the detailed analysis of their reception on specific areas reveals their polysemantic character together with the examined regions’ polyvalence. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the process of assimilation of specific ideas within various fields was of an irregular nature – for example in Croatia rationalism was first adopted in physics (the eighteenth century), and later in theology (the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). In the state and law theory, as it was mentioned, it went through greatest transformations with reference to the “Western pattern”.

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Translation Anna Maria Skibska