Beloved Brethren

Please allow me to welcome you in Zagreb, on the occasion of the „235-20-15“ festivities of the Grand Lodge of Croatia. The numbers in the title refer to 235 years of the first Grand Lodge constituted on Croatian territory in 1775, and 20 years of the provisional Lodge „Illyria“, established in 1992 by the Grand Lodge of Austria where Croatian and Slovenian Brethren were guided by experienced Austrian freemasons in the resurrection process of Masonic light in these latitudes. Only five years later – and 15 years ago – Croatian freemasonry was formally restored by the consecration of the Grand Lodge of Croatia on 8 November 1997.

In the present booklet you will find a short history of Freemasonry in Croatian lands, starting with the establishment of the first Lodge in Glina in 1759 up to the present. It is an interesting fact that the spreading of Masonic ideas had a surprisingly early start in this area, before similar processes gained any significant momentum in other parts of the Habsburg Empire. The reason for this is the rather benevolent treatment of Croatia on the part of Maria Theresia (1717-1780), archduchess of Austria and queen of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia who was greatly assisted by Croatian soldiers in the War for Austrian Succession (1740-48) which erupted upon her accession to the Austrian throne, challenging her inheritance of Habsburg lands. A suite of historic events thus led to the formation of the first Grand Lodge „Liberty“ (Latomia Libertatis sub Corona Hungariae in Provinciam redacta) on 22 October 1775, led by Count Ivan Drašković and Count Stjepan Nitzky, two most prominent figures among Croatian freemasons of those days. Following Nitzky’s premature death in 1777, the Grand Lodge was named the Drašković Observance. Unfortunately, and soon thereafter, Freemasonry in Austria sustained its first serious setback in 1782 when Joseph II, Maria Theresias son and successor, ruled that all Lodges within the Empire had to subject themselves to the newly established National Grand Lodge of Austria (1784). Freemasonry in the Austrian part of the Empire was completely banned in 1795, and was restored only at the end of the I World War (Grand Lodge of Vienna, December 1918). Masonic ideas in Croatia never disappeared and survived periods of hardship, to see its Grand Lodge reborn as the Mother Grand Lodge „Ljubav bližnjeg“ in December 1918. In the same year this grand jurisdiction formed the new Grand Lodge of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes „Jugoslavija“, and masonry again flourished until the advent of the II World War, when in 1940 it declared itself dormant and remained so until 1992, for more than half a century.

But here we are today, together celebrating our 235-20-15 feast!

I wish you a most pleasant stay in Zagreb.

Dragan Kukavica
Grand Master
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FREEMASONRY IN CROATIA

THE DRAŠKOVIC OBSERVANCE (1775)

By Bros. Eugene Laxa and Will Read

17 February 1977

ARS Quatuor Coronatorum, Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076
(abridged transcript)

"The History of Freemasonry" in Austria and Bohemia has been recounted in some detail by Bro. Ladislas Aurele de Malczovich in Vols 4-9 of AQC (1891-96). He tells the story well and in his article in Vol. 9 states that in his next contribution'... we shall witness the growth of the National Hungarian Rite of Count Drašković. Unfortunately, Bro. Malczovich did not continue his interesting saga and his 1896 episode was his last on that subject. ¹

Hence, as the story of the 'Drašković Obsrance', which originated on Croatian territory, does not appear to have been told, this paper is an attempt to repair that omission.

In 1527, both Hungary and Croatia elected to serve the Hapsburgs, then rulers of Austria, but the latter never gained over their new subjects the influence which they exercised over the Austrian provinces, and the Hungarians and the Croats therefore enjoyed liberties denied to the Austrians.

Maria Theresa (1717-80) ascended the throne of Austria-Hungary in 1740. She married Francis, the Duke of Lorraine (1708-65) - later to be the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I – who was the first royal freemason and the only foreign sovereign to have been initiated into an English lodge.²

From the small beginnings of the early years of the 18th century, and with the support of Francis I, the freemasonic movement began to take shape during the reign (1740-80) of Maria Theresa and was consolidated into a national organization during the reign (1780-90) of their son Emperor Joseph II (1741-90).

Joseph II was an ardent reformer and his radical measures embraced all aspects of the life of the Empire, but his endeavour to introduce the German language marred his good works for this was especially resented by the Magyars and the Slavs.

The Hungarian part of the empire (Hungary, Arad, Carpatho-Ukraine, Slovakia, parts of to-day's Austria and Croatia) had a total population of 8 millions in about a hundred small cities of which only four or five had more than 20,000 inhabitants. The effective and controlling people were the local aristocracy who, together with some 30,000 civil servants and some 20,000 priests, formed the privileged classes. The religion of the country was mainly Roman Catholic, although about 10 per cent were Calvinists and Lutherans (both banned from holding public office) and a small number were Greek Orthodox. More than 90 per cent of the population were peasants of whom the majority were serfs.
It was, therefore, the local intelligentsia, including the freemasonic fraternity, who were able to introduce liberal and progressive ideas into the economic and cultural life of the nation. It is curious that Freemasonry in the empire started in Croatia, which was one of the poorest parts of the country, and that it was some years later that it moved into the richer centres of Hungary proper, where it developed rapidly under the Calvinists and the Lutherans.

Joseph II endeavoured to give Freemasonry governmental status, but this was not due to his interest in the Craft per se but in his desire for centralized and absolute control in his own hands. In 1782, Joseph gave his blessing to the formation of a National Grand Lodge (as shown later in this paper) to which all lodges in the country had to adhere. This was followed by other restrictive edicts (which were left to the police authorities to enforce) during his reign, through that of his brother Leopold II (1790-92), into that of Francis II (1792-1835), son of Joseph II, leading eventually to the end of Freemasonry in Austria-Hungary for 70 years.

COUNT STEFAN NICZKY

Stefan Niczky, who for the purposes of Freemasonry took the name 'Hieronymus', was the co-founder with Drašković of the Drašković Observance. He was the son of Christof Niczky and Julia Jankovics and was born in 1747. By the age of twenty-six he was an outstanding civil servant, being Counsellor to the Viceroy, President of the Board of State Accounts, and Chamberlain and King's Lieutenant in Kríževci.

It was in Budapest in 1768 that Niczky had been initiated at twenty-one by a French colonel named Le Claire: this was in an 'extraordinary lodge' when he received, in addition to the three basic degrees and the Scots degree, several 'high' French degrees. As Deputy Grand Master he represented the Observance on civil occasions while Drašković represented it at military functions.

As we shall see, Niczky died in 1777 shortly after carrying out a most important masonic duty.

COUNT IVAN DRAŠKOVIĆ

Ivan Drasković was born in 1740 into an old aristocratic, military, Croatian family. From his father, General Count Adam Drašković, he inherited a liking for military life. He joined the army at an early age and took part in the Seven Years' War (1756-63). In 1761, while on active service, he sustained extensive burns resulting from an explosion; but this did not deter him for he continued his military career with increased zeal. By the age of thirty-three he was a full colonel in the Frontier Regiment No. 10.

His character and nature were such that lesser men envied him. It was said that there was no heroic virtue he did not possess; that in the heat of battle he showed the greatest spirit of sacrifice for his country and for his fellow soldiers; that his sober, keen, lively mind always knew the right decision to take. Perhaps one of his outstanding qualities was his ability to take equal shares with his men in duties as well as in rewards.

A man of this type was bound to have his ill-wishers, and these resorted to intrigues against him. The experienced Empress, Maria Theresa, did not listen to these calumnies, but her son, Joseph II, lent them a friendly ear with the result that in 1776 Drašković was relieved of the command of his regiment. The younger officers, however, believed in him completely and such was their regard for him that they felt that they had '...lost their second father'. During that enforced retirement he devoted himself to his family, his estates and Freemasonry.
During the War of Bavarian Succession (1773-79), his sense of duty and love of his country prevailed over his resentment at the injustices he had suffered. He again offered himself to the military authority and saw more service as the officer in command of a volunteer detachment.

By that time, Drašković had already done much for Freemasonry in Croatia. He had sponsored or founded three lodges, had organized a Provincial Grand Lodge of which he had been elected Grand Master and was recognised as the leading spirit of Freemasonry in the Hungarian part of the empire.

The War of Bavarian Succession greatly hampered the activities of his Provincial Grand Lodge because the majority of its members, being participants in the campaign, were on active service far from their homes and the Grand Officers remaining in the country, being hundreds of miles apart, could not be of much help in the control of the lodges. Many difficulties arose: for example, one lodge applied to become a military lodge (a travelling lodge); because it was meeting in a foreign country it wished to accept the authority of the jurisdiction controlling Freemasonry in that country. Again, many of the lodges, being in comparative isolation, established contacts with other masonic bodies or authorities, and wished to affiliate to their systems.

It was not until his return from the war, in 1779, that Drašković became aware of these proposed affiliations. He thereupon convened a General Assembly at his estate in Božjakovina but no decisions were taken at it. It happened that later in that same year he was again called to resume command of his regiment at Arad, which further precluded his being able to deal with the matter. His stay in Arad was quite short but during it he founded two lodges, one in Sibju (Hermannstadt) and the other in Czik-Szereda.

Drašković’s military career ended in 1781 and from that time he spent his life on his estate at Starjak and devoted himself to his major aims - to assist his fellow-men, to protect and support the afflicted and the helpless, and to minimize adversity and misfortune. He was well trusted; his servants and estate workers counted upon his paternal affection. It was said that '...to become his friend one had but to need him'.

He gave away much of his personal wealth, generally anonymously; he helped many without their knowing the identity of their benefactor. On Sundays, after Mass, he would gather round him his servants, workmen, and other subordinates; for hours on end he would teach them the principles of responsibility, loyalty, love of their neighbour, and, on secular matters, would advise them on the practice of animal husbandry and counsel them on their everyday problems.

On 21 February 1787, at the age of forty-seven, Drašković was called to the Grand Lodge above. His death, following a serious illness which he endured with courage, caused consternation amongst the brethren of his former lodges; they had lost their leader and had no one to replace him.

His dedication to Freemasonry had been complete. Because of his drive and initiative, lodges had been founded in towns and cities where Freemasonry had previously been unknown. No insults or injustices could undermine his enthusiasm. He was revered throughout the empire and was to be remembered amongst masons, especially in his own country, for many a generation.

At his funeral, which took place at his castle at Klenovnik, representatives from all his lodges were present. Each lodge in Croatia held a memorial service; that of the lodge Magnanimitas was most impressive and, at it, a Grand Officer Jeszenovszky was the principal speaker.
The seal which is said to have belonged to the Grand Master of the Drašković Observance depicts a knight with a drawn sword holding, in his left hand, two horse-shoes being a symbol of 'strength through unity'. The inscription reads:

U+U+U+
DCCLXXII

The three letters 'U' are indicative of the relationship of the Drašković system to that of the Strict Observance which had Ultorem Ulescitur Uitor (An Avenger avenges the avenger)\(^7\) as its motto. The year '1772' probably refers to that in which the decision was taken to adopt an independent freemasonic system suited and adapted to Croatian needs.

**THE DRAŠKOVIĆ OBSERVANCE**

The system of Freemasonry practised in Austria-Hungary in the second half of the 18th century was predominantly Strict Observance \(^8\) but Croatia had a system of its own which, though similar in many respects to the Strict Observance Rite, had many unique features. It was known as the 'Drašković Observance'.

Unfortunately, owing to misguided caution and exaggerated zeal in the concealment of the supposed 'secrets', all papers and documents relating to this period were burned by the several lodges of the Observance after Drašković died; hence few records of those particular years are available.

In the 1770 \(^8\) there was in existence in Croatia a small group of lodges led by the Lodge *Libertas* at Varaždin which was very active and said to be quite daring in its liberal outlook. Actually, this Lodge *Libertas* (q.v., infra) applied for affiliation to the Grand Lodge at Prague, but the delays were such that the Croatian lodges, under the leadership of *Libertas*, decided to form their own autonomous masonic authority with Count Ivan Drašković and Count Stefan Niczky as the first Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master respectively.

Drašković and Niczky would never had succeeded in founding their Observance had they not had the co-operation of a number of young officers who had spent some time as prisoners-of-war at Magdeburg in Prussia during the Seven Years' War, their prisoner companions being French, Austrian, Württemberger and Swedish officers.

The French prisoners were the most numerous and many of them were freemasons. In 1761 they constituted a lodge in the prison and named it the *Loge de Felicite*: this was followed in the same year by a second called the *Loge de Parfaite Union* which received a Warrant from the National Grand Lodge of Germany and worked the Strict Observance Rite. There seems no doubt that the Croatian officers learned the secrets of the Craft from their French colleagues so that on their return to their native land they established lodges of their own with a leaning towards a special kind of Freemasonry which, while being Strict Observance in form, was Scottish Rite in substance.

Drašković felt that Freemasonry could play an important, perhaps the most important, part in the improvement of the general conditions of the people of his beloved country.

Ivan Drašković, who was known masonically as 'Jacobus', had been introduced into the Craft by his uncle, Field Marshal Count Kasimir Drašković,\(^9\) and became an avid student of the fraternity which was enjoying great popularity in Europe at that time. He soon realized that the Freemasonry practised in neighbouring Austria was unsuitable for the temperament of the men of the Hungarian part of the Empire. Therefore, following the foundation of the lodges at Glina and Zagreb (q.v., infra) he became convinced that reforms were necessary.
A suitable opportunity presented itself in 1772 when he met Count Stefan Niczky who even as a youth had high ideals, was clever, ambitious, and who had an outlook on life common to, and partly identical with, that of Drašković. The source of their friendship was Freemasonry, hence the mutual will and understanding in their joint endeavours to adapt the Strict Observance Rite to the needs of the Croats.

Both realized the undesirability of existing in isolation and agreed that some contact had to be established with lodges under other jurisdictions. It fell to Niczky to make the first approach which was to be to the Vienna Lodge of the Three Eagles, following which an approach was to be made to the Lodge of the Scots Master in Prague. These, however, came to naught because the conditions for recognition and affiliation required by each of those lodges were too severe and would have left the Croatian lodges in subjection to, and dependent on, the respective Grand Lodges, and without opportunity for independent development.

Thus, Drašković and Niczky looked inwards instead of outwards and decided that to avoid foreign domination they would have to establish a Grand Lodge of their own and adopt a system or code of practice suitable to Croatia.

Their first step was to unite their own lodges, so Drašković brought together his military lodges at Glina and Zagreb, and Niczky brought together his own two Libertas lodges at Varaždin and Križevci, all four being in Croatia proper.

**The General Plan**

For the unification of their lodges they adopted a modified Templar system adapted from the appropriate parts of Strict Observance, and they set down the Statutes and the ritual of their new Order, which was to consist of three degrees, namely:

- **First:** A Degree comprising the Entered Apprentice and the Fellowcraft Degrees;
- **Second:** A Degree comprising the Master Mason and the Scots Master Degrees;
- **Third:** A Degree comprising the Elect of Nine and the Elect of Fifteen Degrees.

In this way they satisfied those brethren who held so-called 'high' degrees.

The Constitutions, or, as they called it, 'The General Plan', was a simple but comprehensive scheme of organization and administrative control.

**Progress**

The leaders of the two Unions - military and Libertas - were naturally anxious to inaugurate their system as soon as possible. Representatives of the two Unions - the four lodges - met at Brezovica near Zagreb on 22 October 1775, when they constituted themselves a Provincial Masonic Grand Lodge. And thus there came into existence what might be termed a 'free' system of masonry. Its title was Latomia Libertatis sub corona Hungariae Provincias redacta (Reformed Masonry of the Province of Libertas, or, The System of the Reformed Lodge Libertas). After the death of Niczky in 1777, the two parts of the new Grand Lodge were represented by Drašković himself and it was from that time that it became known as the Drašković Observance.

Neither the Croatian nor the Hungarian language was considered to be of sufficient status for this new fraternity and Latin was therefore adopted as its official language.

The principles and objects of the founders were well set down in the foreword to the Constitutions. There it was clearly stated that it was not intended to change the basic principles of the old and noble institution but only to adapt it to the requirements of the times and local needs.
The importance as well as the special difficulties of communication were emphasized and the need was stressed for constant vigilance to preserve the Observance from the attacks of its numerous enemies. It was decided to divide the Province into two parts, each having a Deputy Grand Master as its head and each assisted by three Overseers. The Grand Master, independently of his Deputies and their Overseers, was to be assisted by two Overseers - one for each division - an Orator and a Secretary.

Thus, one Deputy with his Overseer had the charge of the military division comprising the lodges at Glina and Zagreb, while the other had the charge of the Libertas division consisting of the Lodges at Varaždin and Križevci.

The second General Assembly should have been held in 1776 but, owing to the absence of Drašković in Budapest and the illness of Niczky, it did not meet until 1777 by which time there were three new lodges which were also represented, viz., Vigilantia at Osijek and the Lodge L’Invincible aux Bras Armés at Lika - both in Croatia, and the Lodge Magnanimitas at Pest in Hungary.

Despite the intention that fundamental principles should remain inviolable, many changes were made in organization and government. At this Assembly in 1777, many of the former offices were abolished in order to make the system less bureaucratic. The officers appointed under the new Constitution were:

- Count Ivan Drašković (Zagreb Lodge) - Grand Master
- Count Stefan Niczky (Varaždin Lodge) - Deputy Grand Master
- Alex Pasthory (Varaždin Lodge) - Senior Warden
- Colonel Knexevich (Glina Lodge) - Junior Warden
- Count Franz Splény (Pest Lodge) - General Visitor
- Adalbert Barics (Pest Lodge) - Orator
- Captain Pausewein (Pest Lodge) - Secretary

And the following Declaration was approved and then made:

“Our masonic authority is fully independent of all foreign masonic jurisdictions. As we consider freedom to be the basic condition of Freemasonry, we do not wish to pay any dues, or to be answerable to any foreign authority. We wish to maintain friendly relations with our Swedish Reformed brethren working under the Zinnendorf system, with the brethren working under the Order of the Duke of Brunswick in Germany, and with the brethren working under the Order of Duke Albert of Mecklenburg in Vienna. We are in harmony with the brethren of Berlin who follow the system of Strict Observance. It is not our intention to deny recognition to any regular mason, to whatever Rite or system he may belong, and we shall always be guided by the true spirit of masonic brotherhood. We have formed our own Supreme Authority to avoid difficulties of communication with distant authorities. Above all, we value our freedom and independence.”

Such was the apprehension of interference by enemies of the Craft within the country that many special precautions were taken, e.g. there was to be only one General Assembly each year; lodge summonses were to be issued at least six weeks in advance but worded in such a way that non-masons would be unable to understand them. Further, in order to maintain the ‘secrecy’ of Freemasonry, meeting places were to be varied, the ornaments and external masonic signs abolished, but all other essential and fundamental characteristics of the fraternity left unaltered. Lodge by-laws were to determine which ornaments were to be retained. In general, only the Tracing Board was to be kept in use, and in many lodges this took the form of a carpet into which all masonic symbols were woven. A special code was to be used for all communications and candidates were to be under surveillance for two consecutive periods of six months prior to initiation.

Entrance to the Observance was to be free, i.e., no entrance fee was to be charged, and moneys for day-to-day needs and for charities were to be obtained by means of ad hoc levies on its members.
All the lodges were to be regarded as equal. A special document was prepared setting out this principle and it was signed by the representatives of all the lodges present at the General Assembly. Parts of the Regulations were couched in the form of 'Exhortation' (see Appendix B).

The Second General Assembly had been presided over by Count Stefan Niczky and it was therefore most tragic that, just as it ended, he died. This was a most grievous loss to this new organization for which he had worked so hard and which in its first two years, 1775-77, had grown from four lodges to seven all working actively to build the new 'Province' on a sure foundation.

**THE OPPRESSION AND EVENTUAL COLLAPSE OF THE FRATERNITY IN THE HAPSBURG EMPIRE**

Several references have been made to the attitudes of successive sovereigns - Maria Theresa, Joseph II, Leopold II, Francis II - towards the Fraternity and their affect upon it, not only in Croatia but also in the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The first setback occurred when Maria Theresa, by an edict of 4 September 1771, prohibited the remittance of moneys by convents, religious orders, etc., to their sister or parent organizations in countries outside the empire. This was due to the antipathy remaining between Prussia and Austria following the Seven Years' War and to the determination of Frederick of Prussia that Austria should not gain anything in Germany which might balance Austria's loss of Silesia to him under the Peace of Hubertusburg.

Freemasonry was regarded as a religious organization - which in fact it was at that time in the empire - and many lodges in Austria, Hungary and Croatia owed allegiance to jurisdictions abroad; hence, they were precluded from paying dues to their controlling bodies, such as the Strict Observance, in Germany and elsewhere.

Following a visit by Baron Südhausen to Vienna, a Provincial Grand Lodge of Austria was formed in February 1776 with the Vienna Lodges Crowned Hope and St Joseph and their sister lodges in Eberau and Varaždin as its nucleus, although the Provincial Grand Lodge was not officially constituted until 1777 with Count Dietrichstein as its first Grand Master.

The outcome of these Orders, and of the long-standing aversion to Prussian domination, was the eventual formation of a National Grand Lodge of Austria but this was not formally constituted until 24 April 1784, and then only after long discussions with, and in opposition to, the Grand Lodge of Germany. This National Grand Lodge had four Provincial Grand Lodges under it, viz., those of Hungary, Arad, Bohemia and Lombardy.

Maria Theresa associated her son Joseph II (1741-90) with her in the government of the empire after the death of his father (Francis I) in 1765. Although Joseph was instrumental in introducing many reforms while his mother was alive, it was on becoming ruler of the most extensive realm of central Europe in 1780, at the age of thirty-nine, that he was able to put his most advanced theories into practice. An avalanche of edicts followed his accession. He reigned for only ten years but in that time he promulgated 6,000 decrees or orders and 11,000 new laws designed to regulate every aspect of the community.

One of these orders (18 June 1782) re-enacted Maria Theresa's prohibition of 1771 on the remittance of moneys abroad. Another of 11 December 1785, which was issued on the Emperor's personal stationery, and which came to be known as the Freimaurerpatent (Freemasons' patent), required all masonic lodges to affiliate to the National Grand Lodge of Austria officially set up the previous year. This the majority of the lodges of the Drašković Observance did, under the aegis of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hungary. Under this order of 1785 the number of lodges was reduced and those left working had to curtail their membership. Those lodges which resisted eventually fell by the wayside. The next destructive blow fell during the subsequent two-year reign of Joseph's brother, Leopold II (1790-92).

Leopold supported the King of France against the revolutionaries, and the increasingly aggressive declarations of the new French National Assembly after November 1791 induced him to conclude a defensive alliance with Prussia. Arising from this situation and the threat to the internal security of the State, the police - in 1792-93 - with the concurrence of the Emperor,
advised all masonic lodges to halt their activities; this they did and, while it did not mean that lodges went out of existence, it effectively left them in a state of suspended animation.

The final blow came in 1795 during the reign (1792-1835) of Francis II. The Jacobins, the revolutionaries, had dominated the 'Reign of Terror' in France and, although they virtually ceased to exist in that country by 1794, their teachings and principles had spread to other countries. Hence, following the discovery of the Jacobin conspiracy in Hungary in 1795 (see 'The lodge at Pest - Magnanimitas supra), all masonic life ceased, to be officially prohibited by an order of the Court of 28 August 1798 which declared all secret societies and fraternities to be illegal.

On 27 April 1801 a law was passed which called for a declaration to be made by all officers and public servants - the classes which had been the backbone of the freemasonic fraternity - that they did not, and would not in the future, belong to any secret society or fraternity.

So, together with all masonic lodges of other jurisdictions operating in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Drašković Observance came to an end.

MASONRY IN CROATIA AFTER FRANCIS II

A brief note about the Craft in Croatia in the 19th and 20th centuries will serve to complete the picture. The short domination of the country by Napoleon I resulted in a number of lodges being formed amongst the French officers and civil servants of the occupying forces. These lodges were located at Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Karlovac, etc., but they did not attract many members from the local population, so that when Austria re-established itself in 1815, the lodges were closed and some of their members - being local - were persecuted for their allegiance to the Craft.

Fifty years were to elapse before another masonic lodge made its appearance in that part of the Continent, and this was subsequent to the Austro-Hungarian Agreement of 1867. It commenced with a Warrant being granted by the Grand Lodge of England to Lodge Unity in Budapest and this was followed by other lodges formed by the Hungarians themselves.

This new masonic movement did not reach Croatia until 1871. On 14 February in that year, under a Warrant issued by a Hungarian lodge, Lodge Ljubav Bližnjega (Love Thy Neighbour) was founded at Sisak, and other lodges followed, e.g., Hrvatska Vila (Croatian Nymph) at Zagreb.

In 1917, during the First World War, Lodge Ljubav Bližnjega published a booklet commemorating its forty-five years of existence and dedicating it to the 200th Anniversary of the United Grand Lodge of England. This, in war-time and in hostile territory, showed remarkable courage.

In spite of ecclesiastical opposition, the lodges prospered and by 1918 there were several lodges in Croatia, some of which adopted names used by lodges 150 years earlier, e.g., Razboritost (Prudence) at Zagreb, Budnost (Vigilantia) at Osijek, Sirius at Rijeka and Stella Orientalis at Zemun.

The Croatian lodges separated themselves in 1918 from the Hungarian Grand Lodge and made their senior lodge into the "Croatian Grand Lodge Ljubav Bližnjega", replacing the lodge proper with one to which they gave the name 'Grof Ivan Drašković' thus commemorating the founder of the Drašković Observance.

One year later, on 9 June 1919, the 'Grand Lodge Ljubav Bližnjega' came to an agreement with the Grand Lodge of Serbia and, as a result, a larger authority was formed - 'The Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes „Yugoslavia“ - with its headquarters in Belgrade.

However, the Serbian hegemony disillusioned many old masons who thereafter resigned from their lodges and, eventually, Freemasonry under that Grand Lodge degenerated into a Mecca for job-seekers and opportunists.

There was one other unfortunate influence upon Freemasonry between the two Wars: this was the growing domination of the French Grand Orient with its multiplicity of degrees and its atheistic masonry as practised in Serbia. Against this influence, the three-degree system of theistic Freemasonry, which had up to that time been followed by all lodges in Croatia, wilted sadly and eventually disappeared.
EPILOGUE

The foregoing is the story, far from complete, of the rise and fall of Freemasonry in a small corner of Europe during the 18th century. The following passages from a work, published in 1950, by the Serbian historian Vaso Bogdanov are relative and interesting. Concerning the old Croatian freemasons he said:

"During the eighteenth century, the freemasons had a great influence on the development of the public and political life in the Austrian empire. The importance of this organization, which comprised all classes of society, is due to the fact that all Hungarian-Croatian reformers at that time were members of masonic lodges. Because of the absence of other liberal political organizations, the lodges were positive and progressive in their character.

... this important organization was, of all Hungarian countries, most developed in Croatia and ... the leading role in masonry in the whole of Hungary was played by the Croats. The undisputed founder and leader of the freemasonic bodies was Count Ivan Drašković... As existing documents prove, the Drašković Observance transformed an international cosmopolitan organization based on mystical and superstitious elements into a patriotic fraternity.

Drašković's practical nature and his realism were demonstrated by the fact that the members of his lodges were recommended to study, as masons, many matters about which nobody at the time really cared, e.g., the increasing of the trade of the country, the improvement of the standard of living of the serfs, the maintenance of the laws and constitution of the State.

It has been said that the main distinction between the Drašković and some other masonic jurisdictions was that, while the latter recognised only the King, the Drašković fraternity recognised the country and set its laws above the King."

What a tribute to the energy, the initiative and, above all, the high ideals of Count Ivan Drašković! He can truthfully be described as 'The father of Freemasonry in Croatia'.

The depth of the roots of the tree of Freemasonry planted by Ivan Drašković in Croatia is confirmed by a comment of Stipe Šuvar, Vice-President of the Croatian Communist party (as quoted in the Zagreb newspapers in 1973) more than thirty years after Freemasonry had been persecuted and the Craft abolished in Yugoslavia. He was speaking of the Croatian intellectuals and students and said: We have to finish once and for all with this masonic liberal tradition in the University of Zagreb.

A comment made ostensibly in denigration of Croatian Freemasonry but, in reality, a tribute to its high ideals and good works.

NOTES
1 Malczovich contributed ten articles to AQC on the subject of Freemasonry in Austria and Bohemia. It would be interesting to know why he did not complete the series. According to his obituary (A QC 44) he was at one time Vice-Secretary to the Royal Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. Was there a political reason for his discontinuing tl;e articles? His subsequent papers in A QC are all on the Chivalric Degrees - 1901, 1904, 1906, 1907. He died in 1931.
2 Francis, Duke of Lorraine, who was initiated by Dr Desaguliers at a special Delegation at the Hague in 1731, was successful in banning within the kingdom of Austria the promulgation: of the Bull of Pope Clement XII (In eminenti) of 28 April 1738, and he ordered the release of all Freemasons who had been arrested on the orders of the Inquisition.
3 It was considered dangerous, particularly in correspondence, to use proper names: every newly made brother was required to choose a pseudonym by which he would be known amongst the brethren.
4 The spelling of names, places, etc., as given in this paper may differ from modern practice: this is due to the orthography of the sources - Croatian, Hungarian, German, Latin, etc. - having been followed throughout.

5 During the eighteenth century, many scores of 'masonic' degrees were invented in France and elsewhere on the Continent, to many of which the word 'Scottish' or in modern use 'Scots', (Ecossais) was applied although there was no connection with Scotland or Scottish Freemasonry. This explanation should be borne in mind whenever the word 'Scots' is used in this paper.

6 Amiti de Guerre at Glinia; L'Invincible aux Bras Armes at Lika; Prudentia at Zagreb (q.v.).

7 Perhaps in the sense of Vengeance avenges the Avenger.

8 Founded by Carl Johann Gottlieb, Baron von Hund, in Germany about 1754.

9 Count Kasimir Drašković (1716-65) was initiated in the Lodge Zu den drei Kanonen in Vienna in 1742.

10 See Appendix A (The Constitutions); B (A Summary of Regulations); C (The Ritual of the Drašković Observance).

11 The word 'Province' was not used in the modern masonic sense to indicate a 'division' of a larger masonic authority, but that that Grand Lodge was exclusive to Croatia which was a 'Departement' or 'Province' of Hungary.

12 L'Ordre des Fendeurs (Order of the Woodcutters) established in Paris in 1743 by Chevalier Beauchaine had officers with appropriate titles, e.g. 'Adze', 'Axe', 'Charcoalmam', 'Sawyer', 'Logger', 'Carpenter'.

13 There is no record of such a Warrant in Lane's Masonic Records.

14 The Order of Maria Theresa (established by the Empress on 28 June 1757) was the highest honour in the Hapsburg Empire and was awarded to officers for deeds of heroism.

15 There are many expressed, or implied, references in this paper to the fact that the Drašković Observance had many illustrious and influential men amongst its members, but their names have been omitted from the text. The following - a few of the many - will serve to indicate the high standing which the Observance enjoyed:

Aristocracy: (many being civil administrators, King's Lieutenants, chamberlains; etc.) Counts Keglevich, Jankovich, Pejachevics, Erdödy, Bedeković, Auersperg, Davidovics, Inkey, Althan, Orczy, Klobusiczky, Bathany, Gyulay, Spleny. Army officers: (many holding the distinguished Knighthood of the Order of Maria Theresa) Knezevich, Bogovich, Peharnik, Jellachich.

The Church: (Roman Catholic) Maximilian Vrhovac, Bishop of Zagreb - founder of schools, libraries, parks, etc., and one of the most illustrious names in Croatian masonry; (Greek Orthodox) Bishop Joseph Schakabenda, Abbot Stephan Stratimirovics.

Physicians: Jean de Langue, Mathias Kerczelicz, Vincens Kunstler.


16 Colonel Count Franz Lorenz Drašković (1750-1817) was a younger cousin of Count Ivan Drašković.

17 Franz August Heinrich, Baron von Südhausen, a Danish captain. He was a keen mason, a friend of Zinnendorf, and championed the system followed by the Grand National Lodge of Germany against Hund's 'Strict Observance'. He consecrated the Provincial Grand Lodge of Austria in 1776 having been most active in its formation; it eventually became the National Grand Lodge. Südhausen tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade Joseph II to become a Freemason.

18 Vide 'The lodge at Varaždin - Libertas' and 'Another lodge at Varaždin - Friendship', supra.

19 In 1784 the Provincial Grand Lodge of Hungary consisted of the following twelve lodges: the first seven were Drašković Observance lodges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magnanimitas</th>
<th>Pest</th>
<th>Bravery</th>
<th>Karlovac</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taciturnitas</td>
<td>Poszony</td>
<td>Three White Lilies</td>
<td>Temesvar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilantia</td>
<td>Osijek</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Poszony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudentia</td>
<td>Zagreb</td>
<td>The Golden Wheel</td>
<td>Eberau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertas</td>
<td>Varaždin</td>
<td>The Virtuous Traveller</td>
<td>Eperies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Varaždin</td>
<td>The Virtuous Cosmopolitan</td>
<td>Balassa Gyarmat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


21 Ibid.

22 The second founder and first Treasurer of Lodge Ljubav Bližnega, Matija Laxa, was the grandfather of Bro. Laxa, a co-author of this paper.
Count Ivan Draskovic de Trakoscan
First Grand Master (1775)

Adolf Mihalić
Grand Master (1918)
Grand Lodge „Ljubav bližnjega“

Georg Weifert
Grand Master (1919)
Grand Lodge „Jugoslavija“

Branco Horvat
Charter member 1992
Provisional Lodge „Illyria“
In the last days of spring of 1991, six Brothers terminated their membership in the Grand Lodge of Jugoslavija and continued to meet in the Croatian cultural club in Zagreb, in anticipation of a rebirth of Freemasonry in Croatia. Brother Čedo Kirchner, a Croatian Mason living in Vienna, spearheaded the idea that the Grand Lodge of Austria should be the one to return Masonic light to Croatia, and his efforts were joined by numerous Austrian Brethren. However, the process was neither simple nor easy to be done.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Freemasonry was declared illegal in 1940, and for the next fifty years very few Masonic activities saw the light of day in this part of Europe. In 1992 only two Croatian Brothers were still alive – Antun Ulrich, the famous architect who lived in Zagreb, and Eugen Laxa who emigrated to Brasil. By that time both of them had reached a high age.

In January of 1992 the Grand Lodge of Austria formed in Vienna the Provisional Lodge Illyria (called a „Deputation Lodge” in German) with the task of educating and upbringing a generation of Masons who would be able to revive the Grand Lodge of Croatia. There were thirteen found members among Austrian Brethren, and the name Illyria was chosen as a remembrance to the ancient of days when Croatia and Slovenia were part of a Roman province of the same name. The Labyrinth – from the floorwork of the cathedral in Chartres – was chosen as the lodge’s medal (bijoux), representing the eternal quest of a mental search for the beginning and the end, the search and the finding, of darkness and light – all these being common elements of the cultural background of Europe.

A month later, in February 1992 in Klagenfurt, the Illyria Lodge held its very first (and untitled) communication and Bro. Walter Raming was elected to serve as Worshipful Master. It was decided that Illyria would cater to the needs of both Croatian and Slovenian Brethren. During this lodge, four Entered Apprentices were advanced to Fellowcrafts. The lodge was consecrated in Vienna, in March, and the first thirteen gentlemen were initiated. Three Brothers were raised to the degree of Master Mason during a separate communication. The ritual working was done bilingually – in German and in Croatian. It was decided that Croatian Brethren would continue to have their lodge meetings in Graz. At this time Illyria already had 40 members – 13 from Austria, 20 from Croatia and 7 from Slovenia.

In summer of this year the first meeting of Brethren from these three countries was organized in Trakošćan castle, the one-time seat of the Drašković nobility, one of whose esteemed memebrs was Count Ivan Drašković, the founder of Freemasonry in 18th century Croatia.
During the rest of the year Croatian Brethren were busy translating the rituals of the first three Craft degrees, as well as the rituals for the Initiation ceremony and the Lodge of Sorrow. Most of the translations were done by or under the supervision of Bro. Brano Horvat, in whose residence in Podsused the first **Illyria’s Lodge of Sorrow** was held (with the permission of the Grand Lodge of Austria) commemorating all Croatian Freemasons who were called to the Celestial lodge after 1940. This was the first Masonic Lodge held in Croatia in 52 years, and the renowned Croatian artist Ms Ljerka Njerš produced a plaque to celebrate this important event.

By the summer of 1993, another eight candidates from Croatia were initiated in Klagenfurt and Graz. It was decided that three Volumes of Sacred Law would in the future be placed on the altar – the Bible, the K’uran and the Talmud, and that the ritual would be trilingual. A second meeting was held in Trakošćan castle, producing a working-schedule and Bro. Čedo Kirchner being elected as the second Worshipful Master. There were already 96 Brethren on the roster, 37 of them from Croatia. Unfortunately, in October, the spiritual leader of Illyria, Bro. Kirchner died suddenly and quite prematurely. Walter Raming once again becomes its Worshipful Master, and Bro. Brano Horvat was elected as his deputy. Some months later, early in 1994, the lodge was split up for organizational reasons, so that the Croatian Brethren continued to meet in Graz, while the Slovenian members relocated their communications to Klagenfurt where a new Provisional (**Deputation**) Lodge **Dialogus** was established. In summer, a third conference was held in Trakošćan.

On 21 September 1994 the Grand Lodge of Croatia was registered as a civil society with the Croatian Ministry of Public Administration. Its founding members were Zlatko Bourek, Drago Dumančić, Brano Horvat, Radovan Horvat, Slobodan Kuvalja, Nenad Porges, Hrvoje Raguž, Zvonko Tomić, Nikica Wurth and Zvonimir Žepić. The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Austria kindly gave permission that lodges can be held in Croatia, whereas Brother Tomić provided the requisite space in his **Price-cutters** warehouse in Sesvete. The paraphernalia for the Temple were handcrafted by the renowned architect Bro. Željko Kovačić.

During the same year Bro. Brano Horvat translated and printed the Schneider instruction booklets for all three Craft degrees, and the Old Charges as the reprint of an earlier translation by MW Bro. Adolf Mihalić (Grand Master of the Grand Lodge Ljubav Bližnjega). As of 1995 the stated communications of the lodge were held in an office building of the Sutinska vrela sports complex, kindly provided free of charge by its manager Mrs. Karlović. The Festive boards were organized on the premises, in the restaurant Vrelo. Further ten candidates were initiated during ceremonies held in Graz and at the fourth meeting in Trakošćan. A special gathering of the Illyria Lodge was held at Neuhodis castle in the Austrian province of Burgenland, attended by eleven Croatian Freemasons.

In October 1994 Bro. Brano Horvat participated in a feature called „Public issues“ aired by Croatian radio, where he was interviewed on Freemasonry in Croatia, and this was the first public presentation by Croatian Masons. Before the end of the year, thirty members of Illyria applied for demits, in order to establish three lodges required for the future Grand Lodge of Croatia. After a lengthy period of „shopping around“ a property – appropriate for lodge purposes - was found in Podsused, on the western outskirts of Zagreb. The purchase was accomplished through donations by Brethren, and with substantial financial assistance by the Grand Lodge of Austria and Brethren from Graz. A small temple, artistically furnished by Br. Zlatko Bourek, was consecrated soon thereafter in the house located on the property.

The day 14th September 1996 was chosen as the day for the consecration of the three Croatian lodges – **Lodge Hrvatska vila**, **Lodge Grof Ivan Drašković** and **Lodge Tri svjetla**. But only three days before this grand and long-expected event, Bro. Brano Horvat – the Grand Master elect - suddenly died leaving everyone aghast! But life had to go on, and the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Austria, MW Bro. Heinz Scheiderbauer „brought the Light“ into the three lodges during the festive ceremony of consecration held on 14.9.2006 in Trakošćan. On the Croatian team were the Worshipful Masters of the three Croatian lodges, WM Bro. Radovan Horvat, WM Bro. Zvonimir Žepić and WM Bro. Igor Francetić. The Illyria Lodge thereby ceased to exist, upon successfully fulfilling her purpose and aims.
Over a period of four years Croatian Brethren regularly travelled to Austria in order to participate in lodge meetings in Vienna and Graz, working on ideas of universal Brotherhood and dreaming of having a Temple of their own, in Croatia. With the help of Austrian Freemasons, for which Croatian Brethren will be grateful to the end of our days, the Craft in Croatia now had some seventy members including 32 Master Masons, who have acquired the right to establish three lodges, and – finally – their Grand Lodge!

The annual assembly of the three Croatian lodges was held in June 1997 and Bro. Igor Francetić was elected as Grand Master, Bro. Milan Gelb as Grand Secretary and Bro. Željko György as Grand Treasurer. On 8th November 1997 the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Austria, MW Bro. Heinz Scheiderbauer once again brought the Light, thereby consecrating the Grand Lodge of Croatia and installing its first Grand Master MW Bro. Igor Francetić.

Bro. Walter Raming, the first Master of Illyria, was proclaimed Honorary Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Croatia ad vitam. Brother Radovan Horvat, Dragan Kukavica and Branko Šömen were decorated for their important contribution to the establishing of the Grand Lodge of Croatia.

MW Bro Radovan Horvat, PGM
Grand Lodge of Croatia

Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Croatia

Igor Francetić 1997-2000
Radovan Horvat 2000-2006
Dragan Kukavica from 2006
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Castle Brezovica where the Grand Lodge of the Drašković
Observance was founded in 1775.