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**Francis Violich**. *The Bridge to Dalmatia: A Search for the Meaning of Place.* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. xx + 352 pp. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8018-5554-2.

**Reviewed by** Drago Roksandic (University of Zagreb)
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**The Bridge to Dalmatia**

Francis Violich is emeritus professor of city planning and landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also an American of the Croatian origin. These two aspects of his biography, public and private, are the determining "spaces" of this book. *The Bridge to Dalmatia* is both an environmental ecohistory and an attempt to understand the urban anthropology of Dalmatia, a region inheriting and living multicultural experience over at least two thousand years. It is both a scholarly and literary interpretation of Dalmatian environmental cultural identity in the Croatian millennial community.

The book consists of an introduction and seven sections: Introduction: Crossing the Bridge to California; Section I: Identity, Key to the Meaning of Place; Section II: The Making of Dalmatia as a Regional Place; Section III: Cities of the Mainland; Section IV: Three Seaside Villages of the Islands; Section V: Two Towns That Dominate Their Islands; Section VI: Mountain Village Linked to the Sea; and Section VII: The Environment: Common Ground for Community Identity.

Violich's work includes a large variety of personal and intellectual experiences. Some of them are discussed by him in the text (Lewis Mumford, Louis Adamic), the others are referred to in his reflections upon Dalmatia (in particular those ones related to his contacts with Croatian experts, relatives, etc.), and the third, as ones can be identified only by a cautious, knowledgeable reader, including works written by American scholars in disciplines Violich has been interested in for the last sixty years. All of them have been brought together in his "construction" of the Croatian community identity in Dalmatia. His book is a very interesting contribution to an intercultural, American-Croatian dialogue, since it belongs to both the American and the Croatian mental and intellectual traditions.

Family memories, immigrant oral histories, and personal experiences in each of its chapters are interwoven with scholarly interpretations of problems of Dalmatian human geography and urban anthropology. Mental images are confronted with facts derived from scholarly works and numerous maps, drawings, illustrations, etc. Such an approach facilitates his personal understanding of environmental community identities of Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, as well as a lot of other localities in Dalmatia, along the coast and islands.

It does not help us to understand why some other environments have been omitted, if one has in mind multicultural Dalmatia in a long-term perspective and, in particular, if one wants to understand the destructive nature of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, tragically affecting Dalmatia, as well as Croatia as a whole. In sub-regional terms, his book does not pay any particular attention to the continental ("Morlacchian") Dalmatia, that is much different from the maritime one. Urban and rural settlements inside Dalmatia should have been compared to those ones along the coast, as well as on islands. Some of them include historically deeply rooted Croatian-Serbian controversies (Obrovac, Benkovac, and Knin), an aspect which has been totally neglected in "The Bridge to Dalmatia." Acts of aggression have also taken place inside Dalmatia. They have not been just "imported" from outside.

Consequences of the acts of aggression during the war 1991-1995, primarily those ones affecting material culture, have been identified so that war has to be remembered, as well as continuously investigated. Mulitcultural richness and varieties of Dalmatia no doubt are and will be continuously challenging in many ways. Violich's book is a passionate, authentic document about his understanding of Dalmatia "between Worlds."

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