

Title: August Šenoa, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Southern Slav Question  
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August Šenoa, the father of Croatian Realism, called for and himself inaugurated a turning away from the prevalent narrative topic of fighting against Turkish domination and, what he called, the “German mold” in the style of literary production. His efforts in this reflect the precarious position that the South Slavic states of his time held as the ground between the super-powers of Austria-Hungary in the northwest and the Ottoman Empire in the southeast. Writing from within that context, Šenoa challenges the traditional anti-Ottoman sentiment by portraying the West as the greater threat to national identity and independence.

This paper will explore how Šenoa’s first historical novel *The Goldsmith’s Gold* negotiates the above-mentioned tensions through a love triangle that places a Croatian nobleman between two women who embody the potential future of Croatian nationhood: a simple Croatian artisan’s daughter and a wealthy Germanic femme fatale. The exclusion of Turkish protagonists from the plot and, yet, the symbolic meeting of the Croatian love pair at the execution of a convert to Islam, the turbulent political background against which their story unfolds, and the eventual murder of the Croatian heroine will be read in light of Šenoa’s attempt to fulfill his self-prescribed role of the author in raising national consciousness.