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Cover story

On 9th-12th June 2009 Dubrovnik in Croatia was a seat of the Conference on "New Challenges in Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering" organised in honour of Prof. Bozidar Liscic on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his birthday and under the chairmanship of Prof. Bozo Smoljan WAMME Fellow, and the patronage of the International Federation for Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering. Dubrovnik is a Croatian city on the Adriatic Sea coast in the extreme south of Dalmatia, positioned at the terminal end of the Isthmus of Dubrovnik. In Wikipedia you can find information that Dubrovnik is one of the most prominent tourist destinations on the Adriatic. Historical lore indicates that Dubrovnik as the Ragusa was founded in the 7th century on a rocky island named Laus, which provided a shelter for Dalmatian refugees from the nearby city of Epidaurus. The Latino-dalmatian founders were escaping from the Slavic invasions. Another theory appeared recently, based on new archaeological excavations. There is also increasing support in the scientific community for the theory that major construction of Ragusa took place during B.C. years. This "Greek theory" has been boosted by recent findings of numerous Greek artefacts during excavations in the Port of Dubrovnik. Also, drilling below the main city road has revealed natural sand, which contradicts the theory of Laus island. After the fall of the Ostrogothic Kingdom, the town came under the protection of the Byzantine Empire, although it was essentially an independent city-state that actively interacted with the surrounding Serbian littoral. After the Crusades, Ragusa came under the sovereignty of Venice (1205-1358), which would give its institutions to the Dalmatian city. The Republic of Ragusa received its own Statutes as early as 1272, statutes which, among other things, codified Roman practice and local customs. By the Peace Treaty of Zadar in 1358, Ragusa achieved a relative independence as a vassal-state of the Kingdom of Hungary. Between the 14th century and 1808 Ragusa ruled itself as a free state. The Republic had its peak in the 15th and 16th centuries, when its thalassocracy rivalled that of the Republic of Venice and other Italian maritime republics. The prosperity of the city of Dubrovnik has always been based on maritime trade. In the Middle Ages, as the Republic of Ragusa, also known as the fifth Maritime Republic (together with Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa and Venice), it became the only eastern Adriatic city-state to rival Venice. Supported by its wealth and skilled diplomacy, the city achieved a remarkable level of development, particularly during the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1808, Marshal Marmont abolished the republic and integrated its territory first into the Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy and later into the Illyrian provinces under the French rule. When the Habsburg Empire gained these provinces after the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the new imperial authorities installed a bureaucratic administration, which retained the essential framework of the Italian-speaking system. In 1815, the former Ragusan Government, i.e. its noble assembly, met for the last time in the ljetnikovac in Mokošica. With the fall of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the city was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia).

