

# THE ŽIVA KRUNICA CONFRATERNITY (THE LIVING ROSARY CONFRATERNITY) IN THE CROATIAN PRESS

Research on the different organisations, communities and institutions of society is interdisciplinary in nature. The organisational frames that the social sciences describe, interpret, forecasting and controlling their operation, are derived mainly from the economy, public administration and the political sphere.<sup>1</sup> However there are organisations on which little research has been done; the organisations of religious life can be classified among these. The latter can be defined in general as systems open to their environment, which function continuously in time, pursue their own particular goals, are formed by individuals and small groups of individuals, have a particular internal structure needed for the co-ordination of their activities, and in the majority of cases are characterised by a particular division of work and hierarchical distribution of responsibility. Put briefly, it can be said that the organisations are corporate actors and social formations of society, to which individuals voluntarily transfer a part of their material and/or intellectual goods.<sup>2</sup>

The organisation and its culture is taken for granted by its participants and in the majority of cases is not the subject of reflection;<sup>3</sup> it offers its members collective orientation on the basis of identical values and gives coherence to social action.<sup>4</sup> The organisational culture comes into being as the result of a learning process, it ensures a possibility for orientation and interpretation in a complex and complicated world, it offers a programme of action, it represents action on the basis of an identical cultural tradition, and thus it is not exclusively consciously learned.<sup>5</sup>

The organisation thus has a culture, which is narrower and less stratified than the existing cultural system of the society,<sup>6</sup> but often the organisation itself is regarded as part of the culture. Social psychology calls this *organisational culture*. The greatest role in laying its foundations is played by the people who create the organisation, who formulate the values and norms representing the basis on which the organisation operates.<sup>7</sup>

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1 CSEPELI 2001.

2 KLIEBER 1999. 24.

3 CSEPELI 2001. 302. Csepeli calls this relationship "natural", "taken for granted".

4 CSEPELI 2001. 303.

5 CSEPELI 2001. 303. Csepeli calls this conscious organisational socialisation.

6 CSEPELI 2001. 302.

7 CSEPELI 2001. 302.

The organisational culture also creates its own time and its own space: the organisation's festivals, material symbols, places of community life, and rites and customs of everyday life appear.<sup>8</sup> With these, organisational identity can be created, on the basis of which the individual shapes his positive attitude towards belonging to the group and formulates his separation from the other group and organisation.<sup>9</sup>

The real or only imaginary social connections of belonging to different types of communities, including religious confraternities, represent a certain feeling of social security for the individual. They can give the individual an answer not only to the question of "who am I?" but also "where do I belong?" This is because the lack of connections can create a feeling of uncertainty.<sup>10</sup> The awareness of belonging somewhere can reduce this but even so many factors of insecurity may remain for the (religious or non-religious) individual: why do I suffer, why will I be/am I sick, what will happen to me after death? etc. It would appear that the religious confraternities can provide spiritual help for their members in this respect. This was and is the source of their attraction, the reason why many people join them. In this way religion provides and strengthens social capital, not just for the individual but also for the community.<sup>11</sup> The psychological factors are also important for the interpretation of other areas of the culture and the culture as a whole. Behind cultural differences too, there are not only objective causes but in many cases psychological factors.<sup>12</sup>

Not all organisations also constitute a community. The connections between people often remain at the level of superficial contacts or loose connection networks and do not become institutionalised. But even in such cases they have a very important role. They represent a kind of safe "harbour" in the awareness of belonging somewhere, they can provide the help of the group: they can offer principally small services and give emotional help in coping with the tensions of everyday life.<sup>13</sup>

The religious confraternities and associations undertake a complex social role. For this reason research on them is the task of many disciplines. Research on the Catholic confraternities is difficult because of the international nature of the confraternities and their research. As a result of different traditions in the history of scholarship, interest in the confraternities differs from country to country and the approaches adopted also differ. Political and ideological aspects are a further complication. The history of research in Western Europe is quite different from that in the countries of Central Eastern Europe.

As a result of the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the countries of Central Europe, the life of the church, religious folk life and religious culture in general, including functioning of the religious confraternities and research on their history, took

8 CSEPELI 2001. 303.

9 CSEPELI 2001. 303.

10 BENDA-BECKMANN, F. – BENDA-BECKMANN, K. 2000.

11 SMIDT 2003. 1–6, 211–222.

12 KÓSA 1990. 78.

13 WELLMAN – CARRINGTON – HALL 1988. 130–184.

a different course in each country. Briefly, it can be said that during the socialism that existed in the decades following the Second World War, the subject of religion was forced into the background in the region. In all countries the anti-religious and anti-church Marxist ideology opposed research on forms of Roman Catholic and Western Christian religious practice in general and in a few places, such as Romania and Yugoslavia, this was further aggravated by the opposition to such research by Orthodoxy which had become the state religion.

## **Research on the religious confraternities in Croatia**

A very instructive overview of research in ethnology of religion in Croatia appeared recently. It showed that it was not only the atmosphere of the socialism imbued with ideology that prevailed in Yugoslavia between 1945–1990 (when Croatia was part of that formation) that was responsible for the neglect of research on religious themes.<sup>14</sup> This neglect was also influenced by the circumstance that the Serbs who became dominant in 1920 were Orthodox. As a result of these influences the attitude prevailed that Croatian ethnology should deal with questions concerning Croatian cultural history and consequently in religious respects it should deal with the pre-Christian Croatian (Slav) mythology, beliefs and folk (=peasantry), and not with phenomena of urban origin.<sup>15</sup> As a result the questions of religious life, religion and religious practice appeared principally as the demand for a mythological reconstruction and subsequently as the historical source for current beliefs and rites rather than as the study of popular Christian religious practice. However, the anthropological considerations that appeared with growing force in the research carried out in the 1980s and 1990s turned attention towards religious phenomena and the social role of religion in the examination of how they influenced the power structures and the transformation of popular culture. The most recent studies interpret the social and symbolical role of religious rites and examine the Christianisation of popular culture. All these studies applying the considerations mentioned were made mainly after the democratic political change of the 1990s,<sup>16</sup> indicating how the ideological and political connections determine scholarly research (among other things).

A sharp distinction is made in the Croatian historical literature between the religious societies of settlements along the Croatian coast and those of Slavonia, the region around Zagreb. Up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century the coastal settlements of Dalmatia showed strong Italian influence. They resembled the Italian societies not only in their language use (Dalmatian), but also in their operation. For this reason they are more interesting for research. The fraternities operating in the region of Zagreb and Slavonia showed greater similarity to the Austrian and

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14 ŠANTEK 2004. 23–24.

15 ŠANTEK 2004. 24.

16 ŠANTEK 2004.

Hungarian societies. This was also reflected, for example, in the differences in the patronage of the societies. Historical research began in the 1990s, mainly after the political change and the recovery of Croatian independence. It was then that the Istrian historical archive launched its yearbook, *Vjesnik Istarskog Arhiva = VIA*, in which a few studies and research reports have already appeared on the religious societies.

The journal launched in 1977, *Croatica Christiana Periodica*, in the 1990s also published a number of important studies on the societies. The 1997 and 1998 volumes published a thematic compilation on religious societies in Croatia, under the titles *Bratovštine u Hrvatskoj* and *Bratovštine na Hrvatske prostorima*. As already noted, the former Dalmatian towns and religious societies of today's Croatian coastal area are in the focus of attention.<sup>17</sup> T. Slavka Petrić presents the societies of Šibeniki (Sebenico) in the light of their ties to the different churches. The life of the confraternities here was rich and extensive as Šibenik was an episcopal see with many churches.<sup>18</sup> The societies of the coastal settlements took root in the Middle Ages. They played an important role in the local societies in helping their members accept their local, occupational and status identity. They set up hospitals and took part in caring for the poor. The surviving minute-books and registers of births and deaths preserve the obligations and rights of members. Churches, chapels and altars were erected in the areas from the members' donations and have preserved the memory of these 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century societies right up to the present.<sup>19</sup> The societies of Mary on the islands close to the mainland have roots reaching back to the Middle Ages. Material relics of their operation (churches, chapels, altars), and observation of the Marian feasts bear witness to the strong veneration of Mary. Among the oldest organisational frames are the societies of the Assumption of Mary which accepted anyone, including laypersons, as members. There were also numerous other, smaller societies on the islands, such as the Rosary confraternities.<sup>20</sup> We also learn about the community life of Croatian communities living outside Croatia (in Rome, Venice); in Venice, for example, they organised a society under the patronage of Saints George and Tripun which was granted privileges of indulgence by Pope Sixtus IV.<sup>21</sup> Most of the documents of the Dalmatian religious societies from the late Middle Ages right up to the 18th century were written in Italian.<sup>22</sup> The studies on the past of the history of the religious societies published in *Croatica Christiana Periodica* contain references to a good number of earlier articles and books.<sup>23</sup>

17 ČORALIĆ 1991.

18 PETRIĆ 1997.

19 BENYOVSKY 1998.

20 ŠTOKOVIĆ 1992–1993

21 ČORALIĆ 1998.

22 KOVAČIĆ 1998.

23 Among the older works, special mention can be made of Gelcich, G.: *Le Confraternite in Dalmazia* and the monography of Vojnović, K.: *Bratovštine i obrtne korporacije u Republici dubrovačkoj od 13. do konca 18 vijeka*. And among the more recent works: Black, Ch., *Le confraternite italiane del cinquecento*. GELCICH 1885.; VOJNOVIĆ 1899., BLACK 1992.

We have only scattered data, mainly from the local history literature, on the confraternity life of the Croatians along the Danube who were in direct contact with Hungarians, which throw some light on the functioning of the Rosary confraternities.<sup>24</sup>

## Periodicals of the Rosary Confraternity

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rapid spread of literacy, education, the postal service and the public transport network, the conditions and background were created for the appearance of mass communications in Croatia too. The great social mobility that followed in the wake of industrialisation also created the need for people to be able to reach each other with the help of some kind of intermediary means and for new channels through which the actors of economic and political life could convey their thoughts and aspirations to the masses. The places of social openness changed and grew wider. Whereas earlier the authorities, the church, the association and the immediate (kinship, neighbourhood) community provided a sufficient frame and flow of information needed for orientation and a livelihood, by the second half of the 19th century these frames proved to be inadequate and in part ceased to exist. New forms of religious propaganda appeared.<sup>25</sup>

For a long while the Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Hungary did not know what to make of the rapidly proliferating periodicals, monthly and weekly papers and later daily newspapers, seeing them as instruments of secularisation and channels for the spread of liberal ideas.<sup>26</sup> The Hungarian and Croatian part of the country lagged behind the Austrian and Czech parts of the empire and even more behind Germany, France and other Western countries regarding the confessional press,<sup>27</sup> and also in comparison with the position of the papacy.<sup>28</sup>

Already in the late 1870s Leo XIII, the Rosary Pope, urged the clergy in Hungary to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the press for the purposes of the universal church and to spread the faith.<sup>29</sup> One sign of the gradual change was the appearance in 1885 of the Hungarian-language Rosary monthly, *A legszentebb Rózsafüzér Királynéja* [The Most Sacred Queen of the Rosary]. There was also a certain lag in the publication of this devotional publication intended for a special stratum, but perhaps the gap was not as great as in the case of the modern secular press in general.

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24 SEKULIĆ 1985.

25 Dorottya Lipták has written about these ideas in a different context. Cf.: LIPTÁK 2002. 13–28. The first overview of the Catholic press was written by Béla Dezsényi. See: DEZSÉNYI 1943.

26 DERSI 1973. 11.

27 DERSI 1973. 7–18. See also Lipták 2002, who compares Hungarian, Austrian and Czech popular entertainment periodicals.

28 DERSI 1973. 11–13.

29 Idézi: DERSI 1973. 7–13.

## The Living Rosary periodicals in Europe

The first regularly published periodical for the propagation and guidance of the Living Rosary, *La couronne de Marie. Organe mensuel de la dévotion du très Saint Rosaire*, was launched in 1860 in Lyon, the city where the Living Rosary originated.<sup>30</sup> In France the Dominican Order also had a separate periodical, *L'année dominicaine, Revue mensuelle illustrée* also launched in 1860, but published in Paris.<sup>31</sup> The English Rosary periodical, *The Monthly Magazine of the Holy Rosary*, first appeared in 1879 in London.<sup>32</sup> In 1885 it was joined by another monthly publication, *The Rosary*.<sup>33</sup> The Flemish and Walloon (French) communities of Belgium launched their Rosary periodicals *Le propagateur du Rosaire. Bulletin mensuel*, and *De Rozenkrans. Maandschrift* in 1875, both published in Leuven.<sup>34</sup> From 1879 the other Flemish (Dutch)-language periodical was published in the Dutch city of Hertogenbosch-Zwolle, also under the title *De Rozenkrans*.<sup>35</sup> The German Rosary periodical, *Der Marien-Psalter*, was started in Berlin in 1878 as a monthly publication, but from 1881 it was published in Dülmen.<sup>36</sup> Among the countries of Southern Europe, Rosary monthlies were issued in Spain and Italy in this early period. *La Voz Dominicana* was published in Spain, in Madrid and was also distributed in Portugal, while in Italy *Il Rosario* appeared in Ferrara and *Il Rosario e la Nuova Pompei* in Pompei, both from 1884.<sup>37</sup> The Polish Rosary periodical, *Róża Duchowna*, was launched in 1898. The articles in the monthly published in Lwow until 1939 dealt with the life of the Dominican Order in general and with the Rosary confraternities. The issues also included Marian themes and religious poetry, as well as news of Catholic Action.<sup>38</sup> However, it is remarkable that the first Polish-language *Living Rosary* appeared in 1841 in Poznan and in practically every decade after that rule-books and prayer books were published in larger towns.<sup>39</sup>

If we take these dates into consideration, it can be seen that the Hungarian-language Rosary paper launched in 1885 and the Croatian paper in 1895 were among the late appearances.

30 LEIKES 1886. 113.

31 LEIKES 1886. 113.

32 LEIKES 1886. 113.

33 LEIKES 1886. 114.

34 LEIKES 1886. 113–114.

35 LEIKES 1886. 114.

36 LEIKES 1886. 114.

37 LEIKES 1886. 114.

38 ZIELIŃSKI (ed.) 1981. 252–253.

39 ESTREICHER IV. 132–133.

## The Living Rosary periodical in Croatia

The Rosary confraternity's monthly publication, *Gospina Krunica*, appeared in Croatian at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from 1895.<sup>40</sup> It was edited throughout by the Dominican Order. The Rosary publication was founded in the coastal town of Split. It was not until some time before or during the First World War that the editorial offices were able to move to Zagreb. I have not been able to trace either the time of the move to Zagreb or the name of the first editor. But volume IV was edited by the Dominican P. Angjeo-Maria Miškov. The move to Zagreb was most likely in 1917 because that was probably when the new volume numbering was introduced, while retaining the original title. The numbering was then consistent and continuous right up to 1944!<sup>41</sup>

I personally checked the (very incomplete) collection of Rosary publications in Croatian in the Croatian National Library in Zagreb. I found volumes 1, 4, 14–19, 21–26 of the periodical *Gospina Krunica*. The rest are missing. Of these volumes only 1–14 appeared during the time Croatia was part of the Kingdom of Hungary, when the Catholic Church also operated within the same frame. Volume 4 was still printed in Split, but the 14th volume appeared in Zagreb. It is not known when the change took place. The periodical's move to Zagreb is probably a reflection of the growing importance of the Croatian capital, the fact that the episcopacy of Zagreb increasingly took over the direction of the Catholic Church in Croatia.

On the title-page of the periodical Mary, as Queen of the Rosary, presents the rosary to Saint Dominic and Saint Katherine of Siena. A large part of its contents consists of poems, news of the Rosary confraternity and the history of the rosary. The numbered news items concern mainly the Croatian church, followed by Rome and events of the universal church in third place. The 1934 volume has writings about the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of the October devotions.<sup>42</sup>

The Rosary almanac for 1940 wrote about the history of the Living Rosary Confraternity in Ljubljana. The first living Rosary publications in Slovenian appeared in the territory of what was later Slovenia in 1849–1850. At that time, under the strong German influence the rosary was still called *roženkrans*.<sup>43</sup>

However – with the exception of one or two remarks concerning the church hierarchy – Hungary does not figure in the articles of the publication, even during the years of personal union before 1918. Only the 1939 volume deals with the 34th Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, and in the same volume there is also a lengthy article on Blessed Margaret of the Árpád dynasty. After an article by

40 They still have to be collected in Croatia.

41 However we found the accounts for one volume: in 1940 the 25<sup>th</sup> volume was written, and again in 1941. Then up to 1944 the periodical probably did not appear, as the volume for 1944 has been numbered 26.

42 Jordan Viculin O.P.: Pred 50. godina ... (K jubileju listopadske pobonosti.)

43 Ignacije Duišin: Iz povijesti jedne slovenske kruničarske bratovštine, in: *Kalendar Gospine Krunice za godinu 1940. Godina VII.* Zagreb, 119–121.

Tihamér Tóth, Bishop of Veszprém the July issue contains a long, illustrated report on the congress.<sup>44</sup> It is interesting that there is not such a detailed report on the 1935 Eucharistic Congress in Ljubljana as on the later congress in Budapest. The 1938 June issue reports on the making of the first Croatian Catholic film with sound track. The May-June issue of 1941 greets Ante Pavelić, and the country's independence. The volumes available from 1930 frequently contain articles on Lourdes, Fatima, and pilgrimages to Lourdes, indicating the close ties between the veneration of Our Lady of Lourdes and the rosary devotions. In the early 1930s there is increasingly frequent mention of child Rosary members. However, the greatest number of writings deal with Mary and the Rosary confraternity. In 1935 we learn, for example, that they donated a gold rosary to Our Lady of Máriabisztrica. An article in vol. XIV of 1930 traces the history of the rosary. From time to time the essence of the different Rosary confraternities (bratovština sv. Krunice, Vješna Krunica, Živa Krunica) and their relationship to each other had to be explained in Croatia too, just as in Hungary. The Dominican Order also frequently features in the articles.

I found the 1937 rule-book of the Croatian Rosary confraternities: *Opći kruničarski pravilnik* (Zagreb).

### **The children's Rosary confraternity: *Mladi kruničari***

The children's Living Rosary confraternity is a special form of the living rosary. In the 1930s in Croatia great emphasis was placed on involving children in the Rosary confraternity. Evidence of this can be seen in a small booklet published in 1932, *Mladi kruničari*. The situation was similar in Hungary. This confraternity form too started from France. It is linked to the name of P. Ignatius Bondy who tried to put his idea into practice around 1900 and in the space of five years did, in fact, recruit fifteen thousand children into the prayer society. Elsewhere the initiative found a response mainly in Italy, although the Holy See also recognised this confraternity form in 1917, and gave it privileges.<sup>45</sup>

### **Rosary for the soldiers**

At the outbreak of the First World War, on February 12, 1914 the synod congregation created the Living Rosary confraternity for soldiers. At the request of the French chaplain, Don Carlo Devuyt, Pope Benedict XV further developed this and endowed it with indulgences. Soldiers saying the Living Rosary prayers had

<sup>44</sup> Eugen KORNFEIND: Blažena Margareta djevica, reda Sv. Dominika, kćerka kralja Bele IV. in: *Kalendar Gospine Krunica*. VI. Zagreb, q939. 45–48.

<sup>45</sup> KIRSCH 1950. 345–348.

and have essentially the same rights and obligations as other members, with the exception that they did not have to form 15-member groups.<sup>46</sup> It functioned in the Hungarian army and so it seems likely that it was also known among Croatian soldiers as well. However, I did not find any printed trace.

## Other rosary publications in Croatian

The Living Rosary Almanac appeared regularly from 1934 under the title: *Kalendar Gospine Krunica*. After the disintegration of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1941), Dr. Ladislav Vlašić wrote an article in its columns about the non-material culture of the Croats of Bacska-Baranya who at that time again lived in Hungary.<sup>47</sup> *Glasnik Žive Krunice. Vesti s groba častnoga sluge Božjega. 1944.* can be found in the National Library in Zagreb. The first issue contains the rules of the Living Rosary.

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My short article has presented a few data on Rosary periodicals and printed materials in Croatian. It is my hope that they will encourage search for the missing issues of *Gospina Krunica*, and the collection of other Rosary publications in Croatian. But most of all, I hope that it will inspire Croatian researchers to study the everyday life and operation, the association and distinctive religious culture of the religious societies, among them the Living Rosary Confraternity.

In my research work, in 2002, with the help of Professor Vitomir Belaj I was able to carry out research in the library of the Faculty of Theology, in the monastery library of the Dominican Order and consult with experts on Croatian church history. I dedicate this short article to him in gratitude!

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<sup>46</sup> KIRSCH 1950. 344.

<sup>47</sup> *Kalendar Gospine Krunice za godinu 1941. Godina VIII.* Zagreb, 134–148.

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