

Reviews

Francesca Maria Gabrielli, *Evine kćeri. Žene o biblijskim ženama u talijanskoj renesansi* [Daughters of Eve. Women on Biblical Women in the Italian Renaissance]. Zagreb: Disput, 2019. Pages 224.

Although feminism in the modern sense of the word emerged not earlier than the late nineteenth century, pre-modern era had already witnessed most articulate examples of the so-called “feminist consciousness”, attempts to revise the traditional misogyny and advance the position of women. The book of Francesca Maria Gabrielli deals with one of the periods in which women, despite the patriarchal framework, achieved a relatively high level of participation in culture production and public transparency. The study concerns the Italian Renaissance when a number of women writers and artists not only took part in cultural life but at the same time questioned traditional views of the inferiority of their sex.

The majority of these early “feminists” had to find a way to deal with one of the foundations of cultural misogyny—an entrenched interpretation of the biblical text according to which the female gender is naturally inferior and subordinated to that of man. Thus “feminist” authors tended to depatriarchalize the biblical text, that is, to offer its alternative readings, but, naturally, with great consideration for the special status of the Scriptures and the hermeneutical horizons of patriarchal society. Having examined a series of such reinterpretations, the study of Francesca Maria Gabrielli traces four archetypal female biblical figures—Eve, Susanna, Mary and Judith—in the works of five Renaissance women writers and artists. Though most distinctive in type, ranging from humanist literature and Petrarchan-Bembist lyric to polemic treatise and painting, the analysed works share a common objective—to vindicate women’s dignity, intellect and voice.

The first chapter is devoted to Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466), a noble woman of Verona who, through an unconventional choice of lifelong virginity and decision to remain at the parents’ home and pursue learning, has become one of the first female voices in the Italian humanism. Nogarola joined the humanist debate about women (*querelle des femmes*) by emphasizing exemplary historical female figures, and, even more importantly, by articulating a sophisticated defence of one of the most-debated female figures in general—that of the biblical Eve. In her epistles to other humanists, Nogarola repeatedly provided examples of female virtue and intellectual ability, drawing them from the authoritative classical heritage. On the other hand, in tune with the traditional association of virtue and masculinity, in their responses Italian humanists often described Nogarola through the trope of the *virago*, i.e. a woman who has transcended the inherent limitations of her own gender.

However, Nogarola’s even greater contribution to the (re)definition of woman’s nature and status is to be found in her *Dialogue on Adam and Eve*, in which she presents a highly articulate reinterpretation of the tale of Genesis. Traditional understanding of this story has been extremely misogynous as the woman was blamed for the fall of human kind, the consequence of which was the perception of women as inferior human beings who need to be subordinated to men. It is upon this traditional problem that Nogarola focuses most of her *Dialogue*, the question as to who bears greater responsibility for the Fall, Adam or Eve. Although she appears to accept the traditional idea of female inferiority, the very fact that her work represents a theological discussion in which two collocutors of different sex participate on equal basis suggests intellectual equality between women and men. Isotta’s “feminist” agenda is just as evident in her argumentation. Like her collocutor, Venetian humanist Ludovico Foscarini, Isotta Nogarola accepts the idea of Eve’s inferiority in the dialogue, though with a hidden agenda —“to free her, at Adam’s disadvantage,

from the burden of greater responsibility". Namely, Isotta argues that Eve, due to her inherent intellectual inferiority, is actually *less responsible*, "for where there is less intellect and less constancy, there is less sin" (from the translation of Nogarola's dialogue by Margaret L. King and Diana Robin). Similarly, Isotta undermines the traditional interpretation of the story of the Fall from yet another angle. She stresses an important detail in the biblical text according to which only the man, Adam, was forbidden by God to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, thereby suggesting that Eve *did not* actually transgress God's direct commandment. Moreover, Isotta expands her multi-layered argumentation: she warns about a mitigating fact, as viewed from the humanist perspective, that Eve's key motive was her natural lust for knowledge, and not arrogance. Equally so, through a succession of subtle intertextual allusions Isotta comes forward with an even clearer articulation of Eve's fundamental desire—"to develop a mode of cognition independent of bodily sensation"—by which women are emancipated from the pejorative identification with the body. All in all, in this chapter Gabrielli shows that through her representation of Eve, and in particular of Eve's desire to know and to transcend the body, Isotta Nogarola legitimizes her own life-style, a life-style dedicated to the realization of aspirations that are both intellectual and spiritual, and at the same time vindicates the intellectual and spiritual aspirations of all women.

Chapter Two is dedicated to the analysis of *The Story of Devout Susanna*, a poem written in the second half of the fifteenth century by a Florentine noble woman, Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici, wife of Piero de' Medici and mother of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Gabrielli approaches the reinterpretation of the biblical tale of Susanna through the concept of the "gaze", which proves a rewarding hermeneutical key. Clearly, on the most obvious level, the story thematizes a woman posited as an object of the dominating, openly violent gaze of two elder males. Yet by skilfully revealing numerous intertextual references in Tornabuoni's poem, Gabrielli points to an array of additional meanings hidden in this text. The first of these references to other female characters posited as object of the male gaze is an allusion to Dante's Matelda. That reference soon leads to a darker allusion to Proserpina, showing how easily the male gaze can "degenerate from idealization to degradation, from adoration (Matelda) to rape (Proserpina)". The warning regarding the proximity of visual pleasure and sexual violence in the sacred narrative is enhanced by additional allusions that link Susanna to Petrarch's Laura and Dante's Beatrice on the one, and abused Danaë on the other side. Following the logic of the "gaze" as the key, Gabrielli warns about yet another intertextual level in this poem—the unique figure of Medusa who inverts the conventional paradigm that posits men as agents of the gaze and women as objects of the gaze, thus inverting the traditional male-female power dynamics. However, as Gabrielli cautions, Medusa's gaze itself is the result of sexual trauma for she, too, was once the victim of rape; in addition, her sadistic gaze is ultimately defeated by Perseus. Lastly, perhaps the most important "gaze" through which Gabrielli interprets this sacred narrative is Susanna's heavenward gaze while the old men accuse her unjustly before the gathered crowd. Only seemingly passive, the gaze of Susanna turned towards God challenges the hierarchical dynamic inherent not only in the male gaze of the elders, but also in the female gaze of Medusa, which replicates, albeit in an inverted fashion, the male-female antagonism that defines the patriarchal logic of domination. By analysing Tornabuoni's description of the stoning to which the elders were punished, which does not appear in the biblical narrative but is common in the visual and literary representation of the theme, Gabrielli suggests that Tornabuoni subtly evokes the neotestamentary account of Jesus preventing the stoning of an allegedly adulterous woman. This opens a possibility that Tornabuoni evokes a parallelism between Susanna and Christ, i.e. she depicts her heroine as a person who consciously emulates the non-retaliatory logic of Christ, an attitude that refuses to reproduce the cycle of violence and domination.

Chapter Three concerns an interesting example of inter-genre dialogue between two works of art: the drawing *Pietà*, executed by Michelangelo around 1540 for his friend Vittoria Colonna, and the proemial sonnet of the manuscript of spiritual sonnets that around the same period of time Vittoria Colonna assembled for Michelangelo. The close friendship of these authors, their shared interest in theological issues, along with the fact that the mentioned works were dedicated or executed for each other, justifies their joint analysis as a specific “verbal-visual dialogue”. The central theme of this dialogue is an attempt to articulate the understanding of the divine “in which women can also recognize and mirror themselves”, i.e. a divine that, being inclusive of the feminine, might function as an ideal for the female gender as well; in other words, the verbal-visual dialogue between Michelangelo and Colonna can be read as suggesting the necessity to carve out a new emancipatory space for female subjectivities within the framework of Christian theology.

Gabrielli embarks upon the analysis by drawing attention to the fact that Michelangelo’s drawing features a range of unusual details. To begin with, the figures of Mary and Christ are remarkably symmetrical in terms of composition, which may be interpreted as an allusion to their equally important role in the redemption of humanity. Even more importantly, the drawing both alludes to and deviates from the traditional iconography of the Trinity, positioning Mary in the place traditionally reserved for God the Father. Mary’s inferior position is therefore subtly redefined: the divine is, in other words, depicted “in such a way that (...) the trinitary logic Father-Son-Holy Spirit, to which the Virgin is traditionally added in a hierarchically inferior position, is substituted with a representation focused on the mother-son relation”. Moreover, Mary in Michelangelo’s drawing—by way of the inscription on the cross quoting Beatrice’s words in Dante’s *Paradiso* and by way of her resemblance to Michelangelo’s sculpture of Rachel—acquires the characteristics of the aforementioned female figures, which further depatriarchalizes the traditional understanding of the Mother of God (and subtly evokes the motif of menstrual blood). Another key female figure that Michelangelo’s Mary evokes through a series of iconographical details is Mary Magdalene. Through the connection with Mary Magdalene—the first who witnessed and proclaimed Jesus’ resurrection, which earned her the title *apostola apostolorum*—Mary’s vocal role is further amplified. On the other hand, in the proemial sonnet of the manuscript of sonnets for Michelangelo, through intertextual references Colonna also points to yet another significant figure that theologically authorizes the woman’s voice, the Samaritan woman. Importantly, it is with the Samaritan woman that Jesus engaged in one of his longest conversations in the New Testament, and who eventually became an evangelist whose testimony led many Samaritans to follow Christ. Colonna continues her enumeration of authoritative female voices, by alluding to Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Herself, thus clearly pointing to the conceptual connection with Michelangelo’s drawing. All in all, through the artistic dialogue between Michelangelo and Colonna, Gabrielli skilfully reconstructs the unconventional aesthetical-theological project, a depatriarchalized representation of the divine which “insists on the presence of a female aspect—Mary—which is neither hierarchically inferior to the male nor is reducible to the undifferentiated role of woman as mother”.

In the fourth chapter Gabrielli examines the oeuvre of the Baroque female painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-c. 1653). More precisely, she analyzes four paintings executed in the second and third decade of the seventeenth century, dedicated to the same theme, which helps Gabrielli treat them as a “syntactic unit”, i.e. offer a reading that interprets the paintings in their semantic interrelation. They depict one of the key female figures of Christian tradition, Judith, whose interpretations were often accompanied by certain discomfort as this figure at the same time embodies undeniable devoutness and manipulative sensuality. Gabrielli’s basic thesis is that in her four paintings Artemisia Gentileschi transcends this traditional dichotomy—on archetypal level the dichotomy of Mary and Eve—and attempts to articulate the danger of reproducing the patriarchal logic of domination.

In her analysis of the paintings—two of which are entitled *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, and the other two *Judith and Her Maidservant*—the first detail to which Gabrielli points is that the central figure of Artemisia's presentation is not Judith, but her maidservant, in post-biblical tradition known as Abra. This fact becomes even more intriguing once we learn that the maid's facial features, at least on the paintings in which they are visible, correspond with Artemisia's self-portrait (*Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*), i.e. that the painter portrayed herself in the image of the maid. Gabrielli stresses that according to the biblical text, after the episode with Holofernes Judith set Abra free, i.e. that even Judith, a devout widow whose actions did not deviate from the patriarchal logic for a single moment, nonetheless made a "feminist" gesture. In other words, Abra is "a crucial factor in Artemisia Gentileschi's revision of the Judith theme, inasmuch as the paintings under consideration can be read as articulating the necessity of putting an end to women's counterproductive servility to the hierarchizing dynamics of patriarchy". The idea of the necessity to overcome the aforementioned dynamics is even more evident in the second semantic layer which Gabrielli emphasizes, Artemisia's artistic allusions to the fact—confirmed by the biblical text itself—that in her decision to slay Holofernes Judith is explicitly identified with her ancestor Simeon. According to biblical tradition, Simeon violently and by fraud, together with his brother Levi, revenged the rape of their sister Dinah, yet, interestingly, the Bible does not represent his action as just, unlike that of Judith. By drawing attention to Judith's identification with the violent act of her ancestor—the result of which is not only unjust revenge but also marginalization of the voice of the rape victim Dinah—Artemisia questions the justifiability of Judith's action which merely protracts the violent patriarchal logic. However, arguably the most forceful attempt to overcome that logic of domination is discernible in the painting *Judith Beheading Holofernes* from Uffizi, with which Gabrielli concludes her analysis. In it the vertical sword with which Judith slays the Assyrian general indisputably resembles a cross—in other words, the sword as a symbol of dualistic logic and old testament justice transforms into a symbol of Christ's neotestamentary mercy. Gabrielli thus concludes: "The feminist message of the four paintings under consideration is in my opinion communicated through the evocation of an alternative logic of love which collapses the walls between self and other, and by no means through the representation of the alleged power of women who, by way of their 'legitimate' antagonistic actions, merely strengthen the chains of patriarchal ideology".

In Chapter Five Gabrielli analyzes the treatise *Innocence Betrayed* by Arcangela Tarabotti, member of the Venetian middle class whom the family forced to enter a Benedictine convent although she felt no spiritual vocation. Tarabotti's perspective is very specific and valuable because apart from being an articulate and unexpectedly defiant nun, she was also a woman with a physical disability. For those reasons, her work criticizes a specific form of patriarchal domination, forced religious segregation of women, i.e. their monachization in convents. Besides a general attack on this practice "as emblematic of the socio-political and cultural subordination of women", Gabrielli in Tarabotti's text also reads a specific, additional criticism of forced monachization of disabled women. Scanty yet pregnant textual references Gabrielli interprets from the standpoint of a sacrificial theory indebted to Reineke's reading of Kristeva's theory of abjection: the hiding of "unruly" female bodies as the surrogate effort of a community in crisis "to subdue the very abject threat it has itself projected on the unruly bodies of disabled women", an effort that evokes the earliest strivings of an emerging subject for differentiation from the maternal matrix. In her treatise, Tarabotti offers an alternative to the mentioned practices through a thesis by which body diversity is a phenomenon in perfect harmony with the will of God, and in full accord with Christ's benevolence.

In addition to the criticism concerning forced segregation of women, the treatise of Arcangela Tarabotti also questions the traditional discourses on femininity, notably through reinterpretation of the archetypal figures of Eve and Mary. In traditional interpretation the fallen Eve is seen as a

tragic example of female embodiment, one that every woman potentially incarnates, whereby Mary has been represented as a disembodied ideal, one that no woman could ever incarnate. The treatise of Arcangela Tarabotti undermines this dichotomy “by rehabilitating Eve’s and celebrating Mary’s embodiment”. By turning back to the neuralgic point of patriarchal interpretations of Eve—the tale of the Fall—Tarabotti cautions that the first woman suggested that the fruit from the tree of knowledge be picked as a result of her own innocence, love, and a desire to know represented, in a telling passage, as stemming from women’s corporeality. On the other hand, Tarabotti affirms the corporeality of Mary with the fact that she made Christ man with her body, i.e. “clothed Him in His human form with her most pure blood”.

As it is clear from this (too) short summary, *Daughters of Eve* is a valuable and an original book. Written from the feminist standpoint, this broadly conceived study dedicated to a theme from the world culture is not typical of Croatian literary historiography. Besides its topic and approach, this study is equally appealing regarding its content. Although written in a scholarly style with an extensive apparatus, it is a remarkably lucid and interesting read. Particularly noteworthy, however, is the specific style of scholarly analysis, even style of thinking that characterizes this study. In the best tradition of poststructuralism, Gabrielli starts from a seemingly trivial, often hardly discernible detail which she uses to approach the analysis from an entirely unexpected angle. The result of such an approach which through seemingly marginal leads to the core of the problem are most innovative and unpredictable interpretations. Another result, of course, is a brilliant book.

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Antal Molnár, *Confessionalization on the Frontier. The Balkan Catholics between Roman Reform and Ottoman Reality*. Rome: Viella, 2019. Pages 266.

One of the leading Italian publishing houses, *Viella* from Rome, has taken particular interest over the last fifteen years in the social and cultural history of the Croatian coast and Balkan inland. For this purpose, a special editorial series has been launched under the title *Interadria. Culture dell'Adriatico*. Among the twenty-two titles published to date, the latest is the work of the eminent middle-generation Hungarian historian, Antal Molnár, concerned with the position of the Balkan Catholics in the seventeenth century.

Full professor of Early Modern History at the Faculty of Philosophy, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, and vice-president of the History Board of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in international circles Molnár has been acknowledged as an expert in church history, with focus on the relations between the Holy See and the Balkans during Ottoman rule. After twenty-five years of zealous study of the topic, the author has selected eight essays which have been expanded and revised, in addition to a new chapter on the influence of the Catholic missions on the consolidation of the Albanian nation in the seventeenth century. The final version of the book has been prepared in the context of the research project "Christianity versus Islam. At a Crossroads between Crusades and Coexistence in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The central research issue concerns the forming of ethnic communities based on confession. The title *Confessionalization on the Frontier* suggests that the position of the Balkan Catholics between the spirit of Catholic Reformation and Ottoman rule is being envisaged as a process of parallel development of the church, state and society. The author justifies his focus on the Balkan Catholics by their high mobility, fairly strong political links with foreign centres, and the abounding written sources, which makes them a more convenient object of study than their Orthodox and Muslim counterparts.

The relative minority of this confessional group may be clearly read from the data on the number of Catholics in Bosnia. Based mainly on the documents from the Vatican Archives and secondary literature provided by Croatian historians of the older generation, it has been estimated that during Turkish wars of the latter half and late seventeenth century around 150,000 Catholics fled from Bosnia to the Habsburg Slavonia and Hungary, or to Venetian Dalmatia, so that in the mid-eighteenth century only 40,000 Catholics remained in Bosnia (pp. 180-181). Although that number increased to almost 100,000 by the end of the eighteenth century, this colossal demographic loss had far-reaching consequences on the social structure of population—virtual disappearance of the middle class—which significantly slowed down all the later attempts at modernisation. An additional hindrance was a competition of the three major forces in their approach to consolidate the Catholic community in the Balkans—Roman Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Congregatio de propaganda fide*), Franciscan province of *Bosna Argentina* and Dubrovnik Republic.

The establishment of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622 on the basis of the Tridentine principles, the author sees as a strong impetus to the work of all Catholic missions, marked by centralisation tendencies and increased supervision over all missionary activities. In practice, this implied far more frequent missions of the apostolic visitors from Rome, who were given a special assignment to map out and describe the geographical, historical, religious and ethnographic features of each region they were sent to (p. 139). However, frowned upon by the Ottomans—traditionally neutral towards the Christian communities on the territory under their rule, yet fervent opponents of the growth of their religious institutions—papal missionaries in the Balkans also had to cope with unexpected resistance of the Franciscan order.

Underlying the mentioned resistance was Franciscan traditionalism, their discontent with the Tridentine reforms and the fear of losing the privileges granted to them both by the Roman popes and Ottoman sultans. The author observes that because of their missionary role, rooted in the Middle Ages, the Franciscans in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not strictly adhere to the rules of poverty, but received alms and bequests, mainly using them to build churches. This led to a conflict not only with new missionaries sent with the support of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith—most often secular clergy or Jesuits—but equally so with the Ragusans. Particularly noteworthy is the contribution of the chaplains of the Ragusan merchant posts throughout the Balkans and Hungary as far as Buda as the third important element in the highly complex mosaic of the Catholic communities on the territory under Ottoman rule.

On the example of a thirty-year conflict over Belgrade Church (1612-1643) between the Franciscans and the Ragusans, whose tiny trade colonies always had special chaplains, the author most exhaustively expounds his thesis that the religious and commercial, or social conflicts, if viewed more broadly, overlapped. The chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist, erected in the south part of the Ragusan merchant quarter in Belgrade and formally under jurisdiction of the Franciscan Convent in Srebrenica, became the subject of dispute when Ragusan merchants tried to replace the Franciscans with the Jesuits. The change had taken place in the 1560s, when Ragusan chaplains in Belgrade were replaced by Bosnian Franciscans, coupled by a rapid rise of wealthy Bosnian merchant families, such as the Brnjaković, who tended to threaten the centuries-old Ragusan positions. The Franciscan-Jesuit rivalry over the Belgrade Church ended with the Franciscan victory and the establishment of an independent Bosnian merchant colony in Belgrade in 1626 (p. 98), while the religious controversy turned into a commercial issue regarding the control of trade in the Balkan part of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottomans eventually banished the Franciscans, this blow upon Dubrovnik prestige was far too heavy and finally spurred the closing of Ragusan trade colonies in the Balkans. Noteworthy is the author's assessment about the students surpassing their masters in trade: "how the Ragusans acquired know-how from the Venetians in the 13th century, the Bosnians learned the art of trade from the Ragusans in the 15th century" (p. 95).

Gradual expansion of the Franciscan Bosnian province to other lands was looked upon with concern and suspicion by the Ragusans. This was the case of Bulgaria, where the Bosnian Franciscans performed their missionary work from the end of the sixteenth century. The attempts of fra Petar Zlojutrić, whom the pope installed bishop of Sofia in 1601, to impose higher revenue ended with an intervention of the Ragusan Senate in favour of don Vicko Agustinov, chaplain of the then Ragusan trade colony. The field of this dispute also encompassed Slavonia, where the Bosnian Franciscans, having spread beyond the Sava River, acted as missionaries particularly near Požega, Velika and Našice, but also as far as Hungary in the 1580s. In these disputes, though reluctantly, Rome supported the Franciscans, aware of the privileges formerly granted to them and their specific status. Moreover, we may agree with the author's assertion that Rome also acknowledged the fact that, owing to the Franciscans, Bosnian merchants contributed to the development of Bosnian Catholic culture, promoting the printing of books in the *bosančica* script and influencing the rise of Bosnian national consciousness (p. 96-97).

In addition, Molnár stresses the major contribution of the Catholic Church to the development of yet another national community in the Balkans—that of the Albanians. He agrees with the view put forward by the Orientalist Hasan Kaleshi, by which the Albanians did not have their own state nor language culture in the Middle Ages as in the case of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, so that the Ottoman Empire, having destroyed other states in the Balkans, saved the Albanian ethnic group from extinction and complete assimilation. Under Ottoman rule, the Albanians expanded their

ethnic territory towards Kosovo and Macedonia and managed to preserve their tribal organisation, which came to the verge of extinction under earlier Byzantine and Serbian rule (p. 137). It is interesting to note that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century as many as twenty-five out of ninety-two Ottoman viziers were Albanians, which tells of the strong Islamization among them. However, the key role in the shaping of the Albanian nation the author assigns to Pietro Massarecchi (*alias* Pjetër Mazreku), born in Prizren and 1624-1643 archbishop of Bar, who fought for closer connection of the Albanian Catholics with Rome, and their independence from the Slav Catholics (p. 143). Interpreted in that light is also the resistance of the Albanian lower clergy against Ragusan missionaries in Ulcinj and Lezhë, who had no knowledge of the Albanian language and customs, and who were even accused of appropriating for the Dubrovnik Church the means originally assigned to the Albanian clergy.

The prayer books as the first books printed in Albanian, along with the bursaries for talented Albanian boys to study at Roman colleges displayed a standard pattern of how Rome cared for the interests of the Catholic community, promoting literacy and culture. Sadly, the same catastrophe that hit the Catholics in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the seventeenth century during the great Turkish wars also caused irreparable damage to the Albanian community, which, according to the author's objective assessment, ultimately resulted in the Holy See's loss of interest in the Balkans and withdrawal from bigger projects in support of the Catholics on the territory of the Ottoman Empire.

The research into the life of the Balkan Catholics would not be complete without addressing the relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church (the author intentionally omitted the Greek ethnic element, drawing attention to the far too great differences in relation to the dominant Slavic corpus). Having touched upon sporadic tensions in the relations between the two Churches, due mainly to the efforts of the Serbian episcopos to impose taxes upon the Catholic community, the author centres on the attempts to establish Church union in the course of the seventeenth century. He argues that all these attempts failed because of the cultural and national role of the Orthodox Church among the Serbs, but also due to the relative autonomy it enjoyed in the Ottoman Empire (p. 157). In view of the number of its members, Serbian Orthodox Church under the Ottoman rule had become the largest Christian community in the Balkans, yet the clergy was ignorant and apparently disinclined towards the reforms advocated by the Catholic side after the Council of Trent (p. 160).

The conclusion about the remarkable ignorance of the Serbian Orthodox clergy the author supported with the fact that an incomparably smaller number of Serbian written sources of that time has been preserved in relation to the sources from the Catholic circles. Connections with his central research topic on the role of Catholic Church in the shaping of the nations in the Balkans Molnár sees in the fact that Serbian Orthodox Church inherited the notion of medieval statehood of the Nemanjić dynasty, having become the bearer of Serbian national identity. Patriarch also represented the political head of the people (pp. 160-161). Similarities may also be drawn in the negative influence of popular beliefs on religious culture, especially in the form of Crypto-Christianity, a phenomenon observed earlier in the Albanian case (p. 141).

One minor flaw in this comparative survey is that no space has been devoted to the position and contribution of the Jewish community in the Balkans, apart from a cursory mention of the Split port, established in 1592 upon the prompting of a young Jew Daniel Rodriguez, which encouraged the Bosnian merchants in the hope that their collaboration with Venice would finally remove the Ragusans from their leading position in Balkan trade (pp. 95-96). While, in reference to this, the author discusses the weakening of Venetian influence in the Balkans because the Dalmatian dioceses under Venetian control avoided missionary work on the territory under Ottoman

authority (pp. 57-58), surprisingly, there is no mention of the Habsburg role in the Balkans and south Hungary at the time. A fleeting glimpse of this may only be found in the episode on Ivan Tomko Mrnavić (p. 60). We follow the lifepath of this canon of the Bishopric of Šibenik, who realised that in the current circumstances it was not possible to reorganise the Catholic Church in the Balkans through the plan he personally drew and sent to the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. Thus he left Dalmatia and sought refuge in Hungary, where under the auspices of the archbishop of Esztergom he first became the canon of the Zagreb Cathedral, then the general vicar of the Bishopric of Zagreb, and finally the bishop of Bosnia.

The author rightly observes that the Franciscan province of *Bosna Argentina* was not a monolithic block, and that, on the level of micro-historical approach, it is possible to make a clear distinction between the positions held by certain convents. While Fojnica, as a leading friary, offered long resistance to the attempts from Rome, other friaries, such as those in Sutjeska and Kreševo, were more inclined towards agreements and negotiations. On the other hand, by the mid-seventeenth century the convents in Srebrenica and Visoko had already lost former influence due to the rapid fall in the number of Catholics. These circumstances certainly called for reforms on the level of the entire Catholic community in the Balkans, conceived not only by the fathers in Rome, but also clerics assigned to pastoral field work, such as Ivan Tomko Mrnavić or the Jesuit Bartol Kašić, with emphasis on the promotion of the culture of written word and education of the youth at Italian seminaries, as well as on stronger church surveillance through more frequent apostolic visits to these remote lands. Equally attractive are the unusual fates of ordinary people, such as that of Magdalena Pereš-Vuksanović known as *La Schiavona*, whose life struggle to preserve the vow of virginity—because of which she even disguised herself into a man and served in the army, until she found shelter in Rome as a servant and finally as a nun—has become a topic of hagiographies described by Roman Oratorians in 1639.

Equipped with a small glossary of Ottoman and South Slavic terms pertaining to certain religious or economic issues, along with twelve maps which show the distribution of the Catholic and Orthodox church institutions in the Balkans from the beginning of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, the book is an indispensable source of diverse information and possible research approaches to early modern church history of the Balkan Peninsula. In Molnár's book we shall find reliable, comprehensive and well-argued answers to a long succession of research issues related to specific religious communities but equally so to the turbulent lives of the individuals of different rank. Therefore, we are indebted to the author and publisher for yet another valuable contribution to the understanding of the culture of the Adriatic and the inland of the Balkan Peninsula, with due attention paid to Dubrovnik and its past.

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Emir O. Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo (1386-1463)* [The Kingdom of Bosnia and Ottoman Empire (1386-1463)]. Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2019. Pages 556.

Perception of the Ottoman role in the development and transformation of Bosnia, and with it the entire Balkan Peninsula, is multi-layered, problematic, and currently (mis)used in contemporary political culture. To the present day, Ottoman invasions have continued to stir the deepest emotions, owing mainly to the uncritical and hostile presentation of the Ottoman Empire in a dominant part of historiography. Consequently, negative presentations of the Ottoman rule had a profound impact on the self-consciousness of the Balkan states formed in the nineteenth century during the period of national resurgence, which was shaped in complete opposition to the Ottoman tradition and culture. In fact, politically coloured historiography of the period, however, aimed to create a direct link between the medieval and national states. It presented the Middle Ages as a national culture departure point of the newly-formed states and neglected the gradual transformation of the Balkans under the influence of the Ottoman civilization.

The quoted introductory remarks of Emir Filipović clearly show how the stereotypes about the Ottoman Empire were formed. In addition, Bosnia is burdened by many other clichés not founded on evidence—that in 1463 it “fell by a whisper”, that the Ottomans must have been invited to Bosnia by some of the local magnates, that Bosnian Christians are responsible for the downfall of the Kingdom of Bosnia. According to Filipović’s conclusion, it was not until after WWII that the historians began to change their firmly entrenched biased views. By providing solid and scientifically grounded arguments, in this study Filipović has fully disproved all of them.

The work *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo (1386-1463)*, in addition to the preface, introduction and conclusion, comprises eight chapters and a series of subchapters in which the author meticulously highlights all aspects and layers of the events in the Kingdom of Bosnia, from the first Ottoman attacks on the kingdom to its downfall, and a few decades later. The events are presented within a broad framework, from very dynamic repositioning on the European and Ottoman scene and the political profiles of the Bosnian kings, to the echo and consequences of the crucial battles (Marica, Bileća, Kosovo, Dobor, Angora, Lašva, etc.). As the author puts it, in the course of almost eight decades the relations between the Kingdom of Bosnia and Ottoman Empire evolved through various stages, each of which having its own characteristics governed by the wider international situation and the circumstances in the Bosnia itself. From the very first attack on the Kingdom, it was quite clear that the Ottomans would not give up. Yet they met with fierce resistance of the Bosnian king and the nobility. A variety of factors accounts for the eighty years of their resistance. Namely, when the attacks started, the Kingdom was embedded in the minds of its inhabitants as a powerful and wealthy state able to resist any military campaign. Eventually, the conquest of Bosnia was also conditioned by wider historical circumstances. The Ottomans, no doubt, would have been more expeditious in their invasion had it not been for the Battle of Angora (1402), which temporarily halted the realisation of their policy of territorial expansionism. Also, the fact of the matter is that the Ottomans attacked patiently and slowly, according to the policy “divide and rule”, by combining swift and successful military actions with longer periods of peace.

During these peace intervals, Bosnian population was given opportunity to accustom to the principles of the Ottoman social order, and at the same time lose trust in the concept of Bosnian state, which the Ottomans were gradually dismantling. Bosnian society honoured the feudal principles of “the crown of kingdom” and “lords of the diet” (*gosпода rusaška*). However, these principles contributed to the disintegration of the state structure because they allowed the king and the magnates to lead different policies at certain critical moments, giving opportunity to the Ottomans to achieve

their goals. The reason behind the total collapse of the Bosnian state should also be sought in the feudal land ownership system, in which land was allotted among the magnates, some of whom recognised Ottoman domination at a relatively early stage and paid tax to the sultan. In this way the Ottomans positioned themselves as arbitrators in the Bosnian internal conflicts and weakened king's authority, and moreover, they had influence on his election from a fairly early date. Put differently, they subjugated the political authorities, and in later phases, suppressed them. The finally conquered territories no longer had any political and social representatives who in the new circumstances would act as the bearers of national identity. At the same time, by imposing the payment of tribute and restrictive economic measures, the Ottomans were determined to push the Kingdom to the verge of existence. In the given circumstances, this particularly concerned the hindering of trade between Bosnia and Dubrovnik, and an official standpoint according to which Bosnian silver, whose export was the core of the Kingdom's economy and wealth, belonged to the sultan's treasury.

In summary, taking into account that the conflicting sides were not equal rivals, the author concludes that the Ottomans had little trouble in conquering Bosnia, and in so doing, did not sacrifice substantial means or men.

Medieval history of Bosnia did not end with its fall under the Ottoman rule. Certain processes continued for at least several decades. The idea of Kingdom survived on for some time, not only in the minds of Bosnian inhabitants, but also in those of the Hungarian king and Ottoman sultan, who as early as the 1470s installed "their own" Bosnian kings. The struggle of Hungary and Ottoman Empire for the domination over Bosnian territory and people is apparent even in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

Lastly, due mostly to the displacement of population and immigrations, the consciousness and illusions about the restoration of Bosnia as it used to be before the Ottomans slowly retreated before new historic streams. Owing to Ottoman invasion, Bosnia transformed into a state whose social picture consisted of three opposing religious communities. With time, they would produce three different views of both the past and future, author concludes.

Apart from a respectable number of scientific books, studies and published archival sources, for the purpose of this study Emir Filipović has examined some ten funds of the State Archives in Dubrovnik. It is a general fact that these archives are the main source for the study of the history of medieval and Ottoman Bosnia, as well as the states in the broader Balkan area, naturally, from the perspective of the Ragusans. Although generations of scholars have been sifting Dubrovnik archival material, some of it still remains to be explored and interpreted. Thus for a comprehensive analysis of the Ottoman relations with Bosnia the minutes of the sessions of all the three councils had to be researched, along with chancery and notary records, as well as the correspondence between Dubrovnik authorities and its ambassadors to foreign courts. Indeed, within the context of this study the author often quotes Ragusan decisions, comments, diplomatic and other actions. Most attention has been devoted to the War of Konavle (chapter "Stežanje omče 1430-1443 [Tightening of the Rope 1430-1443]"), for the following reason: "This seemingly local conflict, the dimensions of which at first did not anticipate a movement 'of the largest hierarchies in such a small area', offered the Ottomans a new opportunity to interfere and spread their influence in Bosnia. It was then that their 'arbitrative role in the relations between the king and nobility, but also between Bosnia and Hungary' gained prominence. Ottoman position towards the conflicting sides was essential for determining the overall political orientation. Viewed in contemporary parameters, Ottoman intervention in this low-intensity conflict represented the apex of diplomatic strategy. Leaving the rivals to exhaust each other under their arbitration, the Ottomans strengthened their

own positions and waited for the Bosnian ‘apple of discord’ to drop freely into their hands”. That war also marked a turning point in the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Dubrovnik Republic. Prior to the war, the Ragusans successfully avoided sending their ambassadors to Istanbul, settling all the current affairs and issues with the representatives of the Ottoman government posted in the neighbourhood. Having assumed an arbitral role in the War of Konavle, Sultan Murad II forced the Ragusans to make their first appearance at the Porte, to be followed by many diplomatic missions in the centuries to come.

Filipović’s book *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo (1386-1463)* affords well argued and most vividly elucidated historical facts from the last decades of the Kingdom of Bosnia and represents a very valuable contribution to the historiographic debate on this topic.

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Vladislav Gučetić, *De casibus domus atque familię suę carmen allegoricum*, ed. Darko Novaković [Biblioteka Marulianum, vol. 10; Kritička izdanja, vol. 2]. Split: Književni krug, 2018. Pages 105.

The book is the second title in a critical edition series published by the Split Literary Circle and Marulianum Research Centre; currently it is the only Croatian book series dedicated to critical and philologically documented editions. The *De casibus domus atque familię...* includes a reliable text of two longer Latin hexameter poems composed in Dubrovnik during the eighteenth century, and an introductory study by the textual editor, Darko Novaković (“The epyllion and counter-epyllion on a family scandal: *De casibus domus atque familię suę carmen allegoricum* by Vladislav Gučetić”; there is a resume in English). Novaković’s study turns the tables on what was known in Croatian literary history about this poem of Vladislav Gučetić (1678-1746), a Dubrovnik nobleman, contemporary of Diderot and Voltaire, Swedenborg and Alexander Pope. The last scholar to describe Gučetić’s work at length, Mirko Deanović (1935), declared the contents of the manuscript AMB 242 (Dubrovnik, the Franciscan Library), which is the only textual witness for the poem known today, to be a single poem, a pastoral and Arcadian description of Gučetić’s life and family. It is not clear how and why Deanović arrived at this conclusion; Novaković delicately refrains from interpretation. For some eight decades after Deanović, until the book under review, no research has been done on Gučetić and the manuscript AMB 242, nor has the text of the poem been published.

Relying on archival research by Nenad Vekarić and Irena Bratičević, Novaković reports that one of the owners of the MS AMB 242 was the translator and scribe Ivan Ksaver Altesti (1727-1816); palaeographic analysis of the handwriting, carried out by Irena Bratičević, shows that the scribe of the manuscript was most probably Nikola Bunić (1708-1769), son of Vladislav Bunić and Ursula Gučetić, sister of Vladislav Gučetić. Moreover, Novaković is the first to realize that the manuscript preserves not one, but *two* poems, by two different authors; archival documents help us to understand the events which inspired the poems. These events, again, turn out to be much darker than Deanović’s presumed “image of a full-blown Arcadia, of courts and salons, of wigs and harpsicords, of declamations and romantics trysts”.

Vladislav Gučetić poeticized his personal misfortune caused by a family quarrel over whom one of his daughters should marry; the quarrel reached its height in 1744, when people from outside the family intervened, and there ensued a physical assault, a lawsuit, and a sentence of temporary banishment from Dubrovnik for a son-in-law of Vladislav Gučetić. The affair inspired Gučetić’s somewhat more than 1600 hexameters narrating macabre, dreamlike visions: in the middle of a *selva oscura* a convoy of wineskins floats on a river; the wineskins turn into wild beasts and attack a tower where a flock of doves has built its nest.

Soon after the epyllium was composed, someone else—we do not know who it was, but the person obviously knew Gučetić’s poem very well (Novaković rejects the hypothesis that the person was Nikola Bunić, the scribe of the MS AMB 242)—responded with his own versified interpretation of the events, in his own 960 or so verses, again allegorically, but in a roman *à clef* mode. This second poem does not introduce animals; following the tradition of Theocritus and Vergil, it gives real people Arcadical and pastoral names; a key is included after the poem. The *Anonymi responsio* (the title was given by Novaković) holds Vladislav Gučetić, as an old man on the verge of senility, responsible for most of his sorrows; the poem also rudely attacks Gučetić’s friend, friar, preacher and literary historian Sebastijan Slade Dolci (1699-1777). The response is a competent poetic composition, but artistically inferior to what Gučetić had written.

Two aspects of Gučetić’s poem seem especially intriguing. First, the nobleman from Dubrovnik is an excellent poet. His verses are enjoyable in his analyses of his emotional states, in his religious

outpourings (such passages bring to mind an earlier compatriot of Gučetić, Ivan Gundulić), and in his narration and description of a fanciful skirmish in the middle of the twilight forest. Gučetić handles the demanding medium of Latin verse—the elegiac distich in the introductory epistle, the epic hexameter in the main poem—with clarity and ease, and with a certain flair for stirring collocations, especially in psychological descriptions.

Let me give two examples, with my own translations (Novaković prints only the Latin texts, adding copious Croatian paraphrases in his introduction). From the introductory epistle sent by the Arcadian “Alphesiboeus Fusius” to “Euander Nicius”—by the author to the friar Sebastijan Slade, as Novaković has deciphered from the poem itself—here is a psychological description with Ovidian and paradoxical flourishes, the author’s answer why he chose to compose a poem about his trauma:

Vulnera si stillent et adhuc sit aperta cicatrix,
 Tangit sollicita saucius ipse manu
 Atque acres narrat quos senserit ipse dolores
 Et gaudet tactu sepe dolere suo.
 Nostra etiam fuerit non ultima forte voluptas
 Quę lacerant nostris incubuisse malis,
 Sint licet et pelago belloque acriora feroci,
 Sint licet et quovis vulnere acerba magis.
 Quę si facta dolent, pariunt memorata quietem
 Lętitiamque affert quam fugat ipse dolor.

If there is still a flow from the wounds, if the scar still has not healed, the wounded man touches it himself, because he is worried, and wants to tell about the sharp pains he has felt, and often he is glad to feel pain caused by his own touch. I also felt a certain pleasure in reliving the evils that have beset me, although they are crueller than a storm on the sea, crueller than war, although they hurt more than any possible wound. But if the acts cause pain, the telling brings some rest, and the same pain which drives off the joy can bring it back.

After a hymnic, almost ecstatic cry *ex profundis* to God the Father, to Trinity and to the Virgin Mary, Gučetić tells his misfortunes in an epic mode. Here is a description of his emotional state:

Postquam bis geminę me fractum funere prolis
 Invida Mors nimium, nimium imperiosa subegit,
 Multiplicique domus iacuit prostrata sub ictu,
 Atque omnis periit spes mascula meque iacentem
 Semianimemque meę iussit superesse ruinę,
 Ducebam exanguis tenebrosa silentia vitę
 Męsta cruentatę fugiens commercia lucis,
 Me fugiens, onus ipse mihi, noctesque diesque
 Lugebam tacitus crudi sub iure doloris,
 Quo curę vigiles, quo vulnera cordis agebant,
 Quo suspirantem lacrymę rapuere, sequebar.

Twice I was broken, two children of mine were carried away by a merciless Death, a wanton Death, and our house fell down under these blows; all the hopes of male offspring were lost; sick and only half alive, I had to survive

my own ruin. I existed in a darkness, pale and silent, I refused to face the blood-stained light of day, I was fleeing from myself, I was a burden to myself; silently for days and nights I mourned, crushed by my still-raw pain; the unceasing worry, the wounds of my heart, my tears and sighs led, and I followed.

Another intriguing aspect of the poem is its relation to reality. In the mid-eighteenth century Dubrovnik, which was a part of Europe where Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, David Hume, Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, all lived and wrote—in this Dubrovnik, poetic composition in Latin is still a literary medium supple enough for authors and readers, albeit in a very narrow social circle (both poems were certainly addressed to the *local* public, the educated members of elite Dubrovnik families), to express and share their hardest, most painful traumas. Neo-Latin poetry thus plays the role of psychotherapy *ante litteram*; the anguish caused by an absurd everyday existence—subject to turns of fortune and to the hell which is other people—mutates into wild fanciful visions (which remind the reader of Croatian literature of the 200 years older, but equally strange, epic Croatian poem by Mauro Vetranović, the *Piligrin*). At the same time, the cultured noblemen of Dubrovnik, the gentlemen poets, approach the classical tradition of Latin poetry extremely freely and creatively, cheerfully mixing genres. Their poems, though, are neither pastime nor some hermetic game; they are serious enough, *dangerous* enough, to require an answer (a *counter-poem*, as Novaković says) in the same medium and in a similar tone and mood.

The great names of Croatian writing in Latin in eighteenth-century Dubrovnik (Rajmund Kunić, Ruđer Bošković, Bernard Zamanja, Marko Faustin Galjuf) are mostly active outside the City. The poems by Vladislav Gučetić and his anonymous antagonist, as edited by Novaković and his associates, open new questions about literary culture *inside* the City, indeed, inside a single noble family; questions which might lead to a new interpretation of the literary history of Dubrovnik during the eighteenth century.

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Stjepan Ćosić and Mijo Korade, *Isusovci u Dubrovniku. Komentari Stephana Desiderija iz 1693*. [The Jesuits in Dubrovnik. Commentaries of Stephano Desideri from 1693]. Zagreb: Leykam international, 2019. Pages 170.

The centuries-long presence of the Jesuit order in Dubrovnik has generally been well covered to date in terms of historiographical study and documentation. Viewed methodologically, these studies are based on archival material and written sources, owing to which the spiritual and educational aspect of the order's activity has been most thoroughly examined. Given the fact that every now and then some new sources come to light, their content is certain to contribute to the deepening of our knowledge and consequently affect the interpretational perspectives within the historiographical discourse of particular topics. This is best exemplified in the book *Isusovci u Dubrovniku. Komentari Stephana Desiderija iz 1693*. [The Jesuits in Dubrovnik. Commentaries of Stephano Desideri from 1693], which not only contributes to a better understanding of the Jesuit activity in Dubrovnik at the end of the seventeenth century, but also addresses a succession of topics not necessarily related to religion, thus making this source equally appealing to a broader readership and the researchers into the history of everyday life.

Prepared for print by Stjepan Ćosić and Mijo Korade, the book *Isusovci u Dubrovniku. Komentari Stephana Desiderija iz 1693* was published in Zagreb by Leykam international in 2019. The central part of the volume (pp. 57-153) comprises a shorter chronological narrative by Stephano Desideri (1671-1749), young Umbria-born Jesuit who spent almost three years as a teacher at the Jesuit school in Dubrovnik. Apart from Desideri's text, the book includes an introductory study (pp. 5-57) and appendices (pp. 153-165).

The introductory study provides a systematic and problematic overview of the activity of the Jesuit order in Dubrovnik, primarily through a prism of the order's relationship with the secular authorities, as well as through the religious-educational work of the Jesuit members. In conclusion, the authors come forward with a short analysis of Desideri's manuscript. The religious-educational activity of the Jesuits in Dubrovnik, formally initiated by the arrival of the first members in the city in 1559, from the very beginning, as the authors argue, was marked by an ambivalent relationship with the secular authorities. Having found themselves between the real political and interventionist foreign policies of the ruling Ragusan nobility, the Jesuits frequently balanced between different interest groups, depending on the internal political ferment and the changing government paradigm. For this reason they were known to come into conflict with the authorities, frequently with an uncertain outcome for the order's existence in the city. Ćosić and Korade further address the religious-educational work of the Italian Jesuits in Dubrovnik, by providing their biographies and activity within the order (missionary, educational, spiritual). Among the more prominent members of the order, the authors single out Giulio Mancinelli, Tomasino Baldasini, Giovanni Battista Tolomeo and Ardellio Della Bella. In the closing part of the text, Ćosić and Korade afford basic biographical data on Stephano Desideri, along with a summary of the Commentary, with emphasis on certain essential details of literary-historical relevance within the manuscript.

Desideri's manuscript constitutes the greater part of the book here published in the original Latin version with the translation into the Croatian language. The manuscript was translated by Maja Pajnić and Jozo Ivanović, certain corrections being made by Maja Matasović, while the editors and Vesna Rimac stand behind the final redaction of the transcription and the translation.

In accordance with traditional style, Desideri's manuscript has been divided into two books, with ten chapters each, in addition to a shorter preface at the beginning of the first book. In the preface, Desideri dedicates his work to St. Stephen the First Martyr, underlining the main goal: to

write about the location and customs of the cities he has been sent to by order of the Superior General. Humbly characterising his work as an endeavour, stressing that his purpose is not to compete with the great writers of the antiquity (Livius, Curtius, Florus and Sallustius), whom, however, he shall try to emulate, Desideri also reveals his *modus operandi*—his observations will not focus on the already familiar facts but rather on what he himself witnessed and heard with his own ears. An interesting feature of this type of narrative source is the author's self-reflexive view regarding his writing, holding that whatever man writes is subject to questioning as opposed to the divine—his chronicle debut thus being no exception.

In the opening chapters of both books the author writes from the ego-historical perspective, speaking primarily of himself (his arrival in Dubrovnik, health, family), while the other chapters contain mainly the descriptions of particular events. Therefore, the chapters range widely in topic, lacking a sharp chronicler's focus, from which it is quite evident that the author has abandoned the original objective to devote himself to the description of the cities he was sent to. Although Desideri felt this unfulfillment of the goal as a personal failure, the readers of this work may certainly appreciate the fact that the writer touched upon a broad spectrum of topics, owing to which today we can read about the religious history but also everyday life of Dubrovnik in the seventeenth century.

Considering that the content of this manuscript is fairly hard to present following the author's classical narrative, further in this text I shall draw attention to two key moments in the chronicle, which, in my opinion, are worth mentioning from the standpoint of the religious history, historical imagology and socio-cultural history.

The first moment, doubtless, is that related to the understanding of the religious circumstances in the Dubrovnik area, more precisely, of the relationship between the Jesuits and the archbishopric in Dubrovnik. In addition to a vast array of topics upon which Desideri dwells, between the lines the reader will clearly discern the author's political intention: to use this text to settle his accounts with Giovanni Vincenzo Lucchesini, archbishop of Dubrovnik, to whom Desideri has devoted considerable space in both volumes. By doing so, the archbishop, though the author tries not to mention him by name, thus becomes—I may rightly assert—the main protagonist of this chronicle, in which the writer, on the basis of carefully selected examples, implicitly draws the reader's attention to his unstable and amoral nature. The first case we find in Chapter 7, where he writes about the archbishop's attempt to place the members of the order under his control, which caused considerable consternation among the Jesuits, the result of which was the prohibition of the order members to hear confessions as well as the exile of teacher Baldassini from Dubrovnik (after his stormy reaction to the confession ban, when he sent the students for confession to archbishop's palace). In the second case, in a long description weaving through several chapters of book two, is the extramarital affair and murder of merchant Čelović, involving the noblemen Frano Bona and Tomo Bassegli, whereupon the murderers hid from the secular authorities in a church. Archbishop's whimsical nature Desideri portrays on the example of his change of opinion regarding the entry of soldiers into the church building, whereby the archbishop consented to this action at first yet soon denied it, threatening to seek the intervention of the pope.

The second important moment of this manuscript is its historical-imagological and anthropological aspect. Desideri's manuscript mirrors seventeenth-century Dubrovnik as observed by this young Italian monk. His experience of Dubrovnik is particularly revealing. The city's wealth and the centuries of its independence the writer counterposes in terms of imagology to the uninviting natural conditions of the location where the city was founded (bad air, cold weather, *bura*, frequent earthquakes). Despite unfavourable climate conditions, Dubrovnik is presented as an extremely

prosperous city, its dwellers civilised and pious, the writer's emphasis being placed on the care of the poor and the sick. Social order he has described as virtually harmonious. Writing about the city's political administration, albeit with an error or two which slipped in the text occasionally, Desideri argues against the writers who anticipate the decay of this tiny Mediterranean state, which, in his opinion, is still stable and thriving—postponing its old age. Equally interesting from the imagological perspective is the writer's description of the religious converts and his own views of the treatment of such individuals which should be very strict in order to send a clear message. Several chapters make a valuable contribution to the study of everyday life of seventeenth-century Dubrovnik, where the author, for example, describes Ragusan nobility and the position of women in Dubrovnik. His description of the Feast of St. Blaise deserves to be mentioned but also that of the education in the Dubrovnik Republic. On the latter topic his views are fairly critical and addressed to the city governors and their attitude to education. He condemns the custom by which young noblemen abandon school once they enter the Major Council, a practice later also adhered by the commoners. In so doing, he believes, Dubrovnik deprives itself of learned men whose knowledge and capacity could contribute to its welfare.

A special appendix at the end of the manuscript contains a list of writers who inspired Desideri while writing this work, along with a detailed list of the students who attended the Jesuit school during his stay in Dubrovnik, in addition to a smaller glossary from Latin to Italian and the local idiom. Appended in the last section of the book, shortest in terms of volume, are the fascimiles of certain manuscript pages, along with the photographs of the Jesuit Collegium.

The true value of the book *Isusovci u Dubrovniku. Komentari Stephana Desiderija iz 1693.* rests in its diversity (quite contrary to the goal set by the writer) and the many dimensions it offers in terms of research; an opportunity to testify in one place to the religious and secular themes, which may attract historical anthropologists, imagologists and social historians. In addition, the political thread that the writer weaves through his chronicle together with his own personal history is just as significant.

Ivan Grkeš, historian

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