There is a need to read literary and historical sources anew, as confirmed by data which, when read within the current social context, suggest the existence of ethnic and religious tensions among members of the Western and Eastern churches in the 18th century when, particularly mid-century, heated polemics were underway on the schism between the churches.

Ethnic and religious tensions appeared as the consequence of threats to group, national and religious identity. In a religious, utilitarian book by Antun Josip Knezović from Osijek, ”Put nebeski” (The Heavenly Way), there is advice at the end to the churchgoers of the Western church in Slavonia and Vojvodina to call themselves Dalmatians; the advice was given to protect them from the name ”Rac” used to refer to members of the Eastern Church. Another example, this one from the first half of the 18th century, of affective defense from attempts to lure Eastern church members to the Western church suggests in the degree of bitterness displayed that Eastern churchgoers would rather embrace Islam than an alliance with the Western, Roman church. Against this background the Croatian, Illyrian Revival movement program stands out in even greater contrast with its ideal goal of overcoming this legacy of antagonism.

The article is followed by a moralizing folk song on hell and hellish torment which appeared with only minor differences in the number of verses throughout the 19th century in religious hymn books. A. J. Knezović found the song in the hymn books of his predecessors; this is an example of a literary-religious message backed by threats of hellfire, a Christian message through which the broader Croatian populace joined the Western European literary and spiritual horizon.

(Translated by E. Elias-Bursać)