

THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY OF ST. FRANCIS'S WOUNDS IN BUDA – A CULTURAL CENTER FOR THE CROATS IN HUNGARIAN DANUBE REGION DURING THE 18TH CENTURY

Robert SKENDEROVIĆ*

In the 17th century the Croats have settled in Hungarian Danube region in the groups with different names (as Bunjevci, Šokci, Bošnjaci i Dalmatinci). Due to the multiple names, up today in some writings those groups are identified as *splittergruppen*, with unclear ethnic roots. Such interpretation of their ethnic identity is not taking into account the fact that from the first mention in the 17th century they shared the same culture, which represented the basis for the Croatian national integration. The Franciscans of the province of Bosnia Argentina have played an important role in that process. In Hungary the most important center of their work was monastery of St. Francis's wounds in Buda. This work is showing how the Franciscan production of high culture influenced the process of shaping Croatian proto-national identity in Hungarian Danube region during the 18th century.

Key words: Franciscans, the Province of Bosnia Argentina, Budapest, Bačka/Bács-Bodrog county, proto-national identity, high culture, Croatian national integration

The Problem of Cultural Identity in the Proto-national Period

Although “for most writers on nationalism, nationalism is a modern political ideology which can be found only from the late eighteenth century”, there are many examples in which cultural integration in pre-modern times actually

* Robert Skenderović, Ph. D., Croatian Institute of History, Department for the History of Slavonia, Syrmia and Baranja, Slavonski Brod, Republic of Croatia

marks the true inception of national identity.¹ Croatian national integration follows this nation-building model with its cultural integration taking place before the Modern era. Consequently, the study of Croatian cultural integration in the multiethnic Habsburg Monarchy during the 17th and 18th century is interesting to understanding many other national integration cases.

Almost all theories on nations and nationalism agree that culture is a key element of national integration. James G. Kellas states that “without a national culture there would be little left of nationhood”² Scholars such as Ernest Gellner have a different opinion on the role of national culture, claiming that nationalism often obliterates cultures and sometimes even invents them.³ Most scholars agree, however, that national culture should always be defined as high culture with the standard written language as the common language of communication. From this perspective, national integration is not an obliterator of popular culture. Rather, it develops popular culture into high culture and uses it as an integrative force for creating a powerful community. As a result, the cultural identity of a pre-modern people can be transformed into a modern national identity, and that people can become a nation.

The key element in every national culture is a standard written language. In many cases of national integration its creation is a proto-national community's primary goal, giving it an advantage over other peoples who are unable to do the same. The significance of a standard written language is its ability to integrate those who are able to read it, and who become a community through its use.⁴ Only after creating a standard language is a community able to create other important institutions of high culture, such as media (newspapers), high education and science. With such institutions of high culture a community is finally able to create a common, “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson), that is, in essence, a politically organized nation. In addition to creating their own high culture, this success helps them distinguish themselves from other nations and even to assimilate non-developed ethnic communities.

Ethnicity, language and culture do not always form the basis of national integration, as Hobsbawm concluded in the case of the French Revolution.⁵ In the case of Croatian national integration, however, ethno-cultural belonging played a central role. Friedrich Meinecke's division of nations into Culture-nations (*Kulturnations*) and State-nations (*Staatsnations*) may still be the best model for understanding the integrative process that occurred among the Croats during the 17th and 18th century. As opposed to the state-nation which

¹ James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1991), p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), p. 48-49.

⁴ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

draws its core identity from the existence of its own state, dominant elements of national integration such as common cultural identity based on a common language, tradition, collective memory and often religion define the culture-nation. It is imminently clear from many examples that nations with strong cultural identities were more homogenous, while those with weak cultural identities found many problems in the process of national integration, or even disappeared into assimilation.

The Catholic Church's Cultural Policy in the 17th Century and the Creation of a Standard "Illyrian Language"

Applying Meinecke's division, one discovers that Croats belonged partly to both integrative models. The Croatian Kingdom's traditions remained important only in the regions that were still part of it, while states that acquired other parts of Croatian territory (Venetian Republic, Ottoman Empire) did everything to destroy its legacy. As a result, that legacy weakened drastically in Venetian-ruled Dalmatia, in "Turkish Dalmatia" and in "Turkish Croatia" (western Bosnia), making it impossible for Croats to create their modern nation on the basis of statehood. Significant migrations of Croatian refugees from Dalmatia and Bosnia into Hungary, Slovenia, Austria and Italy complicated matters further; their populations were replaced by other ethnic and religious groups who brought new identities with them. For this reason, most Croats in the regions occupied by the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire accepted regional identities (becoming Dalmatians, Bosniaks, Slavonians) or were even assimilated by Muslim Bosniaks and Orthodox Serbs. In spite of these eras of political weakness, when Croatia bore the sorrowful title "*Reliquiae Reliquiarum*", Croats accomplished a cultural integration that would later become the basis for modern Croatian national integration.⁶

The Catholic Church was the only organized institution able to assist in Croatian cultural integration of high culture at that time. As opposed to the Serbian Orthodox Church which chiefly maintained the Serbian tradition during Ottoman rule, the Catholic Church – as a "universal" church – was not necessarily interested in guarding Croatian ethnic and state identity. Other reasons forced the Holy See to support the cultural identity that would later develop into Croatian national identity. Confronted by the Protestant Reformation in Central Europe and Orthodox domination in the Ottoman Empire, the Catholic Church faced these problems in the Balkans, as well. Protestant missionaries managed to find supporters in Istria, central Croatia, and even in parts of Slavonia that were under Ottoman rule. At the same time, Orthodoxy

⁶ As Georg Schöpflin wrote: "There are, clearly, various ways of reaffirming the community. What is important to note is that where one instrument is weak something else will be found to take its place." - Georg Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2000), p. 56.

acquired near domination over all Christians in Slavonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on the basis of the *millet* system.

This forced the Holy See to change its cultural policy in the Balkans, and to accept the Protestant strategy of using vernacular as a weapon of religious propaganda. A major change began in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) decided to establish the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* as a central institution for promoting Catholic faith among non-Catholics and non-Christians through a carefully planned cultural policy.

The *Sacra Congregatio* was especially interested in directing Catholic propaganda at Orthodox Slavs. Because all Orthodox Churches were theologically close to the Catholic Church, the Holy See envisioned that adequate propaganda might return them to Catholicism. According to this policy, one of the Holy See's primary goals in its 17th century Balkan policies was to create a written "Illyrian language" for all South Slavs. By creating a common "Illyrian language" the Catholic Church hoped to influence all Southern Slavs through its religious publications.

In the 17th century an important dispute erupted among the members of the *Sacra Congregatio* over which language would be most appropriate for propaganda aimed at Orthodox Slavs. Owing to the legend about Čeh, Leh and Meh, most Church prelates and European humanists believed that the territory of ancient Illyricum was the homeland of all Slavs.⁷ On the basis of that belief, they also considered the Croatian ("Illyrian language") the purest and most beautiful Slavonic language. The task of creating an "Illyrian language" was given to a group of Croatian priests living in Dalmatia for several reasons. First of all, Dalmatia was a Catholic Church stronghold with numerous bishoprics, parishes and monasteries. Secondly, Dalmatian cities had been home to an educated class of people since the Middle Ages, including many authors of vernacular literature (demonstrating that Dalmatian dialects of Croatian - Štokavian-ikavian and Štokavian-ijekavian - already formed the basis for creating a standard language). Under the influence of Ragusan poetry, Croatian priests employed by the *Sacra Congregatio* decided on the Štokavian dialect and Latin script as the best combination for a standard language.⁸

The most important figure among them was Bartol Kašić, the Jesuit author of the first Croatian grammar *Institutionum linguae illyricae libri duo* (Rome, 1604). Kašić also translated the Bible, although the translation was not published during his lifetime. Several decades later the first Croatian dictionary, *Blago*

⁷ According to that legend Čeh, Leh and Meh were of Slavic origin and lived in Illyricum. Later, because of a dispute or crime, they migrated north. Čeh was the founding father of the Bohemians, Leh of the Poles and Meh (Rus) of the Russians.

⁸ The tradition of Ragusan poets played an especially important role in choosing the dialect with which to create a standard language. Their works were popular among all Croats as early as the 17th century and their literary aptitude so impressive that all authors of "Illyrian" grammars and dictionaries adapted their linguistic standards accordingly.

jezika slovinskoga ili Slovník (Loretto-Ancona, 1649-1651), was written by Jakov Mikalja, another Jesuit from Dalmatia. It was, in fact, a Croatian-Italian-Latin dictionary and was financed by the *Sacra Congregatio*, demonstrating that the linguistic projects of both Jesuits were directly supported by the Holy See. Both the grammar and the dictionary were significant and created the basis for the development of the standard Croatian language.⁹ By creating a written “Illyrian language” the Catholic Church managed to forge an early modern identity for the Croats that was at the level of high culture, a precondition for creating a modern nation as Ernest Gellner has stressed.¹⁰

Expansion of the Province of Bosnia Argentina into Slavonia and Southern Hungary during 16th and 17th Century

During Ottoman rule in the 16th and 17th century, the extensive migrations of Catholic and Orthodox South Slavs shifted to the Hungarian Kingdom. Most of Catholic Croats settled primarily in southern regions (Baranja/Baranya, Bačka/Bács-Bodrog county) and around Buda and Pest. Moving together with the Croatian Catholic population, the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina managed to spread their activities far to the north, across Slavonia and Hungary to the cities of Buda and Pest, and far to the east to Serbia, Transylvania, Bulgaria, and even to Moldavia.¹¹ The expansion of their jurisdiction was not just as a consequence of extensive Croatian migrations from Turkish Croatia, Bosnia and Dalmatia to Slavonia and Hungary. It also occurred because the Catholic Church hierarchy (bishops-parishes) disappeared from those regions together with most lay priests. The Franciscans remained, together with some Jesuits missions, as largely the only organized Catholic institutions.¹² A third reason was the fact that many Ottoman officials who lived in newly acquired Ottoman lands were, in fact, former Catholics, sometimes even close relatives of the Franciscans, and still somewhat aligned with them.¹³

⁹ Stjepan Krsić, *Pape i hrvatski književni jezik u 17. stoljeću* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2004), p. 58.

¹⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 18.

¹¹ In Bulgaria and Transylvania the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina organized Custodies. Soon, both Custodies separated: first the Custody in Bulgaria in 1644, then in Transylvania in 1662 - Bono Benić, *Ljetopis sutješkog samostana* (Sarajevo-Zagreb: Synopsis, 2003), p. 46.

¹² An example is the parish of Karaševo/Carașova in the Romanian Banat that had been without a priest for decades before arrival of Franciscan Marko Bandulović (Bandini) in 1626. - Istvan György Toth, “Franjevci Bosne Srebrene kao misionari u turskoj Ugarskoj (1584-1716)”, *Scrinia Slavonica* 2 (2002), p. 185.

¹³ There was the well known case of Jeronim Lučić (1575-1643), a Bosnian Bishop who faced many difficulties because three of his brothers were Muslim. - Franjo E. Hoško, *Euzebijije Fermendžin - crkveni upravnik i povjesnik* (Zagreb: Katehetski salezijanski centar „Orjentacije“, 1997), p. 181.

Because the usual Catholic hierarchy disappeared under Ottoman occupation, the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina decided to organize parishes in their own way. Instead of the usual hierarchy (bishopric–parish), they established monasteries as regional pastoral centers so that, in every region, a few parishes were subordinate to one monastery.¹⁴ Due to this flexible organization, their close relations with the Catholic faithful, and a familiarity with Ottoman government, the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina managed to include all Croatian settlements scattered across the occupied territories of Croatia, Bosnia, Slavonia and Hungary in one pastoral and cultural community. The dearth of secular intellectuals prompted the Franciscans to play not just a pastoral and cultural role among Croats under Ottoman rule, but also a juridical, educational and scientific one.¹⁵

It would be hard to imagine Franciscan activity without the economic help of Catholic merchants, however. Boasting the highest levels of wealth and literacy, they were usually leaders of Croatian Catholic communities across Bosnia, Slavonia and Hungary.¹⁶ In an examination of the colonies of Croatian Catholic merchants and the principal Franciscan monasteries or residences, a close relationship between the two groups emerges. Moreover, many Franciscans were themselves from merchant families, demonstrating that the Franciscans and the merchants constituted the Catholic Croat elite in lands under Ottoman rule, and together consolidated cultural and economic aspects of social life.¹⁷

In addition to the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina, Jesuits supported by the Republic of Ragusa and Ragusan merchants maintained a presence in the many Catholic settlements around Slavonia, Serbia and Hungary. Therefore

¹⁴ For example, all parishes in Slavonia were subordinate to the monastery in Velika or in Našice; those around Buda were subordinate to the Franciscan residences in Pest and Tököl; centers of pastoral care in Bosnia were Tuzla, Sutjeska and Olovo, which even took pastoral care of some parishes in Bačka and Banat - Eusebius Fermendžin, *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica* (Zagreb, 1892), p. 447.

¹⁵ As well-educated persons, Franciscans became advocates for Catholic individuals and Catholic communities in Ottoman court trials. They were also well-known doctors whose medical knowledge was so popular that even the Ottomans admired their skill and sought out their services. The Franciscans also organized primary and secondary education for Catholics in their monasteries, and were also known as writers and publishers of books on various topics (pastoral, medical, historical, etc.).

¹⁶ The best-known communities of Croatian Catholic merchants were: Olovo, Tuzla, Sarajevo and Sutjeska in Bosnia; Belgrade in Serbia; Požega, Našice and Velika in Slavonia; Pécs, Szeged, Buda and Pest in Hungary.

¹⁷ As the wealthiest members of Catholic communities, and frequently relatives of Franciscans, merchants usually financed the construction of churches, the purchase of Mass vestments and book publication. The best example of this support was Friar Ivan Mihajlović Požežanin (1605-1643), son of a wealthy merchant from Požega, in Slavonia. Mihajlović was elected bishop of Prizren (Kosovo) in 1643. After Mihajlović's election his father promised to singlehandedly finance all of his son's religious activities in Prizren. - Fermendžin, *Acta Bosnae*, p. 443.

the Jesuits and the Franciscans frequently clashed over jurisdiction in those parishes.¹⁸ Those clashes disappeared over time, however, partly due to Ragusa's weakening influence over those lands, which almost completely disappeared at the beginning of the 18th century.

Croatian Settlements in Buda, Pest and Surrounding Villages from the 16th to the 18th Centuries

A small Croatian community had lived in Buda during Ottoman rule. It consisted primarily of Croatian merchants from Bosnia and Ragusa, who established their colonies all over Hungary, Serbia and Slavonia. Another important group of Croatian settlers were Dalmatians. In contrast to Bosnian and Ragusan merchants, Dalmatians were mainly peasants who settled in villages around Buda and Pest. It seems that they arrived as part of the large Dalmatian migration to Hungary, which happened at different points and for various reasons during the 17th century. From that time the Dalmatian regional name had become dominant in Croatian settlements of the Buda and Pest region, and remained present until the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁹

During Ottoman rule the Croats of Buda and Pest settled in three locations: the suburbs of Buda, the village *Tököl* (croat. *Tukulj*) and Pest. In 1633 two Franciscans, members of the Province of Bosnia Argentina, arrived and founded a mission there. From that time forward, Franciscan pastoral care for all Croats in the Buda and Pest region intensified.²⁰ According to István György Tóth the two Franciscans managed to take over the Calvinist church in Pest, which became the center of their mission.²¹ At the same time, or perhaps even before, the Franciscans built their residence in *Tököl*, a village on the island Csepel.²² Their living and working conditions were difficult because of frequent Ottoman atrocities against Catholics, especially against priests, so the Franciscans had to work in secrecy as much as possible. In 1649 Bishop Martin Ibrišimović administered the sacrament of confirmation to 2003 people in the Buda and Pest region.²³ Because the Bishop was unable to conduct regular

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 433.

¹⁹ For example, in the year 1830 an anonymous Budim author published a poem "*Pozdravljenje mlogo poshtovanomu otcu Gerguru Csevapovichu*" (Buda, 1830) in honor of Franciscan Grga Čevapović on the occasion of his second election as Minister of the Province of St. John Capistrano. A citation indicates that the poem was published by the Dalmatian Community in Buda ("*od obchine dalmatinskog roda u Budimu izpivana*").

²⁰ Toth, "Franjevci Bosne Srebrene kao misionari", p. 188-189.

²¹ István György Tóth, "Between Islam and Catholicism: Bosnian Franciscan Missionaries", *The Catholic Historical Review*, 89 (2003), No. 3, p. 419.

²² Emericus Pavich, *Ramus viridantis olivae, in arcam militantis ecclesiae relatus* (Buda, 1766), p. 203.

²³ Fermeđzin, *Acta Bosnae*, p. 467.

canonical visitations thanks to problems created by the Ottoman government, it is feasible that this was the first visitation after many years or even decades. Therefore, one can estimate that there were some 3000 to 4000 Croatian Catholics living in the Buda and Pest region at that time.

After the liberation of Buda and Pest from Ottoman rule in 1686, the populations of both cities changed drastically. Muslim inhabitants disappeared and new settlers arrived from all parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, Serbia, Bosnia and Dalmatia. Among them were many Croats who settled not only in Buda and Pest, but also in numerous villages around those cities. In the city of Buda there was a large number of Croats in Viziváros, Uj Buda/Neüstift (Croat. *Naistift*) and Taban. During the first half of the 18th century, one part of Viziváros was even called 'Horvatváros' in Hungarian (i.e. 'Croatenstadt' in German)²⁴, and the cemetery near the district was named the 'Croatian cemetery'.²⁵ Both toponyms disappeared by the end of the 18th century, but are strong proof of a Croatian presence in Buda in the first decades after liberation from the Ottomans. In much smaller numbers, Croats also lived in Pest city, and there were also many Croatian settlements around the two cities. Larger Croatian settlements were in Érd (Croat. *Hamsabeg*), Ercsin (Croat. *Jarčin*), Földvár (Croat. *Feldvar*), Perkáta, Törökbálint (Croat. *Turbalint*), in the village Tököl on the island of Csepel, and in the town Szentendre (Croat. *Senandrija*).

According to historical sources, Croatian settlers referred to themselves primarily by their regional names (*Dalmatians*, *Ragusans* and *Bosnians*) but also used Croatian ethnic name. Hungarians referred to them as *rácsok*, a term used for all South Slavs, usually translated to German as *Raitzen*.²⁶ Of all of these, the Dalmatian name prevailed, confirming that the last and strongest migration during the Long War (1683-1699) originated in Dalmatia. Part of this migration ended in the Buda and Pest region. Another wing of the migration ended in Bačka, where Dalmatians settled in the large region around Baja, Segedin/Szeged, Subotica/Szabadka and Sombor.²⁷

²⁴ Today, a street called "Horvát utca" exists in that part of the city in memory of those Croats.

²⁵ A French map of Buda from 1749 shows a Croatian cemetery written in French as *Cimetieres des Croates* – Monumenta Cartografica, *Budavár Erödítési Térképe 1749* (original name of the map: *Plan de la Fortresse de Buda*, made by Langer François in 1749, Scale 1: 1780, Map Storing of the Institute of Military History, Budapest)

²⁶ The name *rács* (pl. *rácsok*) probably came from *Raška*, an old name for the Serbian state. Catholic Croats did not bring that name to Hungary, but it was later accepted by some of them because of its widespread use among Hungarians for the South Slavs. Later, many Serbian and Hungarian historians translated "catholic *rácsok*" as "Catholic Serbs" which is incorrect because of the Serbian name's strong connection to Orthodox identity at that time.

²⁷ Croats in Bačka known as *Bunjevci* also used the Dalmatian regional name until the middle of the 19th century. – see: Ante Sekulić, *Bački Bunjevci i Šokci* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1990), p. 56.

In records from the “Illyrian Parish” in Viziváros (*Parochia Illyricae Nationis Budae in aquatica*)²⁸ marriages of Croats who came to the Buda region from Slavonia, central Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Bačka and even Kosovo are recorded from 1692 to 1740. Marriages are also recorded for some people from Austria (Styria) and Germany, but the first German marriage occurred on January 25, 1700, eight years after the marriage records start, showing that the “Illyrian Parish” was predominantly Croatian in the beginning. Most newcomers came from two regions - Bačka and Slavonia. This fact demonstrates that Croats from those regions had strong mutual connections with the Croats from the Buda and Pest region during the 18th century, mostly through marriage and kinship.²⁹

Establishing the Franciscan Monastery and Parishes in Buda at the End of the 17th Century

After the liberation of Buda and Pest in 1686 the church hierarchy was revived. The large number of newcomers made it necessary to regulate pastoral care. The Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina received two mosques from the city municipality, to rebuild as churches. The first mosque, in the district of *Aquatica civitas/Viziváros*, was given by an Emperor's order on June 20, 1691. The new church was dedicated to the St. Francis's wounds and was rebuilt as the central church and monastery of the Province of Bosnia Argentina in the Buda and Pest region.³⁰ The other mosque was in *Rasciana civitas/Taban* and became a parish church for the Catholics who lived there (mostly Croats and Germans).

Throughout the 18th century, the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina administered pastoral care in all districts and villages of Buda and Pest settled with Croats: Szentendre, Solymär, Tarnok, Törökbálint, Érd, Ercsi, Földvár, Tököl, Csepel, Buda and its suburb Taban.³¹ In parishes with ethnically mixed

²⁸ Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL), microfilm RK 12/30, Romish-Katholisches Pfarramt Országut (*Illyrische Pfarramt*) 1692-1740

²⁹ Croatian surnames provide further evidence for the connection between those settlements. In the Bačka region common surnames include *Budimac*, *Budimčević*, *Budimlić* (from Buda), *Peštalić* (from Pest), *Tukuljac* (from Tököl/Tukulj) and *Ostrogonac* (from Esztergom/Ostrogon). In the same way, names common among Croats in the Buda and Pest region include *Somoborac* (from Zombor/Sombor) and *Bunjevac*, which denotes the homeland and ethnicity of newcomers. – see: Živko Mandić, “Prilog povijesti budimskih i peštanskih Hrvata”, in: Stjepan Lukač, ed., *Hrvati u Budimu i Pešti* (Budimpešta: Hrvatska samouprava, 2001), p. 475.

³⁰ Ivan Stražemanac, *Povijest Franjevačke provincije Bosne Srebrene* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1993.), p. 241. – Today, this church is in the Fő útca and belongs to the Order of St. Elizabeth, the sisters who received the church and monastery after the Franciscans left the building in 1785.

³¹ Archives of the Franciscan Monastery in Buda (AFMB), *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, sign. B. 5, p. 27.; Pavich, *Ramus viridantis olivae*, p. 203.

populations, each ethnic group had its own predicator, someone who was usually a native speaker of their language, or was fluent in that language.³² Such organization of pastoral care shows that the 18th century Catholic Church in Hungary was very ethnically tolerant.

On the other hand, relations between Catholics and Orthodox were much different. Although Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs lived together in Buda, Pest, Csepel, Szentendre and other places, they did not communicate extensively. According to the canonical visitation to the Parish of Taban from 1783, Catholic priests did not have any communication with their Orthodox colleagues, and there were no mixed Catholic-Orthodox marriages.³³ Priests on both sides tried to exercise full control over communications between Catholic and Orthodox believers. For example, some Catholic girls who worked as servants in Orthodox families were under the special control of parish administrators who monitored their religious practices and informed the bishop about them.³⁴ Such religious confrontation created strong divisions between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs in the Buda and Pest region despite the fact that their languages were similar and that they lived side by side.

Cultural Communication Among Croats from Hungary to the Adriatic Coast Through the Publishing Activities of Franciscans

Soon after liberation from Ottoman rule, the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina decided to organize a high school in Buda and the formal study of philosophy started in 1699. In 1710 the Franciscans additionally organized the study of theology. In the beginning, newly organized schools were *Studium provinciale*, a status the Buda Franciscan high school carried for the next two decades. On September 26, 1722, it achieved the status of *Studium generale primae classis* ("of the first class"), the highest status of Franciscan high schools.³⁵ This clearly owed to its success.

Initially, all professors at the *Studium generale* were Croats, the majority of them from Slavonia, but also from Buda, Srijem, Bačka, Dalmatia and Bosnia. They developed broad activities in education and publishing. The primary interest and the majority of their works dealt with philosophy and theology, but they were also interested in other sciences and humanities, of which linguistics was the most important for the cultural integration of the Croatian faithful.

³² MOL, microfilm RK 12/30, Romish-Katholisches Pfarramt Országút (*Illyrische Pfarramt*) 1692-1740

³³ Esztergomi Egyházi Léveltár (EEL), Visitationis Canonicae, Liber 167/ A, Budai-Taban Plébaniá 1783, p. 36.

³⁴ EEL, Visitationis Canonicae, Liber 173/A, Szentendre Plébaniá, 1783, p. 48

³⁵ Pavich, *Ramus viridantis olivae*, p. 55-56.

As the only publishers of Croatian language books in Hungary they had to decide which linguistic form to accept. That was the reason why some of the most prominent professors of the Franciscan *Studium generale* decided to work with linguistics. One of them, Friar Lovro Bračuljević (around 1685-1737) published the religious work “*Uzao scerafinske (nascki) goruchie gliubavi*” (Buda, 1730) in which the chapter *Opomena za pravo, dobro i lako scititi ove kgnighe* (Instructions on the correct way to read this book) was dedicated to regulating writing.³⁶ In it, Bračuljević established several elements important for the future development of standard Croatian in Slavonia and Hungary by choosing the Štokavian-ikavian dialect and Latin script for his book. Rejecting Italian and Hungarian spelling, Bračuljević believed that words should be written phonetically. The same rules were preached by Friar Stjepan Vilov (?-1747), also a professor at the *Studium generale* in Buda. In his work, *Razgovor prijateljski medju kristjaninom i ristjaninom* (Buda, 1736), Vilov also wrote short linguistic directives (*Opomena*) with the same idea of a phonetic orthography as introduced by Bračuljević. According to Friar Emericus Pavić (1716-1780), his student and a future professor at the Buda *Studium generale*, all Franciscans in Hungary and Slavonia accepted the orthographic regulation Vilov presented in *Razgovor prijateljski*.³⁷ Bračuljević and Vilov’s orthographic regulations were once again adopted in Pavić’s linguistic directives (*Opomena*) published in his theological textbook *Jezgra rimskog pravovirnoga nauka kršćanskoga za mladež* (Buda, 1769), in which Pavić did not devise any different orthographic rules, but rather accepted those of his professor Stjepan Vilov.³⁸

The works of Bračuljević, Vilov and Pavić are part of the broader linguistic body of work by Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina that had already begun a century before. During the 17th century several Franciscans from Bosnia published their works on vernacular, continuing the work of the Dalmatian Jesuits Kašić and Mikalja. The Franciscan tradition of publishing books in Croatian vernacular started with *Nauk karstjanski s mnozijem stvari duhovniemi i vele bogoljubniemi* (Venice, 1611) written by Friar Matija Divković in *bosančica*, a Croatian variant of Cyrillic script.³⁹

³⁶ Ante Sekulić, *Hrvatski pisci u ugarskom Podunavlju od početka do kraja 18. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Društvo hrvatskih književnika, 1993.), p. 12.

³⁷ In *Nadodanja glavni dogagjaja k Razgovoru ugodnom naroda slovinskoga* (Pest, 1760) Emericus Pavić wrote the chapter *Od slovosložija slovinskoga pjeva* in which he said: “U ovome našem okolišu/Složni ljudi svi jednako pišu/ Od pokojnog fra Stipe Vilova/Složno mećat naučiše slova/ Slova reko iz knjigah latinskih/ U današnji jezik naš slovinski/” (In our region/all people write the same way/From deceased Friar Stipan Vilov/they have learned how to write/Letters from Latin books/into our *slovinski* language of today) – Ibid., p. 66.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁹ Of interest is Alberto Fortis’ famous “Viaggio in Dalmazia” (1774) about Divković’s “Nauk krstjanski”. According to Fortis “Nauk krstjanski” was so popular among the people in Dalmatia at the beginning of the 18th century that they knew the book almost by heart. If a priest said something during his sermon that was not in keeping with Divković’s book, Morlachs would

In the 17th century Ivan Bandulović, Stjepan Margitić Markovac⁴⁰, and Lovro Šitović, Franciscan friars who had been born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, continued the tradition of writing in vernacular⁴¹. During the first half of the 18th century two Franciscans from Slavonia also authored books in Croatian: Šimun Mecić⁴² published *Cvitak Pokornih aliti knisxice Sedam Pismi Pokorni* (Buda, 1736), in Croatian (*u Jezik Illyricski*) and Antun Bačić published the catechism *Istina Katoličanska* (Budim, 1732). Each of those books was popular among the Catholic Croats in Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slavonia and Hungary for several reasons. First, they were the first books published in Croatian. Second, the Franciscans taught many Catholics, villagers and townspeople, to read, so through the enjoyment of Franciscan books many Croatian faithful in Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slavonia, Srijem, Bačka and Hungary formed an “imagined community” of the same culture.

The popularity of Franciscan books grew rapidly in the 18th century with two books that were not published for religious purposes. The Dalmatian Franciscan Andrija Kačić Miošić published his book *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga* (Pleasant Conversation of the Slavic People) in Venice in 1756, and issued a second edition already in 1759 as a result of its widespread popularity.⁴³ The book was directed at common people rather than intellectuals, a fact which increased its popularity. It is a collection of epic poems about important historical events in the Balkans. Kačić Miošić wanted to base his poems on events, to create a kind of popular history, because most other contemporary poems about historical events and persons were fictitious. Readers applauded his attempt, not only in Dalmatia, but also in Bosnia, Slavonia, Bačka and in the Buda and Pest region. The book appeared in so many editions that it became the first Croatian bestseller.

rise and say, “That’s wrong”. Fortis explained that the authorities finally decided to collect as many copies of Divković’s book from the people so as to escape such problems. – Alberto Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1984), p. 42-43.

⁴⁰ Margitić published *Izpovid krstjanska* in 1701, and *Fala od sveti* in 1708. His works were still published in *bosančica*, however. His biography is significant because it shows the mobility usual for Franciscans at that time. Margitić was born in Bosnia (in Jajce), educated in Franciscan educational centers in Dalmatia and Bosnia, and served as a monk in Slavonia and Hungary. During his stay in Hungary, Margitić even worked for a short time as a professor at the Franciscan *Studium generale* in Buda.

⁴¹ Šitović published *Pisna od pakla* (Venice, 1727) and, like Margitić, worked in Dalmatia, Bosnia and Slavonia. – Slobodan P. Novak, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti 3: od Gundulićeva ‘poroda od tmine’ do Kačićeva ‘Razgovora ugodnog naroda slovinskog’ iz 1756.*, (Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1999), p. 880.

⁴² Šimun Mecić was from Požega in Slavonia. He was also a professor at the Franciscan *Studium generale* in Buda.

⁴³ Andrija Kačić Miošić was born in Makarska in 1704. According to some sources Kačić was also a student at the Buda *Studium generale*.

Because of the popularity of Kačić Miošić's work, Emericus Pavić, a Franciscan from Buda, wrote a sequel entitled *Nadodanje glavni događaja Razgovoru ugodnom* (Continuation of the Main Events in Pleasant Conversation), which was published in Pest in 1768. This continuation of Kačić Miošić's book presents many factors important for an understanding of 18th century Croatian culture. The fact that Emericus Pavić saw a need to write the sequel a mere twelve years after Kačić first published his book, shows its importance for the Croats in Hungary. It also shows that Franciscans from the Province of Bosnia Argentina had a decisive cultural influence among Croats, from Budapest to the Adriatic Sea, by publishing popular books, among which Kačić's *Razgovor ugodni* was the most successful.

Books were not the Croatian Franciscan's only vernacular publications. The 18th century also saw the beginning of popular calendars. During the 18th century (from 1754 to 1780) Emericus Pavić published one entitled *Ilirički kalendar*.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, not a single preserved copy of those calendars has survived.⁴⁵ Judging by its long publication run, however, one can assume that the calendar also played an important role in the cultural development of Hungarian Croats, and in their cultural integration.⁴⁶

Both Pavić's publishing enterprises, *Nadodanje* and *Ilirički kalendar*, were directed at the common people. Many scholars posit illiteracy as the main obstacle to modernization, and the main problem in creating "imagined communities", but illiteracy among Croats was partially solved in a very simple way. It was a Croatian tradition, from the Adriatic coast to the Buda and Pest region, to organize *prela* (s. *prelo*), social events where people danced, played games and listened to poems. In ancient times poems were performed by *gusle*-players, but in the 18th century these musicians were replaced by literate persons who read poems and articles aloud.⁴⁷ Poems from Kačić's books were the most popular. The popularity of the *prelo* explains the success of Kačić's books, and renders the illiteracy of pre-modern people an unsuitable argument against the cultural integration that happened already in the 18th century.

⁴⁴ The first edition of the almanac *Ilirički kalendar* was actually published by Friar Georgius Rapić in 1743, but in only two editions (1743 and 1744).

⁴⁵ Matija Pavić, "Književna slika Slavonije", *Glasnik Biskupije Bosanske i Srijemske*, Đakovo, No. 9 (1889), p. 229.

⁴⁶ Emericus Pavić is also important in the history of Croatian medicine. He published *Flos medicinae/Cvit likarije* (Buda, 1756) in Latin and Croatian. *Flos medicine* was a translation of the Salernitan Regimen of Health, and the first medical book published in Croatian. – see: L. Gleisinger, "Prva medicinska knjiga na hrvatskom jeziku (Pavićev prijevod Salernitanskih regula)", *Alma Mater Croatica*, 4(1940-1941), No. 2, p. 56-64.

⁴⁷ Fortis, *Put po Dalmaciji*, p. 58.

The Breakup of Bosnia Argentina Province and the End of the *Studium Generale* in Buda

At the beginning of the 18th century the Province of Bosnia Argentina extended across three states: the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. During the first half of the 18th century Franciscans came into conflict with all three governments, and also clashed among themselves, resulting in the Province's breakup. The Dalmatian Province of St. Caius was the first to separate itself from the Province of Bosnia Argentina, achieving autonomy in 1735. Two decades later Franciscans in Hungary and Slavonia also separated from the Province of Bosnia Argentina, creating the Province of St. John Capistrano in 1757.⁴⁸ As a result of this fragmentation, the Croatian Franciscans could no longer maintain the cultural and integrative role that they had played for the previous century and a half. Two other problems emerged at the end of the 18th century for the *Studium generale* in Buda: the Royal University relocated from Trnava to Buda and the era of Josephinism reached its peak after 1780.

As soon as the Royal University moved from Trnava to Buda in 1777, Franciscan students started to attend it. According to the *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, one of the first Franciscan students at the Royal University was Ignatius Dominicus Martinović, a student of Theology who would later lead the Jacobin uprising.⁴⁹ The Royal University became a new opportunity, not only for Franciscan students but also for professors. The Franciscan *Studium generale* did not immediately stop its activities, however, and the Franciscans of St. John Capistrano managed to preserve it for five years after the Royal University opened in Buda. Then, in the year 1782, according to a record in the *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, the studium of philosophy was transferred to Ilok (Croatia).⁵⁰ According to a royal decree from September 1, 1783, all Franciscan high schools were closed and their students compelled to attend state universities.⁵¹ Josephinism reforms finally closed the Franciscan *Studium generale* in Buda and had a similar effect on the Franciscan administration of parishes. Until 1779 Franciscans from the Buda monastery administered parishes in Csepel, Taban and Sz. Laszlo, and had chaplains in Hanzabeg, Szentendre, Törökbalint and Ercsin. They handed over all of these parishes to lay priests in the next few years, in accordance with Josephinism and its ideas on the role of religious orders.⁵² Finally, by order of Emperor Joseph II in 1785,

⁴⁸ Franjo E. Hoško, "Prosvjetno i kulturno djelovanje hrvatskih franjevaca tijekom 18. stoljeća u Budimu", *Nova et vetera* 28 (1978), 1-2, p. 114.

⁴⁹ AFMB, *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, p. 4.

⁵⁰ AFMB, *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, p. 46.

⁵¹ Franjo E. Hoško, "Nastavna osnova filozofije i teologije u školama hrvatskih franjevaca", in: Josip Turčinović, ed., *Samostan Male braće u Dubrovniku* (Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1985), p. 213.

⁵² AFMB, *Prothocollum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, p. 15.

the Franciscans relocated from the monastery in Fő útca to the Augustinian monastery in Margit Körút. Their old monastery was given to the Order of St. Elizabeth, in order to become a hospital.⁵³

Conclusion

During the early modern period, the Croats were divided between three states – the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic – none of which had an interest in developing Croatian cultural identity. For the purpose of disseminating religious propaganda, the Catholic Church decided to create a written language for all Southern Slavs, a task that was given to Croatian priests who selected the Štokavian-ikavian and Štokavian-ijekavian dialects and Latin script. While the Catholic Church did not succeed in its intention of reuniting the Orthodox Churches with Rome, it did help to create a high culture and to integrate all Croats into one cultural community.

The early attempt of creating a standard written Croatian language continued with publishing projects by Franciscans from Bosnia Argentina. Together with wealthy merchants, the Franciscans constituted the core of Croatian elite in Hungary, Srijem, Slavonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Turkish Dalmatia. Due to that fact the Franciscans of Bosnia Argentina and of St. John Capistrano (after 1757) managed to culturally integrate all Dalmatians/Bosniaks/Catholic Rács/Illyrs/Bunjevacs/Šokacs/Croats in the immense territory that spreads from Budapest to the Adriatic Sea. The monastery in Buda and its high school were one of the most important centers. Its professors published many books in Croatian, accepting the Štokavian dialect and Latin script chosen by Dalmatian Jesuits Kašić and Mikalja. Without state support, Franciscan activities helped build a Croatian proto-national community capable of creating its own high culture and preparing itself for future national integration. As a result of Josephinism reforms and the start of the Hungarian national movement, however, the Franciscan monastery in Buda lost its cultural significance for the Croats in Hungary at the end of the 18th century.

The Croatian community in Budapest never managed to find a secular alternative to the Franciscans. In the 19th century, Croats in Buda and Pest remained a small community but lacked a strong elite, and financial and political influence. Despite this, the Croats in Buda and Pest managed to maintain their ethnic identity until the end of the 19th century. It is only at that point that they disappeared almost entirely into natural assimilation, unable to maintain their cultural reproduction.

⁵³ “*in finem Hospitalis erigendi, cujus Planum dein Viennam missum fuit*” – AFMB, *Prothocolum Historiae Conventus Budensis*, p. 64.

Das franziskanische Kloster der Wunden des Hl. Franziskus in Ofen – das kulturelle Zentrum der Kroaten im ungarischen Donaugebiet während des 18. Jahrhunderts

Zusammenfassung

Im 17. und im 18. Jahrhundert kam es zur starken Bildung der kroatischen kulturellen Identität, wodurch die Bedingungen für spätere Bildung kroatischer Nation geschaffen wurden. In dieser Zeit begann die Formierung der kroatischen Hochkultur mit dem Schwerpunkt auf der Bildung gemeinsamer Literatursprache. Einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Entwicklung der vormodernen kroatischen Hochkultur leisteten die Franziskaner der Provinz *Bosna Argentina* (Bosna Srebrena). Diese Provinz umfasste im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert den riesigen Raum von Ofen und Pest im Norden bis zur Adriaküste im Süden. Ein wichtiges Zentrum dieser Provinz war das franziskanische Kloster der Wunden des Hl. Franziskus in Ofen. In diesem Kloster wurde zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts eine franziskanische Hochschule gegründet, die schon 1722 den Status *primae classis* bekam, den höchsten Status, den franziskanische Hochschulen erreichen konnten. Die Lehrer der franziskanischen Hochschule in Ofen veröffentlichten während des 18. Jahrhunderts zahlreiche wissenschaftliche und literarische Werke in kroatischer Sprache. Ihr Schaffen stellte einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Bildung der kroatischen Hochkultur dar und trug zur Verbindung der Kroaten im ungarischen Donaugebiet untereinander und zur Erhaltung ihrer Identität bei. Das Beispiel der Wirkung von Franziskanern aus Ofen zeigt deutlich die Wichtigkeit der Bildung von Hochkultur als Voraussetzung für die Schaffung der nationalen Kultur, aber zugleich entdeckt auch ihre Methoden des kulturellen Wirkens unter den breitesten Volksschichten.