

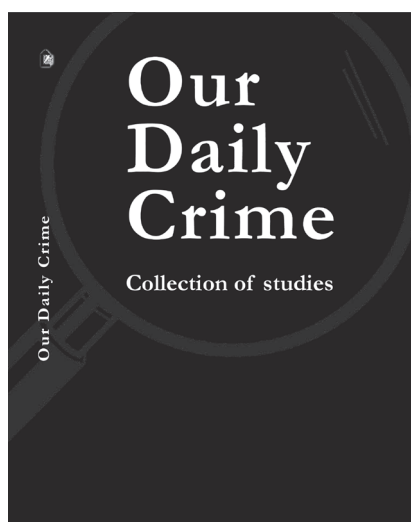
***Our Daily Crime. Collection of studies*, Gordan Ravančić (Ed.) (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014)**

Foreword

Crimes and social responses to them are constant companion of mankind throughout the entire history. We often consider crime as a kind of social deviation or opposition to social order, i.e. organized societal communities. However, one can treat crime also as a (anti)social response to dysfunction of social organization. Namely, one could make a kind of comparison: as we know from the elementary physics that any force has its anti-pod, thus we could make an analogy that any social interaction has its opposition/reflection within a community or society. Consequently, in the present-day world that is overwhelmed with various kinds of violence, terrorism and crime in general, it would be interesting to look back and try to grasp in which way(s) our predecessors have dealt with crime and what was considered as a crime at all. I realize that such a shift of perspective could seem socially “destructive” and possibly aiming to relativization of crime, though it certainly should not be so. Namely, I believe (and hope) that this shift of our perspective in perceiving crime could reveal some approaches in dealing with various social deviations in the present-day world. Especially, since crime is a social construct, and as such it depends on and can be subject to various social changes.

Thus, historical perspective to the perception of crime possibly could give us some answers and directions regarding prevention and origin of the criminal behavior, as well as interesting insight to social differences in treatment of crime during the history. Aim of this collection of works was to gather in one place various studies regarding investigation of daily (mostly petty) crime throughout history – from the Middle Ages up to the present day. The focus was on Croatia and surrounding countries in order to reveal – I believe – particularly interesting material in the form of a number of independent case studies approaching daily crime from different perspectives and using different methodologies.

Thus, this book in front of you represents a collection of studies trying to reveal various types of crimes and social responses to them, embracing relatively large time framework from medieval times up to our recent history. At the same time it has to be emphasized that analyzed cases and types of crimes do not reflect the most common and the most typical crimes throughout the history. Analyzed topics vary from questions regarding petty and violent crimes up to feuds in pre-modern societies, across problems of dealing with crime in the cities during the modernization processes, up to



the perception, definition and usage of crime in turbulent times of defining the social-istic state and later during the Homeland War in Croatia.

All the included articles are result of long research of the scholars who contributed to this collection of studies, and – as reviewers of the volume have noted – all of the presented statements and conclusion in the following pages are well reasoned by scholarly apparatus. Therefore I believe that the collection of studies in front of you will become interesting and instructive reading not only for professional historians, scholars dealing with history of daily life and law history but also appealing texts for a broader audience. All the authors have written their contributions in their own standard languages (Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian etc.), and most of the included articles are translated into English in order to bring these interesting topics closer to the audience. The only exception is the first article that remained in Italian, as it was originally written, and the only explanation for not translating it into English was lack of funds. Still, since Italian is a language spoken by more than 60 million people and broadly used in historical science, I hope that this will not be too inconvenient for the future readers. At the end, I have to stress that the presented conclusions and statements do not reflect attitudes of publisher and/or editor of this volume since all the authors had a full liberty regarding the choice of a particular topic and methodology. Still, if any technical / editorial error has remained, after numerous readings and corrections, that is – naturally – *mea culpa*.

Gordan Ravančić

20 November 2014