

Fate of Christian-Themed and Inspired Croatian Books at Zagreb City Library During Communist Era

The author analyses and explains the procedure which the Zagreb City Library followed to “secrete” those books that the communist regime found unsuitable from the library’s circulation and to remove them to a “closed fund”, inaccessible to the library members and the general public. During the communist regime the City Library removed 2800 titles from the library’s fund. Of these, 600 titles were Christian-themed Croatian books, works of Croatian literature inspired with Christianity. The author uses select examples to demonstrate the *modus operandi* of the library’s censor, who carefully examined the books of the City Library to “secrete” into the closed fund every book that may have touched upon the Christian views of life and the world in as little as a few sentences. Several examples of books which were officially banned are presented, as well as the devastating effects that book censorship in libraries has had on the research of the Croatian written heritage and literature. Although the books “secreted” from the circulation were withheld from the library members, who were completely unaware of the existence of the closed fund, the City Library treated the “secreted” books with negligence, which lead to the disappearance of about a hundred Croatian Christian books in the course of several decades, meaning that one sixth of the “secreted” Croatian Christian books was destroyed. Of particular interest with regard to the “secreted” Croatian Christian books at the City Library is that they included forty books from the Collection of rare books and manuscripts, which was managed by the senior librarian Marko Orešković from 1945 to 1976. The author proves that it was Marko Orešković who was the books’ censor at the Zagreb City Library.

A list of 600 Christian-themed and inspired Croatian books which were “secreted” from the fund of the City Library is provided. The books which were lost and the forbidden books from the Collection of rare books and manuscripts are marked in the list.

Keywords: censorship in libraries, communism, Zagreb City Library, “secreting” books from the library’s circulation, closed book fund, Christian-themed and inspired Croatian books