

## “Verba movent, exempla trahunt”: Don Nikola Batistić and Croatian Folk Hagiographic Literature of Late 19th and Early 20th Century

Most modern literary-historic reviews evaluate negatively or they omit all together the literary works of Nikola Batistić (born 1846-1929), a Croatian theologian, classical philologist and a writer. The time in which Batistić lives and writes is recognized as a time of trial for all religious people. On one hand, they are exposed to moral and religious indifference and, on the other, the mere foundations of their faith are being depreciated by the methodology of empirical sciences. Most of his works belong to the genre of literary hagiography and are written primarily for the general public or, in his own words, for plain folk. These are: „Život svete Lucije, djevice i mučenice“ („The Life of Saint Lucia, a virgin martyr“), published in Zadar in 1896, „Život svetog Vida“ („The Life of Saint Vitus“), published in Zadar in 1898. and „Život svete Katarine“ („The Life of Saint Catherine“), published in Zadar in 1910. The literary works of father Andrija Kačić Miošić were for Batistić an example of addressing a wide audience in a simple way while keeping the function of the content and the message intact. As Batistić considers A. K. Miošić to be a writer that one needs to follow, he also wants to exhort others to write about religious subjects in a way accessible to plain folk that could then be able to use those works for their moral and religious formation. In the preface of „Život svete Katarine“, Batistić mentioned a number of religious writers that were, in his opinion, inspired by his „Život svete Lucije“. These writers are: F. Jeričević and his „Život svetog Marina“ („The Life of Saint Martin“), published in 1897, L. Jelić and his „Sveti Šimun Bogoprimac“ („Saint Simeon the God-Receiver“), published in 1903, A. Anić and his „Život svetog Ilara opata“ („The life of Saint Hilarion the Monk“), published in 1908, and father K. Bušić and his „Makabejčevići“ („The Maccabees“), published in 1896. Despite the shortcomings that we see in his works, it would be superficial to conclude that Batistić is an ignorant writer-on the contrary, while writing he stimulated the knowledge of not just modern literature and art but also of scientific achievements, and the popularity and recognizability of his works among the folk was very notable in that time.

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