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POETIC MARTYROLOGY OF NIKOLA BRAUTIC

Abstract

Bishop Nikola Brautic created a unique work in the entire Croatian literature. In fact, I think that there is no similar work which should be looked up to. The work, as the bishop admitted, (Hos ego versiculos feci reclusus et exul,| Carcer et exilium quo leviora forent.|Neve rigor fragilemque vehemens tentatio mentem | In desperatas praecipitaret aquas.) was created „out of despair“ while he was in the most notorious Roman prison Angel fortress by the order of the Pope Gregory XV. He lived in that prison for eight months and was sentenced for ten years of prison in Perugia, but after two years the new Pope Urban VIII declared him innocent and set him free. In one distich Brautic praised a life of one saint or some solemnity. Therefore, with its title the distich created one whole, and Poetic martyrology is composed of 4864 distiches. He used Latin language of that time, which was also in everyday usage, but as far as stylistic figures are concerned besides wonderful comparisons, the most expressive one was the word play which can be found almost in every distich. It is understandable that there is a strong influence of poets from Augustus' period (primarily Virgil and Horace), what is reflected usage of characteristic phrases. Special attention in the paper is paid to the so called Illyrian saints, i.e. those who are in any way connected to ancient Illyricum. In that segment Brautic often complemented the Roman Martyrology of Cesare Boromini which was his main reading.

Key words: distich; martyrology; Illyrian saint; martyr