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SUMMARY

A Contribution to the Study of the Procession Za križen (Following the Cross) and the Chant of Gospin plač (Lamentation of Virgin Mary) on the Island of Hvar

The centuries-old procession *Za križen (Following the Cross)* – a part of the Mediterranean tradition of settings of the story of the Passion of Jesus, and also a part of the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage – passes through six villages on the island of Hvar (Jelsa, Pitve, Vrisnik, Svirče, Vrbanj and Vrboska) on the night from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday. Its central point is the performance of *Gospin plač (Lamentation of Virgin Mary)*, a chant built around octosyllabic couplets, whose origins can be traced all the way to the medieval Croatian version of *Planctus Mariae* from the *Osor-Hvar Hymnbook* (1533). It is sung at the stations of the procession alternately by two groups of male singers (*kantaduri* i *odgovoroči*). The melody is based on a series of sequences separated by pauses, and each syllable can endure few sequences. Because of its unique melodic and rhythmic structure, and the way of interpretation, this one-part tune is very recognizable, but not easily memorable. The *Gospin plač* chant demands adequate interpretative, vocal and intonational abilities of performers. It is transmitted orally from one generation to another, already at a young age. Singers practice it mostly during rehearsals organised in the home of the *križonoša* (cross-bearer) during the Lenten season.

This paper provides descriptions of procession's formal characteristics and structure and a review of former notions of its roots and important parts of its history. However, the emphasis is given to the *Gospin plač* chant, to the provenance of its text and to the features, context and regime of its performance, sketched through conversations with participants and by observation of the contemporary praxis model in the village of Svirče.

Key words: Island of Hvar, Procession *Following the Cross (Za križen)*, Medieval Croatian Version of *Planctus Mariae (Gospin plač)*, One-Part Singing, Glagolitic Chant.