

FELICITY HILL, *EXCOMMUNICATION IN  
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND: COMMUNITIES,  
POLITICS, AND PUBLICITY*

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Društveni fenomen inherentan i sveprisutan u srednjemu vijeku, a kojim su se europski povjesničari poput Elizabeth Vodole, Donalda Logana i Véronique Beaulande već dosta bavili, tema je još jedne nove izvanredne studije. Knjiga *Excommunication in Thirteenth-Century England: Communities, Politics, and Publicity* nastala je na temelju doktorske disertacije povjesničarke Felicity Hill na Sveučilištu East Anglia. Hill trenutačno predaje srednjovjekovnu povijest na škotskome Sveučilištu St. Andrews, a prije toga radila je kao znanstveni suradnik na Sveučilištu u Cambridgeu.

Kao što autorica naglašava u poglavlju *Introduction* (1–28), ali i u ostatku knjige, dosadašnje studije koje su se bavile ekskomunikacijom uglavnom su se fokusirale na pitanje učinkovitosti te duhovne kazne pri čemu je ona bila utvrđivana s obzirom na uspješnost Crkve i njezinih službenika da pojedinca primoraju na promjenu ponašanja. Hill se odmiče korak dalje i postavlja jedno drukčije pitanje: kakve je posljedice ekskomunikacija imala za pojedinca u društvu te kako su pojedinac i društvo doživljavali ekskomunikaciju? Postavljajući tako koncept svoga

The subject of this new extraordinary study is a social phenomenon inherent and ubiquitous in the Middle Ages, which European historians such as Elizabeth Vodola, Donald Logan and Véronique Beaulande have already dealt with a lot. The book *Excommunication in Thirteenth-Century England: Communities, Politics, and Publicity* is based on the doctoral dissertation of historian Felicity Hill at the University of East Anglia. Hill currently teaches medieval history at Scotland's University of St. Andrews, after having worked as a research associate at the University of Cambridge.

As the author emphasizes in the *Introduction* chapter (1–28), but in the rest of the book as well, previous studies which have dealt with excommunication have mainly focused on the question of the effectiveness of this spiritual punishment, which was determined with regard to the success of the Church and its officials in compelling the individual into changing their behavior. Hill goes a step further and asks a different question: what consequences did excommunication have for the individual in a society, and how did the individual and

istraživanja, autorica mnogo dublje prodire u stvarno značenje toga fenomena. Hill, naime, u knjizi dokazuje tezu da je zbog karakteristike iznošenja i obznanjivanja te kazne u javnosti, ona na razne načine utjecala na reputaciju i ekskomuniciranih pojedinaca i Crkve, a ujedno je bila i jedan od načina komuniciranja i prenošenja političkih poruka širim masama.

Knjiga je podijeljena na tri glavna dijela. U prvoj dijelu, *Individuals* (29–102), autorica ispituje što je za pojedinca značilo biti ekskomuniciran, preciznije kakve su sve mogle biti reakcije pojedinaca na ekskomunikaciju. Pritom, u poglavlju *The Spiritual Effects of Excommunication: Instilling Fear* (29–58), autorica kreće od utvrđivanja primarne svrhe ekskomunikacije. Prema službenim crkvenim shvaćanjima – kanonskom pravu i teolozima – svrha ekskomunikacije bila je proglašiti prokletstvo nad pojedincem, međutim samo s ciljem njegova vraćanja u krilo Crkve. Drukčije rečeno, ekskomunikacija nije bila shvaćena učinkovitom ako se pojedinac nije pokorio i tražio odrješenje. S druge strane, među laicima ekskomunikacija je uglavnom bila shvaćena kao automatsko proklinjanje. Crkva takvo laičko shvaćanje, prenošeno primjerice mirakulima i egzemplima, nije obeshrabrivala jer je time zastrašivala pojedince. Drugi način utjerivanja straha od ove kazne bio je elaborirani ceremonijal koji se odvijao prilikom proglašavanja ekskomunikacije u župnim crkvama. Glavni aspekti toga ceremonijala bili su zvonjava, gašenje svijeća njihovim bacanjem na pod i formule koje su izgovarali svečano odjeveni klerici. Formule su se često referirale na biblijske negativce poput Jude i Pilata te na Sotonu.

U idućem poglavlju, *Belief, Fear and, Conscience* (59–102), autorica propituje u kojoj se mjeri pojedinci u stvarnosti bojali te kazne i bili spremni prihvatiti pokoru. Prema autoričinoj analizi pojedinci su ozbiljno shvaćali ekskomunikaciju i njezine posljedice, u čemu je veliku ulogu imala i činjenica da ekskomunicirani pojedinci nisu imali pravo na kršćanski pokop. No nisu svi bili spremni na trenutačno traženje odrješenja od kazne. Budući da posljedice ekskomunikacije nisu bile vidljive za zemaljskoga života, manje pobožni pojedinci prihvaćali su živjeti izopćeni i tražili su odrješenje tik pred svoju smrt, a bilo je i slučajeva kad je rodbina

society perceive excommunication? Choosing such a concept for her research, the author penetrates much deeper into the real meaning of that phenomenon. Hill proves the thesis that due to the nature of presenting and announcing the punishment in public, it affected the reputation of excommunicated individuals and the Church in various ways, and was also one of the ways of communicating and conveying political messages to the wider masses.

The book is divided into three main parts. In the first part, *Individuals* (29–102), the author examines what it meant for an individual to be excommunicated, more specifically, what the reactions of individuals to excommunication could have been. Furthermore, the chapter *The Spiritual Effects of Excommunication: Instilling Fear* (29–58) begins with the author establishing the primary purpose of excommunication. According to the official Church understandings – the canon law and theologians – the purpose of excommunication was to declare an individual as cursed, but aiming only for his return to the fold of the Church. In other words, excommunication was not considered effective if the individual did not repent and seek absolution. However, the laity mostly understood excommunication as automatically cursing the individual. The Church did not discourage such a lay understanding, conveyed by miracles and examples, because it intimidated individuals. Another way of instilling fear of this punishment was the elaborate ceremony that took place when excommunication was announced in parish churches. The main aspects of this ceremony were the ringing of bells, the extinguishing of candles by throwing them on the floor, and formulas pronounced by ceremonially dressed clerics. The formulas often referred to biblical villains such as Judas and Pilate and Satan.

In the next chapter, *Belief, Fear and, Conscience* (59–102), the author questions to what extent individuals actually feared this punishment and were ready to accept penance. According to the author's analysis, individuals took excommunication and its consequences seriously, in which the fact that the excommunicated individuals did not have the right to a Christian burial played a major role. But not everyone was ready to ask for immediate relief from punishment. Since the consequences of excommunication were not visible during earthly life, less pious individuals accepted to live excommunicated

postumno tražila odrješenje. Postojali su i pojedinci koji su smatrali da su nepravedno ekskomunicirani te su uopće negirali podlijeganje toj kazni. Međutim, kako autorica naglašava, to nije značilo da su prestali vjerovati u kaznu kao takvu. Laici su, naime, nekada propitivali vjerodostojnost crkvenih službenika koji su proglašavali ekskomunikaciju – ako su sumnjali u njihovu čudorednost i namjere, samim time sumnjali su i u to da su proglašeni izopćenima. Crkva je, s druge strane, i u takvim slučajevima ekskomunikaciju smatrala valjanom.

Ako strah od vječnoga prokletstva i grižnja savjesti nisu bili dovoljna motivacija za traženje odrješenja, moglo je to biti društveno isključivanje (*shunning*). Autorica ispituje kako se zajednica odnosila prema ekskomuniciranim pojedincima u drugome dijelu svoje knjige, naslovljenome *Communities* (103–184). U trećemu poglavlju knjige, *Exclusion from the Community of the Faithful* (103–137), Hill pobliže opisuje kako je trebao izgledati društveni ostracizam koji je Crkva proklamirala, ali i propituje je li mu zajednica uvijek pribjegavala s obzirom na to da ima malo izvora koji to u praksi potvrđuju. Vrsta društvenoga ostracizma, najrevnije provođenoga u srednjovjekovnoj Engleskoj, bio je gubitak svih zakonskih prava, odnosno zabrana sudjelovanja u sudskim parnicama. U nekim je slučajevima ekskomunikacije biskup imao pravo uključiti svjetovnu vlast i naložiti pritvaranje pojedinaca. S druge strane, isključivanje pojedinca iz društvenih interakcija u slučaju ekskomunikacije bilo je specifično po tomu što su pojedinci bili svjesni toga da to nije trajno stanje. Također, ono nije uključivalo potpuno ignoriranje, kao što je to bilo u slučaju, primjerice, otpadništva (*outlawry*). Obraćanje izopćenim pojedincima bilo je dapače poželjno ako ih se pritom motiviralo na pokoru i traženje odrješenja. Crkva je nadalje donekle umanjila učinkovitost društvenoga ostracizma nakon što je papa Grgur VII. dozvolio članovima obitelji da komuniciraju s izopćenima bez straha da će pasti pod kaznu male ekskomunikacije. I najzad, autorica se posebno osvrće na slučajeve kada zajednica, bilo zbog visokoga društvenog položaja ekskomuniciranih pojedinaca bilo zbog njihove reputacije i društvenoga kapitala, naprosto nije pribjegavala njihovom društvenom isključivanju. U slučajevima visoko društveno pozicioniranih osoba ekskomunikacija

and sought absolution just before their death, and there were also cases when their relatives sought their absolution posthumously. There were individuals who believed that they were unjustly excommunicated as well and denied being subject to that punishment at all. However, as the author emphasizes, this did not mean that they stopped believing in punishment as such. Namely, the laity used to question the credibility of the Church officials who proclaimed excommunication - if they doubted their moral order and intentions, they also doubted the fact that they were declared excommunicated. The Church, on the other hand, considered excommunication valid even in such cases.

If remorse and the fear of eternal damnation were not sufficient motivation for seeking absolution, it could have been social exclusion (*shunning*). In the second part of her book, entitled *Communities* (103–184), the author examines how the community treated excommunicated individuals. In the third chapter of the book, *Exclusion from the Community of the Faithful* (103–137), Hill describes in more detail what the social ostracism that the Church proclaimed should have looked like, but also questions whether the community always resorted to it, considering that there are few sources confirming this in practice. A type of social ostracism, most zealously enforced in medieval England, was the loss of all legal rights, i.e. the prohibition of participation in court cases. In some cases of excommunication, the bishop had the right to involve the secular authorities and order the detention of individuals. However, excluding individuals from social interactions in the case of excommunication was specific in that individuals were aware that it was not permanent. Furthermore, it did not involve such complete disregarding as in the case of, for example, apostasy (*outlawry*). As a matter of fact, addressing excommunicated individuals was desirable if they were at the same time motivated to repent and seek absolution. Furthermore, the Church somewhat reduced the effectiveness of social ostracism after Pope Gregory VII allowed family members to communicate with outcasts without fear of falling under the penalty of minor excommunication. Finally, the author specifically inspects the cases when the community, either because of the high social position of excommunicated individuals or because of their reputation and social capital, simply did not resort to their social exclusion. In the

je dapače mogla biti opravdanje za političko djelovanje. To, dakle, znači da su uspješnost i posljedice ekskomunikacije uvelike ovisili o čimbenicima koje sama Crkva nije bila u stanju kontrolirati.

U poglavlju *Apathy, Rejection and Divided Loyalties* (138–184) Hill još dublje ulazi u problematiku negiranja te crkvene kazne, odnosno odbijanja šire zajednice da isključi pojedince iz društvenih interakcija, propitivanjem u kojoj je mjeri zajednica uopće činila kohezivnu društvenu cjelinu. To što je pripadala kršćanskomu krugu nije, naime, ujedno značilo da ju je ta vrijednost jedina i u potpunosti ujedinjavala. Ekskomunikacija je, nadalje, zajednici bila nametnuta, nije bila rezultat kolektivne odluke. To posebice dolazi do izražaja ako se uzme u obzir da je većina ekskomunikacija štitila crkvenu imovinu i prava. Uz to što laici i klerici nisu dijelili iste interese, još su problematičniji bili slučajevi u kojima klerici nisu dijelili konsenzus oko nametanja ekskomunikacije, a što se često događalo u sporovima vezanima za podjelu crkvenih beneficija. Takvim su pak sukobima same crkvene institucije ugrožavale svoju reputaciju.

U trećemu dijelu knjige, *Publicity* (185–289), autorica iznosi najinovativnije i najvažnije argumente u svojoj knjizi. Ako pak ni grižnja savjesti ni društveno isključivanje nisu bili dovoljni da bi ekskomunikacija bila uspješna, osjećaj poniženja i ugrožavanje dobre reputacije zbog te kazne mogli su natjerati pojedinca da traži odrješenje, a to je ujedno bila i posljedica od koje se najviše strahovalo. Kako autorica objašnjava u petome poglavlju *Publicity, Reputation, and Scandal* (185–229), u slučaju *ab homine* ekskomunikacije, kanonsko je pravo nalagalo iznošenje imena ekskomuniciranih u javnost, učestalim objavama imena na svetim misama. Iako je u teoriji objavljivanje trebalo izvršiti dodatni pritisak na pojedinca, ono je moglo imati sasvim suprotne učinke od onih koje je Crkva htjela. To je oboma, klericima i laicima, naime, bilo moćno sredstvo za korištenje prilikom osobnih i političkih sukoba: javnim “[d] enuncijacijama su nastojali manipulirati percepcijama o događajima i protivnicima.” (196). Time su, međutim, istovremeno među masama otvarali prostor za političke diskusije, stvaranje frakcija u društvu i eskaliranje sukoba.

U poglavlju *Violence, Excommunication, and Dispute Settlement* (230–258) Hill donosi primjer uz pomoć kojeg dočarava kako su dvojica klerika, jedan

cases of people with high social positions, excommunication could actually be a justification for political activity. Therefore, this means that the success and consequences of excommunication depended largely on factors which the Church itself was unable to control.

In the chapter *Apathy, Rejection and Divided Loyalties* (138–184), Hill delves even deeper into the issue of denying that Church punishment, i.e. into the wider community’s refusal to exclude individuals from social interactions, by questioning the extent to which the community constituted a cohesive social unit. The fact that it was a part of the Christian circle did not, in fact, mean that this value was the only and completely unifying one. Furthermore, excommunication was imposed on the community, it was not the result of a collective decision. This is particularly evident if one takes into account that most excommunications protected Church property and rights. In addition to the fact that the laity and the clergy did not share the same interests, even more problematic were the cases in which the clergy did not share a consensus on the imposition of excommunication, which often happened in disputes related to the distribution of Church benefices. Church institutions themselves threatened their reputation with such conflicts.

In the third part of the book, *Publicity* (185–289), the author presents the most innovative and important arguments in her book. If remorse and social exclusion were not enough for excommunication to be successful, the sense of humiliation and bringing their reputation into jeopardy due to this punishment could make the individual seek absolution, which was also the most feared consequence. As the author explains in the fifth chapter (*Publicity, Reputation, and Scandal*; 185–229), in the case of *ab homine* excommunication, canon law mandated that the names of the excommunicated be made public, with frequent announcements of the names at Holy Masses. Although the announcements were theoretically supposed to put additional pressure on the individual, they could also have effects quite opposite to what the Church wanted. It was a powerful tool for both clerics and laymen to use during personal and political conflicts for “Denunciations sought to manipulate perceptions of events and people.” (196). However, by doing so, they simultaneously allowed space for political discussions among the masses, creating factions among society and escalating conflicts.

koji je bio biskupov rođak i drugi koji je bio u kraljevoj službi, krajem 13. stoljeća koristili ekskomunikaciju i glasine (*famam publicam*) u sporu oko veoma unosne crkvene prebende. Iako drugi kandidat nije uspio dobiti željenu prebendu, uspjelo mu je pridobiti naklonost jednoga dijela javnosti, zbog čega je kralj intervenirao i osigurao mu dodjelu jedne druge prebende, s također vrlo visokim prihodima. U posljednjemu poglavlju, *Ecclesiastical Broadcasting in the Thirteenth Century: The Origins of the Great Curse* (259–289), autorica rekonstruira začetke i uspostavu prakse regularnoga proglašavanja *ipso facto* ekskomunikacija četiri puta godišnje, poznatih još i pod imenom *latae sententiae*. Početkom je 13. stoljeća uopće moglo doći do uspostavljanja te prakse zbog rastuće birokratizacije crkvene administracije. Za razliku od *ab homine* ekskomunikacija, prilikom proglašenja *ipso facto* ekskomunikacija krivci nisu bili javno imenovani. Prema autorici i takva je vrsta ekskomunikacija bila utjecajna jer su njome klerici upozoravali vjernike na kriminalno i nepoželjno ponašanje. Pritom je iz crkvenih registara uočljivo da je svaka dijeceza u Engleskoj imala specifične zločine na koje je crkva upozoravala. No, isto tako, najveći se broj *latarum sententiarum* odnosio na obranu crkvenih prava i posjeda. Ta je, dakle, činjenica stalnim promulgacijama bila prenošena lokalnoj zajednici putem ekskomunikacija.

Zbog svojih općenitih zaključaka i novih spoznaja, ova bi knjiga svakako mogla biti interesantna i inspirativna hrvatskim povjesničarima koji se bave srednjim vijekom jer daje uvid u to kako je funkcionirala srednjovjekovna ekskomunikacija. Zbog prirode izvora iz 13. stoljeća Hill se najčešće zadržavala na raščlanjivanju slučajeva vezanih za više društvene slojeve. Srednjovjekovni izvori iz Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije obiluju spominjanjem te srednjovjekovne spiritualne sankcije u slučajevima vezanim za razne društvene slojeve i situacije. Hrvatski povjesničari stoga imaju mnogo prostora za buduća istraživanja toga fenomena.

In the chapter *Violence, Excommunication, and Dispute Settlement* (230–258), Hill provides an example with the help of which she evokes how two clerics, one of them a relative of the bishop and the other in the king's service, in the late 13th century used excommunication and rumors (*famam publicam*) in a dispute over a very lucrative Church prebend. Although the second candidate did not manage to get the desired prebend, he managed to gain the favor of a part of the public, which is why the king intervened and secured the award of another prebend with very high revenues as well. In the last chapter, *Ecclesiastical Broadcasting in the Thirteenth Century: The Origins of the Great Curse* (259–289), the author reconstructs the beginnings and establishment of the practice of regularly announcing *ipso facto* excommunications four times a year, also known as *latae sententiae*. At the beginning of the 13th century, it was possible to establish this practice in the first place due to the growing bureaucratization of Church administration. Unlike *ab homine* excommunications, when *ipso facto* excommunications were announced, the culprits were not publicly named. According to the author, even this type of excommunication was influential because the clergy used it to warn the faithful against criminal and undesirable behavior. At the same time, it appears from the Church registers that each diocese in England had specific crimes the Church warned against. However, the largest number of *latarum sententiarum* referred to the defense of Church rights and property. Therefore, this fact was conveyed to the local community by constant announcements through excommunications.

Due to its general conclusions and new insights, this book could certainly be interesting and inspiring to Croatian historians who deal with the Middle Ages, as it provides an insight into how medieval excommunication functioned. Due to the nature of the sources from the 13th century, Hill mostly focused on the analysis of cases related to higher social classes. Medieval sources from Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia abound with mentions of this medieval spiritual sanction in cases related to various social strata and situations. Therefore, Croatian historians have a lot of space for future research into this phenomenon.

