

LJILJANA MARKS

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb

## **BALTAZAR ADAM KRČELIĆ: CHRONICLER OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

There are relatively numerous examples of oral tradition in B.A. Krčelić's *Annuae*. They spring from historical events — which are their context — from actual events of the time, often witnessed by Krčelić, and an autobiographic discourse is evident in them. By genre, these are jocular stories, and legends: mythic (about the appearance of the dead, about the devil, vampires, about a flying army); historical (about buried treasure); religious legends (about the miraculous saving of the painting of Our Lady of the Stone Gates); as well as rumours and actual experiences. These texts were rarely found in studies of Croatian oral and written literature, because they were written in Latin and were only translated into Croatian in 1952.

The texts are analysed in the context of the historical events they refer to and from the aspect of contemporary study of oral prose; compared with notations of recent thematically identical notations of oral tradition from Croatia; and, their reception in Croatian literature is considered.

Keywords: oral tradition, everyday life, 18th century

Baltazar Adam Krčelić undoubtedly holds a place within the framework of discussions and consideration of plurilingualism in 18th century Central Europe. Regarded almost exclusively as a historian, his importance in the history of Croatian literature, particularly oral literature, is unjustifiably ignored. There are a number of reasons for this: one, of course, being the Latin language in which almost all his works were written and published. In any case, the *Annuae* were only published in Latin on the basis of the original manuscript in 1901, with a detailed foreword written by Tadija Smičiklas;<sup>1</sup> however, not even the 1952 translation into Croatian and his,

---

<sup>1</sup> Tadija Smičiklas (1843-1914). He attended the classics high school at the Zagreb Greek Catholic Seminary, and matriculated in 1863. He taught in Osijek, and studied in Prague; he did advanced training in history sciences in Vienna at the Faculty of Philosophy and at the Institute for Research into Austrian History. He taught at high schools in Rijeka and Zagreb, and then lectured at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb where he was the first doctor honoris causa; Chancellor of the University, from 1883 a member, and, from 1900

tentatively, most readable and most popular book, did not prompt major research or evaluations.<sup>2</sup>

Studies which deal with the relationship between Croatian oral and written literature regularly quote data from the oral literary texts in *Annuae* — since few complete 18th century texts have been preserved. Josip Kekez, with cursory analysis of the themes, refers to them in his studies of two Latinists — B. A. Krčelić and Josip Bedeković-Komarski (Kekez 1987:180-181); and Maja Bošković-Stulli in *Usmena književnost* [Oral Literature] in the first volume of the History of Croatian Literature (1978), and in her book *Priče i pričanje* [Stories and Story-telling] (1997) (Bošković-Stulli 1978:221-224; 1997:80).

Baltazar Adam Krčelić<sup>3</sup> was born in Šenkovec near Zagreb on February 5, 1715. His parents were originally from Krbava, and this was the source of his noble name, de Corbavia. His father was highly placed in public office and he was mentioned in the *Annuae* along with other members of the family. Krčelić had three living brothers, Krsto, Josip, and Ignjat (although there were other siblings who died at birth, they were not mentioned), and two sisters: Ana, who was married to Franjo Hadrović, and Julijana, to whom he makes no reference. Later, Krčelić often mentioned Ana and her husband in the *Annuae*. He was on good terms with all the members of his family.

He came to Zagreb when he was going on eight, was educated by the Jesuits and later at the seminary, and in 1731 continued his studies at the Croatian College in Vienna (many of his fellow students from that time were mentioned later in the *Annuae*), and then at the Illyrian College in Bologna (1734-1738); he earned his doctorate in philosophy and theology, attained a solid legal education, and learnt Italian and French which he used later. Krčelić was not familiar with the German language (which is strange because of the time he spent in Vienna), or at least he did not know the language as well as he knew French and Italian. On the other hand, it is known that his students, Petar and Nikola Škrlec, who were brothers, and Count Ivan Patačić, knew German. These three students, who were later to become very prominent in Croatian social and political life, merged with their tutor into a spiritual community. They exchanged letters for years, "the Škrlec brothers address him as "Father", and write to him in

---

until his death, chairman of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences in Zagreb. He stands out in Croatian historiography as the author of the History of the Croats I-II, the first summarised history of the Croatian people, and as the editor of more than ten volumes of the *Diplomatički zbornik kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije* (*Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*).

<sup>2</sup> It was only in 1994 that Krčelić's *Povijest Stolne crkve zagrebačke* [The History of Zagreb Cathedral] appeared in its Croatian translation. It, too, contains a lot of material for oral literature.

<sup>3</sup> There were also inconsistencies in Krčelić's biography, for example, regarding the place of his birth and the like. The data I present in this paper is based on Stjepan Krivošić extensive study (Krivošić 1978).

Latin, Italian and French. They never stop asking him for advice in all of life's turns" (Smičiklas 1901:VI). Moreover, Nikola Škrlec became "the royal counsellor and education supervisor" and saved the *Annuae* from being burnt, which had been Festetić's sentence of the manuscript. Krčelić's deep interest in languages is also shown in his legacy which contains several large dictionaries and books of grammar (Krivošić 1978:140-141).

On his return to Zagreb, Bishop Juraj Branjug appointed Krčelić to the parish of Sela near Sisak, where he stayed for two years until 1745. In his 32nd year, in 1747, he came to Zagreb where he became canon of the Zagreb Chapter. Branjug promoted him by naming him dean of the Croatian College in Vienna. He managed that institute for two years; he left a list of the names of young men from leading Croatian families who had been educated in Vienna, including the Škrlec brothers and Count Ivan Patačić, referred to above. In Vienna, he came into contact with many prominent people of that time, including the Chancellor, while Count Leopold Nadasdy was his protector, and it can be seen in the *Annuae* that he later sent confidential reports to him in Vienna. Krčelić was undoubtedly wise and well-educated for the European notions of that time: Empress Maria Theresa personally entrusted him with Pavao Ritter Vitezović's (1652-1713) legacy and prompted him to write a Croatian history in the same spirit. He remained a promoter of the political interests of the Viennese Court, which some Croats held very much against him.

After the death of Bishop Juraj Branjug (in 1748), Franjo Ksaver Klobušicki was appointed bishop, and Krčelić returned to Zagreb. When Krčelić departed for Kaloča, Bishop Thauszy, who could not bear him, came to Zagreb. Because of his close relations with Vienna, Krčelić had made enemies in Croatia: Thauszy brought charges against him for imbezzlement and immorality (homosexuality). When Thauszy died, Maria Theresa named him the Čazma archdeacon. He became very ill, probably from rheumatism, and was long confined to his bed — there is mention of a special small bench which he had made so that he could write in bed. He died in 1778, was buried in Zagreb Cathedral, and his manuscripts are kept in the National and University Library in Zagreb.

Describing Krčelić, A. A. Baričević wrote that he was small, plump, dark, with peasant features, and he had a minor speech impediment (ore blaeso). In his eulogy, A. Kalafatić said that, otherwise, his body 'was fairly strongly built by Nature' (Krivošić 1978:227).

There is no question that he was an interesting, controversial person to whom the people around him were not indifferent. And the *Annuae* were like their writer. He started writing them in 1764, and they are, in fact, a topical chronicle only of the three years between 1764 and 1767, while the foregoing events (from 1748 to 1764) were described from memory. As he wrote about events as they were happening, there is no disengagement from them or any critical evaluation. The events were included, set in

order, and interpreted according to their significance at that particular time, but also according to Krčelić's assessment of them.

T. Smičiklas noted the particularity of the *Annuae* as a historical work and/or the difficulty in categorising the book according to some genre canon. He wrote: "Nor are they written as annals, but more like a chronicle. But they are not a chronicle either, since in large part they are permeated by a self-aware spirit, with the writer himself at the centre of the events. Nor are they a 'history' as they were called by the author, but only partly material for history. They are closest to "memoirs", not by their form, but by the major part of their content" (Smičiklas 1901:28).

Krčelić himself did not believe that his work would ever be published, and that is probably the reason for his directness and openness. After his death, the manuscript invoked genuine shock: it was given to Count Pavao Festetić<sup>4</sup> for his assessment, and he suggested that it be burned or strictly censored. "It is necessary to protect innocent youth, to prevent the corruption of young people... It would not be too cautious for this book to be kept most firmly locked away. (...) The essence of my opinion is that this book, as the last remains of K's human frailties, be burnt in fire, or that it be submitted to the joint censorship of this council, which will set aside what is worthy, and throw the rest into the fire". Fortunately, in my opinion, the council was chaired by Krčelić's above-mentioned student, Nikola Škrlec. He examined the book in order to "preserve the honour of his former 'father'. He erased in black ink on twenty-two of its pages everything which could shock future generations" (Smičiklas 1901:29-30).

The majority of these places in the text were later successfully reconstructed and the entire text is preserved in the translation. Fesetetić's main objection was that Krčelić mixed public with private circumstances, that he passionately attacked his contemporaries.

The writer allowed himself to be misguided by mere story telling, which all good people reject. The entire book riddled with old wives' tales (Smičiklas 1901:29).

*Annuae* definitely is a historical work, and, indeed, even the most important 18th century Croatian historical memoir. For that matter, that was how Smičiklas evaluated it; Krčelić "gives us a political and cultural picture of Croatia, at least in outline, for the entire 18th century. He

---

<sup>4</sup> Pavao Festetić was a member of a well-known noble family, one branch of which had, from the 17th century, been a member of the Magyar aristocracy, and owned properties in several counties in Hungary. This Pavao Festetić (1725-1782) was the first member of the Hungarian branch of the family to be mentioned in connection with Croatia. He was counsellor to the Magyar Chancellery in Vienna (from 1759) and counsellor to the Vienna Court Chamber (from 1762); in that year he supported the awarding of the archdeaconate to Krčelić. For his work on the promotion of the national economy, fruit-growing and silk-worm breeding, Empress Maria Theresa awarded him a Hungarian countship in 1772 (*Hrvatski biografski leksikon* 1998:191-192).

interprets for us the causes of almost all political questions. There is hardly any cultural profession which he does not touch upon. He speaks about many important events which no-one else even mentions. He is today, and undoubtedly will continue to be — second only to the papers of the Croatian Sabor [Parliament] — the main source on Croatian history in the time of Maria Theresa" (Smičiklas 1901:31).

From today's aspect, the *Annae* have lost nothing of their freshness, and those "old wives' tales" which scandalised Krčelić's contemporaries are what make interesting, even today, this chronicle from the 18th century. The work is a chronicle of its time, seen very personally with salacious stories from social life and the gossip which interested the author, but also with a pronounced autobiographical discourse. The personally coloured approach and the happenings of that time are not the most important aspects of the book. Krčelić provides the context for the stories and political events of his time: he writes about the weather, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and thus the book really does become a comprehensive chronicle from the mid-18th century.

The book also contains examples of oral tradition, particularly that of Zagreb, and this element had been only indirectly present in Croatian literature.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the collection of "historical and cultural-historical" sketches, *Stari i novi Zagreb* [Old and New Zagreb], edited by Emil Laszowski and published in ten sheaves during 1925 (reprinted in 1994), one also finds legends from Krčelić's *Annae*, translated from the Latin and edited mainly by Ivan von Bojničić. However, Bojničić presents these texts as strange information from the past "which throws light on the superstitions then", and not as part of Zagreb's oral tradition. Thus, he did not recognise tradition in the text which he himself gave the title *Sablast na Harmici* [A Ghostly Vision on Harmica].<sup>6</sup>

One should not be too strict in judging such qualifications and classifications of these texts: they are a product of their time and the way in which the major part of oral tradition were evaluated, particularly legends which were a less familiar and less recognised genre than fairy-tales or novelistic and jocular stories. Apart from that, in the ruling scholarly and literary concept, this literature was connected largely with what belonged to the people in the broadest sense, and the full texts, echoes and remnants were not sought for in historical texts. Legends which did appear in historical works were largely regarded as superstition, or, possibly, as beliefs — although in some cases this was not the editor's personal assessment but paraphrased or even literal transposition of

---

<sup>5</sup> For example, August Šenoa's novel *Diogenes* (1878) is directly based on parts of the *Annae*, as well as the novel *Za kralja — za dom* (I. *Pretorijanac*; II. *Žrtve zablude*) (1894-1895) by Josip Eugen Tomić, and the novels *Grička vještica* and *Kći Lotrščaka* (1921-1922) by Marija Jurić Zagorka.

<sup>6</sup> The text referred to was "Navodno pojavljivanje duše iz čistilišta" (Krčelić 1952:503-504; Marks 1994:89-90).

introductions or judgements from previously published editions: the above quotation from Bojničić is taken almost directly from Smičiklas's introduction to the Latin edition of the *Annuae* published at the beginning of the 20th century.

Several oral literary and folklore (ethnological) layers can be read off in the *Annuae*.

### **The layer of superstition and social events**

In later commentaries and descriptions of these themes Krčelić is called an author who battled against prejudice with his work. This was fully in the spirit of Enlightenment, rationalism, critical judgement and the wish that the masses be edified and turned away from silly and superstitious practices, which was undoubtedly Krčelić's intention. His rationalism is testified to by a preserved manuscript containing 22 prescriptions, called a veterinary medication book (*equorum medicamenta*). Almost all the prescriptions are rational with only three examples with elements of magic components. It is a known fact that Krčelić was very helpful when plague was raging in Sela in 1745, when he was parish priest there, and his contribution was publicly recognised.

From the folkloristic aspect, I am less interested in such interpretations and in Krčelić's comments and the reasons for which he gave them in his book, and much more interested in the events and data which he presented and which are so valuable for the study of the time in which Krčelić lived.

In the *Annuae*, Krčelić also presents direct utterances about local events which, in his interpretation, are permeated with the motifs of oral tradition: he writes about secret potions, on conjugal hatred and infidelity; he speaks of actual events which developed into rumours in their re-telling; about something that happened on May 27, 1751 when "In Biškupec near Varaždin (...) an unusual phenomenon like a small cloud was seen — although it was not a cloud — which became paler and paler, produced an explosive sound and then dispersed. In their ignorance, the common folk thought that the heavens had opened". At that same time, in the vicinity of Zagreb "near Hrašćina two balls fell out of the sky and crashed into the earth". This was a meteor which caused great fear among the people. The parish priest had it dug out of the ground, various people were written to about the incident, and "Their Highness in Požun" heard about it and was sent a large ball (Krčelić 1952:97). In connection with the eclipse of the Sun in 1764, he wrote: "I was pleased and surprised that the common folk in Croatia rid themselves of their fear of the eclipse and various superstitions from previous years", and he was able to establish this personally since "by chance I found myself in the countryside" (Krčelić 1952:471).

Apart from stories about saving the miracle-working picture of the Virgin Mary from the fire, which will be referred to in more detail later in the text, Krčelić mentioned the fire which occurred two years later, in 1733, in the city of Zagreb, and the bishop's efforts to save the city by a votive procession, or at least to reduce the fear of Zagreb's citizens from that terrible event.

On that occasion the Bishop pledged that a votive procession of the clergy would go from St. Rok on the feast day of St. Florian, in order to liberate us from the danger of the fire. Seeing himself in his predecessor, Emerik Eszterházy, who had carried this out in 1713, when locusts harshly devastated the homeland, he ordered that the large bells ring out from the feast day of St. George until the feast day of St. Simon. They say that the bell-ringing blessed the air (and in their ignorance they babble crazily that it works against witches).

Krčelić also gave examples of later processions, without any added comment:

The vow of the City of Zagreb: Because of a pestilence among the livestock which has raged unceasingly for years, on the suggestion of the city priest, Matija Stepanić, St. Francis Xavier was taken as the new patron saint of the city in 1762 with the pledge of the city magistrate, which was also approved by the Zagreb bishop. A regular fast was undertaken for December 2 and celebration of the day dedicated to St. Xavier. They vowed that a prayer procession would go from the parish church to that of the Jesuits and that the pledge would be renewed there every year (Krčelić 1952:441).<sup>7</sup>

This data allows us to read off the echoes of mediaeval folk beliefs that cities could be saved from fire, locusts, witches, and plague by various vows. Krčelić himself points out that this was "applied for the first time on that occasion, while it still continues today both in Zagreb and in all parishes" (Krčelić 1952:549). The echo of votive processions in Zagreb oral tradition is found, for example, in the legend on the origin of the Chapel of St. Dismus which was written down in Zagreb in 1963: It is said that plague was ravaging Zagreb and the city council vowed that a procession would go across the Sljeme Hills to Marija Bistrica if the plague

---

<sup>7</sup> St. Xavier is highly revered in Zagreb, which is demonstrated in the host of information on him in the chronicles of the Zagreb Jesuit Collegium. The saint was ceremoniously introduced to Zagreb in 1622, on the occasion of the celebration of his canonisation. He did not have his own altar in the Jesuit Church of St. Katherine, but Count Nikola Erdödy, Sr. erected a chapel in his honour in 1658 not far from Zagreb, and thousands of pilgrims soon started visiting it. The reverence in which he was held was evident in just the year 1762, as Krčelić also mentions, when, at the instigation of the Zagreb city priest and with the approval of Bishop Franjo Thauszy, the Zagreb city fathers chose St. Xavier as the patron saint of Zagreb. The city council was prompted to undertake the vow of the fast on the eve of the feast day and the subsequent annual procession because of the livestock plague, which had been rife in Zagreb and its surrounding villages for years (Vanino 1969:349-353).

ceased. According to the legend, one day the Plague halted at the beginning of the Chapter Hill where the Chapel of St. Dismus now stands, because it took fright at the corpses of robbers hanging on the gallows as a warning to all who came to the city with evil intent (Marks 1994:84). According to records, plague was often found in the Lower Town, even on the Chapter Hill and in the nearby Nova Ves area, but never in Zagreb itself (Horvat 1992:22; Jerand 1935:45).

Krčelić was also an engaged observer of the Zagreb social life of that time: the first dances and largely Carnival parties in Zagreb were organised at the mid-18th century by Countess Maria neé Stubenberg, the wife of the Banate Governor, Ludvig Erdödy. They brought freshness to Zagreb social life, and soon became the fashion and were also organised in the homes of the Zagreb nobility, at the home of Krajačić, the City Magistrate, at the Banate Mansion on St. Mark's Square, and even at the archbishop's residence on the Chapter Hill (Premerl 1974:139-150). Krčelić wrote about them and about the theatrical productions which were performed on such occasions in private houses, in which women also acted. He also wrote about various forms of debauchery as the triumph of lechery in Zagreb (Krčelić 1952:129).<sup>8</sup> Despite Krčelić's malicious commentary enriched by salacious details, these descriptions are valuable direct testimony to Zagreb

---

<sup>8</sup> "This winter, as never before, debauchery manifested itself in Zagreb at parties and, if I may say so, the triumph of lechery. True enough, as early as 1749 the late Countess de Erdšdy had introduced public dances, which had never been seen or heard of in Zagreb, so that people did not know what a dance was. She did not regard it as being below her station for her and a few members of the first families to act in some German comedy, towards which, however, the citizenry and the nobility felt a certain revulsion. This could not possibly have appealed to them, since that had previously regarded masks and masquerades as something diabolical.

After the death of that countess, the wife of the current count governor came to Zagreb. Terezija Illeházy, a young woman with a wonderful body (like Diana) who loves company (and was thus devoted to pleasures and pride), promoted such events at the highest degree. In earlier years, such as 1750 and 1751, the bishop and Erdödy had prevented them taking place, but public dances, masquerades and other such entertainment was organised in private houses, while in 1752, even in the royal mansion, because by that time Klobušicki had already been transferred, and the current bishop ingratiated himself with that woman. The officers from the Banate Military Border were invited to such festivities, and were obliged (out of respect) to take part at considerable expense in those follies for the entire period of Carnival from Epiphany until Lent... This year, however, when the countess in question took charge, there was a general air of great debauchery and all the countesses, young female members of the nobility, were invited, for whom the wantonness was to their liking, as it was to the officers, too... All the visitors had to pay 34 krajcers each evening [they attended] and this money went into the pocket of the countess. Anyone one could attend, whoever happened along, whether peasant, or servant, just as long as they paid that amount. The officers had to attend out of respect, as did individual young city employees and nobles, because whoever did not come had to explain his absence. In this way, what the citizens and others had rejected according to the traditions of their forebears, now came to be nurtured and adored, luxurious living, so that shame and shyness became a fault... And there were other attendant things but these were the most important (Krčelić 1952:129).

social events and required material for all later culturological and folklore research into theatre, Carnival and dance.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> "Dances and Carnival entertainments were held at private homes. Neither the count-governor nor the bishop arranged them this year [1751], because they were really clandestine counsellors to Her Majesty, and parties were banned in Vienna because of the period of mourning for the Empress Elizabeta, the widow, mother of the present queen" (Krčelić 1952:65).

"So that was how Carnival unfolded, while (...) at the end, namely on the last day of Carnival, certain letters [were] handed out, in which every individual woman was described, and those [describing] those who were not present at the time were sent to their homes. Only Magdalenić's daughter was praised as a woman of rare good sense. The others ground their teeth because of their descriptions. Arguments often arose and, as is innate where debauchery is concerned, with deep envy, suspicion etc." (Krčelić 1952:131).

The information about the absence of Carnival parties because of the death of the widow empress actually confirms the regularity of the Carnival entertainment for the citizenry held in Zagreb between Epiphany and Lent, otherwise the fact that they were not held would not be worth mentioning.

### The oral literature layer

In the oral literature layer, I first set apart the stories in Krčelić's *Annuae*.<sup>10</sup> They grow out of the historical events in the chronicle, and sometimes are permeated or interwoven with them, or the actual historical event described provides their broad context.

Oral tradition prevails as far as genre is concerned: mythic (about returning of the dead, about the devil, vampires, a flying army, about Freemasons and their contract with the devil); historical (about the search for buried treasure); legends or the so-called "authentic experiences" (*Erlebnisgeschichte*) and jocular stories. The stories are not separated from the chronicle discourse<sup>11</sup> and their order is interesting: one often invokes another by association as in actual, live narrations, reminding one of those already mentioned, and underscoring them. The story emerged from the chronicle discourse and followed its style with full and whole sentences, but other style processes allow the identification of oral tradition.

In the story of the *Navodno pojavljivanje duše iz čistilišta* [The Alleged Appearance of the Souls from Purgatory], dated in 1765, it was said that the following occurred in the house of the aristocrat, Aleksandar Jelačić, who had a brick-built house in the area of Harmica near the Chapel of the Holy Saviour: his dead daughter, Konstancija, appeared there at night, wandering through the corridors and in the cellar and making a great noise. Once she appeared to the widow Kristina and asked that her father fulfil her uncompleted vows. During this encounter, Kristina felt as if she was being touched by a very warm hand. The next day, there was the visible mark from a charred hand on her shoulder. Three city senators were sent as a delegation to investigate this occurrence, but Krčelić himself saw the mark on the widow's shoulder. Kristina then went to the Cappuchine monks, and then to the Cisterians in Kostanjevica, and then to Mariazell, where the late Konstancija had intended to go and fulfil her vow. At both places, she was given a certificate that Konstancija's soul had flown to heaven (Krčelić 1952:503-504).

The content of oral tradition about the appearance and return of the dead to this world is almost always reduced to folk conceptions of the souls which have to return to earth until they have completed the penance ordered of them — in the above case, the vow to visit Marazell. The influence of the Church is obvious. As time passed and the stories were re-

---

<sup>10</sup> Krčelić's attitude towards oral forms (although we cannot speak of oral tradition in the contemporary way in the context of Krčelić's time) is also shown the fact that in the work *De regnis* (1770) he translated into Latin the well-known Čakavian poem *Marina kruna* [Mary's Crown] (Kekez 1987:181).

<sup>11</sup> Only sometimes was the title of the described event emphasised, but in later commentaries on Krčelić's work and in the published stories this was often taken as the title of the story. Krčelić did not present these events as stories, but as strange happenings from the past, or similar, and their given titles were not really emphasised at all.

-told they became fairly independent, allowing great opportunities for the free reign of folk fantasy. Usually they were transmitted as actual personal experiences, as memoirs, so they were powerfully charged with emotion, they varied and were interesting.

The legend is a memorate, dated in 1765. That was the year in which Krčelić wrote the *Annuae* and was a witness to what he described. The text is not presented in a neutral chronicler manner because Krčelić was suspicious from time to time, distancing himself, and was sometimes witty and more often ironic in his attitude to the event in question. However, he himself, like the narrator of the legend, was not quite sure whether the event described had actually taken place or not, and he summed up his stance in the final sentence: "I have described it as it happened, while only God can explain it". He wants to remain believable, which is an important feature of tradition, and he provides exact details on the place, date, name and surname of reliable witnesses who can swear to what took place; one of them was his sister Ana Hadrović. All these elements cannot vouch for the factual truth of the content, as they are often themselves not credible, but they are the inseparable style elements of legend and its characteristics as a genre.

The famous Zagreb case of the devil in Gora follows in Krčelić's text immediately after the description of the events with the unfortunate Konstancija, and takes place in the same year (Krčelić 1952:504-505). It was said that the devil had wormed his way into a house, the local curate had exorcised the house during the night, but the devil moved to the rectory in Gora, where he showed himself, talking and behaving in a strange manner. It was revealed that the local curate was passionately in love with some woman. The woman in question lit and extinguished her lamp, and made such a terrible noise in the house that all the members of the household fled. Then the curate came to drive out the devil, but instead stayed there undisturbed, giving himself up to the pleasures of love. Although this story follows on from the legend about the return of the dead, which could have prompted it — this story about the appearance of the devil is actually the re-telling of an event which actually took place, although it had no elements of the miraculous or the diabolical. It is interesting from various aspects as it speaks of the Zagreb of that time, which was the theme of everyday narrations and provided the basis for the stories. In today's genre classification, we would call it a description of an "authentic event", an everyday event, a life story. We are grateful to Krčelić and his affinity for such everyday, banal stories taken from informal, sometimes even by-the-way conversations from which they emerge and are given form as he enters them into his chronicle, since very little similar information about the Zagreb of that time has been preserved. It is significant that the themes of these strange concocted stories were largely based on motifs from oral literature. The motif about priests and their love affairs with women were frequent and popular in folk stories, especially in the jocular ones. The sintagm of the devil from Gora is mentioned as a

saying in the description of a comical event in Varaždin (Krčelić 1952:505), which could mean that the author liked it, or that it was often told in the Zagreb of the period. This is indirectly confirmed by Krčelić's mention of the fact that the event became the basis of a saying in Zagreb: "That's the devil in Gora".

A funny little story is directly connected with this event (by its content and its place in the *Annuae*), following the *Devil in Gora* tale. It is about a male goat which was stolen by Captain Josip Žuvić and tied to the gates of the Franciscan church in Varaždin. The billy-goat was bleating loudly just as the Franciscans were going to choir: one of the friars appeared at a window, saw the black horns and the dark colour, became frightened and asked who was there, and Josip Žuvić replied that it was the devil driven out of Gora (Krčelić 1952:505). This little story, too, is told as an actual experience and serves to underscore Krčelić's claim that the event in question with the devil in Gora was the source of the saying. I would say it was the source of the syntagm whose ironic meaning can be understood only if the reader knows the tale of the curate and his mistress. In this event with the billy-goat, Krčelić plays with that syntagm: Captain Žuvić, who is a libertine and strolls about with young women — obviously knows the story and the saying and manages to use it to outwit the friars.

Krčelić obviously has an ironical and almost cynical attitude to the story told. Outside of the context mentioned, it serves as an independent humorous story (a schwank) about the cheated and outwitted friars. However, composed in this way, it shows a broader context, and indicates the presence of the sintagm in conversations at that time, and the undoubted associations it called up in other situations as well.

Krčelić also writes about rumours. In 1751, the Paulines were said to be spreading rumours about an ostensible royal female personage, killed by spears and firearms, who was appearing in Lithuania one moment, and in Cracow the next. However, "the newspapers did not mention this phenomenon nor was I able to find out what actually happened, although I enquired of all my friends (...) Therefore, it should be regarded as an old wives' tale..." (Krčelić 1952:98). The story in question is a rumour which grows out of an ostensible story (often also published in the newspapers), and is then spread by word of mouth and, if it takes hold, is with time given the style and composition of a legend. Today's contemporary stories emerge in exactly the same way as did this Krčelić tale. Quite by chance, I found confirmation of Krčelić's old rumour: a Polish colleague told me that the "Krčelić rumour" in question was a well-known Polish legend. Zygmunt August Radziwill (he lived at the mid-16th century), a member of the prominent noble Polish family, married Barbara, whom he loved very much, against the wishes of his mother. However, Barbara Radziwillowna died very soon after (history says of syphilis), but it was rumoured that her mother-in-law had probably poisoned her. After her death, she started to appear. Barbara's beautiful reflection would appear in a mirror, and then start to disintegrate until only the skeleton was left. This

is one of Poland's best-known legends, it exists in a large number of almost unvaried forms, and is found in school reading lists and children's books.

Krčelić classifies in the same group the story from Slavonia about how "an entire army in German uniforms was seen in the sky". The motif of a flying army belongs among the motifs of oral literature. The notion of armies of the dead is a very old one, and can be traced through Antiquity, right up to Pliny and Herodotus. In Croatian oral tradition, that army of the dead is spoken of as being made up of genies, that is a diabolical army (Bošković-Stulli 1963:286-288; 1987:67-73; 1997:402-406).

This is followed by minor rumours from Hungary about vampires (1766). In his account of these rumours, Krčelić mentions the testimony of a parish priest, Adam Habijanec, who claimed that a deceased husband, a nobleman, appeared to his wife in Patak at night, and had sex with her. The widow complained to the clergymen. Then the grave was opened, and one of the corpse's arteries was cut, bringing forth blood.

Finally, they resorted to a common method, that is they shot him several times with a rifle. Some use the practice of cutting off the vampire's head, and they say it then ceases to exist (Krčelić 1952:526).

Even though the event itself is located in the broad vicinity of Zagreb, the notation of it definitely testifies to rumours which were then the subject of discussions in Zagreb. Krčelić put the text together with deep awareness of the dramatic element in the event: he first places the occurrence in its broad context — mentioning that rumours were spreading in Hungary about the existence of vampires, he names a prominent person, the counsellor and secretary of the Magyar Chancellery, Ladislav Batta, who went to check on the truth of the rumours, and then tells of a similar event recounted to him by a parish priest from Oborovo. The content of the vampire story is identical to those stories and their contemporary notation in Croatia.

Historical tradition about buried treasure corresponds in the diversity of its motifs with the broad Croatian and European region. Motifs typical to legend appear in them: the belief that on particular days throughout the year treasure buried in the ground "blooms" and the colourful fire of the female Protector of the Treasure is seen on the surface of the earth. The Protectress can be an animal, usually a snake, the daughter of a king who is under a spell giving her the form of a snake from which she can only be set free under strictly set conditions. In this way, one can gain access to the treasure. Seekers for the treasure are usually hampered and freighted by supernatural creatures, very often the Devil himself. In order for the treasure to be found, a human sacrifice is sometimes required, for example, the murder of a monstrous boy whose blood is said to be used more easily to uncover the treasure; or the treasure has to be dug up with certain caution or otherwise it will transform into coal and sink even deeper into the earth (Marks 1994:110-112). Blessed water and prayers are a

protection from the supernatural guardian of the treasure. A hazel-tree switch is an aid to finding the treasure more speedily and with more success, and it was called a rašlja, or divining rod, among the masses (Marks 1994:113).

Baltazar Adam Krčelić wrote about common talk around the year 1753 concerning a certain Mr. Jelačić and a city-dweller, Karlo Softić, who had looked for buried treasure in a number of places, and had even dug in Vlaška Street in Zagreb. Later they had hired a hump-backed boy, a beggar, to dig at the Medvedgrad fortress on Sljeme Mountain. Nobody ever saw him again. It was rumoured that the two of them had murdered him and used his blood in their search, while one of them had been grabbed by the Devil, though it was more likely that he fell into the hole and was buried there.

These serious accusations were never investigated by anyone, so the various rumours stopped of their own accord. Still, the gentleman in question felt a certain fear after that, he lost his self-confidence, and was rarely seen in Zagreb, as if he was afraid (Krčelić 1952:360).

It is probable that the event itself caused a stir in the city and was long the theme of talk, because Krčelić wrote later in his chronicle that in January, 1758, five years after the event described, Karlo Softić died. He had previously been called Magdić and was a Turk who had converted to Christianity and become a citizen of Zagreb, a well-known merchant. Jelačić died in the same year, and the treasure hunt is mentioned as one of the three possible causes of his death. J. Jelačić, chairman of the District Court Bench, died intestate, without heirs and without receiving the sacraments on April 24, 1758: "He was a slave to his own passion, he was greedy and had a bad reputation because of it." Krčelić also mentions that, for years after, there was talk in Zagreb about secret corridors and buried treasure at Medvedgrad.

One characteristic group of prose texts had an influence on oral literature: these were the texts of the mediaeval miracles, the exempla, a genre in which the Virgin Mary (or, more rarely, members of the sainthood) spoke to the faithful in extraordinary circumstances, helping them in their misfortunes. "Those miracles, according to manuscripts and printed tracts, were read by the people apart from the sermons", or accounts of them were read by priests to congregations in churches (Bošković-Stulli 1978:102). In the oral stories which emerged from these texts the direct didactic application of the exempla was weakened, but the message of comfort and hope was retained. Through time, the orally transmitted fable was adapted according to the rules of the folk story. One of the very frequent and widely disseminated motifs of these narrations was the miraculous salvation from the fire of either a painting or a statue of Our Lady, or the unusual phenomena linked with her painting (Marks 1996:357-380).

The best known Zagreb legend about the miraculous painting of Our Lady speaks of an event which occurred at the Stone Gates, the eastern gates to the city, which still exist today as the sole preserved mediaeval passage in the old part of the City of Zagreb.

According to historical sources, the Stone Gates were damaged in the fires of 1645, 1674, 1706 and 1731. The story about the miraculous saving of the picture of Our Lady at the Stone Gates, however, was first mentioned by Krčelić in the *Annuae* and was dated May, 1731:

A great fire occurred in Zagreb. The first, on May 31, 1731, destroyed a major part of the Upper Town and the Chapter. (...) Something worth mentioning also took place during that fire: the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary remained untouched by the flames, and now, due to the efforts of the pious widow of someone called Modlar, it is revered under the arch of the city gates. Before, the painting stood above the City Gates. The picture was found whole and undamaged in the middle of the flames, and even ashes, since the frame burned completely, and was removed from the ashes on the third day (Krčelić 1952:549).

The above entry in the *Annuae* is given in an appendix in the biography of Bishop Juraj Branjug, as one of the miracles which occurred while he was bishop. Krčelić was only sixteen years old at the time and I assume that he was a witness to this wondrous event which means that this was a memorate of the first order. Krčelić remembered the event as having taken place in May because he was sent to the Jesuit College in Vienna in the same year.

His entry of the time became the main (sometimes, even the only) source for the veracity and reality of the event in question. All later interpretations of the legend cite Krčelić. This was obviously the source of the later vitality of the legend in oral tradition and in Croatian literature.<sup>12</sup>

Krčelić's affinity for the miracle and for the legendary is confirmed by the fact that on his return to Zagreb after his fifteen years of study in Vienna and his deanship of the Croatian College there, he brought back to Zagreb in 1747 a printed tract, *Življenje blaženoga Gazotti Augustina*,

---

<sup>12</sup> In his *Članci i kritike* [Articles and Reviews], A. Šenoa also speaks of the miraculous salvation of that painting from the fire and refers to the "old tradition" which speaks of arson; he dates it in the year 1674. According to that story, a beggar set fire to the city as an act of revenge and a large number of houses were burnt, along with the incompleting tower and part of the Church of St. Mark. It was said that "the fire reached the 'Stone Gates' and that it was stopped there miraculously by the painting of the Virgin Mary, whose small church stands below those gates. The painting still bears [signs] of charring by the fire. That is why the people of Zagreb express great reverence to the picture" (Šenoa 1934a:317). Šenoa's reference to tradition, we assume he means oral tradition, and the difference in the dates in relation to Krčelić's description of the miraculous saving of the painting of *Our Lady of the Stone Gates* (in Šenoa's writing, it occurred almost seventy years earlier) is also indirect evidence that the legend was perhaps even older than Krčelić's testimony, and of its possible oral transmission. This is indirectly confirmed by the story's echoes in Croatian literature.

*zagrebečkog biskupa* [The Life of the Blessed Gazotti Augustin, Bishop of Zagreb] (written the year before, in 1746). The tract was written anonymously, and was published at his own expense by the Zagreb canon Stjepan Putz (Krivošić 1978:203-204).

The legend about the founding of the City of Zagreb was published in the tract: because of a drought which had lasted for months, Bishop Kažotić led a procession through the city and its surrounding area. When he came to the site of today's Zagreb Cathedral, he struck a stick into the ground and an eternal and inexhaustible spring came forth for the well the people called Zagreb. This legend is an example of the continuity of oral transmission right up until this century.<sup>13</sup>

And to conclude: what do Krčelić's writings about the 18th century mean to us today in the research of oral literature? His chronicle *Annuae* — with all due respect to the historical discourse — is the sole and thus the inescapable chronicle of the everyday life, of the informal conversations shaped into stories, the rumours, and the gossip of his time. In this respect, Krčelić is a modern observer — even according to today's rules on research into oral literature.

---

<sup>13</sup> Krčelić presents in his *History of Zagreb Cathedral* (1994:121); see echoes in contemporary oral utterances in: Marks 1994:9-14, 51, 54-56).

## REFERENCES CITED

- Bošković-Stulli, Maja. 1963. *Narodne pripovijetke*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska - Zora. (Pet stoljeća hrvatske književnosti, Vol. 26)
- Bošković-Stulli, Maja. 1978. *Usmena književnost*. Zagreb: Liber - Mladost, 7-353, 641-651. (Povijest hrvatske književnosti, Vol. 1)
- Bošković-Stulli, Maja. 1987. *U kralja od Norina. Priče, pjesme, zagonetke i poslovice Neretve*. Edited in collaboration with Z. Rajković. Metković - Opuzen: SIZ za kulturu općine Metković - OSIZ u oblasti kulture Opuzen.
- Bošković-Stulli, Maja. 1997. *Usmene pripovijetke i predaje*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska. (Stoljeća hrvatske književnosti)
- Bošković-Stulli, Maja. 1997a. *Priče i pričanje*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska. (Stoljeća hrvatske usmene proze)
- Horvat, Rudolf. 1992. *Prošlost grada Zagreba*. Zagreb: August Cesarec & ATLANTIC Paper.
- Hrvatski biografski leksikon*. 1998. R, E.Gm. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 191-193.
- Jerand, D. 1935. *Šetnja Zagrebom pet dana. Povijesne crtice*. Zagreb: Tisak zaklade tiskare Narodnih novina.
- Kekez, Josip. 1987. *Usmeni-pisani književni suodnosi. Izbor rasprava i ogleda*. Nikšić: NIO - Univerzitetska riječ.
- Krčelić, Baltazar Adam. 1747. *Življenje blaženoga Gazotti Augustina, zagrebečkoga biskupa, iz vnogeh skup izebrano, i na peldu, i pobožnost, proti bl. biskupu po nekojem nevrednom ove biskupije mešniku, i stolne zagrebečke cirkve kanovniku z dopušćenjem poglavarov očivesto domorodcem vučinjeno*. Zagreb.
- Krčelić, Baltazar Adam. 1952. *Annuae ili historija (1748-1767) [Annuae sive historia ab anno inclusive 1748 et subsequis 1767] ad posteritatis notitiam*. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti.
- Krčelić, Baltazar Adam. 1994. *Povijest stolne crkve zagrebačke*. Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest.
- Krivošić, Stjepan. 1978. "Baltazar Adam Krčelić (1715-1778)". *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 375:107-229.
- Marks, Ljiljana. 1994. *Vekivečni Zagreb*. Zagreb: AGM.
- Marks, Ljiljana. 1996. "Zagrebačka usmena tradicija između ljubavi i politike". *Narodna umjetnost* 33/2:357-380.
- Nemec, Krešimir. 1994. *Povijest hrvatskog romana od početaka do kraja 19. stoljeća*. Zagreb: Znanje.
- Nemec, Krešimir. 1998. *Povijest hrvatskog romana od 1900. do 1945. godine*. Zagreb: Znanje.
- Premrl, Nada. 1974. "Ples kao oblik društvenog života u prošlosti Zagreba". *Iz starog i novog Zagreba* 5.

- Smičiklas, Tadija. 1901. *Balthasari Adami Kerchelich, Annuae 1748-1767*. Zagreb: MSHSM. (Vol. 30)
- Stari i novi Zagreb*. 1925. E. Laszowski, ed. (Vol. I.: 1, 2, 3-4, 5, 6, 7-8, 9-10)
- Šenoa, August. 1934. *Diogenes*. Antun Barac, ed. Zagreb: Binoza.
- Šenoa, August. 1934a. *Članci i kritike (Pabirci o crkvi svetoga Marka)*. Antun Barac, ed. Zagreb: Binoza.
- Tomić, Josip Eugen. 1894. *Za kralja — za dom I. (Pretorijanac)*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska.
- Tomić, Josip Eugen. 1895. *Za kralja — za dom II. (Žrtve zablude)*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska.
- Vanino, Miroslav. 1969. *Isusovci i hrvatski narod, I. Rad u XVI. stoljeću. Zagrebački kolegij*. Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut Družbe isusove u Zagrebu.
- Zagorka, Marija Jurić. 1963. *Grička vještica: Vol. 1. Tajna Krvavog mosta; Vol. 2. Malleus maleficarum; Vol. 3. Suparnica Marije Terezije; Vol. 4. Dvorska kamarila*. Zagreb: Stvarnost.
- Zagorka, Marija Jurić. 1989. *Kéi Lotrščaka. Čarobna priča o Manduši zlatokosoj i postanku slavnog kraljevskog grada na sedam kula*. Zagreb: Mladost.

## BALTAZAR ADAM KRČELIĆ: KRONIČAR SVAKIDAŠNJICE

### SAŽETAK

U *Annuaama* (1748-1767) B. A. Krčelića nalaze se i relativno brojni primjeri usmenih predaja. Izrastaju iz povijesnih događaja (koji su im ujedno i kontekst), stvarnih onodobnih događanja, kojima je sam Krčelić nerijetko svjedokom te je evidentan autobiografski diskurs. Žanrovski su to šaljive priče, predaje: mitske (o javljanju mrtvih, o vragu, vampirima, o letećoj vojsci), povijesne (zakopano blago), legende (o čudesnom spasenju slike Majke Božje Kamenite) te glasine i istiniti doživljaji. Ti su tekstovi bili rijetko prisutni u proučavanjima hrvatske usmene i pisane književnosti jer su napisani na latinskome jeziku i tek su 1952. prevedene na hrvatski.

Tekstovi se analiziraju u prepletanju s povijesnim događajima o kojima svjedoče te s aspekta suvremenih proučavanja usmene proze; uspoređuju se s ovodobnim tematski podudarnim zapisima usmenih predaja iz Hrvatske; razmatra se i njihova recepcija u hrvatskoj književnosti.

Ključne riječi: usmena tradicija, svakidašnjica, 18. stoljeće