

Sermons Against the Carnival in Popular Literary Text of Croatian Calendars

Summary

The attitude towards the carnivals in 19th century Croatian calendars ranged from condemnation of carneval gaiety and immoderation to descriptions that appear in the second half of the 19th century and at the turn of the 20th century where carneval customs are described in a tendency to preserve the aspects of folk life of a specific region and greater national community. In the period of the Illyrian Revival carnivals were an occasion for manifestation and awakening of a national identity.

In the mid-19th century, observation of changes in carneval customs leads to an idealization of the earlier order and harmony. Changes cause concern for authors, for they perceive them as the consequence of a difficult political situation and a further cause for weakening of the sense of national identity.

The study analyses popular calendar texts, in verse and prose, in which carnivals are described and conedmned with great severity as a source of immorality. Readers are invited to activate virtues to counteract the carnival enemy. Condemnation of the carnival provides an opportunity to attack new customs and new fashions, and thus calendar texts preserve interesting data, for example on fashion, dance and the consequences of carneval merrymaking. The occasion for severe criticism were balls held for adults and children ["Bal and kinderbal"], and the goal of the attack were women as the source of social weaknesses and vices.

In the conclusion it is stated that the popular author and publisher of the calendar, with the intent of communicating this lesson to those who are exposed to the harmful consequences of carneval excesses, used those very popular literary forms that are characteristic for carneval days, including: joking papers, wills, advertisements, death notices and unambiguous attractive titles; in other words he was trying to act not only with words against the carnival, but with carnivals against the carnival.

[Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursac]