

BAPTISMAL KINSHIP AND WEDDING WITNESSES IN THE PARISH OF DESNE AS FACTORS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS (1870-1875)¹

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This work is based on the analysis of the register of baptisms and weddings of the Desne parish in the Neretva Valley. Godparents' and wedding witnesses' relationships were analysed, godparents' for 1870 and 1871, and wedding witnesses' for the period from 1870 to 1875. By analysing the data, it was tried to be determined whether those relationships were used as social network links or as a means of better positioning within the community. The study is based on the analysis of the number of godparents and their sex structure, on the interval between the birth of the children and their baptism, on the correspondence of the children's and godparents' names and surnames, on the number of multiplied godparents, on the comparison between the godparents' and children's parents' jobs as well as on the places where children and godparents lived. In the case of weddings, the number and sex of wedding witnesses, correspondence of the children's and wedding witnesses' names and surnames, multiplied wedding witnesses' and the places where spouses and wedding witnesses lived were analysed.

Keywords: baptismal kinship, wedding witnesses, the parish of Desne, social networks, family relationships

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of research on social networks², both in the scientific and broader community. Some of the studies concern family relationships as an essential fundamental part of society. That is because socialisation is an important determinant of the family, which reveals the family as an open system in interaction with the environment.³

The study of social networks in the context of godparents' and wedding witnesses' relationships was conducted during the postgraduate program *History of population* at the University of Dubrovnik. The project named "Analysis of Demographic Trends and Social Networks in the 17th and 18th Century" comprised about a dozen settlements and parishes all over Croatia. One of these research areas is the Desne parish in the Neretva Valley. The primary resource for this study was the parish register of the Desne parish, specifically, the register of baptisms from 1865 to 1879 and the register of weddings from 1858 to 1884.⁴ The study aimed to determine, by analysing godparents' and wedding witnesses' relationships, whether and how those relationships played a part in creating and/or maintaining social networks in the territory of the Desne Parish.

About the Desne Parish

Desne is a settlement on the right bank of Neretva and was, as far as it is known, first mentioned in 1361 under the name *Desna*.⁵ During the 16th century, it was formally under the jurisdiction of the Podjezerje parish, but in reality, the Franciscans from Ljubuški served as pastors to the believers until 1563. When the Ottomans destroyed their monastery, Franciscans from Zastrog assumed their function. Desne belonged to the Vid parish from 1720 to 1735, with its centre in Borovci, and then became a part of the newly created parish Borovci. A bishop from Makarska, Stjepan Blašković, founded the par-

² In the context of population, the term "social network" was first used by American-British social anthropologist John Arundel Barnes in 1954. John Arundel Barnes, "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish", *Human Relations* 7 (1954): p. 39.

³ Nino Žganec, "Obitelj – socijalna mreža – socijalni rad" [Family – Social Network – Social Work], *Društvena istraživanja: časopis za opća društvena pitanja* 4 (1995), no. 4-5 (18-19): 504.

⁴ *Matične knjige krštenih župe Desne (1865-1879)* [Register of Baptism of the Desne Parish (1865-1879)], hereinafter *MKKŽD (1865-1879)* and *Matične knjige vjenčanih župe Desne (1858-1884)* [Register of Weddings of Desne Parish (1858-1884)], hereinafter *MKVŽD (1858-1884)*.

⁵ Domagoj Vidović, "Ojkonimija Neretvanske krajine" [Oikonymy of Neretva Region], *Croatia et Slavica Iadertina* 9 (2013): 10.

ish Desne-Rujnica in 1760, and in 1863, the parish was renamed as Desne-Bagalovići.⁶ Finally, in 1921 an independent parish Desne was founded.

In the period considered by this work, and according to 1869 census data, the census unit Desne covered the entirety of the Desne parish, while the next census from 1880 divided the parish into Bagalovići and Desne, which included ten smaller hamlets: Kuće, Marevine, Masline, Strimen, Šišin, Golemc, Hrnjaci, Modro Oko, Na Rujnici and Seline, Krvavac, Momići and Matijevići, Podrujnica with a part of Bobalj, and Vrh Desne.⁷

In the year 1869 Desne had 1,257 residents, and in 1880 only 744 residents⁸ (Table and Graph 1). Desne lost 59.19% of its residents in that period of time. Following those years, the population varied decade after decade, and the last census from 2021 shows that Desne had only 111 residents (Table and Graph 1).

Table 1. The population of the Desne parish (1857-2021)

Year	Population
1857	1,056
1869	1,257
1880	744
1890	831
1900	972
1910	1,163
1921	726
1931	753
1948	627
1953	593
1961	499
1971	298
1981	222
1991	197
2001	130
2011	90
2021	111

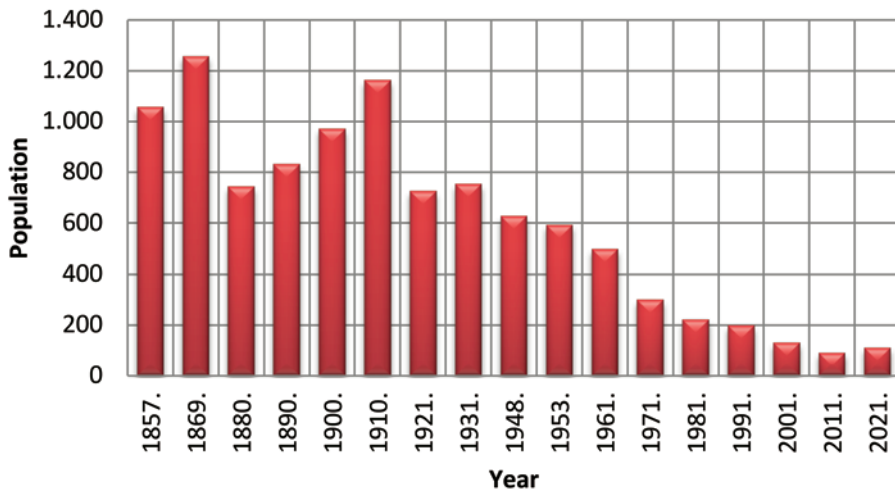
Source for Table 1 and Graph 1: Settlements and Population of the Republic of Croatia between 1857 and 2021 (Zagreb: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, CD)

⁶ Vjeko Vrčić, *Neretvanske župe [Neretva parishes]* (Metković: vlastita naklada, 1974), p. 12.

⁷ Mirko Korenčić, *Naselja i stanovništvo Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (1857-1971)* [*Settlements and Population of Socialist Republic of Croatia (1857-1971)*], (Zagreb: Djela JAZU 54, 1979), pp. 408-413; Inge Bego-Matijević, Žarko Dugandžić and Anđelko Akrap, "Tranzicija mortaliteta: Stanovništvo Desne na Neretvi (1870-1880)" [*Mortality transition: Population of Desne on the Neretva (1870-1880)*], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 47 (2009): 196.

⁸ *Naselja i stanovništvo Republike Hrvatske 1857.-2001.* [*Settlements and Population of the Republic of Croatia between 1857 and 2001*] (Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske, CD)

Graph 1. Population trends of the Desne parish (1857-2021)



The Catholic Church as the Origin of the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage

A major turning point within the Catholic Church occurred at the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The sacraments of baptism and marriage constituted some of the important issues raised by the Council. All over Europe, and especially in Italy, the previous practice had been that three or more godparents would have been present at the baptism. The directives of the Council aimed to standardize the number of godparents, a maximum of two, as well as the sex of godparents, one male and one female.⁹ With the reduction of the number of godparents, the social networks created under the influence of baptismal kinship became less complex while still retaining an important impact on society.¹⁰ That is because the choice of godparents was oftentimes associated with certain privileges, whether for the child or its parents. Therefore, for instance, Benjamin David Paul considers that the choice of godparents reflects two types of relations: *intensive godparent relations*, and *extensive godparent relations*.¹¹ According to Paul, intensive reflection occurs when the godparents

⁹ Guido Alfani, Vincent Gourdon and Agnese Vitali, "Social customs and demographic change: The case of godparenthood in Catholic Europe", *Working Paper* 40 (2011): 485.

¹⁰ Guido Alfani, *Fathers and Godfathers: Spiritual Kinship in Early-Modern Italy* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), pp. 85-86.

¹¹ Benjamin David Paul, *Ritual Kinship, with Special References to Godparenthood in Middle America*. Unpublished thesis. University of Chicago, 1942, 56-58; Ariana Viočić-Koprivec and Nenad Vekarić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi katolika u Dubrovniku (1870-1871)" [Godpar-

are selected within the family circle to strengthen relations between relatives. In contrast, extensive reflection entails the choice of godparents outside the family circle to further expand social ties. Furthermore, according to Paul, the choice of godparents takes place according to a horizontal or vertical paradigm. The horizontal paradigm entails the selection of godparents belonging to the same social strata, while the vertical paradigm refers to the selection of godparents belonging to different social strata.¹² The issue of baptism, as a fundamental Christian sacrament, was significant to the broader community throughout history. For some, it was a social custom, for some, a non-binding sign of belonging to the community, and to others, a type of magical act of releasing the person from the devil's influences of evil and power, while for the believers it was a sign of belonging to God, and by extension, the sign of association with God, binding people to the Christian life.¹³

The role of godparents changed throughout history, and godparents either represented or took the place of the baptized child's parents at baptism, i.e. they were its "spiritual parents".¹⁴ In the 16th century Dubrovnik, it was customary for the first male child to be named after his paternal grandfather. The child would also have up to ten godparents from various social classes, from priests to homeless people.¹⁵ There is a recorded case of Andrija de Pozza, who was one of the few not to succumb to the fashion at that time, as he picked close family members or friends as godparents.¹⁶ According to the research conducted by Dinka Alaupović-Gjeldum in the territory of the Imotski Region and Western Herzegovina from the end of the 19th century until World War II, it is evident that the baptisms of children were most frequently performed on the first Sunday or the day after birth. A male child would have a godfather, and a female child would have a godmother. It was often the case

ents and Marriage Witnesses of the Catholics of Dubrovnik (1870-1871)], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 54/2 (2016): 330.

¹² B. D. Paul, *Ritual Kinship*, pp. 56-58; A. Violić-Koprivec and N. Vekarić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi" [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses]: 330.

¹³ Ante Mateljan, "Aktualnost sakramenta krštenja" [Actuality of the Sacrament of Baptism], *Služba Božja: liturgijsko pastoralna revija* 57 (2017), no. 1: 24.

¹⁴ This is reinforced by the Croatian terminology – the term "kum" derives from the Latin term "compater", meaning – father or second father, and the word "kuma" derives from the term "commater", meaning – mother or second mother. See: Ante Crnčević and Ivan Šaško, *Pred liturgijskim slavljem [Before the Liturgical Feast]* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za liturgijski pastoral, 2011), p. 64.

¹⁵ Zdenka Janeković Römer, "Obiteljska knjiga Andrije Antojeva de Pozza (1569-1603)" [The Family Records of Andreas de Pozza (1569-1603)], in: *Med srednjo Evropo in Sredozemljem: Vojetov zbornik* (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC; ZRC SAZU, 2006), p. 492.

¹⁶ Z. Janeković Römer, "Obiteljska knjiga Andrije Antojeva de Pozza" [The Family Records of Andreas de Pozza], p. 492.

that godparents were the brothers or sisters of the baptised child's parents or some other relatives. Godparents were not considered relatives and baptismal kinship presented no marriage impediment.¹⁷

The Council of Trent brought a new era into the sacrament of marriage and with it, more structure into the proceedings. That is because, amongst other things, wedding witnesses had been discussed as indispensable factors of the sacrament of marriage at the Council. According to the Council's directives, a marriage was valid only if it was performed in front of a priest, in most cases a pastor, and in front of two witnesses, that is, *wedding witnesses*.¹⁸ All the details were supposed to be entered into registers of weddings which pastors were required to keep from then on. The Catholic Church adhered to those designations until the 19th century. At that time, in many European Countries, e.g. Belgium and the Netherlands, civil marriages preceded canonical marriages. Civil marriage was important because of legal and property relations and the legal recognition of children. It was often the case that up to four wedding witnesses were present at those weddings.¹⁹ However, women could not be wedding witnesses until the end of the 19th century, when the rule changed, at first in France in 1897 and then in Belgium in 1908.²⁰

The Number and Sex Structure of Children Born and Their Godparents in the Desne Parish (1870–1871)

In the period considered, there were 101 children born in the Desne Parish; in 1870, 63 children were born, and in 1871, 38 were born. The annual birth rate in 1870 amounted to 50.12%, and in 1871 to 30.55%.²¹ Of the total number of children born, there were 51 women (50.49%) and 50 men (49.50%)

¹⁷ Dinka Alaupović-Gjeldum, "Običaji životnog ciklusa u Imotskoj krajini i zapadnoj Hercegovini, od konca XIX. stoljeća do drugog svjetskog rata" [Life Cycle Customs in the Region of Imotski and Western Herzegovina from the End of the 19th Century to World War II], *Etnologica Dalmatica* 8 (1999): 154.

¹⁸ During its twenty-fourth session held on 11 November 1563, the Council laid down by decree *Tametsi* that weddings should be public, performed "before the face of the Church", with a priest's blessing, following three announcements and in the presence of two or three witnesses, and that they should be entered into the register of weddings.

¹⁹ Camille Berteau, Vincent Gourdon and Isabelle Robin-Romero, "Trois siècles de parrainages à Aubervilliers: de la Réforme catholique au temps des banlieues industrielles", in: *Le Parrainage en Europe et en Amérique: Pratiques de longue durée XVIe -XXIe siècles* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 39.

²⁰ C. Berteau, V. Gourdon and I. Robin-Romero, "Trois siècles de parrainages": 68.

²¹ I. Bego-Matijević, Ž. Dugandžić and A. Akrap, "Tranzicija mortaliteta" [Mortality Transition]: 204.

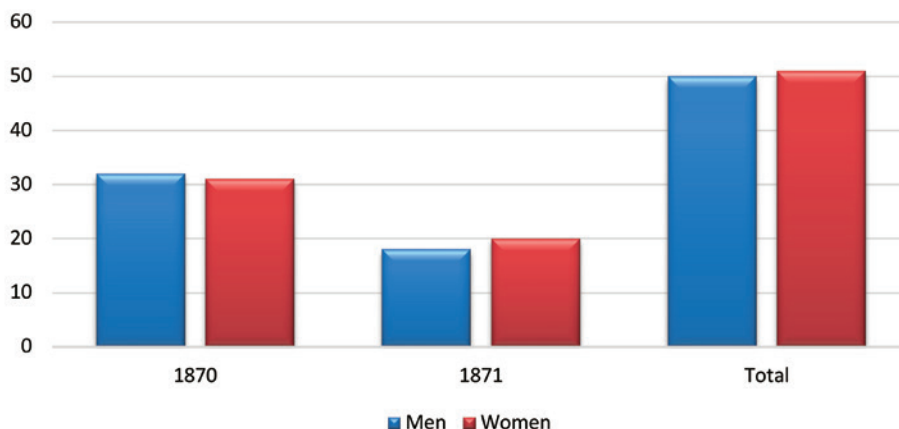
(Table 2 and Graph 2). The sex ratio between male and female children at birth amounted to 265:259 in the period from 1870 to 1880; that is, 1,023 males per 1,000 female children.²²

Table 2. The number and sex structure of children born in the Desne Parish (1870–1871)

Year	The number of children born			The proportion of women (%)
	Total	Men	Women	
Total	101	50	51	50.49
1870	63	32	31	49.2
1871	38	18	20	52.63

Source for Tables 2-12 and Graphs 2-6: *MKKŽD (1865-1879)* and *MKVŽD (1858-1884)*.

Graph 2. The sex structure of children born in the Desne parish (1870-1871)



By analysing the register of births, it is evident that most baptised children had two godparents. One hundred ninety-two godparents were entered for 101 baptised children, which amounts to an average of 1.9 godparents per child (Table 3). This represented a higher proportion than in the surrounding settlements. For example, in Dubrovnik, there were 167 children born in the same period, and they had 295 godparents, amounting to an average of 1.77 godparents per child.²³ According to the study by Daria Vučijević and Ivana

²² I. Bego-Matijević, Ž. Dugandžić and A. Akrap, “Tranzicija mortaliteta“ [Mortality Transition]: 205.

²³ A. Violić-Koprivec and N. Vekarić, “Krsni i vjenčani kumovi“ [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses]: 331.

Lazarević, 152 children were baptised in Blato on Korčula in 1870, and in the Pupnat parish on Korčula, 104 children were baptised from 1870 to 1875. Most children there also had two godparents.²⁴ In the neighbouring country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the 19th century, it was customary for a male child to have a godfather at baptism and for a female child to have a godmother.²⁵ There are records of a very interesting custom on the island of Brač during the 19th century. There, the midwife carried the child to baptism and was accompanied by two godfathers and one godmother, regardless of the sex of the child.²⁶

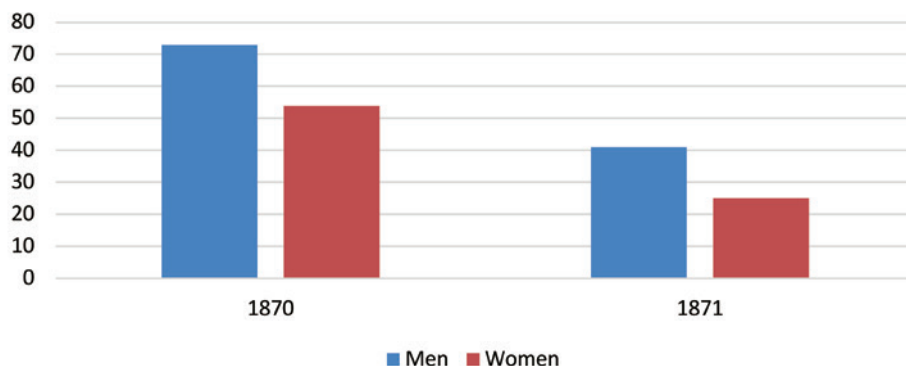
Table 3. The sex structure of godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)

Year	The number of godparents			
	Total godparents	Men	Women	The proportion of women (%)
Total	192	113	79	41.14
1870	127	73	54	42.51
1871	66	41	25	37.87
The average number of godparents per child	1.9			
Year	The number of male children's godparents			
	Total male children	Godfathers	Godmothers	The proportion of women (%) (godmothers)
Total	50	70	24	25.53
1870	32	44	20	31.25
1871	18	26	4	13.33
Year	The number of female children's godparents			
	Total female children	Godfathers	Godmothers	The proportion of women (%) (godmothers)
Total	51	44	55	55.55
1870	31	29	34	53.96
1871	20	15	21	58.33

²⁴ Daria Vučijić and Ivana Lazarević, "Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli u drugoj polovici 19. stoljeća" [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 56 (2018), no. 2: 484.

²⁵ Nikola Buconjić, *Život i običaji Hrvata katoličke vjere u Bosni i Hercegovini* [Life and Customs of the Croats of Catholic Faith in Bosnia and Herzegovina] (Sarajevo: Tiskom i nakladom Daniela A. Kajona, 1908), pp. 62-63.

²⁶ Josip Miličević, "Narodni život i običaji na otoku Braču" [Folk Life and Customs on the Island of Brač], *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku* 11-12 (1975): 426.

Graph 3. The sex structure of godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)

The Time from Birth until Baptism and Emergency Baptism

The interval between birth and baptism in the Desne parish was short in the period considered. Most frequently the children were baptised on the sixth day after birth, of which 15 cases were recorded (15.46%). In general, the highest number of children were baptised in the period between the seventh and 30th day after the birth, 34 of them (35.05%). There were some exceptions, and two children were baptised in the interval from 30 to 90 days after the birth, while two were baptised in the interval even from 90 to 180 days after the birth (Table 4). However, even the register of births of the Desne parish attests to the convention of short intervals between birth and baptism, similar to those in surrounding Catholic communities. For example, in Blato and Pupnat on Korčula, the highest number of children were baptised within seven days from their birth.²⁷ In Dubrovnik, in 1770, children were baptised on average two days after their birth.²⁸ In the Imotski region, Western Herzegovina and the island of Brač, baptisms were mainly performed a week after birth.²⁹ In Montenegro, the Archdiocese of Bar, during the 18th and 19th cen-

²⁷ D. Vučijević and I. Lazarević, “Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli” [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula]: 487.

²⁸ Vedran Stojanović and Nella Lonza, “Krsna kumstva u Dubrovniku 18. stoljeća: djeca, roditelji i kumovi kao čvorovi društvenih mreža” [Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik: Children, Parents and Godparents as Knots of Social Networks], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 54 (2016), no. 2: 302-303.

²⁹ D. Alaupović-Gjeldum, “Običaji životnog ciklusa” [Lifecycle Customs]: 149-168; J. Miličević, “Narodni život i običaji na otoku Braču” [Folk Life and Customs on the Island of Brač]: 399-400.

turies children were baptised immediately after birth, with the latest baptism being seven days after the birth.³⁰

In the period considered, the Desne parish recorded four baptisms on the day of the birth, performed in the presence of a midwife and in the danger of death, which constitutes 3.96% of the total number of baptised children. These baptisms concerned two pairs of twins who were in danger of death and had to be baptised as soon as possible.³¹ In cases of an emergency baptism, the children were baptised at home (*battezzato a causa del pericolo*), and those baptisms were performed *in via privata*. They were mainly performed by midwives, as they were the people who could, due to their experience, assess the risk to the child's life.³² In the Blato parish on Korčula, a total of 13 children, or 8.49%, were given an emergency baptism in 1870, while at the same time, from 1870 to 1875, there were only three emergency baptisms performed on Pupnat (2.88%).³³ In 1770 in Dubrovnik, out of 110 recorded baptisms of children, 15 were performed "by necessity" (13.64%).³⁴

³⁰ Ivan Jovović, "Matične knjige primorskih župa barske dijeceze do kraja 19. vijeka" [Registers of Birth of Coastal Parishes of the Diocese of Bar until the End of the 19th Century], *Matica crnogorska* 46-47 (2011): 311.

³¹ Two twin sisters, Lucia and Katarina Bebić, were born and baptised on the same day, 19 October 1870, due to being in danger of death. On 5 January 1871, twin brother and sister, Antonio and Katarina Đugum, were born and baptised.

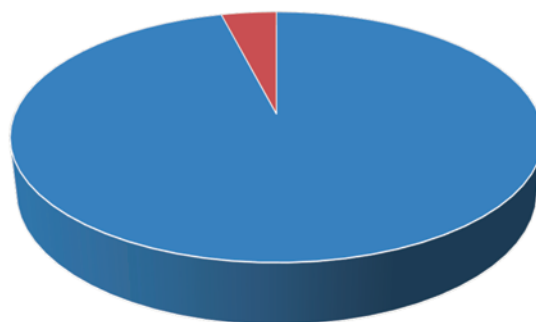
³² Maja Šunjić, "Prirodno kretanje stanovništva Komina na kraju 18. i u prvoj polovici 19. stoljeća" [Natural Population Trends in Komin At the End of the Eighteenth and in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 50 (2012): 369.

³³ D. Vučijević and I. Lazarević, "Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli" [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula]: 490

³⁴ V. Stojanović and N. Lonza, "Krsna kumstva u Dubrovniku 18. stoljeća" [Godparenthood in Eighteenth-Century Dubrovnik]: 10.

Table 4. The interval between birth and baptism and emergency baptism in the Desne Parish (1870-1871)

The interval between birth and baptism	The number of baptisms		Emergency baptisms	
	Total	Proportion	Total	Proportion
Total	97	96.04%	4	3.96%
1 day	4	4.12%	4	3.96%
2 days	7	7.21%	0	0.00%
3 days	9	9.27%	0	0.00%
4 days	8	8.24%	0	0.00%
5 days	6	6.18%	0	0.00%
6 days	15	15.46%	0	0.00%
7 days	13	13.40%	0	0.00%
from 7 to 30 days	34	35.05%	0	0.00%
from 30 to 90 days	2	2.06%	0	0.00%
from 90 to 180 days	2	2.06%	0	0.00%

Graph 4. The proportion of regular and emergency baptisms in the Desne parish (1870-1871)

■ The proportion of regular baptisms ■ The proportion of emergency baptisms

The Names and Surnames of Baptised Children and Their Godparents

“The name of a person may point to religious affiliations or nationality, may speak of family relationships or serve as a way of indicating broader social relations; it can represent a specific intention or desire, express the need for protection from adversity and much more”;³⁵ i.e. *nomen est omen*.³⁶ The choice of available names was highly influenced by the patriarchal structure of the family, which could most prominently be seen in honouring the paternal grandfather by giving his name to his first grandson. The act was meant to preserve grandfather’s name from falling into oblivion. The subsequent children were most frequently given the names of their other grandfather and grandmother, godparents, uncles, and often, the name of the saint commemorated on the day of the child’s birth. Such practice was recorded in other communities, e.g. in Podgora (Makarska Riviera), where “the traditional denominational system always aims to express respect, outlining the contours of the patriarchal system of values and social ranking”.³⁷ In contrast, in the Vinišće parish, personal names were not inherited until the 20th century.³⁸

In the Desne Parish, it was not widespread to name the child after its parents, which was a common practice in the nearby Dubrovnik region.³⁹ Most frequently, children were given their parents’ names in cases where the father had died before the birth of the child or where the mother died after giving birth. The child was named after its father in 4.56% of the total number of cases, and after its mother in 4.53% of the cases. In the case of the child’s death, the next child of the same sex was given the same name. That custom

³⁵ Dubravka Božić Bogović, “Osobna imena u matičnim knjigama krštenih za naselja Draž i Popovac krajem 18. stoljeća” [Personal Names in Parish Baptismal Register of Zmajevac Parish of Croatian Settlement Podolje at the End of the 18th century], *Historical contributions=Historische Beiträge* 40 (2011): 178.

³⁶ The name is a sign – a Latin expression representing a belief that a name contains a powerful and symbolic magical connotation determining the life of its bearer.

³⁷ Nikola Anušić, “Tipologija otklona od imenske denominacije u Podgori u Makarskom primorju” [Typology of the Shift from the Traditional Denomination of Personal Names in Podgora and Makarsko Primorje], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 42 (2004): 307.

³⁸ Mladen Andreis, *Stanovništvo Vinišća: povijesna antroponomija do godine 1900*. [Population of Vinišće: Historical Anthroponomy until the Year 1900 .] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1998), p. 11.

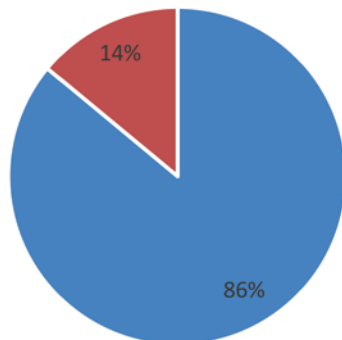
³⁹ Maja Šunjić, “Stanovništvo Rogotina na kraju 18. i u prvoj polovici 19. stoljeća na temelju matičnih knjiga i stanja duša” [The Population of Rogotin at the End of the 18th Century and in the First Half of the 19th Century on the Basis of Parish Registers and Status Animarum], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 45 (2007): 352.

was applied in other catholic communities and could be seen among other Catholic nations, e.g. Germans.⁴⁰ In some communities, naming the child after its godparents was customary. In the Desne parish, the number of children named after their godparents was insignificant. Of the total of 101 children born, 14 (13.86%) had a name corresponding to their godparents' name.

Table 5. The proportion of corresponding names between children and their godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)

Year	The number of children born			The number of godparents			The name of the child corresponding to its godparent's name			
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	The proportion of the total number (%)
Total	101	50	51	192	113	79	14	8	6	13.86
1870	63	32	31	127	73	54	11	6	5	17.46
1871	38	18	20	66	41	25	3	2	1	7.89

Graph 5. The proportion of corresponding names between children and their godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)



- The name of the child different from the name of the godparent
- The name of the child corresponding to the name of the godparent

⁴⁰ Robert Skenderović, "Analiza razvoja imenske formule u gradu Požegi i okolnim selima tijekom 18. stoljeća na temelju matičnih knjiga" [Analysis of the Development of the Family Name in Požega and the Surrounding Villages during the 18th century on the Basis of the Parish Records], *Scrinia Slavonica: Godišnjak Podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje Hrvatskog instituta za povijest* 1 (2002): 265.

By comparison, in the nearby Konavli, it was the members of the close family who were godparents to the first child. Often, they would be the wedding witnesses of the child's parents, grandparents, and mother's and father's siblings. Other children's godparents would most frequently be friends and neighbours. It was often the case that two different families would form a type of extended family by repeatedly selecting godparents among each other.⁴¹ In the parish Blato on Korčula, 15.13% of the baptised children were given the name corresponding to their godparents' name in the same period. In cases where children had been given two names, the first one usually corresponded to the name of one of their godparents. Furthermore, in the parish Pupnat on Korčula, 14.42% of the children had a name corresponding to one of their godparents.⁴²

In the territory of the Desne Parish, children were given common saintly names of the Christian provenance that began to be used more frequently after the Council of Trent. Saintly names replaced the traditional names used until the Council of Trent. That is because the Council recommended that children should be given saintly names, which is why the number and diversity of traditional names were reduced in favour of saintly names.⁴³ Milan Nosić believes that "the decision was harmful to the anthroponomy of Croatia because it forced Croatian traditional names out of use. The drying up of well of traditional Croatian names was supplemented by frequent abbreviations and suffixed biblical and saintly names".⁴⁴

A frequent choice of saintly names shows that the Desne parish cultivated a culture of names and that "from the end of the 18th century, Croatian population once again began to use traditional names as translations of saintly names."⁴⁵ A name of a saint would most commonly be chosen as the child's name so that "every year, on the name day of the saint, people would become aware of the importance of the name and the patron saint. It is thought that saints, as persons of importance, are strong advocates in front of God, and that their life should serve as an example to their namesake".⁴⁶ The register

⁴¹ Jovan Vukmanović, *Konavli [Konavli]* (Beograd: SANU, 1980), pp. 200-201.

⁴² D. Vučijević and I. Lazarević, "Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli" [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula]: 490-491.

⁴³ Petar Šimunović, *Hrvatska prezimena [Croatian Surnames]* (Zagreb: Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2006), p. 22.

⁴⁴ Milan Nosić, *Prezimena zapadne Hercegovine [Surnames of Western Herzegovina]* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filološko društvo, 1998), p. 15.

⁴⁵ Petar Šimunović, *Uvod u hrvatsko imenoslovlje [An Introduction to Croatian Onomastic]* (Zagreb: Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2009), pp. 147-148.

⁴⁶ Antun Jarm, *Imena i imendani – obiteljski imenar [Names and Name Days – the List of Family Names]* (Zadar: Hrvatski institut za liturgijski pastoral Zadar, 1996), p. 3; Niko Kapetanić and Nenad Vekarić, "Utjecaj kršćanstva na izbor osobnih imena u selima Dubrovačke

of the Desne parish records that children mostly had one name in the period considered. In the period considered, only three children in the Desne parish had two names.

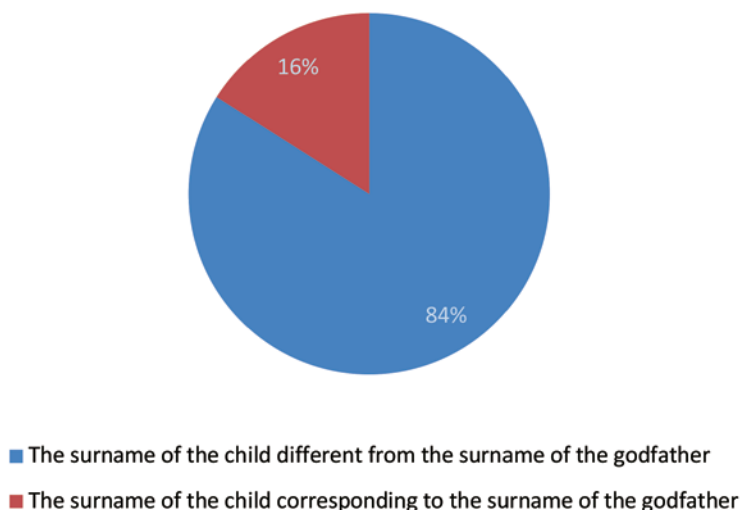
In the Desne parish, in 1870 and 1871, out of 101 total children born, 16 had the surname corresponding to the surname of one of their godparents. In the year 1870, ten children (9.99%) had a surname corresponding to their godparent's surname. It is evident that the same amount of respect was given to the father's and mother's sides of the family. In the year 1871, six children had the surname corresponding to the surname of their godparent, four of them had the surname corresponding to their godfather, and two to their godmother (Table 6).

Table 6. The surnames of children and their godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)

Year	The number of children born	The number of godparents	The surname of the child corresponding to the surname of the godparent			
	Total	Total	Total	Child's godmother	Child's godmothers	The proportion of total number (%)
Total	101	192	16	9	7	8.91
1870	63	127	10	5	5	7.94
1871	38	66	6	4	2	10.53

Republike“ [Christian Origin in First Names in the Villages of the Dubrovnik Republic], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 28 (1990): p. 145; Rina Kralj-Brassard, *Djeca milosrđa: napuštena djeca u Dubrovniku od 17. do 19. stoljeća* [Unwanted Maternity, Nationalized Paternity: The Abandoned Children in Dubrovnik from the Seventeenth to The Nineteenth Century] (Zagreb – Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2013), pp. 128-129.

Graph 6. The proportion of the correspondence between the surnames of children and their godparents in the Desne parish (1870-1871)



Multiplied godparenthood

The Desne parish also records multiplied godparenthoods. It was mainly the godfathers who had a higher number of multiplied godparenthoods. Of the total number of godfathers, 42 (37.17%) were godfathers only once, nine godfathers were godfathers twice (7.96%), and five (4.42%) had five or more multiplied godparenthoods. It is evident that three godfathers were very “popular”. For example, Luka Jovica was a godfather 20 times, Mate Delia 12 times, and Luka Jorić 11 times. Regarding godmothers, of 79 of them, 57 (72.15%) were godmothers once, nine were godmothers twice (11.39%), and one godmother was a godmother four times (1.27%). (Table 7).

Table 7. Multiplied godparenthood in the Desne Parish (1870-1871)

Year	Multiplied godparenthood											
	Godfathers						Godmothers					
	Total	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Total	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Total	113	42	9	0	0	5	79	57	9	0	1	0
Pro-portion (%)	100	37.17	7.96	0.00	0.00	4.42	100	72.15	11.39	0.00	1.27	0.00

Wedding Witnesses

At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Catholic Church, among other things, made provisions relating to keeping parish registers. Thus, at the 24th Council session (11 November 1563), a provision was made stating that all pastors were supposed to diligently keep and preserve records of baptised and married persons in their parish.⁴⁷ The sacrament of marriage was, thanks to the Church, the cornerstone of European demographic stability from the 11th century. Alongside canonical framework, regulations and protective measures (primarily relating to the protection of women and the indissolubility of marriage), the strategies of family survival, depending on both the relationship between spouses and external factors, were being developed.⁴⁸

In the eighth decade of the 19th century, an average groom in Desne entered into his first marriage when he was almost 28, while his partner was almost 25. The marriage age is relatively high, and its growth seems to be one of the symptoms of the ongoing transition. It is somewhat lower in rural Dubrovnik mainland regions and significantly lower on Dubrovnik islands, while still being higher than in Slavonia. The marriage rate in Desne amounted to 7.08% in the period considered.⁴⁹

The Number and Sex Structure of Wedding Witnesses

The Desne parish records 59 marriages from 1870 to 1875 in its register. Most weddings took place in November (26.67%). A little more than a third of weddings were conducted in October-November, about the same as in January-February, meaning that the autumn and summer wedding peaks were mostly even.⁵⁰ The situation was similar in the surrounding area; for example, in the Ravno parish in Herzegovina, where, in the 19th century, the most

⁴⁷ Ante Strgačić, "Inventar fonda matičnih knjiga Državnog arhiva u Zadru" [The Inventory of Registers of the State Archives in Zadar], *Arhivski vjesnik* 1 (1959): 486.

⁴⁸ Marija Mogorović Crljenko, *Nepoznati svijet istarskih žena. Položaj i uloga žene u istarskim komunalnim društvima: primjer Novigrada u 15. i 16. stoljeću* [Unknown World of Istrian Women. The Position and the Role of a Woman in Istrian Communal Societies: Example of Novigrad in the 15th and 16th Centuries] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2006), p. 205.

⁴⁹ I. Bego-Matijević, Ž. Dugandžić and A. Akrap, "Tranzicija mortaliteta" [Mortality Transition]: 215.

⁵⁰ I. Bego-Matijević, Ž. Dugandžić and A. Akrap, "Tranzicija mortaliteta" [Mortality Transition]: 210.

weddings took place in January (34.45%) and February (18.28%).⁵¹ In the register of the Betina parish on Murter from the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18 century, it was also established that the frequency of weddings in particular months depended on customs relating to the Catholic and agricultural calendar.⁵² In all Catholic communities, including Desne, solemn Nuptial Blessing could not be, except on special occasions, received in the season of Lent and Advent, and weddings mainly took place in the time of reduced economic activity (autumn and winter), especially in November. It is evident from parish records that in Desne two wedding witnesses were mainly present at weddings in the period considered.⁵³ For 59 weddings, 108 wedding witnesses were recorded, which amounts to an average of 1.83 wedding witnesses per wedding (Table 8).

Table 8. The number and sex structure of wedding witnesses in the Desne Parish (1870-1871)

Year	The number of weddings	Wedding Witnesses		The average number of wedding witnesses per couple
		Total	Proportion (%)	
Total	59	108	100	1.83
1870	13	26	24.07	2.00
1871	8	14	12.96	1.75
1872	12	16	14.81	1.33
1873	8	16	14.81	2.00
1874	6	12	11.11	2.00
1875	12	24	22.22	2.00

The Surnames of Spouses and Wedding Witnesses

Like baptisms, weddings presented an important ceremony for all Catholic families. Wedding witnesses were carefully selected among family members, friends and acquaintances. In the period considered, of 108 wedding witnesses in the Desne parish, 27 had a surname corresponding to one of the newlyweds;

⁵¹ Marinko Marić, *Stanovništvo Popova u Hercegovini: Ravno* [*Population of Popovo in Hercegovina: Ravno*] (Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2015), p. 138.

⁵² Kristijan Juran, "Građa iz dosad nepoznatih betinskih, prvičkih i tribunjskih glagoljskih matica i drugih spisa" [The Structure from, until Now Unknown, Glagolitic Registers and Other Documents in Betina, Prvić and Tribunj], *Čakavska rič* 31 (2003), no. 1-2: 133.

⁵³ Luka Ujdur and Mara Nikolić from Desne entered into marriage on 10 October 1871 – witnesses unknown.

that is, 24 (22.22%) to the groom and three (2.77%) to the bride (Table 9). It can be concluded that wedding witnesses often came from close or extended family, but that groom's family was given more respect in choosing. There are no records of marriages between relatives in the period from 1870 to 1880 in Desne.⁵⁴ If we compare the data from the Desne parish with its surroundings, it is apparent that in the parish of the City of Dubrovnik the correspondence between the surnames of the wedding witnesses and spouses is much rarer, i.e. it only occurred in 6.60% of the cases.⁵⁵ In Slavonian parish Drenovci, during the same period, one in ten wedding witnesses had a surname corresponding to the surname of one of the spouses (more often, the groom), which indicates that kinship between wedding witnesses and grooms was more common (10.44%) than between godparents and baptised children (2.83%).⁵⁶ In Blato on Korčula, 31.87% of the wedding witnesses' surnames corresponded to the surnames of the newlyweds, while in Pupnat the number amounted to 28.69%.⁵⁷

Table 9. The surnames of the newlyweds and their wedding witnesses in the Desne parish (1870/1875)

Year	The number of the newly-weds	The number of wedding witnesses	The surname of wedding witnesses corresponding to the surname of the groom or bride					
	Total	Total	Total	Groom	Brides	Pro-portion (%)	The proportion of surnames corresponding to the groom (%)	The proportion of surnames corresponding to the bride (%)
Total	59	108	27	24	3	25.00	22.22	2.78
1870	13	26	5	5	0	19.23	19.23	0.00
1871	8	14	4	3	1	28.57	21.43	7.14
1872	12	16	7	6	1	43.75	37.50	6.25
1873	8	16	4	3	1	25.00	18.75	6.25
1874	6	12	3	3	0	25.00	25.00	0.00
1875	12	24	4	4	0	16.67	16.67	0.00

⁵⁴ I. Bego-Matijević, Ž. Dugandžić and A. Akrap, "Tranzicija mortaliteta" [Mortality Transition]: 215.

⁵⁵ A. Violić-Koprivec and N. Vekarić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi" [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses]: 359.

⁵⁶ Ankica Džono Boban and Irena Ipšić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi u župi Drenovci (1870-1871)" [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses in the Drenovci Parish (1870-1871)], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 56 (2018), no. 2: 523.

⁵⁷ D. Vučijević and I. Lazarević, "Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli" [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula]: 497

The Occupations of the Newlyweds and Their Wedding Witnesses

Records in the register of weddings in the Desne parish confirm that Desne was a rural area in which the population mainly lived off agriculture. Even though the register is incomplete in that aspect because pastors didn't always enter the occupations of the newlyweds and their wedding witnesses, the trends and most occupations can be determined. Of the total of 59 newlyweds, 44 (74.57%) were labourers and only one (1.69%) was a landowner.⁵⁸ Of the total of 59 brides, 41 (69.49%) were labourers. Of the total of 108 wedding witnesses, 64 (59.25%) were labourers, one (0.92%) was a clerk⁵⁹, and one (0.92%) was a blacksmith⁶⁰ (Table 10).

Table 10. The occupations of the newlyweds and their wedding witnesses in the Desne parish (1870-1875)

Occupation	Men				Occupation	Women	
	Groom		Best man			Bride	
	Total	Proportion (%)	Total	Proportion (%)		Total	Proportion (%)
Total	59	100	108	100	Total	59	100
Labourer	44	74.57	64	59.25	Laborers	41	69.49
Clerk	0	0	1	0.92	0	0	0
Blacksmith	0	0	1	0.92	0	0	0
Landowner	1	1.69	0	0	0	0	0

Multiplied wedding witnesses

Of the 108 best men, only 11 appear twice, while 86 best men are mentioned only once (Table 11). Best men who acted in this capacity twice were: Nikola Krstičević, Grgo Kaleb, Stipan Batinović, Andrija Marević, Josip Margeta, Ante Đugum, Filip Nikolić, Ivan Ujdur, Nikola Kaleb, Ante Krstičević and Ante Dragović. Best men were selected according to the principle of affection or friendship, but not material status, as almost all were labourers. There was a wider variety of occupations in the parish of the City of Dubrovnik in

⁵⁸ On 12 April 1875, Nikola Vuletić, a landowner and widower from Opuzen, married Ljerka Bebić from Desne.

⁵⁹ On 17 February 1873, Klement Gabrić, a clerk from Metković, was a wedding witness at the wedding of Marko Tutavac from Slivno and Doma Krstičević from Desne.

⁶⁰ On 8 February 1875, Mate Kovačević, a blacksmith from Metković, was a wedding witness at the wedding of Ivan Rakić And Ružica Marević from Desne.

1870 and 1871. It is evident that multiplied wedding witnesses were of the same material status as the newlyweds, as they were most likely picked according to individual characteristics rather than the status itself.⁶¹ According to the study of wedding witnesses in Blato and Pupnat on Korčula in 1870 and 1871, it is evident that it was desirable to pick wedding witnesses from a higher class, i.e. among the most respectable residents. Therefore, a teacher from Blato was the best man 31 times, a landowner 12, and two merchants were the best men 7 times.⁶²

Table 11. Multiplied wedding witnesses in the Desne parish (1870-1875)

Multiplied wedding witnesses					
Wedding witnesses					
Total	1	2	3	4	5 or more
108	86	11	0	0	0

The Places of Origin of the Newlyweds and Their Wedding Witnesses

Of the total number of wedding witnesses in the register of weddings in the Desne parish, 82 have a corresponding place of origin entered, while that is not true for 26 of the wedding witnesses. Most wedding witnesses came from Desne (55.56%), while the others were from Metković (6.48%), Slivno (5.56%) and Borovci (3.70%). A single wedding witness came from Opuzen, Komin, Gradina, Rogotin and Blato, amounting to 0.93%. All the spouses had their place of origin entered into the register. The grooms were most frequently from Desne (76.27%), Metković (8.47%), Slivno (5.08%), Opuzen (3.38%), Borovci (3.38%), Rogotin (1.69%) and Gradina (1.69%). The brides were as well most frequently from Desne (86.44%), followed by brides from Slivno (5.08%), Metković (1.69%), Plina (1.69%) and Vid (5.08%) (Table 12). In the period considered, there are no records of wedding witnesses from the more remote places. This significantly deviates from the surrounding settlements; for example, in the same period, in the parish of the City of Dubrovnik, 62.26% of the grooms were immigrants from other regions, and 29.70% of the wedding witnesses were not from Dubrovnik.⁶³

⁶¹ A. Violić-Koprivec and N. Vekarić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi" [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses]: 364.

⁶² D. Vučijević and I. Lazarević, "Mreža kumova u Blatu i Pupnatu na otoku Korčuli" [The Network of Spiritual Kinship in Blato and Pupnat on the Island of Korčula]: 497

⁶³ A. Violić-Koprivec and N. Vekarić, "Krsni i vjenčani kumovi" [Godparents and Marriage Witnesses]: 365.

Table 12. The place of origin of the newlyweds and their wedding witnesses in the Desne parish (1870-1875)

The place of origin	Wedding witnesses		Grooms		Brides	
	Total	Proportion (%)	Total	Proportion (%)	Total	Proportion (%)
Total	108	100	59	100	59	100
Desne	60	55.56	45	76.27	51	86.44
Opuzen	1	0.93	2	3.39	0	0.00
Slivno	6	5.56	3	5.08	3	5.08
Metković	7	6.48	5	8.47	1	1.69
Komin	1	0.93	0	0.00	0	0.00
Borovci	4	3.70	2	3.39	0	0.00
Plina	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.69
Gradina	1	0.93	1	1.69	0	0.00
Rogotin	1	0.93	1	1.69	0	0.00
Blato	1	0.93	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vid	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.08
Unknown	26	24.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Conclusion

By analysing the godparents in the Desne parish in the period from 1870 to 1871, on a sample of 101 baptised children and 192 godparents, it was determined that the children most frequently had two godparents at their baptism, amounting to an average of 1.9 godparents per baptism. By analysing the sex structure, it is evident that the girls had a higher number of godmothers (55.55%), while the boys had a higher number of godfathers (74.47%). The interval between the birth and the baptism spanned from one day to 180 days, and the children were most frequently baptised in the interval between the seventh and the 30th day after the birth. By comparing the names and surnames of baptised children and their godparents, it was determined that 13.86% of the children had a name corresponding to their godparents, and 8.91% had a surname corresponding to their godparents. In the Desne parish, like in many other communities, there were desirable godparents, although the phenomenon was not particularly pronounced, as only five godparents acted in that role at five or more baptisms.

By analysing wedding witnesses during the five-year period considered, from 1870 to 1875, 108 wedding witnesses were recorded for 59 weddings, and all of them were men. On the basis of the surnames, it can be concluded that the best men mostly came from the family side of the groom, so that 22.22% had a surname corresponding to the surname of a groom and only 2.78% to

the surname of a bride. With respect to the social situation, the best men were mainly of the same social status as the newlyweds. Desirable best men were not particularly prominent, although 11 best men acted in that role twice. As with godparents, most wedding witnesses came from Desne (55.56%).

On the basis of complete results of analyses, it is evident that in the Desne parish, in the period considered, godparents' and wedding witnesses' relationships were based on the usual religious and customary norms, and that to a degree, although not decisively, they served as a factor and link in social networks. The closed nature of the rural community dictated that the godparents and wedding witnesses were picked from close and extended family, which led to the formation of so-called "extended families", which on the basis of mutual assistance, served as a means of relieving the difficult life in such a poor rural area.

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