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Christian beliefs and teaching in Fr. Zoricic's writings – linguistic and theological approach

Abstract

National cultural and religious heritage presents valuable repository of knowledge and wisdom. The article focuses on the understanding, classification and interpretation of Christian beliefs and the Gospel messages presented in the book of Fr. Zoricic (published in Venice 1780), whose theological thoughts were inspired and reinforced by various Italian and Latin writers of the time. The aim of this research is twofold: to preserve this rare spiritual book and to use it as a code of ethics. How was the dichotomy of good and evil presented in the Book? How did Zoricic describe Our Lady, God and the Body of Christ? To whom did he refer the most? To whom did he devote his writing? To be able to attempt answering these questions the Book was digitized, transcribed and transliterated.. On the basis of core terminology, extracted by natural language processing tool, a detailed linguistic analysis is provided.

Keywords

Christian beliefs, cultural and religious heritage, Zoricic, linguistic and theological approach.

1. Introduction

The cultural heritage of a people includes both tangible and intangible heritage through which the creativity of its creators and bearers is expressed in various

forms: literature, languages, beliefs, rites, customs, value system, music, game, dance, monuments, works of art etc. Due to globalization, cultural heritage is threatened by uniformity and stereotypes which can endanger the sustainable cultural diversity and richness of human society (e.g. loss of languages). The „intangible cultural heritage“ means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. Being compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development, the „intangible cultural heritage,“ is manifested inter alia in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship. Its „safeguarding“ means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage¹.

This research presents an interdisciplinary approach to theological thinking and beliefs expressed by Fr. Zoricic in his book *“A Mirror of Different Events or Selected Chapters [to Guide the Faithful Souls in the Way of Salvation]”* (1780). For the purpose of this research the book was digitized, transcribed and transliterated in order to conduct a detailed linguistic and theological analysis but also to preserve it. Being an essential part of the cultural, social and spiritual identity of the local community, the living culture of people offers authentic way of seeing, understanding and interpreting real-world phenomena. In this context, Fr. Zoricic’s book is a valuable resource of cultural and spiritual heritage of Dalmatian hinterland of the 18th century. This research aims to contribute to the

¹ UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH) <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention> (15.06.2015).

protection and transmission of spiritual heritage safeguarded by the digitized version of this book and its analysis.

2. Background

In 1780's, when the book was published, the Hungarian, German and Italian were the languages of official communication in the Croatian territory of the time, replacing Latin which was considered a neutral language of the educated classes allowing Croatian identity to sustain. In such multi-lingual and multi-ethnic context and imposed cultural and religious values by ruling foreign powers, the Illyrians favoured the *stokavian* dialect (spoken in Dalmatia) on which the Croatian language of today is based. Zoricic was born in Pakovo selo near Drnis, Dalmatia, in 1721. He entered the Franciscan Order in 1741 on a small island of Visovac. He was thought philosophy in Makarska and theology in Sibenik where he lately did his teaching service and died in 1783. He also wrote the first Croatian arithmetic textbook in the Illyrian language in 1766². Inspired by his Christian faith, love for his birthplace, language and people Zoricic wanted to provide a book to enlighten ordinary people that could not read Latin or Italian. In a very title of his book, Zoricic refers to the Illyrian language using an attributive adjective 'prominent' "*A Mirror of Different Events or Selected Chapters*" (*selected and translated from the various books into the prominent Illyrian language and brought it to light, the Order of Friars Minor, the followers of St. Francis, the Province of the Most Holy Redeemer, Dalmatia*). In the preface of his book, Zoricic refers to numerous Christian writings about a holy life, miracles or different events written by St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Anthony, Archbishop of Florence, Fr. Seraphin Razzi who wrote not in vernacular language. Thus, moved by love for his Illyrian people, Zoricic offered them selected chapters for their spiritual nourishment and teaching as the disciples of Jesus gathered the pieces of bread that left over in order to feed the poor and the needed.

² Adela Ptičar, *Prvi hrvatski računski priručnici Rasprave Instituta za hrvatski jezik jezikoslovlje*, 30 (2004), p. 173–179.

3. Linguistic Approach

The following subsections refer to the Book's description, digitization, transcription and transliteration, tools, methodology and language analysis.

3.1. Book's description

The book consists of a preface addressed to *Prudent and Honourable Reader*, 11 chapters describing 279 events and an index (256 pages in total).

The first chapter, *the Most Glorified Name of Jesus*, consists of 11 sections referring to the power of Jesus' name which heals the sick of hellfire, casts out devils, nourishes virtues, helps to avoid temptation to sin, provokes happiness, encourages conversion to Christian faith etc.

The second chapter, *the Sign of the Holy Cross*, consists of 28 sections describing the power of the Sign of the Holy Cross which defeats Devils, confers the gift of perfect chastity, presents a sovereign protection against magicians (sorcerers), protects against poison, hearts those who prevent others in making the Sign of the Holy Cross, saves those who honour and contemplate Christ's Passion, His Crucifixion and Five Holy Wounds etc.

The third chapter, devoted to *Our Lady*, consists of 73 sections depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary who saves the world, liberates a woman's son from captivity; protects a child from a wolf or a house fire; saves a Jewish child from oven fire; helps a Jewish woman to deliver a child; delivers a nun or an adulteress from sins, saves a dying man, sinner, thief, a painter or servant, heals the tongue of a priest or a blind heretic; re-attaches the hand cut of Saint John Damascene; saves a soul at the gate of Hell, resurrects a child killed by Jews, casts out devils, protects against lightening, recovers a tongue of student, saves a girl from the devil, appears to a great sinner etc.

The fourth chapter, devoted to the power of *Holy Water*, consists of 4 sections where the power of Holy Water prevents the devil to enter a drunk man or to touch a soldier sprinkled with holy water, makes a sinner humble etc.

The fifth chapter, referring to *the Baptism*, consists of 5 sections describing its power which heals a woman, causes deadly illness of Children not properly baptized in Holy faith, a female baby to utter her own name at baptism etc.

The sixth chapter highlights *the Holy Faith* and consists of (11) sections describing its power as in case of the celebrant who goes through the fire without being burned, a mountain that is moved from one place to another; a heretic

that becomes dumb rejecting the Holy faith, father Francis who goes through fire in front of soldier in Egypt, the Vandals that cut the tongues of all the people in a town but failed to make them speechless etc.

The seventh chapter, *Confession of Sins*, consists of (36) sections referring to the devil who hates Confession or disturbs a good confession, a bad confession of a female merchant, healing power of confession which delivered a woman, a devil's servant, drives temptation away, improves one's emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Some sections advise a reader to confess all sins and to make perfect act of contrition etc.

The eighth chapter, *the Body of Christ*, consists of (44) sections describing the unworthy receptions of the Body of Christ, animals recognizing and honouring the Sacred Host, testifying the power of the Eucharist by water, on a stone, the Devils' humbling and bowing down before the Body of Christ, conversion to the faith, punishment of those receiving Communion in the state of sin etc.

The ninth chapter, *the Holy Mass*, consists of (25) sections describing the power of the Holy Mass which includes punishment if celebrated in the state of sin, inattentively or healing, grace, happiness, salvation if celebrated properly. It also relieves and releases a soul from the torments of Purgatory, protects from lightening, liberates from slavery, saves a person from drawing, hanging, trap; heals from serious illness or the one born deaf and dumb etc.

The tenth chapter, *the Performance of penance*, consists of (11) sections referring to St. Peter's penance after he had denied Jesus; the one asked to perform a little penance or only the Our father prayer; the devils disturbing the completion of the assigned penance; the performance of the prescribed penance because of fear of death; the miraculous conversion of a sinner and a burial of a young man condemned to death etc.

The eleventh chapter, *the Purgatorial Torments*, consists of (31) sections describing the frightful torments of Purgatory; earthly suffering because of the fear of purgatorial torments; a brass candlestick melting in water; stay in Purgatory until the last judgement or 40 years because of laziness; suffering of purgatorial torments because of friendships with bad people, uncompleted ministry or penance etc.

3.2. Digitization

Digitization is the process of conversion of text, image or a signal to an image file made by a scanner. Converting information into digital format makes it easier

to access, process, share, and store. An optical character recognition (OCR) program analysis a text image in order to detect all alphabetic and numeric characters and convert them into ASCII code, the most common format for text file. For the purpose of this research a HP Scanjet G3110 scanner and ABBYY Fine Reader 12 Professional were used. OCR errors were inevitable. The most common spelling errors occurred in the digitization process were misrecognition of characters, incorrectly unified or separated words (missing whitespace, insertion of hyphen or whitespace). The most frequent OCR errors were space deletion, substitution and insertion errors. The following characters were inserted and evenly distributed throughout the text (&,<,\,>,{,%^,*;■,».,/,|,.)},«£,(;:; #,“,[,-,=), but different fonts, subscript, superscript, bolded or italicized particular characters or words were detected as well. A complete scanned text was manually post-edited. An extract of the scanned text, its conversion to word format, post-editing and translation into the English language are shown in Figure 1, 2, 3, and 4.

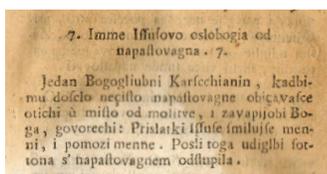


Figure1: Scanned text

7. Ime Isusovo oslobađa od napastovanja.7.

Jedan Bogoljubni Krščanin, kad bi mu došlo nečisto napastovanje običavaše otići u misto od molitve, i zavapijo bi Boga, govoreći: Prislatki Isuse smiluj se meni, i pomozì mene. Posli toga udilgi bi sotona s' napastovanjem odstupilà.

Figure 3: Post-edited text

7* ìmrne Iffufovo oslobogia od napastovngna.7.

Jedan Bogogliubni K irb ■ hianin , kadbk mu dofclo neçifto napallov ; ,ne oteçayafcô etichi ù milio od molitve, 1 / . tvapijobi Boga , govorechi: Prislaiiki Iffufe lmlilujfe menni, i pomozì menrse . Posii toga udiglbi (ottona s' napallovagnem oddupila.

Figure 2: Converted text

7. Jesus' Name Helps to Avoid Temptation to Sin.7.

In order to avoid temptation, a Christian faithful in showing his love for God would go to the place of prayer and implore God saying: The sweetest Jesus show mercy to me and help me! After that the Satan would give up.

Figure 4: Translated text

3.3. Transcription and transliteration

The automatic transcription of the text is not possible since the notation of phonemes in the 18th century Illyrian language was not standardized and differs significantly from the contemporary notation. The transformation of special characters is carried out following these rules:

- the characters “ù”, “à”, “ò” are replaced with equivalents in Croatian orthography “u”, “a”, “o”;
- bigrams: “gl”, “qu” and “gn” are transformed to digrams “lj”, “kv”, “nj” (*neprijategl-neprijatelj- enemy; Czirqua-Crkva-Church, znagna-znanja-knowledge*);
- doubled letters are transformed into single letters as follows: “çç”-”ç” (*reççe-reçe-says*), “ll”-”l” (*milloft-milost-grace*), “v”-”v” (*dilovvati-djelovati-act*), “bb”-”b” (*nebbesku-nebesku-heavenly*), “ff”-”f” or “s” (*veffeglie-veselje-joy*), (*uffati se-ufati se-rely on*) “tt”-”t” (*Sottona-sotona-satan*), “rr”-”r” (*virre-vire-faith*), “kk”-”k” (*akko-ako-if*), “mm”-”m” (*imme-ime-name*), “dd”-”d” (*viddi-vidi-see*), “nn”-”n” (*xenna-žena-woman*);
- bigrams: “sc”, “fc”, “ij”, “gh”, “cz” are transformed into single letters “s”, “s”, “c”, “g”, “c” (*scot-što-what, grifcnik-grišnik-sinner, bratja-braća-brothers, Bogh-Bog-God, sudacz-sudac-judge*);
- trigrams: “cch”, “chi” and “gli” are transformed into single letters “č”, “č” and bigram “lj” (*veccha-veća-bigger, chier-čer-daughter, Rimglianin-Rimljanin-Roman*);
- unigrams: “f”, “x”, “g”, “y”, “z”, “c” are replaced with “s”, “ž”, “đ”, “i”, “s”, “k” (*pifmo-pismo-letter, xivot-život-life, Syn-Sin-Son, zdrugim-s drugim-with other, Sacramente-sakramente-Sacraments*).

Transliteration is particularly used for the processing of textual data as it consists in representing the characters of a given script by the characters of another, while making the process reversible. In this research unigrams, bigrams and trigrams were replaced by diacritics solving the problem of different number of characters between the alphabets of the two writing systems, the Illyrian and the Croatian language.

3.4. Tools and method

Statistically-based *WordSmith Tools 5.0 (WS)* developed by Scott, 2010 was used for monolingual extraction of all words of the Book. Based on ASCII or

ANSI text files, the word-list automatically generated in both alphabetical and frequency order aims to study the type of vocabulary used, to identify common word clusters (words found together in each other's company, sequentially), to get concordance of the selected words (words in their original contexts and text file), to carry out consistency analysis or to be used as input to the KeyWords programme which, analyses the words in a given text and compares frequencies with a reference corpus, in order to generate a list of "key-words". It is based on the assumption that keywords occur significantly more often in a domain-specific corpus than one would predict or expect on the basis

of their frequencies in a general language reference corpus (Scott, 2010). An attempt to generate the key-words list failed as the programme reported an error referring to the difference in languages (despite both word lists in the Croatian language being supported by the programme.

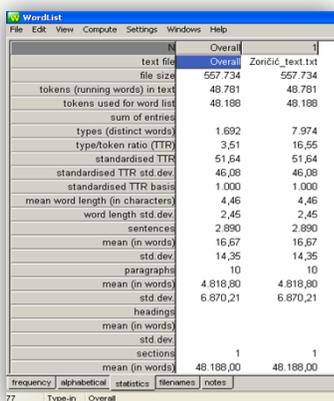


Figure 5: Word-list statistics

3.4.1. The word-list statistics

The word-list statistics (Figure 5), shows overall data referring to the file size (in characters), the number of running (tokens) and different (types) words in the text, type/token ratio, the number of sentences, paragraphs, word length etc. Automatically obtained word list consists of 1692 words as the frequency threshold was set to (≥ 4). Apart from the top ranking function words such as prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, pronouns etc. (*da-that, u-in, at, je-is, na-on, od-from*), the word list consists of the most frequent nouns and verbs such as: *grije-sins, dan-day, ispovidi-confess, odgovori-reply, Bog-God, misu-Mass, žena-woman, pokoru-penance, smrti-death, učini-do*, as shown in Figure 6.

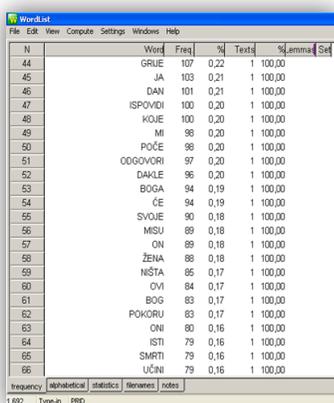


Figure 6: The most frequent nouns and verbs

3.4.2. Concordance list

As shown in Figure 7, the concordance list consists of 70 concordances i.e. examples of a given words in their contexts. Figure 8 presents concordance lines for word „grije“-sins. There are 297 co-occurrences of the word “Bog”-*God (God's judgement, mercy, vengeance, will, gift, truth, help, word, strength, comfort, kindness, forgiveness, goodness, justice, image, punishment; signs from God; God gives wisdom, blessing, does miracles, prevents death; Christian, real, the most merciful, almighty, living, Lord God; pray, celebrate, honour, confess to, turn to, praise, glorify, serve, worship, offend, invoke, rely on, bow down, believe in, enlightened, powered by God, kneel before God, give thanks to God, devote soul to God; curse, hand, love, city, servant of God etc.);*

the word *Marija – Mary – 196 (the Blessed Virgin Mary, Hail Mary, Mother of Marcy, the Mother of God, the Mother of the King of Heaven, the Mother of Jesus, Mary releases souls, comforts, appears in light, intercedes, keeps alive, makes haste to help, the Son of the B.V. Mary, servant of the B.V. Mary, beauty of the B.V. Marry, Altar of the B.V. Mary, the Church of the B.V. Mary, the power of Mary's name, devotion to the B.V. Mary, deny, praise, invoke the B.V. Mary, Mary the advocate, Mediatrix etc.);*

the word *‘Isukrst’ – Jesus Christ – 200 (Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, Little Jesus, the Sacramental Jesus, the Son of the Living God, the Lord J. Christ, the Crucifixion of J. Christ, the Passion of Christ, servant of J. Christ, the Name, Body, Faith, wounds, drop of blood of J. Christ, pray, deny, reject Jesus, the sweetest, dearest Jesus, Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ etc.);*

the word *“grije”- sins – 253 (unconfessed, same, great, horrible, mortal sin; polluted by sin; forgive, confess, hear, hinder, disclose, commit, fall into sin; cry, repent for the sins; turning to/from sins, safeguard from the sins; reject slavery of sin; sin of adultery, kinds of sins, remission of sin, pile of sins, illness of sins, sins committed after baptism, sins of the whole world; live, die in the state of sin, etc.);*

the word *“đava”-devil -178, Satan -72 (devil transforms himself into man, merchant, priest, salad; devil runs away, strangles, Satan transforms himself, laughs, lies, tempts, flatters, persuades, plays; Satan's deception, talk; obsessed, possessed by devil etc.);*

the words: *“muke” torments -111, “Purgatorij”- Purgatory-79, “pakao”- Hell-49 (the most excruciating, horrible, the greatest, bitterest, heaviest, frightful, dreadful, torments (pains, sufferings) of Purgatory, intensity, fear, severity of Purgatorial torments, release a soul from Purgatory, torments of cleansing*

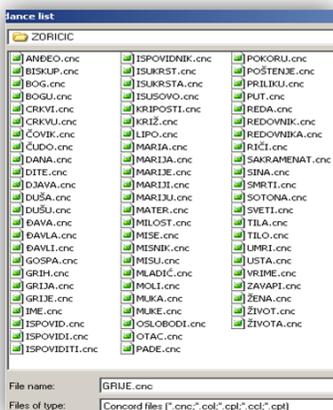


Figure 7: Concordance list



Figure 8: Concordance lines for word "grije"

and purification, go through Purgatory onto heaven, souls' stay in Purgatory, the pains of Hell, eternal Hell torments; lessen, see, undergo, suffer, contemplate, condemn (to) Purgatorial torments, etc.).

According to their frequencies, concordance of the word "Bog" - God has 297 concordance lines followed by the word "grije" -sins (253) which clearly indicate to the dichotomy between good and evil. Pre-and post-modifiers of the selected nouns (nouns preceded or followed by one or more words or phrases) are presented but also the most frequent verbs.

4. Theological Approach

In order to safeguard and to transmit the living culture of people worldwide (England, France, Germany, Austria, the Holy Land, Italy, Argentine, Turkey, Bohemia, Egypt, Dacia, Portugal) and referring to the years: 600, 1225, 1226, 1285, 1584, 1602, Zoricic offers an authentic way of seeing, understanding and interpreting real-world phenomena but also that of Dalmatian hinterland of the 18th century.

As defined by Catholic Encyclopaedia³, *belief* is "that state of mind by which it assents to propositions, not by reason of their intrinsic evidence, but because of authority". *Knowledge* is essentially the consciousness of an object, i.e. any element, fact, or principle belonging to the physical, mental or meta-physical order, that may in any manner be reached by cognitive faculties acting only by the energy of the soul.

In order to know, determine and discern good and evil, the book presents universal Christian beliefs referring to the power of Jesus' Name, the sign of

³ Catholic Encyclopaedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02408b.htm> (11.07.2015).

the Holy Cross, holy Water, the Baptism, the Holy Faith, Confession, the Body of Christ, the Holy Mass, penance, the Purgatorial torments and to our Lady to the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom the author refers the most. Synonyms for the noun *evil*⁴ are: profound immorality, wickedness, sin, corruption etc. *Sin*⁵ is defined as “an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbour caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as „an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law“.

The dichotomy of good and evil is presented contrasting faith to idolatry, sorcery; faithful to heretic, unfaithful, Jew; truth to lie, deception, theft, cheating, gossiping, false testimony; love to hate, jealousy, envy; forgiveness to revenge; generosity to selfishness; angel to demon, devil, Satan, Arab; life to death, sin, murder; Paradise to Hell, Purgatory; Heaven to suffering, torments, pains; diligence to laziness, negligence; virtue to vice; richness to poverty; power to humility; honesty to dishonesty; charity to greed, malice; moral life to evil thoughts, adultery, sexual immorality; freedom to slavery, drunkenness; friends to adversaries; prayer to curse, condemnation, punishment; gentleness to cruelty, crime; man (74) to woman (137) etc.

Our Lady is described as a beautiful woman wearing a stony dress, holding Her Son in Her arms, gifted with ravishing beauty by Her Son, venerated with a special cult, instrumental in calling Christ's attention to the need, assumed into heaven, entitled Queen by divine relationship with all three Persons of the Trinity, co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces nourishing each person with confidence, hope and salvation. The longest chapter devoted to Our Lady confirms Zoricic's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Her significance in life of each Christian faithful. Marian devotion has been deeply rooted in Croatian people and has traditionally played a significant role in the struggle for Croatian nationhood. Thus, numerous shrines, statues and pilgrimages nationwide indicate to thanksgiving offered to the Virgin Mary, often referred to as *Queen of the Croats*, an important indicator of Croatian religious and cultural identity. The cult of Mary is expressed with an extraordinary piety. However, in order to increase the worship of the Virgin Mary and highlight

⁴ Oxford Dictionary, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/evil> (11.07.2015).

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Article 8, Sin (1849).http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a8.htm (11.07.2015).

her role and place in the Ministry of Christ and the Church, Pope Paul VI promulgated Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*⁶, “Mary unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith” referring to her divine maternity, Immaculate Conception and Assumption, *Marialis Cultus*⁷, describing Mary as “the first and the most perfect of Christ’s disciples”, the best model for those who want fully to surrender to God’s love; Apostolic Constitution on the revised liturgy, *Missale Romanum*⁸, and Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*⁹ was drawn up by Pope John Paul II. Mary’s life can be interpreted as a life of any Christian woman on her pilgrimage of life to the eternal homeland. Faith is a way, walking, pilgrimage, challenges, temptations, questions, crosses and sufferings just as all of these elements are intertwined in Mary’s life.

“In John’s text, the description of the Cana event outlines what is actually manifested as a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say Mary’s solicitude for human beings, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs... Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. She puts herself “in the middle”, acting as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she „has the right“ to do so. Mary „intercedes“ for mankind.” The power of Mary’s intercession, her maternal care and salvific mission is thoroughly manifested and illustrated in the Book through all the events and phenomena where she promptly protects and comforts not only the faithful (a Christian, a Jew, a sinner, an adulteress, a thief, a blind heretic, adulterous nun, etc.) but also any God’s creature in necessity or danger (*Our Lady saved a bird from a hawk*).

The Book reflects the messages of hope, trust, comfort, faith, endurance and enthusiasm in today’s world of despair. “Every word of God proves true; he is

⁶ *Lumen Gentium*, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (13.07.2015).

⁷ *Marialis Cultus*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19740202_marialis-cultus.html (15.07.2015).

⁸ *Missale Romanum*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html (15.07.2015).

⁹ *Redemptoris Mater*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater.html (15.07.2015).

a shield to those who take refuge in him” (Proverbs 30:5)¹⁰. These messages are particularly important to the family and the young due to the fact that the concept of family changed and the young challenged by the economic and technological progress often live a distracted life in which faith in God, human dignity, a sense of responsibility, morality, tolerance, respect etc. are easily neglected or forgotten. The book also highlights values aiming at benevolence (preserving and enhancing the welfare of mankind), tradition (respect and safeguarding of cultural and religious heritage) and humbleness (Mary’s fiat) in order to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ. Mary as Mother of mankind is represented as the Model of the living, a living catechism and an example of the one who obeys, learns and suffers. Mary incarnates in her person the faith of the Church, the faith in action and meaning and fulfillment of life through her union with the Lord. Aware of the role and power of the Blessed Virgin Mary and presenting her as the pattern of grace and hope for all humanity as an example of the one who obeys, learns and suffers, Zoricic devoted her almost one-third of all pages (71 out of 256 pages in total).

The Book points to the culture of life, the defense of human life as a fundamental Christian value, as a “sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters”¹¹. The same encyclical of Pope John Paul II highlights “a pressing appeal addressed to each and every person, in the name of God: Respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life! Only in this direction will you find justice, development, true freedom, peace and happiness!”¹². In the Book, Our Lady saves a child from a wolf or a house fire, a woman giving birth, a dying sinner, she re-attached the hand cut of Saint John Damascene, recovered a tongue of student, etc. Any threat to the human life and its dignity constitutes the “culture of death”, disrespect for human person often built on lack of love, anger, lies, envy and a faulty understanding of human freedom. The “culture of death” is manifested through violence, conflicts, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, atheism (lost knowledge about human persons created in the image of God), etc. The message of strengthening

¹⁰ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, 2001, Proverbs 30:5, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+30%3A5&version=ESV> (16.07.2015).

¹¹ *Evangelium Vitae* 2, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html (16.07.2015).

¹² *Evangelium Vitae* 5.

“the culture of life” is important to all the faithful facing permanent conflict between good and evil but also to all the sinner, the disabled, the unwanted, the unloved, the disdained, etc.

The Book calls on all Christians’ obligation to be at the service of life by love, example, concern, service, prayer, word, deed, etc. It gives clear guidelines why we should turn to her as our advocate in all our efforts to build a culture of life, peace, and reconciliation, fighting for the family, unborn, the “littlest”. The Blessed Virgin Mary as the patroness of the culture of life is the Model we are called up to follow in order to live our faith fully and to give witness to it in our daily lives. The book highlights Marian prayers (the rosary, Save the Queen) and devotion to the Blessed Virgin who has been honoured from the most ancient times. It also mirrors its turbulent time, local Dalmatian identity, love for one’s birthplace and language and spiritual enlightenment of ordinary people. It offers clear distinction between „good news“ (Gospel) i.e. equal opportunity for anyone to reach Heaven through the repentance of sins and turning to God for forgiveness and the „bad news“ referring to all those turned away from God and therefore justly consigned to eternal torments.

5. Conclusion

The paper presents a linguistic and theological approach to the processing, analysis and evaluation of Fr. Zoricic’s book as valuable repository of cultural and religious heritage. In order to preserve this rare spiritual book written in Illyrian language and to promote the respect for cultural and religious diversity, the Book is digitized, transcribed and transliterated for a detailed linguistic and theological analysis. The most frequent OCR errors are presented as well as the set of rules applied in order to solve the problem of phonemic notation and different number of characters between the Illyrian and the Croatian languages. Automatically obtained word-list statistics shows overall data referring to the Book size but also the most frequent nouns and verbs. Created out of the word-list, the top-ranking concordances are analyzed in order to present the dichotomy of good and evil.

Theological approach to the understanding of Christian beliefs is supported by the official documents of the Catholic Church referring to the role, place and the power of the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom the author devotes most of his Book. The Book also highlights values aiming at benevolence, tradition, the culture of life as opposed to the “culture of death” and the basic moral guidelines

and ethical parameters in treating the other. Finally, it mirrors the faithful souls who, on their way of salvation, try to know God through His Word, His Son's sacrifice, but also through life guided by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary's belief and obedience, as any other path leads to darkness and spiritual poverty. The author nourishes the learning spirit of his readers, who should understand themselves as lifelong learners and due to their knowledge and beliefs either merit or inherit a place in God's Heaven. This paper aims to contribute to the safeguarding of cultural and religious heritage, national language awareness, development of corpus linguistics and Christian terminology.

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