

# Međimurje Church Singing. Echoes in the “Katolički list” (Catholic Newspaper)

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**Abstract.** Međimurje is a region in the northwest of the Republic of Croatia. Among its many peculiarities, it is characterised by specific folk lyrical solo vocal female singing, the so-called Međimurska popevka (Folk song from Međimurje). In 2013, that traditional Međimurje song was declared an intangible cultural good of the Republic of Croatia. In 2018, it was put on the list of elements on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This article presents the results of the authors’ research into the writings of the weekly Katolički list (Catholic Newspaper) (Zagreb, 1849–1945) about Međimurje singing. It can be seen from the weekly that the people of Međimurje attracted attention with their singing at all church ceremonies and on other occasions. However, with the Caecilian reform of church singing (1870–1920), which was more intense in Croatia from 1907 onwards, Međimurje singing began to be valued differently by some individuals (mainly priests). Echoes of these musical turmoils are also found in the weekly Katolički list. Although the entries of this weekly must be thoroughly supplemented with a description of the socio-political circumstances of the time, including Međimurje singing, and especially with the description of the nature of the Caecilian movement, the patriotic importance and traditional value of that folk singing in northwest Croatia can be strongly glimpsed in all the recorded texts.

**Keywords:** Caecilian Movement, *Catholic Newspaper (Katolički list)*, folk song from Međimurje (međimurska popevka), Međimurje (region), *Saint Cecilia (Sveta Cecilija)*.

## Medžiugorjės bažnytinis giedojimas. Atspindžiai katalikų laikraštyje „Katolički list“

**Anotacija.** Medžiugorjė – regionas Kroatijos Respublikos šiaurės vakaruose. Be daugelio kitų ypatumų, šiam regionui būdingas specifinis liaudies lyrinis solinis vokalinis moterų dainavimas, vadinamasis *Međimurska popevka* (Medžiugorjės liaudies daina). 2013 metais ši Medžiugorjės liaudies daina buvo paskelbta nematerialia Kroatijos Respublikos kultūrine vertybe. 2018 metais ji buvo įtraukta į UNESCO reprezentacinio žmonių nematerialaus kultūros paveldo sąrašą. Šiame straipsnyje pateikiami savaitraščio *Katolički list*

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(Katalikų laikraštis) (Zagreb, 1849–1945) straipsnių apie dainavimą Medžiuigorjės regione tyrimo rezultatai. Iš savaitraščio tekstų darytina išvada, kad visose bažnytinėse ceremonijose ir kitomis progomis Medžiuigorjės žmonės patraukdavo dėmesį savo giedojimu. Tačiau nuo 1907 metų Kroatijoje įvykus cecilietiškam bažnytinio giedojimo reformai (1870–1920), kai kurie asmenys (daugiausia kunigai) Medžiuigorjės giedojimą pradėjo vertinti skirtingai. Šių skirtingų nuomonių atgarsių galima rasti ir savaitraštyje *Katolički list*. Nors šio savaitraščio straipsniai turi būti nuodugniai papildyti to meto socialinių ir politinių aplinkybių aprašymu, įskaitant Medžiuigorjės dainavimą, o ypač ceciliečių judėjimo pobūdžio, liaudies dainavimo patriotinės svarbos ir tradicinės vertės aprašymu, liaudies dainų šiaurės vakarų Kroatijoje patriotinė svarba ir tradicinė vertė gali būti įžvelgta visuose tekstuose.

**Pagrindinės sąvokos:** Cecilijos judėjimas, Katalikų laikraštis (Katolički list), Medžiuigorjės liaudies daina (međimurska popevka), Medžiuigorjė (regionas), Šventoji Cecilija (Sveta Cecilija).

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## Introduction

This paper aims to point out the writing of the *Katolički list* (literal translation into English: *Catholic Newspaper*) about church singing in Međimurje. The *Katolički list* (1849–1945) is a church and theological weekly of the Zagreb Archdiocese. This weekly described religious customs, religious organisational units, buildings, regulations and officials in Međimurje in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Tomić, 2021, 2022) old orthography and terms in the *Katolički list*: *Megjumurje*, *Međumurje*, *Medjimurje*, *Međumurje*. Međimurje is a region in the northwest of Croatia. Međimurje has 729 km<sup>2</sup> with 105,250 inhabitants. Međimurje has 22 municipalities, three towns and 131 inhabited places. The county entirely coincides with Međimurje, the historical-geographical region.

To be able to understand the attitude towards liturgical singing from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, it is necessary to keep in mind the effort at that time, whose aim was to refine and deepen church music practice according to the liturgical, ideological, historical, and aesthetic criteria of the Catholic Church (the Caecilian Movement). In Croatia, the first attempts to restore church music appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereas the organised movement began in 1907 when the Zagreb magazine *Sveta Cecilija* (Engl. *Saint Cecilia* or *Saint Caecilia*; Latin equivalent would be *Sancta Caecilia*) was started and when the *Caecilian Society* was founded. Efforts were made to revive church songs from old Croatian hymnals, to suppress foreign church songs (e.g., songs introduced in the Josephine Era – Josephinism is the policy of Emperor Joseph II (1780–90) towards the Catholic Church; he subordinated the Church to state; dismissed some monks and confiscated their properties, introduced state control over the church, reorganised parishes and state schools for priests), to collect and spread original folk church songs and to harmonise them according to liturgical practice, to create new church songs in the folk spirit, and to raise the quality of the repertoire and the performance of church music. In general, the cultivation of old liturgical vocal music and the creation of many new valuable compositions is often cited as a positive achievement of the mentioned movement. In contrast, citations mentioned excessive purity in musical criteria as a less favourable achievement, which resulted in the emphasis on academic

compositions (*Muzička enciklopedija*, 1971). The echo of Cecilia's efforts can also be seen in the writing of the *Katolički list*.

Another critical moment in looking at the attitude towards church song in Međimurje is the question of the Kajkavian dialect of the Croatian language in liturgical practice, which, in its way, came to the fore in church circles at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and had an echo in the *Katolički list* as well and which has already been elaborated by Tomić (2023) on the examples of disputes that related to catechism and prayer books.

Here, it is worth to mention the book of Croatian folk church songs in Međimurje by Vinko Žganec (1890–1976) (Žganec, 1925), which contains 264 textual and sheet music records of church songs arranged according to their place in the liturgy and in the church year. It is also necessary to mention the Međimurje spiritual handwritten songbooks from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which Zvonar (2018) places in the context of the then socio-political circumstances specific to that geographical area and claims that in them, even in the most challenging periods, the language showed its vitality and expressiveness and was an insurmountable obstacle to denationalisation. As an illustration of Zvonar's claim, one could cite the pilgrimage songs from Međimurje, which were mentioned several times in the *Katolički list* because of their beauty. To refer to pilgrims, Zvonar uses the term *romar* from the Kajkavian dialect and not the term from the Croatian standard (*hodočasnik*). Here, we should point out a couple of facts about the *Međimurska popevka*. It is a traditional folk song in Međimurje whose first written traces date back to the 16th century (Blagus, 2010). In 2013, that traditional Međimurje song was declared an intangible cultural good of the Republic of Croatia, and in 2018, it was put on the list of elements on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### Pilgrims from Međimurje with “Their Beautiful Međimurje Songs”

Reactions to the Međimurje pilgrimage songs recorded in the *Katolički list* are characterised by sympathy due to their beauty and authenticity. They were especially noted during significant pilgrimages to Marija Bistrica, the largest Marian shrine in northwest Croatia, where pilgrims from Međimurje attracted attention with “their songs and rituals” as early as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Proštenje bistričko, 1865). It should be noted that the journal uses the regional Kajkavian “svojimi pjesmami i obhodi” and not the standard Croatian. In 1915, Antun Kolarić described various pilgrim groups in Marija Bistrica and mentioned groups from Međimurje. He was particularly impressed by their singing and the reactions of people that had become a rule in Marija Bistrica: “However, I will not keep silent about one, and that is our dear people from Međimurje. It was during a pilgrimage in Marija Bistrica. People were flocking from all sides, and at one moment, they were listening to many songs and melodies. Of course, those who sang more beautifully drew more attention to themselves” (Kolarić, 1915, p. 22).

In the impressive description of the departure of half a thousand pilgrims on their national pilgrimage from Zagreb to Rome on June 26, 1900, the following was written

about the atmosphere: "The pilgrims from Međimurje and Podravina, when the long train started moving, were singing cheerfully pious songs, while others were waving with their handkerchiefs and shouting from a distance: 'Happy departure!'" (Odlazak hrvatskih hodočasnika u Rim, 1900, p. 206). At the great Eucharistic Congress in Zagreb in 1930, seven songs were sung in the procession, and the sixth one was from Međimurje entitled "Tamjana se miris vije" (*The Smell of Incense Wafts*) (Euharistijski kongres u Zagrebu, 1930). In the context of the description of the pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1937, a church song from Međimurje is also mentioned: "Pozdravljeno budi Tijelo Isusovo" (*Hail the Body of Jesus*) (Glebae adstriptus, 1937).

For Christmas in 1863, Chaplain Reverend Antun Luci trained six male and six female students to sing four Christmas carols in polyphony in the village of Sveta Marija. During their performance, he accompanied them by playing on an accordion. The report states: "Whoever knows our common people from the Lower Međimurje region, and who has heard their bubbling melodies in their songs, would not have believed that the venerable gentleman's spiritual assistant could have succeeded in teaching the youth a few wonderful Christmas songs in such a short time after his arrival to the parish." The priest and the local authorities, including the *Katolički list*, followed this performance with great approval. This celebration was because new figurines were purchased for the Christmas nativity scene in the church. The church in Sveta Marija was thoroughly renovated in 1863, and other church items were also acquired. A few months later, Rev. Luci was transferred to Štrigova as a chaplain (Promjene u nadbiskupiji zagrebačkoj, 1864). In the north, he was very involved in restoring the church of St. Jerome (C., A., 1865). Žganec (1925) writes that Rev. Antun Luci published a church hymnal called *Svete Pesme za službu Božju u cirkvi* (*Holy Songs for the Service of God in the Church*) for his parishioners in the village of Deknovac (Graz, 1876). Luci collected folk songs and redacted them to some extent according to the needs of his parishioners. As a Slovene, he translated some Slovene songs from the songbook into the Međimurje dialect.

The triumph of church singing occurred during the organisation of the Eucharistic Congress in the town of Čakovec, the capital of the region of Međimurje, in 1935. Before the central celebration, a special committee was formed to care for church singing (Euharistijski kongres za Međimurje, 1935). In the report on the first day of the congress (Saturday, August 24, 1935), you can also read this: "At eight o'clock, there was a silent Holy Mass on the great Alexander Square, which the archbishop coadjutor celebrated. During that mass, 7,000 school children received communion, and the choirs from all the parishes in Međimurje were singing Mass songs. Father Kamilo Kolb, a famous Franciscan musician, directed the choirs. He also conducted all the performances during the congress. The singers were accompanied by the music of the Zagreb Tram Workers led by maestro Muhvić. There was also the music of the Franciscan college from the town of Varaždin, the fire brigade's music from the town of Čakovec and other music from Međimurje" (NN, 1935) (Dva velika Euharistijska slavlja, 1935, p. 435).

There was also singing on the second day of the congress above, on Sunday, August 25, 1935. Impressions of the morning music programme in Čakovec were conveyed as

follows: “During the Holy Mass and the public meeting, over 50 thousand people gathered. In the beautiful summer sun, hundreds of church flags, hundreds of crosses, and hundreds of holy pictures were flying; the mortars (here the word *mortar* refers to small cannons that only produce a bang) from the old town were constantly firing, bells from the Franciscan church were ringing loudly, three bands in the square were playing sacred songs. Thousands of people sang church songs in the most holy rapture. This was the peak of the Eucharistic celebrations.” (Dva velika Euharistijska slavlja, 1935, p. 436). Impressions from the afternoon procession through the streets of Čakovec were conveyed as follows: “While singing and praying, an endless procession in the most picturesque costumes, moved for two hours through the streets of Čakovec, which had never seen such a celebration in its past. While observing the piety of the ordinary Međimurje people and, listening to their prayers and songs and recalling in one’s spirit all the past of that tortured ordinary poor people, a man had to be overcome with emotion and tears had to come to his eyes.” (Dva velika Euharistijska slavlja, 1935, p. 437).

The fact that these Međimurje songs are genuinely close to the heart of every resident of Međimurje is also evidenced by the example of those who worked seasonally in Germany. In a letter to their parish priest in Sveti Martin na Mura, the workers report their Sunday attendance at church. The church was 18 km from the place where they worked. It was especially festive for them on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15): “... the parishioners reported to their pastor how they celebrated the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1939 in Ankla. In agreement with the local parish priest, they sang Croatian church songs at the parish mass. In a letter addressed to the parish priest of Sveti Martin na Muri, the parish priest from Ankla also reports on this nice gesture of our Međimurians. He praises their zeal and piety. After the Holy Mass, they stayed for a joint lunch and renewed their memories of the pilgrimage to Marija Bistrica.” (Iz duhovnog života naših sezonskih radnika u Njemačkoj, 1940, pp. 143–144).

### **The Issue of Uniformity and Problematization of Dialect in Liturgical Song**

Intending to point out the importance of publishing a cantual of church songs, a priest from Varaždin wrote in 1888 that every year he listens to pilgrims from Međimurje coming to the Marija Bistrica shrine and is amazed at their singing of church songs. In his article, he does not question their aesthetic value but rather the fact that they have not been unified “according to some church canon.” He claims that the local parishes near Styria sing so-so, while “... everyone else sings – I do not dare to say it – it is enough to utter a sigh: God forgive us!” (Napievi crkvenih pjesama u Međimurju, 1888, p. 283). He appeals to parish priests, teachers, and organists to use relevant hymnals despite a lack of cantuals.

For similar motives of “unification”, but now from the point of view of catechism as well as to promote the use of the Štokavian dialect instead of the Kajkavian dialect in Međimurje churches, the texts of church hymns in Međimurje were analysed by a writer using the pseudonym *Vagus*. This was a priest who described himself as somebody who

had been born as a Kajkavian and who had been recently transferred to serve in Međimurje. His apology was published on the first page of the *Katolički list* of the mentioned year. *Vagus* begins by comparing the singing of an old and a young *školnik* (a term that he uses to refer to organists) and alludes to the obsolescence of Kajkavian songs in Međimurje: "I noticed then that these same songs, which suit the old so well, do not suit the young in the least. When heard from the mouth of a young organist, those old Kajkavian songs were an obvious sign of stagnation... Moreover, these songs seem ancient to me, and not only do they exude too old, but their source is unknown, and their value is dubious." (*Vagus*, 1902, p. 633). In the continuation of the article, the same author claims that these poems are being preserved in manuscripts, so they are endangered by being copied and because of being exposed to arbitrary interpretation. *Vagus* indirectly promotes the need for a new cantual of church singing. He gives an example of the text of the song sung in the *black mass* (that is, the mass for the deceased): "Now listen, relatives, friends, what I want to tell you on this occasion. There, the person for whom the Holy Mass is celebrated and the person who has paid the mass are mentioned by name and surname, and the text pretends that the deceased is speaking: *My beloved daughter (or son) has given me this holy mass... No one can ponder this enough: how much the soul will rejoice in it. If we pay a mass for them, we bring great joy to them...* This does not leave a good impression on a person educated about religious subtleties and dressed in fine religious clothes." (*Ibid.*). Then he lists and analyses some parts of the Lenten hymn *Majka Božja je zaspala, tužnu senju je senjala ... (Mother of God fell asleep, and she had a sad dream...)*. He wonders if singing this song with very pronounced sentimental elements is why the song *Senje Marijina* is bought and kept (It is probably some superstition.). Then he analyses the song in which people sing about "wonderful miracles" that happened to those who wore the scapular of the Mother of God. *Vagus* states that, in truth, he did not mention the most beautiful Međimurje songs here. He wonders why this is so. He thinks that the priests are afraid that the people will not understand songs that are not Kajkavian songs, and that is why they also translate those songs into the dialect of Međimurje (i.e., Kajkavian dialect). However, they are sung in Štokavian in other parts of the Zagreb Archdiocese. "I am happy to admit that among the Kajkavian church songs, there are also particularly gentle ones, and it is a pity that the compilers of Jais's prayer book did not pay more attention to them. I remind myself, however, that if they had invited the external clergy, they would have told them the church songs, which are only sung in some regions – but it seems that few are in Jais's prayer book. I have heard that there are also printed church hymns for the "Medjimurian people" that a former teacher has published with permission from the spiritual realm – God knows when. I admit that I have not read those poems, but I am afraid that some of them have been *translated*, and some of them have been used again – and the real fact is that they all should be thoroughly revised before they can be used in the church, during the service of God." *Vagus* himself realises that the believers of that time did not find any *lapis offenseionis* in the mentioned songs, and neither did they find them in the Kajkavian words, so he resignedly states: "Many honest readers will find it inconceivable that even today when there exist *Cantanauls* (song books) and so



many prayer books, in which there are verified and perfected church songs, people here sing in the *Međimurjean language*.” (Ibid., p. 634).

Along with the apology of his prayer book *Jesus ljubav moja (Jesus My Love)*, Lajtman (1912) writes about singing in churches in Međimurje: “Regarding church songs, there were a lot of them in Međimurje whose quality was so-and-so – but there were hardly any that were good.” They sang songs that had never been approved anywhere. Among these songs, some do not correspond to a pious feeling. In the new prayer book, there are several old songs from Međimurje. However, there is also a wide variety of new Caecilian songs, by means of which the service of God can be exalted, if people accept them in Međimurje” (Lajtman, 1912, p. 254).

About the work of the *Caecilian Society* in Zagreb in 1914, Kolarić states that “the Caecilian idea took root in our Međimurje” (Kolarić, 1915, pp. 22–23). From the *Katolički list*, one can get an insight into the fact that the magazine *Sveta Cecilija* paid attention to church singing in Međimurje. The magazine reports on the Caecilian teaching courses in Međimurje in 1914 (*Sveta Cecilija*, 1914a), as the *Katolički list* quotes it, but also in other articles in the journal *Sveta Cecilija* as the one in no. 4 of 1914, where Franjo Perčić writes the article *Međimurska spričavanja*. The word *spričavanja* refers to the song organists sang at masses for the dead (*Sveta Cecilija*, 1914b). Among the articles in the magazine, there is, among others, a letter from Međimurje in 1915, which was printed as an article with the following title: “Vinko Žganec: Hrvatske pučke popijevke iz Međimurja” (*Vinko Žganec: Croatian Folk Songs from Međimurje*) (*Sveta Cecilija*, 1916). The *Katolički list* also mentioned a letter from Međimurje in *Hrvatska prosvjeta (Hrvatska prosvjeta, 1917)*. One of the eleven choirs that performed in July 1938 in Zagreb at the Caecilian Congress and Choir Review was the choir from the village of Donja Dubrava in the region of Međimurje (I., M., 1938).

Franjo Pipinić, while commenting on the new edition of the prayer book *Isus prijatelj malenih (Jesus the Friend of the Little Ones)* in 1924, states that the selection of songs is too much influenced by the Cecilian movement, which neglected (old) folk singing: “There are almost no old Easter songs in it, even though many are much better than the newer ones, which I was a witness to in the seminary; I witnessed how they were born with difficulty, while my colleague Žganec drew them on to old arias with his Međimurje accent.” (Pipinić, 1924).

## Folk Song on Church and Social Occasions

Međimurje’s Croatian folk songs *Mikor konje* (Hungarian *mikor* = Croatian *kada*?) (*When Horses*), *U polje nam jarica žežija* (*Our Spring Wheat is Glowing in the Field*), *O Jelo Jelica* (*Oh Jela, Little Jela*), *Prsten zvenknul* (*The Ring Jingled*), *Sve su gore* (*All the Mountains*) were played in 1911 by village boys and girls in the village of Kotoriba in honour of Monsignor, Dr Antun Bauer, archbishop coadjutor, who was especially singled out and praised in the *Katolički list* in their report on his trip to Međimurje (Kornfeind, 1911). Dominik Premuš (1861–1934), a prelate from the town of Prelog in Međimurje and

the auxiliary bishop of Zagreb, was also happily welcomed on the occasion of confirmation in the lower part of the region of Međimurje from 26<sup>th</sup> May to 9<sup>th</sup> June 1926. Children in the villages of Legrad, Dekanovec and Vidovec greeted him with the song *Ljubimo Te naša diko* (*We Love You, Our Pride*) (Mokrović, 1926) (It should be noted that the report on Bauer's visit to Međimurje also praised the choirs in Međimurje.). In the *Katolički list*, some Međimurje poems were occasionally published, such as: Međimurju; Spjevaio Josip Zdunić (*For Međimurje, composed by Josip Zdunić*) (Danica, 1922).

In the evening of October 3, 1936, on the eve of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Varaždin Grammar School, a festive concert of Zagorje and Međimurje folk songs was organised in the local theatre. They sang songs composed by former students of that Varaždin secondary school: Dr Vinko Žganec, Josip Vrhovski, Josip Slavenski, Franjo Dugan and Vjekoslav Ružić (Jan, 1936). In his philosophical article in 1937, "Three Conversations with an Atheist", Prof. Dr Stjepan Zimmermann writes, among other things, the following: "And every man loves his own life because it is only acquired once and does not come back when we lose it. Remember the Međimurje song: 'When the swallows leave, they come back to our place, and when they carry away a man, he never returns'." (Zimmermann, 1937, 259). The poignant Međimurje lament *Ah, čovječe razmišljaj!* (*Ah, Man, think!*) was performed in 1941 by united choirs from the villages of Donja Dubrava, Vidovec and Sveta Marija at the funeral of Petar Lichtenberger (1891–1941) (Knez, 1941). Rev. Lichtenberger died in the church just after he delivered the appropriate sermon at the celebration of the virgin mass of Franje Balog in the village of Kotoriba. About eight thousand people gathered at the funeral.

## Organists and Organs in Međimurje

Organists were advertised in it because the *Katolički list* was sent to the clergy of the Zagreb Archdiocese. They were looking for employment: "Stjepan Miklin, 29 years old, single, from Badličan in the parish of Gornji Mihaljevec in Međimurje, last post office Čakovec or Polstau, graduated last year in 1902 from the church music school under the supervision of the diocese of Lavandin and passed the exam in all branches of church music art, as evidenced by the certificate he received, the transcript of which is available for inspection by the editorial office of the *Katolički list*, offers himself for the service of an organist to the reverend gentlemen in the archdiocese of Zagreb." (Uredništvu "Kat. Lista", 1903, p. 48).

Due to the lack of an apartment, the organist from Sv. Juraj is looking for a new job in Trnje. He writes about himself: "The organist, who graduated with honours from the Organ School in the Town of Celje, is looking for employment as an independent organist starting next year. He is very good at singing, playing the organ and manners, but he cannot stay in his current place due to the lack of an apartment. Inquiries and offers should be sent to the parish office in Sv. Juraja in Trnje in Međimurje." (Orguljaš, 1922, p. 552). Due to the lack of an apartment, the organist, Mijo Kos from Goričani, is also looking for a new job. He also graduated from the same music school in Celje. In addition to playing



the organ, he is "... ready to work as a bookkeeper for the Raiffeisen company, a dairy or any other cooperative... Start of service: immediately. Salary by agreement. Address: Mijo Kos, Goričan (Međumurje)." (Crkvene vijesti, 1923, p. 148). Female organists are also mentioned, as in the context of an event, the performance of the "famous female organist Katica and the Macinec Choir" on the Feast of the Name of Mary on September 11, 1921, in the village of Donji Kraljevac in the Chapel of St. Magdalene (K., 1921).

In the *Katolički list*, there are also advertisements looking for an organist. Thus, in 1926, the parish priest from Štrigova sought an organist. The organist should be qualified, have work experience, have good manners, and be young. This is offered: "He will enjoy an apartment in the countryside with outbuildings, land, a woodshed, a coculture, a salary from the municipality and a church service. Petitions should be sent immediately – by May 1 at the latest – it is better to come in person. Štrigova-Međumurje Parish Office." (Traži se kvalificirani orguljaš, vješt orguljanju, mladi, dobrog vladanja, 1926, p. 236).

Organists also enjoyed specific church properties. In the circular of the Ordinariate to the parishes in Međumurje in 1939, it is stated that there existed and still exist properties that were the property of the church and were intended for the financial support of the teacher-organists. According to the new state regulations, real estate and funds established from the Catholic Church's property that serve particular church purposes must be returned to the dioceses. Parish priests should check in the land registers and cadastres the properties intended to support organ teachers. Where municipalities or schools have taken over the management of the land in question or where the teacher enjoys the land and does not perform the cantorial service, parish priests should submit a report to the Ordinariate along with a registered land certificate (Okružnica svim župnim uredima gornjeg i donjeg Međumurja, 1939).

During the renovation of the prayer areas, the organ was also renovated. Thus, after the chapel decoration in Kraljevec, in the parish of Draškovec, a new organ was bought in Maribor for the chapel. The priest sells the old organ to the same person and advertises it in the *Katolički list* (Uredjena kapela u Kraljevcu, 1879). During the First World War, the Zagreb Ordinariate sent a circular to the Međumurje parish offices: "The Royal Hungarian Ministry of Worship and Education has informed this Archdiocese in Zagreb that on November 15 of this year, the dismantling of the metal pipes of the organ for war purposes will begin. Since only those organs of historical or artistic value, which were built before 1850, are exempt from requisition, the reverend parish priest in Međumurje who have such organs of artistic or historical value in their churches or chapels are asked if they have not yet sent the relevant report here, to deliver by post the following: 1. The name of the municipality, where the organ in question is located; 2. Year, when that organ was built; 3. Names and the number of registers as well as the number of manuals; 4. What is the historical or artistic value of that organ. The final decision, whether the relevant organ will be exempted from requisition, will be pronounced by the Royal Hungarian Minister for Worship and Education. In Zagreb, on 3rd November 1917, Dr Dominik Premuš, by hand, consecrated bishop, vicar general." (Premuš, 1917, p. 541).

After the First World War, reports about organ restoration were not frequent. However, there were more frequent reports about the procurement and installation of bells since the wartime requisition included bells. The acquisition and installation of new bells in the village of Štrigova in October 1923 was reported in detail. A substantial sum of 400 thousand crowns was collected from the then parishioners, the municipality, and parishioners who emigrated to America. Catholic societies magnified the ceremony: "Already on the day before the return of the bells, on Saturday, there was mortar fire on all the hills of the parish of Štrigova, and on Sunday, people from Prekomurje and Štajerska and the neighbouring parishes of Međimurje flocked to see the new bells. Everyone's eyes watered when they saw five quadrigas with beautifully decorated carts driving the bells." (Župljanin, 1923, p. 545). In Zagreb, three bells were cast for the Legrad parish. A parishioner described the atmosphere of that September day in 1930: "Although it was pouring with rain, a huge procession started from the church after the early Holy Mass with the clergy, the municipal committee of the trading town of Legrad and the mayor Mr Andrašek, school children and girls in white, with the fire brigade and with their music, with decorated chariots and horsemen in Medjugorje national costumes, all in greenery and flowers and with the rest of the people to the station, from where the bells were escorted to the church... After the finished blessing of the bells, there was a moving farewell and kissing of the bells before they were raised into the tower. No single person in the church had not kissed the bells or given their gifts..." (Župljanin, 1930, p. 536). There was no rush to acquire the bells because of their enormous cost (Lončarić, 1923). The new bells in Slatina cost 360,000: "The Slatina merchant Stjepan Horvat himself, the son of our noble Catholic Međumurje, gave 100,000 crowns for the bells" (Ibid., p. 555). It was not easy with the bell ringers either. Ecclesiastical jurist Juraj Cenkić interprets the draft bell ringer's statute changes. Among other things, he cites the case of Rev. Zvonimir Jurak, parish priest of Sveti Juraj parish in Međimurje, who cannot (according to his conditions) find a bell ringer (Cenkić, 1924).

## Conclusions

This paper has sufficiently demonstrated that contemporaries in the hundred-year-old *Katolički list* recognised and pointed out the beauty of Međimurje's spiritual chants, primarily those of pilgrims. The sympathies aroused by Međimurje singing were additionally strengthened by sympathy for the political situation in Međimurje in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

An additional amount of understanding is indeed required by the reflections of some authors on the church, specifically liturgical songs, which were the subject of their analyses in the *Katolički list*. These analyses reflect a historical moment and the reform of singing, which took place according to some set pattern, which may not have always guaranteed the happiest solutions on the field. Be that as it may, the reform of liturgical singing was understood and accepted over time and sufficiently demonstrated at the Eucharistic Congress in Čakovec in 1935.

Another dilemma that arose with the reform of liturgical singing concerns language, a sensitive issue in the case of Međimurje. Namely, the effort of some authors to unify church singing in the Štokavian dialect was pointed out. In addition to many positive aspects, this brought at least one less noticeable but critical dimension: the people saw their (Kajkavian) language as the last line of defence against denationalisation. Existing songs and singing were ways of preserving language and identity. This is perhaps why Međimurje's folk songs, existing independently of any institution, stored, preserved, and always re-mediated to new generations the original linguistic and traditional fragments of the rich soul of the Croatian people in Međimurje.

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