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ON THE ORIGINS OF THE STORY OF THE SYNOD OF DALMA **

Abstract: The article presents a re-examination of the story of the Synod of Dalma, which is primarily found in the chronicle *Gesta regum Sclavorum* (*GRS*). The author argues that *GRS* is a medieval compilation of diverse texts that were revised and adapted to fulfill the objectives of the chronicle's author. Through an examination of the presumed prior source of the story, or "hypotext", the article scrutinizes its potential content, date, and purpose. This examination of the Synod of Dalma's story allows for the re-establishment of the relationship between *GRS* on the one hand, and the Cyrillic-Methodian tradition, the formation of Christian Moravia, and the reign of the Great Moravian ruler Svatopluk on the other hand. The study concludes that this narrative from *GRS* could potentially offer valuable insights into the history of the Slavs in both the Balkans and north of the (Middle) Danube. Ultimately, a re-evaluation of the credibility of the entire text of *GRS* is suggested.

Keywords: *Gesta regum Sclavorum*, *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea*, Svatopluk, Great Moravia, Cyrillic-Methodian tradition.

Анотација: У раду се анализира прича о Дувањском сабору, за коју је примарни извор хроника *Gesta regum Sclavorum* (*GRS*). Тврди се да је *GRS* средњовековна компилација различитих текстова који су прерађени тако да испуне циљеве писца хронике. Након претпоставке о извору или „хипотексту“ дате приче анализира се његов могући садржај, датум и сврха. Анализа приче о Дувањском сабору омогућава поновно успостављање везе између *GRS*, с једне стране, и ћирилско-методијске традиције, хришћанске Моравске и владавине великоморавског владара Сватоплука, с друге стране. Закључак студије је да одељак о Дувањском сабору из *GRS* може да пружи вредан увид у историју Словена, како оних на Балкану, тако и Словена који живе северно од (средњег) Дунава. На крају предложено је ново покретање расправе о историјској веродостојности *GRS*.

Кључне речи: *Gesta regum Sclavorum*, *Летопис попа Дукљанина*, Сватоплук, Велика Моравска, ћирилско-методијска традиција.

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** *In memoriam* Tibor Živković

The story of the Synod of Dalma is primarily conveyed in *Gesta regum Sclavorum*, a chronicle also known as the *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea*.¹ This chronicle narrates an assembly convened by a ruler named Svetopelek in the otherwise unrecorded location of Dalma. The assembly lasted for twelve days, during which the foundational structure of his state was established. The Synod established a detailed church and secular organization along the Eastern Adriatic coast and the inland region behind it. It concluded with the coronation of Svetopelek by the papal vicar, Honorius. The Byzantine emperor's legates were also present and, while playing a more passive role, endorsed the Synod's conclusions with their attendance. Svetopelek's motive for the event was to learn the exact boundaries of his state, which no wise men from his kingdom knew. He sent envoys to Pope Stephen and Emperor Michael, requesting old charters with the relevant information. Both parties positively responded, sending emissaries and the charters. After the Synod was concluded, King Svetopelek immediately took charge of directing the ecclesiastical and administrative organization himself. He paid particular attention to deploying loyal provincial officers, with the most important ones being from his own family, and building a tax system in which a large amount of the revenue went directly to the king. King Svetopelek also made it clear that anyone attempting to destroy churches or the new ecclesiastical hierarchy would be punished severely, with the crime equated to an offense against the "Crown". The story of the Synod of Dalma ends with the recommendation of a book titled *Methodius* for those interested in learning more about the "numerous laws and commendable customs" inaugurated by the "most benevolent" king.²

The narrative of the Synod of Dalma is preceded by an introductory story also featuring King Svetopelek. This story describes the baptism and Christianization of the king and his entire kingdom. The main character is a learned man named Constantine the Philosopher, from Thessalonica. He possesses profound knowledge of the Holy Scripture and has an impeccable conduct akin to that of a saint. Induced by the Holy Spirit, Constantine embarked on a mission to Khazaria, where he succeeded in first convincing the local philosophers and then converting the entire province to the Christian

¹ *Gesta regum Sclavorum* [=GRS], vol. I, ed. D. Kunčer, Belgrade 2009; GRS, vols. I-II, ed. T. Živković, Belgrade 2009. Selected previous editions: *Presbyteri Diocleatis Regnum Sclavorum*, ed. I. Lucius, in: Ioannes Lucius, *De Regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae libri sex*, Amstelaedami 1666, 287–302; *Presbyteri Diocleatis Regnum Sclavorum*, ed. I. G. Schwandtner, in: *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum, Dalmaticarum, Croaticarum, et Sclavonicarum veteres ac genuini*, vol. 3, ed. I. G. Schwandtner, Vindobonae 1748, 474–509; *Letopis Popa Dukljanina*, ed. F. Šišić, Belgrade–Zagreb 1928; *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, ed. V. Mošin, Zagreb 1950.

² GRS, 40.24–62.8.

faith. All inhabitants were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The holy man achieved the same success among the Bulgarian people. The fame of his missions reached Pope Stephen who wished to meet him and thus summoned him to Rome. Constantine accepted the invitation but first translated the Psalms, Old and New Testament and “all the holy books” from Greek into Slavic and established the Greek liturgy for “all the people he converted”. Constantine, who would later be given the monastic name Cyril by Pope Stephen, made a stop in Svetopelek’s kingdom on his way to Rome. The king received him with great honour, and Constantine began to preach the Gospels and the Christian faith to him. After hearing Constantine’s teachings, the king converted to Christianity, was baptized, and so was his entire kingdom. He became an orthodox Christian and a devoted believer in the Holy Trinity. The baptism and conversion of the king encouraged all the Christians who had been hiding in the mountains and remote places to openly confess their faith. Furthermore, the king ordered the Latin-speaking Christians to return to their homes and rebuild their churches, which had been destroyed by the pagans.³

³ GRS, 30.24–40.21. There is a brief mention of both of these stories in the Venetian Chronicle written by Doge Andrea Dandolo (1306–1354, ruled 1343–1354): *Huius etiam beati Cyrilli praedicatione Svethopolis rex Dalmatiae, qui ab Ostroillo Germano Totilae regis Gothorum originem duxerat, cum toto populo suo fidem catholicam suscepit, et ab Honorio cardinale legato Apostolicae sedis, assistentibus orthodoxis episcopis, et apocrisariis Michaelis imperatoris Constantinopolitani, a quo regnum suum recognoscebat, in plano Dalmatiae coronatus est, et regnum suum in quatuor partes divisit. Est autem Dalmatia prima provinciarum Graeciae, quae habet ab oriente Macedoniam, ab occasu Istriam, a meridie mare Adriaticum, et insulas Liburnicas, et a septentrione Pannoniam, quae est pars Misiae Russiae. A plano itaque Dalmatiae usque Istriam, Croatiam Albam vocavit, et a dicto plano usque Dyrachium, Croatiam Rubeam, et versus montana a flumine Drino usque Macedoniam, Rassiam, et a dicto flumine citra, Bosniam nominavit. Et jupanos in unaquaque regione constituit, et in Salona, et in Dioclia archiepiscopos, ut antiquitus fuerant, esse decrevit. Moderni autem maritimam totam vocant Dalmatiam, Montana autem Croatiam.* / “Blessed Cyril’s preaching led Svethopolis, the King of Dalmatia, who traced his lineage back to Ostroilo the German and Totila, the King of the Goths, to embrace the Catholic faith along with his entire people. Cardinal Honorius, the legate of the Apostolic See, crowned him in the plain of Dalmatia, in the presence of Orthodox bishops, and representatives of Michael, the Emperor of Constantinople, whom he had asked to recognize his kingdom. Subsequently, he divided his kingdom into four parts. Indeed, Dalmatia is the first of the provinces of Greece, bordering Macedonia to the east, Istria to the west, the Adriatic Sea and the Liburnian Islands to the south, and Pannonia, a part of Russian Moesia, to the north. From the plain of Dalmatia to Istria, he named the region White Croatia, and from the said plain to Dyrachium, he called it Red Croatia. The area from the Drina River to the mountains of Macedonia, he dubbed Rassia, and the region across the said river, he named Bosnia. He established zupans in each region and decreed that there should be archbishops in Salona and in Dioclea, as had been the tradition in ancient times. However, today, the entire coastal region is referred to as Dalmatia, while the mountainous region is called Croatia.” *Andreae Danduli Venetorum ducis Chronicon Venetum a pontificatu sancti Marci ad a. usque 1339: succedit*

The connections between these two stories narrated in *GRS* and the Cyrillic-Methodian tradition are evident, as can be seen from the names of the main characters and their activities. The details about Constantine the Philosopher, such as the city of his origin, his monastic name, his learning, his character and the place of his first mission as narrated in *GRS*, are known from both the Slavonic *Life of Constantine* and the Latin *The Life of Constantine-Cyril: With the Translation of the Relics of St. Clement (Italic Legend)*.⁴ The name of Constantine's father as expressed in *GRS* is the same as it is known from Slavonic *Life of Constantine*, its principal source.⁵ The information provided by *GRS* that the pope had invited Constantine to Rome upon news of his missionary successes is known from Slavonic and Latin *Life of Constantine* and from *Life of Methodius*. The passages from *GRS* and the texts from Cyrillic-Methodian tradition could be compared in this regard:

GRS: “[...] Pope Stephen sent a letter to the venerable doctor Constantine, summoning him to come to him. Namely, the pope had heard about Constantine's teachings and the countless people he had converted, and desired to meet him.”⁶

Life of Constantine: “Upon learning of Constantine, the Pope of Rome sent for him.”⁷

Italic Legend: “Upon hearing everything about this matter, the glorious Pope Nicholas was very pleased and sent an Apostolic letter inviting them to come.”⁸

Life of Methodius: “When he learned of these two men, the Apostolic Father, Nicholas, sent for them, wishing to see them as much as the angel of God.”⁹

Raphaini Caresini continuatio usque ad a. 1388, ed. L. A. Muratori, Mediolani 1728, 5, 6, 182–183 (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores 12).

⁴ *Life of Constantine*, in: *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici: Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici* [=MMFH] II, ed. D. Bartoňková, L. Havlík, J. Ludvíkovský, Z. Masařík, & R. Večerka, Brno 1967, 57–115; *Italic Legend*, in: MMFH II, 120–133.

⁵ *Life of Constantine 2*, MMFH II, 61.

⁶ *GRS*, 34.10–18: *Regnante vero rege Svetoplek misit papa Stephanus litteras ad venerabilem virum Constantinum doctorem vocans eum ad se. Audierat enim de eo quod sua praedicatione converti fecerat innumerabilem gentem et ob hanc causam desiderabat eum videre.*

⁷ *Life of Constantine* 17, in: MMFH II, 110; English translation by Marvin Kantor, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1983, 75.

⁸ *Italic Legend* 8, in: MMFH II, 129: *His omnibus auditis, papa gloriosissimus Nicolaus valde letus super his, que sibi ex hoc relata fuerant, redditus, mandavit et ad se illos litteris apostolicis venire invitavit.*

⁹ English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 113.

It can be observed that the *GRS* account aligns with other texts in terms of Constantine's invitation from the papal curia due to his missionary work, and the pope's desire to meet him. The only discrepancy in the *GRS* account is the name of the pope, which is given as Pope Stephen instead of Pope Nicholas. It is evident that it is the information in *GRS* that is erroneous, since there is no pontiff named Stephen during Constantine's lifetime. The pope who invited both Constantine and his brother Methodius to Rome is certainly Pope Nicholas I (858–867).¹⁰ There is a pope named Stephen associated with the work of the two Thessalonian brothers, Pope Stephen V (885–891), but his involvement is rather opposite to that of Pope Nicholas.¹¹ For example, Pope Stephen V abolished one of their, from the perspective of the Apostolic See, most controversial innovation, the use of Slavonic in liturgy. This prohibition appears clearly in Pope Stephen's letter *Quia te zelo* from 885, addressed to Svatopluk (871–894), the "king of the Slavs" and ruler of Great Moravia.¹² "The divine services, sacred mysteries, and solemn celebrations of the Mass that the same Methodius dared to celebrate in the Slavic language, which, to prevent doing so further, he had affirmed by oath on the most sacred body of blessed Peter – we, abhorring the guilt of his potential perjury, decree that it should in no way henceforth be presumed by anyone. Indeed, by the authority of God and our apostolic authority, we forbid it under the bond of anathema [...]."¹³ Given that the confusion of popes' names is a feature that can be found in Slavonic sources of the Cyrillic-Methodian tradition,¹⁴ it is reasonable to suggest that the mention of Pope Stephen in *GRS*, despite its contextually inaccurate usage, may have been influenced by the Cyrillic-Methodian texts.

Similarly, the name of Emperor Michael, mentioned in *GRS* as the emperor to whom Svetopelek sends envoys and requests charters, is historically linked to the mission of Constantine and Methodius. It was to Emperor Michael III (842–867) that Rastislav, the Duke of Moravia and the uncle of Svatopluk, addressed a letter requesting a missionary who could teach the "simple" Slavic

¹⁰ Maddalena Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia (858–882): Papal Power and Political Reality*, Leiden/Boston 2014, 63.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 45.

¹² *Stephani V. papae epistolae passim collectae quotquot ad res Germanicas spectant*, ed. G. Laehr, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [=MGH], Epp 7 (Epistolae Karolini Aevi V), Berolini 1928, Ep. 1, 354–358 [=Quia te zelo].

¹³ *Ibidem*, 357: *Divina autem officia et sacra mysteria ac missarum sollemnia, quae idem Methodius Sclavorum lingua celebrare praesumpserit, <quod, ne ulterius faceret, super sacratissimum beati Petri corpus iuramento firmaverat, sui periurii reatum perhorrescentes> nullo modo deinceps a quolibet praesumatur. Dei namque nostraque apostolica auctoritate sub anathematis vinculo interdicimus [...].*

¹⁴ See M. Betti, *The Making*, 85.

people about the “whole truth” of the Christian faith.¹⁵ It is upon receipt of this letter that Emperor Michael, allegedly, convoked Constantine still “weary” from the mission to the Khazars, and sent him along with his brother Methodius to Moravia.¹⁶

Regarding the concordance of *GRS* with other sources, it is worth noting that the detail of Constantine’s translation of Psalter, Gospels, and “other holy books” from Greek into Slavonic mentioned in *GRS* is confirmed by other sources.¹⁷

¹⁵ For the alleged content of the letter, see *Life of Methodius* 5, in: MMFH II, 143–144: “And it came to pass in those days that the Slavic Prince Rastislav together with Svatopluk sent emissaries from Moravia to Emperor Michael, saying thus: ‘We have prospered through God’s grace, and many Christian teachers have come to us from among the Italians, Greeks and Germans, teaching us in various ways. But we Slavs are a simple people, and have no one to instruct us in the truth, and explain wisely. Therefore, O kind lord, send the type of man who will direct us to the whole truth.’” English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 111. Also, see *Life of Constantine* 14, in: MMFH II, 98–99: “While the Philosopher was rejoicing in God, yet another matter arose, and a task no less than the former. For Rastislav, the Prince of Moravia, through God’s admonition, took counsel with his Moravian princes and appealed to Emperor Michael, saying: ‘Though our people have rejected paganism and observe Christian law, we do not have a teacher who can explain to us in our language the true Christian faith, so that other countries which look to us might emulate us. Therefore, O lord, send us such a bishop and teacher; for from you good law issues to all countries.’” English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 65. The *Italic Legend* retells the content of the Rastislav’s letter, but provides more details. See *Italic Legend* 7, in: MMFH II, 127–128: *Philosopho autem reverso Constantinopolim, audiens Rastislaus, princeps Moraviae, quod factum fuerat a Philosopho in provincia Gazarorum, ipse quoque genti suae consulens ad predictum imperatorem nuntios misi, insinuans hoc, quod populus suus ab ydolorum quidem cultura recesserat et christianam legem observare desiderabat, verum doctorem non talem habent, qui ad liquidum eos et ad perfectum legem ipsam edoceat; rogare se ut talem ad partes illas hominem dirigat, qui pleniter fidem et ordinem legis et viam veritatis populo illi ostendere valeat. Cuius precibus annuens imperator, eundem supra nominatum Philosophum ad se venire rogavit eumque illuc, id est in terram Sclavorum, simul cum Methodio germano suo transmisit, copiosis valde de palatio suo datis expensis.* / “Upon the Philosopher’s return to Constantinople, Rastislaus, the Duke of Moravia, learned of what he had done in the province of the Khazars. Wanting to benefit his people in the same way, Rastislaus sent envoys to the aforementioned Emperor, indicating that his people had abandoned the worship of idols and desired to embrace the Christian faith. However, they lacked the proper teacher who could clearly and completely instruct them. He requested that the emperor send a man who had a full understanding of the Christian faith and could guide his people on the path of truth. The emperor responded positively to these requests and asked the aforementioned Philosopher to come to him. He then sent him, along with his brother Methodius, to the land of the Slavs, providing him with ample expenses from his palace.”

¹⁶ *Life of Constantine* 14, in: MMFH II, 99: “And having gathered his council, the Emperor summoned Constantine the Philosopher and had him listen to this matter. And he said: ‘Philosopher, I know that you are weary, but it is necessary that you go there. For no one can attend to this matter like you.’” English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 67.

¹⁷ *Life of Methodius* 15, in: MMFH II, 160: “For previously he (sc. Methodius) had translated with the Philosopher only the Psalter, the Gospel together with the Apostolos, and selected

However, there is one aspect of *GRS* that diverges from what we know about Constantine. It is the portrayal of him as working alone, without any mention of his brother Methodius. This is in contrast to other accounts that indicate Methodius accompanied Constantine in his missions and travels.¹⁸ According to Wawrzyniec Kowalski, the absence of Methodius' name in *GRS* may have been due to the negative attitude of some Latin clergy in Dalmatia towards his use of the Slavic language in liturgy.¹⁹ And the story of the Synod of Dalma is set in Dalmatia, which roughly corresponds to the Roman province of the same name. Dalmatia also serves as the primary geographical context of the entire chronicle and is believed by most scholars to be the likely place where the chronicle was written.

Two arguments support a different perspective in Kowalski's view. Firstly, it is worth noting that Methodius' name does appear in *GRS*, albeit as the title of a recommended book (*librum... qui dicitur Methodius*).²⁰ This may be an example of metonymy, where the author's name is used in place of the book title.²¹ Secondly, in the Slavic *Life of Constantine*, Methodius only appears once alongside Constantine, with the other two instances of his mention

church liturgies.” English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 125; *Italic Legend 7*, in: MMFH II, 128: *Cumque ad partes illas, Deo prosperante, venissent, cognoscentes loci indigene adventum illorum gavisi sunt, maxime cum reliquias beati Clementis secum eos ferre audierant et ewangelium in eorum linguam a Philosopho predicto translatum.* / “When they arrived at those regions, with the aid of God, the local inhabitants, upon learning of their arrival, rejoiced greatly, especially when they learned that the arrivals were carrying with them the relics of the blessed Clement and the Gospel, which had been translated into their language by the aforementioned Philosopher.”

¹⁸ See e.g. *Italic Legend 7–9*, in: MMFH II, 128–131.

¹⁹ Wawrzyniec Kowalski, *The Kings of the Slavs*, Leiden/Boston 2021, 136–137; *Thomae Archidiaconi Spalatensis: Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum / Archdeacon Thomas of Split: History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, Latin text by O. Perić, edited, translated and annotated by D. Karbić, M. Matijević-Sokol & J. R. Sweeney, Budapest 2006, 78–79: *Dicebant enim, Gothicas litteras a quodam Methodio heretico fuisse repertas, qui multa contra catholice fidei normam in eadem Sclauonica lingua mentiando conscripsit.* / English translation by D. Karbić et al.: “For they said that a certain heretic called Methodius had devised a Gothic alphabet, and he perniciously wrote a great deal of falsehood against the teachings of the Catholic faith in that same Slavic language.”

²⁰ For the possible identification of the *Liber Methodius* mentioned in *GRS*, see Marko Petrak, “*Liber Methodius* between the Byzantium and the West: Traces of the Oldest Slavonic Legal Collection in Medieval Croatia”, in: *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, eds. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević & Trpimir Vedriš, Leiden/Boston 2018, 213–224. Petrak posits that the *Liber Methodius* in *GRS* represents an original compilation by Methodius of various translated texts, rather than a translation of a single text (an entire work) into Slavonic. Ibidem, 223.

²¹ For the metonymy of “author for text”, see e.g. Andreas T. Zanker, *Greek and Latin Expressions of Meaning: The Classical Origins of a Modern Metaphor*, München 2016, 153.

occurring after the account of Constantine's death.²² When the narration turns to the brothers' activities, Constantine is the sole subject of the sentences, a pattern that *GRS* seems to mirror. This is also observed in the *Italic Legend*. Up until the mission to the Moravians, Methodius is not mentioned. Constantine alone embarks on the mission to the Khazars, and he alone discovers the relics of St. Clement.²³

Finally, one of the details from *GRS* that is confirmed by other sources is the name of King Svetopelek. This name is similar to the name of the Great Moravian ruler Svatopluk, under whose reign Methodius carried out his missionary work after Constantine's death. Given the different forms in which the name Svatopluk appears in manuscripts, such as "Svetopulku" in Old Church Slavonic, "Zuentopolc", "Sfentopulch", or "Zuentibald" in Latin, and "Sfentoplikos" and "Sfendoplokos" in Greek, some of which deviate significantly from "Svatopluk", it would be just to consider "Svetopelek" to be another variant.²⁴ As Kowalski has rightly pointed out, it is the same name.²⁵

Despite the abundance of details in *GRS* that align with other sources concerning the lives of the two Thessalonian brothers, the precise nature of the relationship between the chronicle and the Cyrillic-Methodian tradition remains unresolved. This paper aims to explore this issue. First, however, a brief review of previous research on the topic is necessary.

In his renowned monograph on the work of Constantine and Methodius, Francis Dvornik could not identify a connection between the *GRS* text and

²² *Life of Constantine* 12, in: MMFH II, 94: "When they reached a waterless, barren region, they could not endure the thirst. Though they found water in a salt marsh, they could not drink of it for it was like gall. And when they all separated to search for water, Constantine said to Methodius, his brother: 'I can endure the thirst no longer. Scoop up some of this water. For He who once turned bitter water into sweet for the Israelites shall also bring us comfort.'" English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 63; *Life of Constantine* 18, in: MMFH II, 114: "Then Methodius, his brother, entreated the Apostolic Father saying: 'Our mother adjured us that the one of us first to pass away be brought to his brother's monastery to be buried there.'" English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 79; *Life of Constantine* 18, in: MMFH II, 114–115: "Then the Apostolic Father said: 'For the sake of his saintliness and charity I shall transgress Roman custom and bury him in my tomb, in the Church of the Holy Apostle Peter.' And his brother said: 'Since you do not heed me and do not give him up, let him, if it pleases you, rest in the Church of St. Clement, for he came here with him.'" English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 79.

²³ See *Italic Legend* 1–6, in: MMFH II, 122–127.

²⁴ These variants are compiled in M. Betti, *The Making*, 43 n. 2. For additional variants, see Lubomír E. Havlík, *Svatopluk Veliký, král Moravanů a Slovanů*, Brno 1994, 12. The variant "Svetoplek" is employed in *GRS*, but it should be noted that this text will use the more common variant "Svetopelek". This aligns with *Codex Vat. Lat. 6958*, one of the two preserved manuscripts of *GRS*, where similar variants – "Sfetopek" (f. 55r) and "Sphetopek" (f. 55v) – are noted.

²⁵ W. Kowalski, *The Kings*, 108 n.1.

the Byzantine missionaries, or with Great Moravia, the main location of their missionary work. He stated: “There is a report by the chronicler of Duklja, written between 1149 and 1153, of a national assembly held in the plain near the former Delminium (Duvno), in the presence of the representatives of the Byzantine emperor and of the pope. If this event is dated in the year 753, as was recently proposed, we would have here new documentary evidence of the development of Christianity among the Croats. Unfortunately, the report is highly unreliable and so full of confusing reminiscences, that it cannot be taken as evidence that Croatia was already completely Christianized by the middle of the eighth century.”²⁶ Lubomír E. Havlík, another esteemed scholar of Great Moravian history, does not dismiss the potential connection between *GRS* and events in Moravia. However, he perceives it more as a “resonance”: “We cannot exclude the possibility that this fact (sc. that Svatopluk had royal dignity) found its resonance in a tradition recorded by an unknown chronicler in Duklja, in whose Latin (or Old Croatian) text, created from Slavic words and written in Glagolitic, it is stated that Svatopluk (Sfetopelek, Suetopelek, Svetipuk) ‘was crowned king by the legates of Pope Stephen VI, and crowned according to the custom of Roman kings’ – *more Romanorum regum* (Chapter IX).”²⁷ More recently, Kowalski similarly expressed doubts about the possibility of establishing any link: “It is difficult to find any links between the description of this event in *Regnum Sclavorum* (sc. *GRS*) and its possible prototypes in any of the legends about Constantine and Methodius.”²⁸ The same view appears to be shared by other scholars who have specifically studied the story of the Synod of Dalma, namely Ludwig Steindorff and Tibor Živković.²⁹ While they acknowledged clear similarities between *GRS* and the texts on the lives of Constantine and Methodius, they concluded that some aspects of the narrative are, in Steindorff’s words, “far removed from historical truth”.³⁰ Živković’s view is particularly pessimistic: “The analysis of the events described in

²⁶ Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1970, 18–19. For information on the significance of Dvornik’s book for the history of the Byzantine mission to Moravia, see Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250*, Cambridge/New York 2006, 121 n. 23.

²⁷ L. Havlík, *Svatopluk Veliký*, 110–111.

²⁸ W. Kowalski, *The Kings*, 132–133.

²⁹ Ludwig Steindorff, “Die Synode auf der Planities Dalmae: Reichseinteilung und Kirchenorganisation im Bild der Chronik des Priesters von Dioclea”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 93/3–4 (1985) 279–324; Tibor Živković, “O takozvanom saboru na Duvanjskom polju”, *Zbornik za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine* 4 (2004) 45–65; Wawrzyniec Kowalski, “Rupture – Integration – Renewal: The gathering in Dalma and the creation of a political community in the *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea*”, *Slavia Meridionalis* 19 (2019) 1–28.

³⁰ L. Steindorff, “Die Synode”, 286.

chapter IX of the Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea shows quite clearly that the writer deliberately fabricated the entire event in an attempt to strengthen the legal heritage of the rulers of Duklja over the areas that were threatened by the Serbian rulers of Raška.”³¹

It could be argued that these assessments on the credibility of the story of the Synod of Dalma reflect, to some extent, the credibility of the entire text of *GRS* and the unresolved issues surrounding it. *GRS* continues to be a subject of ongoing scholarly debate regarding several general questions, including the identity of its author, the date of its composition, the relationship between its versions, the original language it was written in, its purpose, and the degree of its completion. Even its first editor, Ioannes Lucius, did not hold it in high esteem. Lucius asserts that *GRS* is “rich in fables” and warns historians against believing it, lest they risk their reputation: “The account by the Priest of Dioclea in the history of the Kings of Dalmatia, published by Mauro Orbini in the work titled *The Kingdom of the Slavs*, is also suspect. He claims that during the reign of Emperor Anastasius, one king was seated in Salona and another in Istria. He further narrates their defeat by the Goths and asserts that the Kings of Dalmatia are of Gothic descent, among other things. This casts doubt on the credibility of his accounts of contemporary events. Following him, Thomas, the Archdeacon of Split, conflated the Goths with the Slavs, as did Iacobus Luccari in the *Annals of Ragusa*, who sourced much from the Priest of Dioclea. And if any others wrote in this way, not scrutinizing what they read or heard, and penning their works in the style of the common folk, they cast doubt on their own credibility even in the matters they reported truthfully.”³²

Apart from numerous issues concerning its veracity, the credibility of *GRS* has been challenged recently in a rather radical manner. Solange Bujan has claimed that it is a modern forgery.³³ According to Bujan, the actual author of *GRS* is Orbini, the historian who first published the text in Italian in the early

³¹ T. Živković, “O takozvanom saboru na Duvanjskom polju”, 64.

³² Ioannes Lucius, *De Regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae libri sex*, Amstelaedami 1666, 1.7, 39 (incorrectly written as 36): [...] *fabulosum itidem est, quod Diocletianus Presbyter refert in historia Regum Dalmatiae à Mauro Orbino in tractatu: Il Regno degli Slavi nuncupato edita dum Anastasii Imperatoris tempore, alterum Regem Salonae, alterum in Istria ponit, hosque à Gothis victos narrat, et ex ipsis Gothis, Reges Dalmatiae deducit, aliaque his similia subdens, fidem caeteris sibi contemporaneis detrahit, quem sequitur Thomas Archidiaconus Spalatensis, qui ex eo Gothos cum Slavis confundit, prout, et Iacobus Lucari, in Annalibus Ragusinis multa ex eo desumens, et si qui alii eiusmodi scripsere, si non examinatis iis, quae legerunt, vel audiverunt, more vulgi scribentes, fidem propriam in caeteris, quae vera referunt, in dubium revocant.*

³³ Solange Bujan, “La Chronique du prêtre de Dioclée. Un faux document historique”, *Revue des études byzantine* 66 (2008) 5–38.

17th century.³⁴ She argues that Orbini deceitfully claimed in the prologue of *GRS* that he was presenting a Latin work written by an anonymous writer from the 12th century. Later, Bujan asserts, Lucius harboured a similar malevolent intent. In her view, Lucius opted to translate Orbini's text from Italian into Latin, a language perceived as more authentic for medieval texts. While concerns about the plausibility of collaboration between two individuals who lived and worked decades apart could intuitively be raised (the second author was only ten years old when the first one passed away), this paper will not delve into critiquing Bujan's perspectives. Such an endeavour warrants a separate analysis.

Despite uncertainties surrounding the authenticity of *GRS* and other related concerns, this paper intends to analyse the story of the Synod of Dalma as a piece of an authentic medieval chronicle. Thus, the narrative techniques employed in *GRS* are likely to echo those commonly found in medieval writing, notably the method of compilation, which was a widespread practice among medieval historiographers. As elucidated by Justin Lake, "The majority of medieval historiographers were to some extent compilers of other people's work. Compilation was so important to the composition of histories that only in the late 12th century did a sharp distinction between *auctor* and *compiler* begin to be drawn."³⁵ Lake continues, "Compilation, however, should not be understood as the mindless copying of earlier written sources, since the decision of what to reproduce and how to reproduce it (copying verbatim, excerpting, rewriting, or combining several sources at once) often entailed a sophisticated approach to using prior sources."³⁶

Hence, if we align with Havlík's proposition that the story of the Synod of Dalma forms an "independent plot", we might hypothesize that it derived from a preceding source, incorporated into the chronicle via compilation and rewriting.³⁷ Given that many elements of the story pertain to occurrences in Great Moravia, as previously detailed, it is reasonable to surmise that the source document, which the anonymous writer compiled and recrafted, was similarly associated with Great Moravia. Considering the starkly different geographical context in *GRS*, particularly that of Dalmatia, one could also conjecture that Dalmatian place names were integrated into the previous text, replacing the original ones. This replacement would be the most straightforward method

³⁴ *La storia de Rè di Dalmatia*, ed. M. Orbini, in: Mauro Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, Pesaro 1601, 204–241.

³⁵ Justin Lake, "Current Approaches to Medieval Historiography", *History Compass* 13/3 (2015) 96.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ See W. Kowalski, *The Kings*, 126.

of adapting a story from a disparate geographical setting.³⁸ This assumption gains indirect support from the fact that proper names, in general, are the most volatile elements across the various preserved versions of *GRS*. For instance, in the vernacular version, Dalma is referenced as “planina... Hlivaj,” Svetopelek as “Sveti Puk”, or “Budimir”.³⁹ The story itself, however, remains (almost) unchanged. Consequently, by stripping away the proper names – effectively removing the “diegesis” or the “spatiotemporal world” represented in the *GRS* narrative⁴⁰ – we could potentially unveil the “action” or plot of the prior text.⁴¹ This can be summarized as follows:

1. A local ruler is eager to establish the territorial boundaries of his reign. However, neither he nor his subjects are aware of the actual extent of his kingdom, nor do they know where its borders are.

GRS 40.24–42.18: ***Placuit etiam regi ut temporibus suis rememorarentur ac recordarentur, seu scriberentur, termini ac fines omnium provinciarum ac regionum regni sui quatenus unaquaeque gens sciret atque cognosceret fines et terminos provinciarum et regionum suarum. Congregans igitur omnes sapientes regni sui locutus est eis de verbo hoc, sed nullus eo tempore inventus est, qui certam responsionem daret regi de hac re.***⁴²

2. The local ruler dispatches envoys to significant ecclesiastical and political figures abroad, seeking their assistance in defining the boundaries of his kingdom.

³⁸ See the medieval (hagiographical) examples of textual transformation through the substitution of proper names in the work of Monique Goulet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques: Essai sur les réécritures de Vies de saints dans l'Occident latin médiéval (VIII^e-XIII^e s.)*, Turnhout 2005, 214 n. 35.

³⁹ For the list of differences between the Latin and vernacular version of *GRS*, see W. Kowalski, *The Kings*, 112–121.

⁴⁰ For the definition of “diegesis” in the context of narratological transposition, see Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, Lincoln/London 1997, 295–296.

⁴¹ For the difference between the “action” and “diegesis” of a narrative see G. Genette, *Palimpsests*, 295.

⁴² “The king decided that the borders and limits of all the provinces and regions of his kingdom should be remembered, recorded, or written down in order for each people to know and recognize the borders and limits of their respective provinces and regions. He gathered all the wise men of his kingdom and spoke to them about this matter, but at that time no one was found who could give the king a definite answer about it.”

GRS 42.20–44.8: *Tunc rex Dei sapientia plenus sano utens consilio misit sapientes ac nobiles viros legatos ad venerabilem et apostolicum virum papam Stephanum et ad imperatorem Constantinopolitanae urbis Michaelem rogans et petens quatenus antiqua privilegia quibus termini et fines provinciarum ac regionum, seu terrarum, scripti continebantur, mittere cum viris sapientissimis dignarentur.*

In Sections 1–2, it is noteworthy that the ruler’s interests do not primarily lie in ecclesiastical matters. Rather, his chief concern seems to be discerning the breadth of his political power. This appears to be his singular motivation for dispatching envoys to both the pope and the emperor. Consequently, his request could be interpreted not as an inquiry to determine the extent of his jurisdiction – a detail the local leader would presumably already know – but rather as a plea for international recognition of the territory under his control, or simply, validation of his rule.⁴³

3. Both parties responded positively to the ruler’s request, but the pope was particularly pleased because he saw it as an opportunity to strengthen the faith of the recently Christianized people.

GRS 44.9–20: *Dum autem legati regis Romam venissent et verba regis papae Stephano intimassent, gaudio magno gavisus est papa venerabilis et maxime quod occasione accepta mitteret sapientissimos viros qui novellum ac tenerum regem adhuc in fide et populum eius pascerent ac satiant pane caelesti ac verbo vitae.*⁴⁴

4. The Synod discussed ecclesiastical matters for twice as long as it discussed secular matters, with the papal legate holding equal authority with the local ruler during the Synod.

GRS 48.10–21: [...] *iussu Honorii apostolici vicarii et christianissimi regis Svetoplek per spatium dierum XII synodum fecerunt. In qua diebus octo de lege divina et sacra scriptura ac de statu ecclesiae tractatum est.*

⁴³ See M. Betti, *The Making*, 214.

⁴⁴ “But when the king’s envoys had arrived in Rome and communicated the king’s message to Pope Stephen, the venerable pope was greatly rejoiced, especially because he saw an opportunity to send the wisest men who could nourish and feed the king who is still new and fragile in faith, as well as his people, with the heavenly bread and the word of life.”

*Ceteris autem quatuor diebus de potestate regis, de ducibus et comitibus et centurionibus et de statu regis sermocinatum est.*⁴⁵

5. At the conclusion of the Synod, the local ruler was crowned by the hands of the papal vicar.

*GRS 50.9–16: Finita synodo XII die per manus Honorii vicarii et cardinalium atque episcoporum consecratus est rex atque coronatus more Romanorum regum et facta est laetitia magna in populo et in universo regno eius.*⁴⁶

From Section 3, it can be inferred that the local ruler's actions elicited two reactions at the papal curia: 1) a positive response to the ruler's request, leading to the recognition of the borders of his territory, and 2) a drive to strengthen the papacy's influence in the newly recognized territory. It is plausible to hypothesize that the first reaction was conditioned by the second, meaning that the local ruler may have been obliged to accept papal influence in his land as a condition for the recognition of his borders and coronation (Section 5). As a result of this agreement, the papal curia could have acquired a well-defined territory to extend its authority, carried out by the apostolic legates. Additionally, the papacy could have ensured protection for its legates from the local administration. This context is similar to a real political situation in Great Moravia in 880 when Pope John VIII acknowledged the papal patronage of Svatopluk in the notable bull *Industriae tuae*.⁴⁷ Svatopluk

⁴⁵ "At the command of the apostolic vicar Honorius and the most Christian King Svetopelek, a synod was held for a period of twelve days. During the first eight days, matters concerning divine law, Holy Scripture, and the state of the Church were discussed. The remaining four days were dedicated to discussing the power of the king, as well as dukes, counts, and centurions, and the position of the king."

⁴⁶ "After the Synod was concluded on the twelfth day, the king was consecrated and crowned in the manner of the Roman kings by the hands of Honorius the Vicar, the cardinals, and the bishops. There was great joy among the people and throughout his entire kingdom."

⁴⁷ *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, ed. E. Caspar, in: MGH, Epp. VII (Epistolae Karolini Aevi V), Berlin 1928, Ep. 255, 222–224 [= *Industriae tuae*]. According to Maddalena Betti, the issuance of Pope John VIII's letter *Industriae tuae* and the events of 880 signified a turning point for the papacy. They marked the successful acquisition of a clearly defined territory under a potent ruler's protection, fulfilling the papal ambition to establish a Roman diocese in Slavic lands. This accomplishment, after over a decade of concerted efforts, was crucial for the papacy and its mission (See M. Betti, *The Making*, 146–147, 152–153). Betti's insights resonate with the Synod of Dalma narrative, where Svetopelek expresses a desire to delineate the borders of his domain clearly. The shared interest in establishing well-defined territories – held by both historical ecclesiastical leader Pope John VIII and the fictional character Svetopelek –

was obliged to reinstate Methodius, the papal missionary whom he had earlier expelled under the sway of the Bavarian clergy, and collaborate with him in the governance of ecclesiastical affairs within his territory.⁴⁸ Although Pope John VIII did not mention Svatopluk's coronation in the bull, he did address him as *unicus filius*, a honorific title "usually employed to indicate emperors and candidates for the imperial dignity".⁴⁹ Maddalena Betti, along with most scholars, does not support the notion that Svatopluk was a crowned ruler. She does, however, highlight the "impressive" royal prerogatives bestowed upon Svatopluk by the pope, such as "the privilege of creating an episcopal organization for the Moravian church, along with Archbishop Methodius".⁵⁰ Therefore, the account of the Synod of Dalma could be perceived as additional evidence of Svatopluk's coronation, a claim that finds indirect support in other sources but has not gained widespread acceptance in scholarship.⁵¹ The lack of any mention of the coronation in the bull *Industriae tuae* could be interpreted as a diplomatic manoeuvre by the Apostolic See to maintain political balance and avoid openly revealing its intentions, particularly in relation to the potential threat from the Bavarian clergy. This is illustrated by the inactivity of Pope Hadrian II (867–872) during the three-year imprisonment of Methodius,

merits further examination. It raises questions about Svetopelek's fictionality and suggests the possibility that he might represent a historical figure with similar aspirations, presumably the Great Moravian ruler Svatopluk.

⁴⁸ *Industriae tuae*, 223: *Nos autem illum in omnibus ecclesiasticis doctrinis et utilitatibus orthodoxum et proficuum esse repperientes vobis iterum ad regendam commissam sibi ecclesiam Dei remisimus, quem veluti pastorem proprium ut digno honore et reverentia letaque mente recipiatis, iubemus.* / "We, however, having found him to be orthodox and beneficial in all ecclesiastical teachings and matters, have once again sent him to you to govern the Church of God, and we command that you may receive him as your own shepherd with due honor, reverence, and joyful heart."

⁴⁹ For the summary of the opinions on the meaning of the phrase *unicus filius* in the bull *Industriae tuae*, see M. Betti, *The Making*, 186.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 189.

⁵¹ Several sources mention Svatopluk as the "king": *Zuentopolco regi Sclavorum* / "king of the Slavs" in *Quia te zelo*, 355 (written in 885); and *Zuendibolch rex Marahensium Sclavorum* / "king of the Moravian Slavs" in *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, ed. F. Kurze, in: MGH SRG [50], Hannoverae 1890, 143 (written in 908); *Centupulcho regi Marorum* / "to Svatopluk, King of the Moravians" in *Widukindi Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum libri tres*, eds. H. E. Lohmann – P. Hirsch, in: MGH SRG [60], Hannover 1935, 29 (written in 967–973), and *Zuatopluk rex Moravie* / "Svatopluk, King of Moravia" in *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz, in: MGH SRG N. S. 2, Berlin 1923, 32 (written in 1119–1125). Persian historian Abū Sa'īd Gardīzī (11th century) mentioned that the ruler of the Slavs "wears a crown". See *Kitābe zajnu l-achbār ta'life Abū Sa'īd 'Abduhājī ibn ad-Dahhak ibn Mahmūd Gardīzī*, in: *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici: Diplomata, epistolae, textus historici varii* (=MMFH) III, 428. However, it is unclear whether Gardīzī is referring to Svatopluk. See W. Kowalski, *The Kings*, 127.

his own apostolic missionary.⁵² Consequently, the account of the Synod of Dalma could illuminate the concessions made in 880 by the pope to the Great Moravian ruler, Svatopluk, which were not explicitly disclosed in the papal curia's documents.

Could there have been a Moravian synod, which according to our hypothesis, might have served as the subject of the earlier source utilized by the author of *GRS* for his narrative? We posit that the answer is affirmative. Specifically, it seems highly plausible that representatives of the Pope and Svatopluk convened a synod on the occasion of Methodius' return to Moravia and the initiation of the implementation of the ecclesiastical organization under his leadership. This is supported by an account in the *Life of Methodius*, where in Chapter XII, an assembly of "all the Moravian people" is mentioned. This assembly was reportedly summoned with the intention of reading the papal letter confirming Methodius' orthodoxy. The account reads as follows: "And upon assembling all the Moravian people, they ordered the epistle read in their presence, that they might hear of Methodius' expulsion. And as is man's wont, all the people – save the weak whom deceit moves as wind the leaves – were grieved and mourned the loss of such a shepherd and teacher. But when they read the Apostolic Father's epistle, they found written: 'Our brother Methodius is blessed and Orthodox, and is doing the work of the Apostolic See. And from God and the Apostolic See are all the Slavic lands in his hands. Thus, whomever he curses is cursed; but whomever he blesses, may he be blessed.' Having been shamed, in shame they dispersed like the mist."⁵³ Although the passage is written concisely, it seems that the referenced papal letter must be the bull *Industriae tuae* in which Pope John VIII confirms Methodius' orthodoxy.⁵⁴ Thus, if the Moravian synod indeed took place, it would have been held sometime after June 880, the issuance date of the bull.⁵⁵ Moreover, it seems plausible that this Moravian synod, which was convened as a general assembly, would have addressed other matters beyond the reading of the papal

⁵² On the secrecy of Pope Hadrian II's diplomatic negotiations with Slavic leaders and his passivity concerning Methodius' imprisonment, see M. Betti, *The Making*, 208.

⁵³ *Life of Methodius* 12, in: MMFH II, 157–158; English translation by M. Kantor, *Medieval*, 121–123. This Moravian synod was mentioned by Havlík in reference to the story of the Synod of Dalma, but without any further elaboration of the potential connections between the two. See Lubomir E. Havlik, *Dukljanska hronika i Dalmatinska legenda*, trans. L. Blehova-Čelebić, Podgorica 2008, 135.

⁵⁴ See note 48.

⁵⁵ Havlík mentions "autumn 880", without providing reference for this exact dating. See Havlik, *Dukljanska hronika*, 135.

directive for Svatopluk to welcome Methodius back.⁵⁶ Given that the meeting was initially convened for a church-related issue, it is conceivable that these additional matters were, at least in part, also church-related. As the first item on the agenda of this Moravian synod, specifically the confirmation of Methodius' orthodoxy and the endorsement of his authority to establish church organization in Svatopluk's territory, was present in the papal bull, one could also anticipate that the other agenda items of the Moravian synod were addressed in the same document. There exists a section of the bull which could indeed be interpreted as the synod's agenda items. This particular section delineates the structure of the new Moravian ecclesiastical organization, including its precise hierarchy. The chain of command is meticulously defined: 1) with Archbishop Methodius' endorsement, Svatopluk selects an additional bishop alongside the already appointed Viching; 2) the selected bishop is then dispatched to Rome for papal ordination; 3) subsequently, Methodius collaborates with Viching and the newly ordained bishop to consecrate additional bishops "in other places where bishops ought to and can honourably exist".⁵⁷ These supposed agenda items of the Moravian synod related to the Moravian ecclesiastical organization correspond with the topics addressed during the eight-day deliberations on the "divine law" (*de lege divina*) at the Synod of Dalma. According to the account, these eight days served to lay the foundation for the establishment of the ecclesiastical organization in Dalmatia (Section 4). In the account of the Synod of Dalma, there is also a second session, one that focuses on secular matters. *GRS* presents this session as a four-day-long discussion on the "power of the king" (*de potestate regis*) (Section 4). However, the papal bull contains no similar content. Still, if the aforementioned agreement was established between the pope and Svatopluk, it is logical to argue that the state organization would have been a topic of discussion at the Moravian synod as well. The reasons for the lack of agenda items related to this hypothetical "secular session" in the papal bull *Industriae tuae* can be readily understood. First, the absence could

⁵⁶ *Industriae tuae*, 223: [...] volumus, ut pariter cum ipsius archiepiscopi consensu et providentia et alterum nobis apto tempore utilem presbiterum vel diaconem dirigas, quem similiter in alia ecclesia, in qua episcopalem curam noveris esse necessariam, ordinemus episcopum, ut cum his duobus a nobis ordinatis episcopis praefatus archiepiscopus vester iuxta decretum apostolicum per alia loca, in quibus episcopi honorifice debent et possunt existere, postmodum valeat ordinare. / "We wish that, along with the consent and providence of the archbishop himself, you also appoint another capable priest or deacon at a suitable time, whom we may ordain as a bishop in another church where you deem it necessary to have an episcopal care, so that, in accordance with the apostolic decree, your aforementioned archbishop, together with the two bishops ordained by us, may subsequently be able to carry out ordinations in other places where bishops ought to and can honourably exist."

⁵⁷ See note 55.

be attributed to the inherent nature of the document. Second, the same rationale that explains the omission of the potential coronation of Svatopluk by the hands of the papal legate could apply here as well. Specifically, if the agenda of the hypothetical second session of the Moravian synod, which would be devoted to state organization, were included, it could reveal significant concessions made by the pope to the Moravian ruler in exchange for the acceptance and protection of Methodius in his territory.⁵⁸ Thus, while presented as papal patronage, or *privilegium*, extended to Svatopluk, if this hypothesis holds true, the actual relationship between the two parties may have been the reverse.

6. Following his coronation, the newly crowned ruler executes the ecclesiastical reforms independently, without the involvement of any church dignitary.

GRS 50.16–19: Post haec iussit rex ut consecrarentur archiepiscopi, unus in Salona et alius in Dioclia.

GRS 52.10–17: Statuit etiam rex ut nullus perturbaret in aliquo aliquam ecclesiam, aut haberet aliquam potestatem seu dominationem in aliqua ecclesia, nisi solus archiepiscopus, vel episcopus, cuius sub iure esset eadem ecclesia.

7. Subsequent to the implementation of ecclesiastical reforms, the local ruler advances state reforms. In this process, pivotal roles within the state are apportioned to members of the royal family. A significant proportion of the collected taxes are allocated to the king. Furthermore, the provincial governors maintain accountability exclusively to the king.

GRS 58.24–60.1: Bani post haec medietatem regi persolverent et medietatem sibi tenerent.

⁵⁸ Francis Dvornik contends that Pope John VIII indeed made specific concessions to Svatopluk, though these were confined solely to ecclesiastical matters. According to Dvornik, the Pope appointed Viching – a known adversary of Methodius and a favored figure of Svatopluk – as the bishop of Nitra, at Svatopluk’s request: “Although he [Svatopluk] allowed the Slavic liturgy to spread, he himself preferred the Latin Mass, and he weakened the position of Methodius by asking John VIII to ordain one of his councilors, the German Wiching, as the bishop of Nitra.” See Francis Dvornik, “The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius”, *Slavic Review* 23/2 (1964) 208. However, Betti notes that the passage in the bull *Industriae tuae* about Nitra is likely not original and was probably inserted later. See M. Betti, *The Making*, 153.

GRS 60.6–15: *Et duas partes tributorum comites, idest iupani, regi ut solverent, tertiam vero suo usui retinerent, banis autem, sive ducibus, nullam rationem facerent, sed unusquisque teneret et dominaretur iupaniis earundem provinciarum ac regionum, sed solo regi rationem redderent.*

Section 7 is of particular interest as it describes secular matters, specifically the centralized distribution of power and financial resources in the land. Section 6, on the other hand, suggests the king's autonomy; it is he alone who, upon coronation, initiates reforms, including ecclesiastical ones. This portrayal of a strong and autocratic ruler, seemingly indifferent to church authorities, is reminiscent of what is known about Great Moravian Svatopluk.⁵⁹

8. The reforms implemented in the state are attributed solely to the newly crowned local ruler. They are described as “numerous” and “commendable”, and he is praised as “the most benevolent king”.

GRS 60.15–16: *Multas leges et bonos mores instituit.*⁶⁰

GRS 60.19–21: *Ibi reperiet qualia bona instituit rex benignissimus.*⁶¹

It is evident from Section 8 that the narrative of the Synod of Dalma adopts a panegyric tone, with a sole focus on the king. Therefore, if we consider the primary text of the *GRS* narrative to be linked to the events in Great Moravia and its prominent ruler, Svatopluk, it would be reasonable to surmise that the author(s) of this primary text were individuals who sought to glorify Svatopluk, irrespective of whether he was still alive at the time the text was composed.

Conclusion

Upon the analysis of the story of the Synod of Dalma, it is posited that its Dalmatian context is a diegetic transposition of the primary text about Great Moravia by an author who aimed to write a chronicle on the Slavs living south

⁵⁹ On Svatopluk's power and wealth see Luděk Galuška, “Rex, principes, optimates – the elites of Great Moravia”, in: *Great Moravia and the Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Pavel Kouřil, Brno 2014, 55. On Svatopluk's strong character, see Pavel Kouřil, “The final years and downfall of Great Moravia”, in: P. Kouřil, *Great Moravia*, 178.

⁶⁰ “He established numerous laws and commendable customs.”

⁶¹ “There he will find the kind of good things the most benevolent king instituted.”

of the Danube. The primary source is interpreted as a text that seeks to glorify the Great Moravian ruler Svatopluk, who is referred to as *rex benignissimus*, and the reforms he implemented, which were praised as “numerous” and “commendable”.

The exclusive use of credible documents in *GRS* that refer to events occurring in the second half of the 9th century in Great Moravia, coupled with the writing technique of compilation and adaptation, which was common in medieval historiography, suggests that the chronicle itself is an authentic medieval text. It appears that a renewed source critique for the entire chronicle could potentially restore its value as a trustworthy document for the history of the Slavs in the Middle Ages.

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Драгана Кунчер

О ПОРЕКЛУ ПРИЧЕ О ДУВАЊСКОМ САБОРУ

Резиме

У раду се анализира прича о такозваном Дувањском сабору за коју је примарни извор хроника анонимног аутора *Gesta regum Sclavorum*, позната у науци као *Летопис пона Дукљанина*. Упркос тези да се ради о модерном фалсификату, хроника је посматрана као аутентичан средњовековни текст. С том претпоставком подразумевано је да су и технике писања и начин на који је настала средњовековне. А једна од најзначајнијих карактеристика средњовековне историографије је компилација туђих текстова и њихово уношење, без назнака да се ради о туђем тексту, уз веће или мање прераде, у оригинално дело. Будући да у причи о Дувањском сабору има знатан број података који се односе на мисију Ћирила и Методија у Великој Моравској у другој половини 9. века, претпостављено је да се текст који је аутор хронике користио за своју причу односио на догађаје и личности у Моравској у другој половини 9. века. Након анализе нарације о Дувањском сабору и поређења са политичком и црквеном ситуацијом у Великој Моравској издвојене су подударности. Закључак рада је да је аутор хронике *Gesta regum Sclavorum* за свој текст употребио документ који се односио на Велику Моравску и догађаје после 880. године, уневши га у свој текст након промене географског контекста, то јест након што је избрисао великоморавске топониме првобитног извора и додао топониме везане за Далмацију.

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