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Cultural and Religious Significance of the Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition in Central and Eastern Europe

In most European languages there is a vast body of literature dedicated to the lives and works of Cyril and Methodius. In particular, much has been written on this subject by the Central and East European scholars, due to the role the Apostles of the Slavs have played in the history of this region. The cultural and religious transformation, which was brought about by the brothers from Salonica in the Central Europe, have spread throughout the neighbouring countries after their death.¹ This took place soon after the death of Methodius in 885, when Pope Stephan V (VI) issued the bull *Quia te zelo fidei*, in which he condemned the Slavonic rite and declared it to be heretical.² Methodius's disciples were expelled from Greater Moravia, and

1. See T. Gromnicki, *Święci Cyryl i Metody*, Kraków 1880; W. Chotkowski, *Żywoć śś. Cyryla i Metodego*, Kraków 1885; E. Golubinskij, *Konstantin e Methodej*, Moskwa 1885; F. V. Sasinek, *Život sv. Cyrilla a Methoda, apoštolov slovanských*. Trnava 1885; A. Voronov, *Kiril i Methodij*, Kiev 1928; F. Grivec, *Cyryl i Metody – Apostołowie Słowian*, transl. J. Korzonkiewicz, Kraków 1930; F. Grivec, *Konstantin und Method – Lehrer der Slaven*, Wiesbaden 1960; M. Lacko, *Sv. Cyril a Metod*, Rim 1963; A. Bagin, *Apoštolé Slovanů Cyril a Metoděj a Velká Morava*, Praha 1982; J. Lešný, *Święci Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie Słowian. Dzieło i jego losy*, Poznań 1987; *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian. Studia i dokumenty*, red. J. S. Gajek, L. Górka, t. 1–2, Lublin 1991; *Święci Konstantyn-Cyryl i Metody. Patroni Wschodu i Zachodu*, red. A. Naumov, t. 1–2 Kraków 2013; *The Cyril and Methodius mission and Europe – 1150 years since the arrival of the Thessaloniki brothers in Great Moravia*, ed. by P. Kouřil, Brno 2014.
2. T. Lehr-Splawiński, *Konstantyn i Metody. Zarys monograficzny z wyborem źródeł*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 276–278.

the Slavonic language rite was replaced with the traditional Latin liturgy. The greatest number of exiles found refuge on the territory of the then Bulgarian state. Among them were Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Sava and Angelarius, who were later referred to as the Apostles of Bulgaria.³ And it was due to them that the Glagolitic script originally spread across the whole territory of Bulgaria. However, in Preslav, in North-East Bulgaria, it was the so-called "Cyrillic" script that soon became increasingly popular. That was a completely new alphabet created by Cyril's disciples. In that way, to pay homage to their great teacher.⁴

In 893 the synod in Preslav recognized the Slavonic liturgy to be binding. The work of Methodius' disciples, who gathered around the centres in Preslav and Ochrida, gave rise to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.⁵ Soon afterwards Greater Moravia was sacked and destroyed by the Magyars and for many years Christianity instilled by Cyril and Methodius had to go underground on the territory occupied by the barbarian invaders. This event brought about profound cultural and religious changes throughout the Danube river and Balkan regions and in the Central and Eastern Europe.⁶ As it is emphasized in the works of Brygida Kürbis, the tradition of bilingualism in the life of the Church was inherited by the Czechs – a newly founded state of the Przemyslids dynasty. She also stressed the fact that the Slavonic tradition in Central and Eastern Europe meant bilingualism but not two different rites in the liturgy.⁷

In the tenth century the Slavonic language in the liturgy began to be used also in the territory of Croatia. It is known that in 925, as well as at the end of 927 and at the beginning of 928, Croatian Duke Tomislav convened

3. F. Dvornik, *The Significance of the Missions of Cyril and Methodius*, "Slavic Review" 23 (1964) no. 2, pp. 208–209; L. E. Havlik, *Constantine and Methodius in Moravia*, „Sbornik prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity“, 1964 C 11, pp. 39–40; Zob. także T. Lehr-Splawiński, *Nowa faza dyskusji o zagadnieniu liturgii słowiańskiej w dawnej Polsce*, „Nasza Przeszłość” 7 (1958), pp. 235–256; J. Stradomski, *Spory o „wiarę grecką” w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków 2003, pp. 106–107.
4. I. G. Iliev, *Short History of the Cyrillic Alphabet*, "International Journal of Russian Studies" 2 (2013), pp. 222–227.
5. G. C. Soulis, *The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 19 (1965), pp. 25–26.
6. G. Moravcsik, *The Role of the Byzantine Church in Medieval Hungary*, "American Slavic and East European Review" 6 (1947) no. 3/4, pp. 135–137.
7. B. Kürbis, *Krąg czesko-morawski a pierwsza chrystianizacja Polski*, in: *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian. Studia i dokumenty*, red. J. S. Gajek, L. Górka, t. 1, Lublin 1991, p. 147.

synods which condemned such religious practices. Despite those adverse circumstances the Slavonic rite survived in Dalmatia. In 1248 Pope Innocent IV granted Croatians a privilege to use the Slavonic language and Glagolitic writing in the liturgy. In Dalmatia there existed several Benedictine abbeys in which the Slavonic liturgy was practiced.⁸ It was from there that in 1347 Charles IV brought in, with King Stephen Duszán's consent, the Slavonic Benedictines from Senj to Prague to the monastery founded by him, which was called Emmaus.⁹ The emperor was descended, on the mother's side, from the family of Przemyslids and considered himself to be the heir to the grand legacy of his ancestors. Owing to his support the Slavonic Benedictines, called 'glagolasze' (that is, the ones who use Glagolitic), were assigned to revive the tradition of the Slavonic writing in the Kingdom of Bohemia. It was in the monastic scriptorium that the religious literature in the Czech language, written down in the Glagolitic script, started to be created. The activity of the Slavonic brothers ended during the Hussite wars at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹⁰ It seems that in Bohemia the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was adopted by the Hussites to defend their own religious ideas. This was particularly popular in the case of using the vernacular in the liturgy and in the distribution of communion under both kinds, which, as they claimed, was granted to them by Cyril and Methodius and which was based on a special Pope's privilege.¹¹ We find the reflection of this in the treatises and polemical texts of the time in which the Hussites quite deliberately leave out all references indicating a close relations between the brothers from Salonica and Rome.

During the whole medieval period Cyril and Methodius were especially venerated in Moravia. In this country, which belonged to the Crown of Saint Vaclav, the Hussite ideas were neither popular nor found

8. B. Oczkowa, *Tradycje cyrylo-metodiańskie w Chorwacji i Bośni*, in: *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian...*, op. cit., pp. 172–174; J. Verkholtantsev, *St. Jerome, Apostle to the Slavs, and the Roman Slavonic Rite*, "Speculum" 87 (2012), pp. 40–42.
9. M. Kanior, *Misja benedyktynów słowiańskich w kościele św. Krzyża w Krakowie*, „Folia Historica Cracoviensia” 2 (1994), pp. 24–27.
10. J. Smolik, *Słowiańska liturgia w Czechach*, in: *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian...*, op. cit., pp. 87–88; J. Verkholtantsev, *St. Jerome, Apostle to the Slavs...*, op. cit., pp. 48–55.
11. T. Parma, *The legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius in the plans for the Recatholisation of Moravia*, in: *The Cyril and Methodius mission and Europe...*, op. cit., pp. 334–335.

many followers. This can be partly explained by the influence of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition which still could have been lively and vibrant in Moravia at that time. At the end of the Middle Ages, the presence of the cult of the holy brothers from Salonica can be found there in numerous liturgical calendars, prayers, supplications and the liturgy. There were also various altars and shrines dedicated to them. Since the middle of the fourteenth century, they have been regarded as the patron saints of the Olomouc bishopric, and, subsequently, as the patron saints of the whole Moravia.¹²

Their lives and works find their reflection in the chronicles of Bohemian history. One of them is the chronicle of Přebík Pulkava of Radenín, which was written at the request of the Emperor Charles IV.¹³ They also receive an extensive coverage by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini in his remarkable *Historia Bohemica*, which was completed in 1458. Writing about Cyril and Methodius, Pius II draws extensively from the Pulkava chronicle. The learned Pope stresses in it the involvement of the saint brothers from Salonica in the christianisation of Great Moravia, their connection with Rome and the key role they played in introducing the Slavonic liturgy.¹⁴ *Historia Bohemica* was used by almost all subsequent early modern and modern historians, both by the friends and the enemies of the Roman Catholic Church, who studied the lives of Cyril and Methodius. Depending on their religious and political agendas, they used to stress convenient elements and leave out inconvenient ones of their biographies.¹⁵

The Slavonic Benedictines of Prague also had their branch in Silesia. In 1380 Duke Conrad II founded a Slavonic Benedictine abbey dedicated to Corpus Christi in Oleśnica.¹⁶ Its construction was probably completed only at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Not all the reasons for bringing that particular order to Oleśnica are known. Supposedly, it could have been Duke Conrad II's attempt to reduce the growing importance of

12. A. Kalous, *The Tradition of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Late Mediaeval Bohemian Lands*, in: *The Cyril and Methodius mission and Europe...*, op. cit., p. 327.
13. *Przibiconis de Radenin dicti Pulkavae Chronicon Bohemiae*, ed. by J. Emler, J. Gebauer, J. Goll, in: *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 5, Praha 1893, pp. 15–17; A. Kalous, *The Tradition of Saints Cyril and Methodius...*, op. cit., p. 322.
14. *Eneae Silvii, Historia Bohemica. Historie česká*, ed. D. Martinková, A. Hadravová, J. Mantl, Praha, 1998, pp. 38–42; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe des, lateinischen Textes*, Hrsg. J. Hejnic, H. Rothe, Köln 2005, pp. 90–100.
15. A. Kalous, *The Tradition of Saints Cyril and Methodius...*, op. cit., pp. 323–324.
16. M. Kanior, *Misja benedyktynów słowiańskich...*, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

the German-descent clergy in this area. In the fifteenth century, despite large donations and support from the Duke, the monastery began to fall into decline. The crisis started with the Hussite revolution, as a result of which the main seat of the order in Prague was closed down. Then the Slavonic Benedictines in Silesia lost the support necessary for continuing their mission. With the passing of time the number of monks began to decline dramatically, which finally led to the closure of the monastery. It took place on 13 January 1505 when the bishop of Wrocław John IV Roth incorporated the church and monastery into the parish of the Augustinian order.¹⁷

There was also an important Cracow episode connected with the Slavonic Benedictines. In 1390 a church dedicated to The Holy Cross and a monastery for 30 Slavonic Benedictines was built in Kleparz (now part of Cracow), founded by Queen Hedwig and King Wladislaw II Jagiello.¹⁸ Presumably the intention of the royal couple was to send the Slavonic Benedictines to carry out a mission in Ruthenia. However, that foundation collapsed soon after the death of St. Queen Hedwig.¹⁹ The Holy Cross Church had survived in Kleparz in the state of ruin as long as 1817, when it was finally demolished. Only the name of "Słowiańska" Street (which means "Slavonic") has remained to this day.²⁰ However, Saints Cyril and Methodius were not forgotten in Cracow for a long time to come. It manifested itself, among other things, in the decision taken by Zbigniew Oleśnicki, the bishop of Cracow, in 1436 at the diocesan synod in Cracow to introduce the feast of Cyril and Methodius, "patronorum et apostolorum huius Regni", into the liturgical calendar of the diocese.²¹

17. S. Rybandt, *O pobycie benedyktynów słowiańskich w Oleśnicy*, „Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka” 25 (1970) no. 4, pp. 665–680; B. Czechowicz, *In latinam et slavonicam linguas. Fundacja benedyktyńska w Oleśnicy z 1380 r. i jej lubiąski kontekst*, „Miscellanea Oleśnickie” 1 (2015), pp. 28–33.
18. *Joannis Dlugosii Annales seu Cronicae incliti regni Poloniae: Liber X (1370–1405)*, ed. by S. Gawęda et. al., Warszawa 1985, pp. 183–184; M. Kanior, *Misja benedyktynów słowiańskich...*, op. cit., pp. 23–30.
19. J. Wyrozumski, *Benedyktyni słowiańscy w Oleśnicy i Krakowie*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego: Sławistyka” 3 (1982), pp. 116–124; T.M. Trajdos, *Fundacja klasztoru benedyktynów słowiańskich na Kleparzu w Krakowie*, „Rocznik Krakowski” 54 (1988), pp. 73–89.
20. J. Krukowski, *O słowiańskim kościele S. Krzyża i klasztorze benedyktynów*, Kraków 1886, pp. 28–30; A. Chodkiewicz, *Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska w Polsce*, in: *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian...*, op. cit., p. 128.
21. *Statuta synodalia episcoporum Cracoviensium XIV et XV saeculi*, ed. by U. Haizmann, Kraków 1875, p. 92; J. Stradomski, *Spory o „wiarę grecką”...*, op. cit., p. 107.

It might be supposed that the decision of the bishop was in a direct connection with the planned union of the Churches which was to bring together under one umbrella the Greek Orthodox believers and the Catholics. The project as such was promoted both by the council fathers gathered in Basel (who had the support of the bishop of Cracow) and by Pope Eugene IV himself. In the end, the Pope was able to bring about the union with the Greek Church in Florence in 1439. Having in mind the purpose of propagating the union of the Churches on the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian State and in the Grand Duchy of Moscovy, the Apostolic See sent as its legate the Cardinal Isidore, who was the Greek by origin. It was not the matter of sheer coincidence, that he was born in Thessalonica – in the very birthplace of Cyril and Methodius.²²

Although the "Slavonic" saints had no direct connections to Poland, they ideally served the purpose of the Jagiellonian dynasty in their vision to unite all Slavic countries.²³ When Vladislav II, the son of King Casimir Jagiellon, assumed the Bohemian throne in 1471, this idea received a new significance going beyond the boundaries of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Twenty years later, when Vladislav II occupied the throne of Hungary, the cult of Cyril and Methodius spread over the Pannonian Plain and the lands that constituted the Kingdom of Hungary.²⁴

A great missionary work of the two holy brothers was brought to light again by the Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Hosius during the Council of Trent. In 1558, he was asked by Pope Paul IV to present the Catholic position on certain practices, vehemently promoted by the Protestants, where among others, there was the use vernacular in the liturgy. Hosius put forward his arguments in the printed treatise cast in the form of a dialogue. In the section dealing with a role of the native languages in the Church, he pointed out that six hundred years had passed since Slavonic language, created by Cyril and Methodius for the sake of the liturgy, had been officially approved by the Holy See. However, over the course of time, it was supplanted by Latin. And the reason for that change was that over the course of their development the Slavonic languages had diverged to such an extent that Old

22. O. Halecki, *Od Unii Florenckiej do Unii Brzeskiej*, t. 1, Lublin 1997, p. 26.

23. M. Stawski, *Cyrillo-Methodian traditions in Poland. The Legend of Christian in the Service of Jagiellonian Ambitions*, in: *The Cyril and Methodius mission and Europe...*, op. cit., pp. 358–363.

24. A. Kalous, *The Traditihon of Saints Cyril and Methodius...*, op. cit., p. 327.

Church Slavonic was almost completely incomprehensible for the majority of the Slavic peoples. In the last centuries, Hosius argued, the civilizational development of the Central European countries had led to the popularity and triumph of Latin. To illustrate his point, Hosius brought up the case of the Holy Cross Church in Clepardia in Cracow, where only a century earlier the Slavonic liturgy had been promoted and yet without any success. Ultimately, according to Hosius, Latin should remain the language of the religion of the West because it serves this function best.²⁵

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Polish-Lithuanian State was striving for agreement and unity with the Orthodox world. These endeavours finally resulted in the Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596.²⁶ The process was accompanied by the revival of the cult of Cyril and Methodius in the Kingdom of Poland. When in 1589, at the synod in Piotrków, it was decided to collect *Officia* – a collection of Breviary and Missal prayers to the patron saints of Poland – bishop George Radziwiłł, who was supervising the project, ordered to include in the book the Saint Apostles of the Slavs.²⁷ It is worth mentioning here that bishop George Radziwiłł studied at Gregoriana in Rome, at the place where the idea of the unity between the two Churches was strongly promoted.²⁸

Stanislav Hosius, whom we have already mentioned before, invited the Jesuits to settle in Braniewo in 1565.²⁹ They soon set up the first Jesuit college on the Polish territory, which was one of the five so-called “northern pontifical seminaries”, with the goal to spread the Catholic faith north of the Alps.³⁰ There was also among them the college in Vilnius and one

25. *De expreso Dei verbo, libellus... Item dialogus trimembris... De communione sacrae Eucharistiae sub vtraque specie, De sacerdotum coniugio, Deque sacro vulgari lingua celebrando*, Parisiis 1560, pp. 157v–159v; Cf. F.J.Thomson, *The legacy of SS. Cyril and Methodius in the Counter-Reformation*, “Philhellenische Studien” 10 (2005), pp. 85ff.

26. O. Halecki, *Od Unii Florenckiej...*, op. cit., pp. 232–265.

27. W. Szcześniak, *Obrządek słowiański w Polsce pierwotnej rozważony w świetle dziejopisarstwa polskiego*, Warszawa 1904, p. 14.

28. W. Müller, *Radziwiłł Jerzy herbu Trąby 1556–1600*, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 30, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1987, pp. 229–230.

29. S. Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce*, t. 1, Lwów 1900, pp. 150ff; B. Natoński, *Początki i rozwój Towarzystwa Jezusowego w Polsce 1564–1580*, in: J. Brodrick, *Powstanie i rozwój Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, t. 1: *Początki Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, Kraków 1969, pp. 414ff.

30. L. Lukács, *Die Nordischen päpstlichen Seminarien und P. Possevino (1577–1587)*, “Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu” 24 (1955), pp. 33–94; See more L. Grzebień,

of its alumnus, Josaphat Kuncewicz, was a great promoter of the devotion to Cyril and Methodius in the eastern provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.³¹

In the era of Counter-Reformation the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was particularly applied by the Jesuit Order as the means to revive Catholicism – also in the lands of the former Kingdom of Bohemia. The Jesuits took advantage, in a highly skilled way, of the idea of accommodation and enculturation, which was close to their heart, in order to find some elements of Slavonic identity in the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. At the end of the sixteenth century it was the Jesuit college in Olomouc (founded in 1573), which established itself as one of the most important centres for promoting this idea. The Jesuits were convinced that the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition would be the most suitable model for building connections between the Slavonic Catholics and the heterodox believers in the Kingdom of Bohemia, which was then regarded as a very difficult missionary field. They also received support from the local bishop, Stanislav Pavlovský, and the members of the cathedral chapter.³² Due to this assistance, the Olomouc Jesuits set about working on the religious reforms, which, to a large extent, were patterned on early medieval missionary work carried out by Cyril and Methodius among the Slavonic peoples. In this regard, Moravia and Bohemia became for the Jesuits the experimenting field in counter-reformation and missionary activities in Europe and worldwide.³³ It would make for a fascinating study to investigate the connection between a strong involvement of the Jesuits from the Bohemian province in the missionary activity in the New World and in the South East Asia and the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

There were also some non-Catholics in Bohemia and Moravia who were trying to find their identity in this tradition by indicating continuity of

Podstawowa bibliografia do dziejów Towarzystwa Jezusowego w Polsce, t. 1, Kraków 2009, pp. 221–222.

31. A. Chodkiewicz, *Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska...*, op. cit., p. 129.
32. T. Parma, *The legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius in the plans for the Recatholisation of Moravia*, in: *The Cyril and Methodius mission and Europe...*, op. cit., pp. 336–337.
33. See O. Odložilík, *Czech Missionaries in New Spain*, "The Hispanic American Historical Review" 25 (1945) no. 4, pp. 428–454; J. Kolmaš, *Father Karel (Carolus) Slaviček, SJ (1678–1735). The first Bohemian sinologist*, "Monumenta Serica" 54 (2006) pp. 243–251. M. Křížová, *Meeting the Other in the New World. Jesuit Missionaries from the Bohemian Province in America*, „Historie – Otázky – Problémy", 8 (2016) no. 2, pp. 35–46.

the faith and doctrine so firmly rooted by the saint brothers from Salonica in the Great Moravian State. For instance, in 1660, John Amos Comenius, one of the most famous Protestant reformers and thinkers, published a book under the telling title *Ecclesiae Slavonicae ab ipsis Apostolis fundatae, ab Hieronymo, Cyrillo, Methodio, propagatae, Bohema in gente potissimum radicatae et in Unitate Fratrum Bohemorum fastigiatae, brevis Historiola*.³⁴ The title alone gives us some relatively good insight into the nature and background of his work, in which he describes the history of the Slavonic Church founded by Cyril and Methodius. Comenius argued that the Gospel preached by the „Greek bishops” had quickly spread from Bohemia and Moravia to the neighbouring Poland and Russia. However, the Papacy hindered a spontaneous growth of this Church by trying to get control over it.³⁵

In the second half of the seventeenth century there was the heyday of historical and hagiographical writing dedicated to the lives of Cyril and Methodius, what was mainly caused by the Jesuit counter-reformatory activities. The leading figures among them were Thomas Pešina of Čechorod and Bohuslav Balbín.³⁶ Several years later the Jesuit activity in this field went on disrupted until the dissolution of the Jesuits Order in 1773. The latter event coincided with the beginning of the slow awakening of the national identity in Bohemia, Moravia and the territory of present-day Slovakia. In Bohemia that process not only contributed to the creation of scientific and literary works in the Czech language, but also resulted in the emergence of the first manifestations of the unity of the Czechs with the rest of the Slavic nations. Undoubtedly, the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was recalled by the Jesuits played a crucial role in reviving the national identity. The Czechs and Slovaks realized that it was Cyril and Methodius from whom they had received their own writing and, as a result, had been introduced into “the family of nations of high culture”. The cause of the national revival and the idea of bringing the Slavic nations closer together found supporters and proponents among the representatives of the Catholic Church, as well

34. J. A. Comenius, *Ecclesiae Slavonicae ab ipsis Apostolis fundatae, ab Hieronymo, Cyrillo, Methodio, propagatae, Bohema in gente potissimum radicatae et in Unitate Fratrum Bohemorum fastigiatae, brevis Historiola*, Amsterdam 1660.

35. T. Parma, *The legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius...*, op. cit., p. 336.

36. T. Parma, *The legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius...*, op. cit., p. 340; cf. A. Zobačová, *„Krista tedy hlásat v národu svém”. Několik poznámek ke kořenům a proměnám cyrilometodějství v 19. století*, *Slavica Litteraria* 17 (2014) no. 1, pp. 104–105.

as the Slavonic Christian communities which were active on the territory of Austrian (and later Austro-Hungarian) Empire.

That challenge in Central Europe was taken up once again by the Jesuits who had survived on the territory of present-day Belarus and were restored to activity in 1814 by the decision of the Holy See. The experience gained during the pastoral work in the western part of the Russian Empire could then be successfully used in other countries. The Jesuits were famous for their skill to promote the truths of faith in the alien cultural environment in a subtle way. They had always attached a lot of weight to the knowledge of vernaculars, different local traditions and customs.³⁷ Under the new circumstances, the Jesuits resumed their old role of promoting the unity between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches. It was initiated at the end of the sixteenth century by Anthony Possevino, the secretary of the Society of Jesus, who was sent to Moscow with ecumenical mission.³⁸ In the nineteenth century, this approach had some outstanding continuators among the Russian Jesuits, such as Prince Ivan Sergejevich Gagarin, who joined the Society in 1843. Some years later he was followed by his friends – Ivan Mikhailovich Martinov and Eugene Balabin. Their apostasy received a lot of publicity throughout the whole Europe.³⁹ In 1855, these Russian Jesuits set up in Versailles near Paris the society called 'L'œuvre des saints Cyrille et Méthode', with the task to promote cultural and religious unity among the Slavonic nations in the spirit of the saint brothers from Salonica. They promoted their ecumenical ideas in a book series published under the auspices of 'Bibliothèque slave'.⁴⁰ Paul Pierling was another eminent Jesuit associated with the society who was known for his remarkable contribution to historical studies by writing extensively about the relations between the

37. J. Budniak, *Jednoczeni w różnorodności. Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska jako paradygmat procesu pojednania Kościołów, kultur i narodów*. Katowice 2009, p. 43.
38. S. Polčín SJ, *Une tentative d'Union au XVIe siècle. La Mission religieuse du Père Antoine Possevin SJ en Moscovie (1581–82)*, «*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*» 150 (1957).
39. M. Kwaśnicka, *Piotr Skarga, Antonio Possevino, Iwan Gagarin. Jezuickie projekty pojednania Kościoła prawosławnego z rzymskim*, in: *Antonio Possevino SJ (1533–1611). Życie i dzieło na tle epoki*, red. D. Quirini-Popławska, Kraków 2012, pp. 540–541.
40. M. J. Rouët de Journal, *L'œuvre des saints Cyrille et Méthode et la bibliothèque slave*, «*Revue des études slaves*» 3 (1923) no. 1, pp. 90–104; A. Tamborra, *La riscoperta di Cirillo e Metodio nel secolo XIX e il suo significato*, in: *Christianity among the Slavs. The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius*, ed. by E. G. Farrugia, R. F. Taft, G. K. Piovesana, Roma 1988, pp. 330–333.

Catholic Church and the Orthodox Russia. His most important contribution was a monumental five-volume work entitled *La Russie et le Saint-Siège*.⁴¹ It was mainly due to his efforts that Pope Leo XIII extended the cult of the Apostles of the Slavs to the whole Church in the Encyclical Letter *Grande munus*, issued on 30 September 1880.⁴²

The activity of Ivan Gagarin and his associates had also an impact on these Central European circles that cultivated the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy. In 1849, 'Národní jednota sv. Cyrila a Metoděje' ('Saints Cyril and Methodius National Union') was established in Brno (Moravia) with the mission to promote Catholic and national ideas. When Frederick von Fürstenberg, the Archbishop of Olomouc, purchased the Great Moravian Velehrad in 1856, the place soon established itself as the major center of the movement and the destination place for pilgrims. In order to celebrate the millennial anniversary of the arrival of the Saints to Great Moravia, the great pilgrimage was organized to Velehrad in 1863. A similar one was also arranged in 1885, this time to celebrate the millennial anniversary of St. Methodius' death.⁴³

On 29 November 1889 Archbishop of Olomouc, Cardinal Frederick von Fürstenberg submitted the letter to the superior of the Austrian Province of the Society of Jesus in Vienna, Francis Xavier Schwärzler, in which, he requested that the Jesuits should come to Velehrad in order to take over the local parish. One of the conditions for the Jesuits' arrival in Velehrad was the knowledge of the Czech language. The final decision on taking over the parish in Velehrad was made by the government in Vienna. Such a document was issued on 18 November 1890, and a month later the parish was handed over to the Jesuits.⁴⁴

On 15 January 1891 Cardinal Fürstenberg issued a special decree about handing over the parish in Velehrad to the Society of Jesus. He contained in it a wish that the Jesuits should take particular care of the sanctuary of

41. P. Pierling, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège*, vol. 1–5, Paris, 1896–1912.

42. *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 13 (1880), pp. 145–153; *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian...*, op. cit., t. 2, pp. 106–112; *Encyklika Ojca św. Leona XIII z dnia 30 września 1880 r. dotycząca czci apostołów Słowiańszczyzny św. Cyryla i Metodego*, red. A. Kan-tecki, Poznań 1880, pp. 1–31; A. Tamborra, *La riscoperta di Cirillo...*, op. cit., p. 336.

43. J. Urban, *Święci Cyryl i Metody i ich dzieło*, „Oriens” 1 (1933) no. 4, p. 106; R. Faracik, *Tradycja wielkomorawska i cyrylo-metodiańska a współczesny krajobraz kulturowy Velehradu*, „Prace Geograficzne” 145 (2016), p. 88.

44. J. Budniak, *Jednoczeni w różnorodności...*, op. cit., pp. 44–45.

Saints Cyril and Methodius. From the very beginning of their presence in that holy place the Jesuits devoted themselves to the pastoral activity and provided care for the pilgrims. What is more, Velehrad became an important training centre for the Jesuits going on missions. The missionaries who set out from Velehrad on missions to different parts of the world drew directly on the heritage of the Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Holy Apostles of the Slavs. The pastoral activities of the Jesuits concentrated on using the heritage of Cyril and Methodius in leading the new evangelization and defending the Christian values not only in Moravia, but also all over the world.⁴⁵

When in 1892 Father Antonín Cyril Stojan officially launched in Velehrad 'Apoštolát svatého Cyrila a Methoděje' ('The Saints Cyril and Methodius Apostolate') it received support not only from the Czechs, the Moravians and the Slovaks, but also from the Poles.⁴⁶ One of the most active advocates of the cause in Poland, was the Jesuit Father Jan Badeni.⁴⁷ In 1893, he wrote in a report – which was published in "Przegląd Powszechny" ("The Common Review") – from the mass meeting, which had just taken place in Velehrad, that the Apostolate can strengthen faith of the Catholic Slavic nations, can help them to cultivate their religious life and can bring about unity with non-Catholic Slavs.⁴⁸

After his death in 1899, this tradition was carried on by the Cracow Jesuit Father Jan Urban, who was for many years the editor-in-chief of "Przegląd Powszechny". Being a very active participant of several union congresses in Velehrad, Father Urban was able to grasp the true spirit of those meetings since the very first encounter. He wrote after the first congress in 1907 that all ecumenical efforts „should not be centered on promoting Latin tradition, but they should be focused on gathering all believers in one indivisible Catholic Church”.⁴⁹

45. J. Budniak, *Jednoczeni w różnorodności...*, op. cit., pp. 45–46.

46. A. Chodkiewicz, *Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska...*, op. cit., p. 131.

47. J. Poplatek, *Badeni Jan*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 1, Kraków 1935, p. 205; *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*, red. H. E. Wyczawski, t. 1, pp. 84–88.

48. J. Badeni, *Welegradzkie zjazdy*, „Przegląd Powszechny” 39 (1893), pp. 388–401; Cf. J. Badeni, *Morawska Częstochowa*, „Przegląd Powszechny” 42 (1894), pp. 354–362.

49. J. Urban, *Kwestia zjednoczenia Kościołów na zjeździe velehradzkim*, „Przegląd Powszechny” 95 (1907), pp. 298–299; cf. L. Górka, *Drogi słowiańskiego ekumenizmu. Ekumeniczny charakter działalności zjednoczeniowej ks. Jana Urbana SJ*, „Collectanea Theologica” 40 (1970) no. 3, pp. 139–143.

Although a considerable degree of circumspection was undertaken by the organizers of the Velehrad Congresses, it was almost impossible to avoid hot political issues. Some of the participants were accused of promoting Slav unionism, whereas others were criticized for favouring Pan Slavism.⁵⁰ The outbreak of the First World War, the fall of the Old Empires and the emergence of several new nation states in the Central Europe brought about a setback and a decline of the idea. This negative tendency had partly to do with growing secularization of newly founded Czechoslovakia and with a sharp separation of religious life from politics.⁵¹ It was also against this spirit, that in 1928 the Czech Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment made a bizarre decision to remove the vestiges of inconvenient links between the Cyrillo-Methodian idea and the Jesuit *modus operandi* by replacing the statue of Ignacio Loyola on the Charles Bridge in Prague with the figures of Cyril and Methodius.⁵²

One of the major consequences of the Second World War was the spread of Communism throughout the Central European countries, which was at open war with all Christian churches. It goes without saying that it was virtually impossible to promote Cyrillo-Methodian ecumenism under such conditions. The things have changed since the collapse of the Iron Curtain. And it was John Paul II, the Slavic Pope, who renewed the call to continue the great work of Cyril and Methodius. On 31 December 1980 Saint John Paul II proclaimed the Holy Brothers, along with St. Benedictine, co-patron saints of Europe in his apostolic letter called *Egregiae virtutis*,⁵³ whereas in 1985, on the 1100th anniversary of Methodius's death, the Pope issued an encyclical called *Slavorum Apostoli*, in which he wrote about the great work which had to be carried out by the Holy Brothers in order to introduce the Slavonic peoples to the Gospel with the use of a language and notions which were comprehensible for them. As it was emphasized by John Paul II, Saints Cyril and Methodius transplanted onto Slavic lands not

50. J. Malíř, *Cyrilometodějská idea mezi náboženstvím, národem a politikou*, „*Studia Historica Brunensia*“, 61 (2014) no. 2, pp. 101–114.
51. Cz. Głombik, *Velehrad – zapomniane centrum słowiańskich spotkań ekumenicznych*, „*ΣΟΦΙΑ – Pismo Filozofów Krajów Słowiańskich*“ 1 (2001), pp. 18–33.
52. M.J. Wein, *'Chosen Peoples, Holy Tongues'. Religion, Language, Nationalism and Politics in Bohemia and Moravia in the Seventeenth to Twentieth Centuries*, „*Past&Present*“ 202 (2009) no. 1, p. 57.
53. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 73 (1981), pp. 258–262; *Cyryl i Metody. Apostołowie i nauczyciele Słowian...*, op. cit., pp. 142–145.

only the Christian faith, but also the culture of ancient Greece which was continued by Byzantium.⁵⁴

54. *Acta Apostolicae...*, op. cit., 77 (1985), pp. 779–813; See P. Kuzmič, *Slavorum Apostoli. The Enduring Legacy of Cyril and Methodius*, in: *The Legacy of John Paul II*, ed. by T. Perry, Downers Grove 2007, pp. 267–289; J. Budniak, *Leonarda Górki Dziedzictwo Ojców wezwaniem do jedności w różnorodności*, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 63 (2016) no. 7, pp. 73–90; M. Zięba, *Jestem z Wami. Kompendium twórczości i nauczania Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2010, pp. 76–80.

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Abstract

Janusz Smołucha

*Cultural and Religious Significance of the Cyrillo-
-Methodian Tradition in Central and Eastern Europe*

Keywords:

Cyril and
Methodius,
tradition
of St. Cyril and
St. Methodius,
Slavs, Moravia,
Jesuits, papacy,
ecumenism,
Eastern Church,
Pan-Slavism.

The author of the article discusses the role of the tradition of St. Cyril and Methodius and the reception of this idea in East-Central European culture. Special emphasis was put on presenting the story of the Slavic Rite and its significance, particularly to Eastern Slavs. Later on in the article the author turns his attention to the heritage of St. Cyril and Methodius's ideas in the works of thinkers from the Hussite circles as well as those from the Roman milieu of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini. Next, the focus is shifted to the involvement of Jesuits in reviving the Cyril-Methodius tradition, of which so far little is known in historiography. Despite the fact that the origin of this revival was Olomouc, the ideas were also alive in the formed Republic of Poland. In the second half of the 19th century Velehrad became the symbolic place of worship of St. Cyril and St. Methodius. The place became an important centre of Slavic ecumenical movement. Regular conventions and celebrations in Velehrad attracted active figures involved in the national movement both from Moravia, Bohemia and Slovakia as well as other Slavic countries, including Poland. The ministerial work of Jesuits in the town concentrated on the application of the heritage of St. Cyril and Methodius to carry out evangelization and defend Christian values in the world.

Abstrakt

Janusz Smołuca

*Kulturowe i religijne znaczenie tradycji cyrylo-
-metodiańskiej w Europie środkowo-wschodniej*

Autor artykułu omawia znaczenie cyrylo-metodiańskiej tradycji i recepcji tej idei w kulturze Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Szczególny nacisk został położony na ukazanie historii rytu słowiańskiego i jego znaczenia szczególnie dla wschodnich Słowian. W dalszej części autor zwrócił uwagę na dziedzictwo myśli Cyryla i Metodego w pismach myślicieli z kręgu husycykiego, a także związanego ze środowiskiem rzymskim Eneasza Sylwiusza Piccolominiego. Następnie skupił swą uwagę na mało znanym do tej pory w historiografii, zaangażowaniu w odrodzenie tradycji cyrylo-metodiańskiej członków zakonu Jezuitów. Pomimo, że ośrodkiem tego odrodzenia był Ołomuniec, idee żywe były również na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. W 2. połowie XIX w. na symboliczne miejsce kultu Cyryla i Metodego wyrósł Velehrad. Miejsce to stało się ważnym ośrodkiem słowiańskiego ruchu ekumenicznego. Cyklicznie zjazdy i uroczystości religijne w Velehradzie przyciągały postaci zaangażowane w ruch narodowy zarówno z Moraw, Czech i Słowacji, ale również z pozostałych krajów słowiańskich, w tym również z Polski. Działalność duszpasterska jezuitów w tym miejscu koncentrowała się na wykorzystywaniu dziedzictwa cyrylo-metodiańskiego do prowadzenia nowej ewangelizacji i obrony wartości chrześcijańskich w świecie.

Słowa kluczowe:
Cyryl i Metody,
tradycja cyrylo-
metodiańska,
Słowianie,
Morawy, jezuici,
papiestwo,
ekumenizm,
Kościół wschodni,
panslawizm.

