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## The Slovak-Macedonian Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition and Its Reflection in the Literature of the Slovak National Revival

Словачко-македонската кирилometодиевска традиција и нејзината рефлексija во литературата на словачката национална преродба

**Abstract:** VOJTECH, Miloslav. *The Slovak-Macedonian Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition and Its Reflection in the Literature of the Slovak National Revival*. This article deals with reflections on the Slovak-Macedonian Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, which formed the basis of Slovak-Macedonian literary and cultural relations at the time of the Slovak National Revival. Firstly, the article examines the genesis of the Cyrillo-Methodian cult in the Slovak cultural tradition before the period of the national revival, focusing on its Macedonian and pan-Slavic cultural and literary filiations as a starting point for its subsequent reflection in Slovak literary historiography during the national revival itself (Bohuslav Tablic, Pavol Jozef Šafárik and Jozef Miloslav Hurban) and particularly its literary image, which acquired its most notable form in the spiritual epic work of the Slovak classicist poet Ján Hollý (1785–1849). Particular attention will be given to Hollý's epic imagery of this theme in the context of the development of Slovak epic poetry, the interpretations of its thematic and motif elements and its ambivalent reception by Slovak literary historiographers. Attention is also given to supplementary texts to Hollý's work which are interesting from the perspective of Slovak-Macedonian relations and the relationship between Slovaks and southern Slavs.

**Key words:** *The Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Slovak National Revival, literary historiography, classicism, epic poetry*

The Cyrillo-Methodian mission is undoubtedly a key structural element in the Slavic cultural tradition and its continuity. The foundations of written culture which this mission laid down had a significant impact on the subsequent development of individual Slavic nations. Despite complicated historical processes, which have resulted in the cultural and confessional heterogeneity of Slavic nations, and on occasion even in mutual animosity and conflict, the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition has remained a unique integrating agent within the complex Slavic world.

The literary and cultural heritage of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission and its successors (i.e. the collection of various literary and pragmatic texts from the 10th and 11th centuries) became the universal property of all Slavic nations and the beginning of the genesis of their national literatures. Individual Slavic literary historiographies have traditionally placed these literary texts at the beginning of the "historical story" of their own national literatures, looking within them for the beginnings of their nation's own ethnic and developmental continuity. The Cyrillo-Methodian heritage has thus become the common starting point for Slovak and Macedonian literature, and the "roots of the Slovak-Macedonian literary

relationship" can be found in the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, it is important to remember that Ohrid in Macedonia was a place of refuge for Clement and Naum of Ohrid (both Methodius's students), who continued in the cultural and literary work initiated in Great Moravia. According to Dionýz Ďurišín, "Here in the cultural centre of the southern Slavs, Saint Clement of Ohrid established a theological school which educated around 3000 students and which is considered to be one of the first European schools of higher learning for that time."<sup>2</sup> In addition to this, Clement (and Naum after him) undertook a significant amount of literary activity and created the foundations for medieval Macedonian literature. As Zvonko Taneski states, "In the history of Slovak-Macedonian relations, the cities of Nitra and Ohrid became the initial foundations of [this] relationship."<sup>3</sup> The broader historical and geographical context of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission and its continuity outside of Great Moravia

<sup>1</sup> TANESKI, Zvonko. *Slovensko-macedónske literárne a kultúrne vzťahy*. Bratislava 2009, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> ĎURIŠÍN, Dionýz. *Teória medziliterárneho procesu I*. Bratislava 1995, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> TANESKI, Zvonko. *Slovensko-macedónske literárne a kultúrne vzťahy*. Bratislava 2009, p. 26.

after Methodius's death inspired a Slovak interest in the Slavic south.

Interest in the Slavic south and the Slavic world as such in the Slovak cultural and literary environment is directly related to the gradual revitalization of the Cyrillo-Methodian cult within Slovak culture, which qualitatively can be most intensively seen in the period of the Slovak National Revival (1780–1850), which was the period of the formation of the modern Slovak nation. The Cyrillo-Methodian theme became a subject of historiographical interest, which was unsurprisingly limited by inadequate source and archaeological research as well as the historicism of the period. It was also the subject of the first literary historical syntheses reconstructing the developmental continuity of Slovak literature, which was gradually emancipating itself from the broader Hungarian and Czech and Slovak environment; and it was the subject of artistic representation as seen in the monumental epic poetry of the Slovak classicist poet Ján Hollý (1785–1849) in the 1830s works *Svatopluk* and *Cirillo-Methodiada*.

The programme revitalization of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in the revival period, its establishment in historiographical and nationalist discourse and its literary image would not have been possible without the existence of the continuity of this tradition in the Slovak cultural consciousness in the period preceding the revival itself. Historical sources and literary memoirs of an older provenance mention the names of significant figures from the Great Moravian period and specific events related to that territory. These are clear signs that the Great Moravian tradition had a stable place in the Slovak cultural environment in earlier periods. For instance, in *Kronika Jána z Turca* [The Chronicle of John of Turiec], printed in 1488, there is mention of Svätopluk as the ruler of Great Moravia. One of the first open Slovak claims to the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was the foreword to Benedikt Szöllösi's (1609–1656) hymn book *Cantus Catholici* (1655), in which the missionary work of Cyril and Methodius is mentioned with an emphasis on the antiquity and autochthony of the Christian tradition in Slovakia.<sup>4</sup> This foreword is at the beginning of the cultural and religious interpretation of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, which presents both saints as

<sup>4</sup> Here Benedikt Szöllösi uses the term “*nostra gens pannonia*” [“our Pannonian nation”]. See SZÖLLÖSI, Benedikt. *Cantus catholici*. In *Svätý Cyril a svätý Metod v slovenskej literatúre. Výberová antológia*. Eds. Peter Liba, Silvia Lauková. Nitra 2012, p. 139.

spreaders of Christianity and indicates the first links between the areas of present-day Slovakia and the southern Slavic lands.<sup>5</sup> In the 18th century historiographical works presented the thesis that “St Cyril started his apostolic work among the Bulgarian Slavs neighbouring the Byzantine Empire, [and] later on he started to sow the seeds of the Christian faith in Moravia and ultimately in the lands between the Sava and the Drav”.<sup>6</sup> In the number of texts which built on the foreword in *Cantus Catholici*, it is essential to mention Ján Baltazár Magin's (1681–1735) apology entitled *Murices ... sive Apologia* (1728), which accentuated the autochthony of the Cyrillo-Methodian cult, and particularly Samuel Timon's (1675–1735) work *Imago antiquae Hungariae* (1733), in which the two saints are named as “*slavorum apostoli*”. Interest in the Cyrillo-Methodian cult can also be seen at the end of the 17th century and in the 18th century in the work of Slovak Lutherans. The most significant of these works was the Latin introduction to the collection of maxims, proverbs, adages and weather lore by Daniel Sinapius-Horčíčka (1640–1688) entitled *Neo-forum Latino-Slavonicum* (1678); the foreword by Matthias Bel (1684–1749) to the modified version of the Kralice Bible entitled *Biblia Sacra* (Halle, 1722); and the foreword to Pavel Doležal's comparative grammar *Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica* (1746). All mentions of Cyril and Methodius and their texts are connected by an interpretation of the Cyrillo-Methodian cult as a Slovak cultural tradition. This tendency is linked to the efforts of some Hungarian historiographers to present the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition as something belonging to all of Hungary (Melchior Inhoffer, 1644; Matyás Sambár, 1661; and Stefan Salagijs, 1777)<sup>7</sup> and the efforts of Czech and Moravian historians (Tomáš Pešina of Čechorod and Jan Jiří Středovský) to portray the Cyrillo-

<sup>5</sup> In this regard, Benedikt Szöllösi describes Cyril and Methodius as “holy fathers” who joined the “Pannonians” with the “Bulgarians, Moravians and Prince Bořivoj of Bohemia” through holy baptism. SZÖLLÖSI, Benedikt. *Cantus catholici*. In *Svätý Cyril a svätý Metod v slovenskej literatúre. Výberová antológia*. Eds. Peter Liba, Silvia Lauková. Nitra 2012, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> BEL, Matej. O staroslovenčine a slovenčine. In *Svätý Cyril a svätý Metod v slovenskej literatúre. Výberová antológia*. Eds. Peter Liba, Silvia Lauková. Nitra 2012, pp. 141–142. This was reasserted by Bohuslav Tablic in a note to the poem *Světlo literního umění, kteréž v Panonii v rozličných časích osvěcovalo a ještě osvěcuje*. In TABLIC, Bohuslav. *Poezye I*. Vacov 1806, pp. 110–111.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see FORDINÁLOVÁ, Eva. *Ján Hollý (1785 – 1849)*. Bratislava 2003, p. 155.

Methodian heritage as being exclusively Czech or Moravian.

An important moment in the establishment of the Cyrillo-Methodian cult in the Slovak and broader central European context was the issuing of a papal decree initiated by Maria Theresa in 1777 which introduced the official veneration of Saints Cyril and Methodius throughout the Hapsburg lands.<sup>8</sup> In that same year the Hungarian church historian Stefan Salagius published *De statu ecclesiae Pannonicae*, which alongside tendentious interpretations of Great Moravian history attempted to apply Cyril and Methodius's legacy to the entire Kingdom of Hungary. Salagius's work was one of the impulses behind Juraj Papánek's (1738–1802) historical work entitled *Historia gentis Slavae – De regno, regibusque Slavorum* (1780), which praised the role of Cyril and Methodius in Christianizing the Slovaks and their meritorious work in liturgical language. Papánek's work became a significant and inspirational source of information for Holly and other writers from the period of the Slovak National Revival, who sought to present Slovakia's national history with stories of heroic imagery. Papánek's work was also a starting point for Juraj Fándly's historiographical work *Compendiata historia gentis Slavae* (1793) and his panegyric sermon on the occasion of the feast day celebration of Saints Cyril and Methodius which was published in the book *Príhodné a svätečné kázne II*. [Casual and Feast-Day Sermons II] (1796).<sup>9</sup>

Fándly's work represents the crossing of the notional borders of Baroque Slavism, which was completed by Papánek's historiographical work; the other texts mentioned in the present article dealing with the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition are from the period of enlightenment and national revival, which was a time when there was a gradual qualitative and quantitative change (as well as a functional and structural one) of older emotional texts and intellectual concepts in terms of thinking of the nation and thinking about the nation. This quantitative and qualitative transformation also affected the Cyrillo-Methodian cult.

This tradition became a subject of systematic interest in the emerging field of historiography, literary history and Slavic studies. Pavol Jozef Šafárik (1795–1861) paid the most attention to the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy. His pioneering work *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur*

*nach allen Mundarten* (1826) gave this theme a lot of attention in lengthy articles on the history of the old Church Slavonic language and literature, the origins of Cyril and Methodius, their missionary work and individual recollections.<sup>10</sup>

As a Slavist, Šafárik perceived the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in a sophisticated way, and he systematically noticed its residual effects among southern Slavs. Šafárik's interest in southern Slavic matters was primarily influenced by the time he spent at the Orthodox gymnasium (school) in Novi Sad from 1819 to 1833. In addition to studying extensive source material of southern Slavic origin which he later used in drafting his subsequent monumental Slavist works, Šafárik "met with knowledge of Macedonian folk culture and Macedonian cultural artefacts" while in Novi Sad.<sup>11</sup> In the abovementioned work he spoke of "Macedonia" as a specific geographic entity populated by Slavs<sup>12</sup> and put forward the hypothesis that the language of Cyrillic books "at the time of Cyril and Methodius belongs to this tribe above all others and penetrated into Greek Thrace, Macedonia and Illyria the earliest and the farthest".<sup>13</sup> According to Ivan Dorovský, Šafárik tried to assert that "the foundation of the Old [Church] Slavonic language is the Thessalonican dialect of [Old] Macedonian. Šafárik can be considered the first real Czech and Slovak expert of Macedonian history, writing and language."<sup>14</sup> This is shown by his collection of notes (written in Latin) from 1826 and 1827, where there are a number of chapters dealing with Macedonia<sup>15</sup> as well as by parts of his *Slovanský národopis* [Slavic Ethnology] (1842)<sup>16</sup> and correspondence.

Subsequent works of Slovak origin, primarily those concerning literary history, did not go into so much depth as Šafárik when reflecting

<sup>10</sup> This concerns the first section of the first part: *Dejiny starého slovanského cirkevného jazyka a literatúry*. ŠAFÁRIK, Pavol Jozef. *Dejiny slovanského jazyka a literatúry všetkých nárečí. Spisy Pavla Jozefa Šafárika 1*. Košice 1992, pp. 63–89.

<sup>11</sup> TANESKI, Zvonko. *Slovensko-macedónske literárne a kultúrne vzťahy*. Bratislava 2009, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> ŠAFÁRIK, Pavol Jozef. *Dejiny slovanského jazyka a literatúry všetkých nárečí. Spisy Pavla Jozefa Šafárika 1*. Košice 1992, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> ДОРОВСКИ, Иван. *Кирилometодиевската традиција во чешката и во словачката литература*. Поговор кон изданието – Здењек Кланица: Тајната на гробот на Св. Методиј. Врно/Boskovice 2008, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> DOROVSKÝ, Ivan. *České země a Balkán. Kapitoly z dějin česko-makedonských a makedonsko-českých styků*. Brno 1973, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> ŠAFÁRIK, Pavol Jozef. *Slovanský národopis. Spisy Pavla Jozefa Šafárika 4*. Košice 1995, pp. 35–42.

<sup>8</sup> Their holiday was set to be every 14 March.

<sup>9</sup> FÁNDLY, Juraj. *Concio Historico-Panegyrica de sanctis Slavorum Apostolis, Cyrillo & Methodio*. In *Príhodné a svätečné kázne*. Druhí zväzok. Trnava 1796, pp. 447–488.

on the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy. In his essay *Slovensko a jeho život literárny* [Slovakia and its Literary Life], Jozef Miloslav Hurban limited himself to presenting a romantically styled recapitulation of known historical facts. The Cyrillo-Methodian period was described by him as the inception of Slovak literary life, and he did not forget to mention the broader Slavic interconnections of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission and its continuity outside the territory of Great Moravia after Methodius's death. According to Hurban, "The sad [M]uses then made their way to Bulgaria and Russia, where they found more peaceful domiciles [...] Very sad times ensued in Slovakia for literature and higher spiritual life."<sup>17</sup>

Reflections on the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy during the national revival initially had a primarily non-literary character. The topic was dealt with in texts of a factual, apologetic, homiletical and historiographical nature. It is interesting to note that this theme did not actually take shape in purely literary texts for a considerable amount of time. Holly's epic poem *Cirillo-Methodiada* was essentially the first and paradoxically the only epic literary text throughout the whole national revival period which exclusively dealt with the two historical characters. In terms of portraying the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in an artistic way, Holly had nothing to build upon. This made him an innovator in this regard.

Mapping relevant mentions of Cyril and Methodius in Slovak literature before Holly would lead to a very short list.<sup>18</sup> The only significant literary portrayal of Cyril and Methodius can be found in Ján Kollár's poetic composition *Slávy dcera* [The Daughter of Sláva] (1824). However, Kollár functionally mentioned Cyril and Methodius in a different context. He saw them as a means of overcoming confessional particularism, which was a very sensitive issue in Slovakia at the time. In the verses of this composition, Kollár, who was a convinced Protestant, calls for religious tolerance and unity in the name of the ideal of national unity. In sonnet 59 he states that "yours is Hus and Nepomuk and Cyril". These thoughts were later elaborated on in subsequent versions of *Slávy dcera*. In sonnet 126 in the canto entitled *Labe*,

*Rén, Vltava* [The Elbe, the Rhine, the Vltava] he drew attention to the unhappy past, when "our ancestors were killing the nation through religion", and then in sonnet 8 of the canto entitled *Lethe* he even depicted a trans-confessional Slavic idyll in the form of a pantheon of Slavic gods which are supplemented by Jan Amos Comenius in sonnet 11, and Cyril and Methodius in sonnet 12.<sup>19</sup>

The journey towards Holly's epic Cyrillo-Methodian synthesis and the Great Moravian historical theme was therefore primarily marked by historiographic works. The fashion in which Holly portrayed the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was a result of the level of historical understanding of the issue at the time of the national revival. Similarly to the available historical sources, Holly connected historical fact with epic fiction in his epic poetry.

*Cirillo-Methodiada* emerged as the second of Holly's works. It is assumed that Holly started to write it in 1832, which was immediately after he finished the epic poem *Svatopluk*. Holly's correspondence confirms that at that time he had thoroughly studied the historical sources at his disposal concerning Great Moravia and the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy.<sup>20</sup> However, he was not aware of *Moravsko-pannónske legendy* [Moravian-Pannonian Legends], which was one of the key works on this issue, and he could not use this source for his own literary portrayal of the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy; this was the main reason behind the number of historical inaccuracies present in the epic poem. The legends were published by Šafárik in 1851 in the work *Památky dřevního písemnictví Jihoslovanů* [Memories of Early Southern Slavic Literature] almost two decades after the publication of *Cirillo-Methodiada*.<sup>21</sup> According to Holly's correspondence, the epic poem was finished sometime in 1834, which means it took him two years to complete. The publication of the epic poem was in two stages: the Zora almanac for 1835 included *Životopis ss. Cirilla a Metóda, blahozvestov Slovákov* [The Biography of Saints

<sup>17</sup> HURBAN, Jozef Miloslav. *Slovensko a jeho život literárny*. In HURBAN, Jozef Miloslav. *Dielo II*. Bratislava 1983, pp. 43–44.

<sup>18</sup> These texts are dealt with in more detail in VOJTECH, Miloslav. *Cyrilo-metodská tradícia v perspektíve obrodeneckého historizmu. Epos Jána Hollého Cirillo-Methodiada*. In *Studia Academica Slovaca* 42. Bratislava 2013, pp. 65–66.

<sup>19</sup> For more on this, see VOJTECH, Miloslav. *Literatúra, literárna história a medziliterárnosť*. Bratislava 2004, pp. 53–54.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to the available Slovak sources (Samuel Timon and Pavol Jozef Šafárik), he primarily studied Josef Dobrovský's *Cyrill und Method der Slaven Apostl* (1823), *Mährische legende von Cyrill und Method* (1826) and *Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822).

<sup>21</sup> The legends were already known in 1700 when Metropolitan Dimitry of Rostov introduced them to general cultural awareness, but they gained a bigger reaction when they were published by V. A. Gorskij in *Moskvitjanin* magazine in 1843. For more, see FORDINÁLOVÁ, Eva. *Ján Hollý (1785 – 1849)*. Bratislava 2003, p. 166.

Cyril and Methodius, Evangelizers of the Slovaks], the content of all six cantos in verse and *Ukážka víťazskej básne: Cirillo-Metodiadi* [An Extract of the Triumphal Poem: Cirillo-Metodiadi] (the first twenty-six verses).<sup>22</sup> The whole epic poem was published in that same year by the Royal University Printing House in Buda under the name *Cirillo-Metodiada, víťazská báseň v šesť spevoch od Jána Hollého, arcibiskupstva ostrihomského kňaza, s pripojením Životopisem svatých Cirilla a Metoda, jako tiež Bájoslovím pohanských Slovákov, a Visvetleňím některich slov* [Cirillo-Metodiada, A Triumphal Poem in Six Cantos by Ján Hollý, of the Archbishopric of Esztergom, with an attached Biography of Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as a Pagan Slovak Mythology and an Explanation of Some Words].

Despite the fact that this poetic portrayal of Cyril and Methodius is rather unique in Slovak literature from the national revival period, it is necessary to objectively point out that it was one of the least read of Hollý's poetic works and the most critically received in literary historical circles. The reason why *Cirillo-Metodiada* did not receive such a positive reception as Hollý's other poetic works can be seen in Slovak literary historiography. One of the first literary-historical reflections on Hollý's work was a very revealing piece by Hurban in Slovakia and its Literary Life (1846–1851). It is interesting that Hurban evaded giving a detailed evaluation of *Cirillo-Metodiada*; in his romantically styled appraisal of Hollý he focused solely on the dominant epic poem *Svatopluk*. In characterizing Hollý's work, he states, "In *Svatopluk*, then *Selanky* [Idylls] and *Žalospevy* [Lamentations], Hollý's poetry reaches its highest level. Everything else he wrote does not reach this level. All of Slovak life is outlined here in these three works."<sup>23</sup> If putting aside limiting factors such as the small amount of time for an objective literary-historical discussion and the traditional confessional and generational animosities determined by the period, Hurban's evaluation has a certain lasting validity and in various forms has been repeated in literary and historical syntheses of Slovak literature up to the present day.

Perhaps the most critical evaluation of *Cirillo-Metodiada* was given by Jaroslav Vlček, the founder of modern Slovak literary historiography, in *Dejiny literatúry slovenskej* [A History of Slovak

Literature] (1889), "[A]s a whole the epic poem does not have enough full colours" and "in *Cirillo-Metodiada* Hollý subordinated historical fact to religious interest".<sup>24</sup> Sharper comments on *Cirillo-Metodiada* and Hollý's epic poetry as a whole can be found in Vlček's *Dějiny české literatury* [A History of Czech Literature], "Whereas Homer's and Virgil's epic poetry, Dante, Tasso, Milton and others deliver an emotional warmth and smell, there is nothing like that here. Neither the lover, nor the woman, nor even the mother can find her place in Hollý's verses. This muffles the brighter elements in his heroic cantos; they are covered by a nunnish greyness and they emit a monastierial mildew."<sup>25</sup> The second volume of the so-called academic history of Slovak literature in 1960 also placed an emphasis on *Svatopluk*, Hollý's first epic poem, when evaluating his work: "The epic poem *Svatopluk* is Hollý's most successful work from a conceptual and artistic perspective. This work had a pioneering character in a lot of aspects. In it Hollý's poetic individuality made its fullest appearance."<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to see that while the literary historical interpretations of *Svatopluk* lift its artistic depiction, where Hollý's poetic individuality appeared in full, analyses of *Cirillo-Metodiada* concentrate on emphasizing extra-aesthetic categories (the focus on the national revival ideological function of the text); newer interpretations accentuate its "Christian depth", which they use to try and explain the text's artistic and aesthetic deficits.<sup>27</sup> However, in general the evaluations of Hollý's epic poetry all state that *Cirillo-Metodiada* and Hollý's third epic poem *Sláv* [Slav] do not reach the level of *Svatopluk*.

For the reader, the problem of evaluating *Cirillo-Metodiada* is not so much in its linguistic form, time-measured verse or classicist compositional methods as in its literary aesthetic dimension. Certainly, literary production in the first half of the 19th century cannot be evaluated merely by categories of high aesthetic value or by the tastes of the contemporary readership. When attempting to reconstruct the horizons of contemporary reception of Hollý's poetry, one would come to the conclusion that the entire collection of his works reflected the most pressing

<sup>22</sup> In addition, this volume of the almanac included ten of Hollý's idylls and his ode to Ságelská studenka, a mineral spring near Borský Mikuláš.

<sup>23</sup> HURBAN, Jozef Miloslav. Slovensko a jeho život literárny. In HURBAN, Jozef Miloslav: *Dielo II*. Bratislava 1983, p. 185.

<sup>24</sup> VLČEK, Jaroslav. *Dejiny literatúry slovenskej*. Turčiansky sv. Martin 1933, p. 65.

<sup>25</sup> VLČEK, Jaroslav. *Dějiny české literatury II*. Praha 1951, p. 477.

<sup>26</sup> PIŠŮT, Milan – ROSENBAUM, Karol – KOCHOL, Viktor. *Dejiny slovenskej literatury II*. Bratislava 1960, p. 213.

<sup>27</sup> FORDINÁLOVÁ, Eva. *Ján Hollý (1785 – 1849)*. Bratislava 2003, pp. 151–193.

needs of the national revival's cultural programme. One of its aims was the creation of literature which was qualitatively comparable with the "classical" cultural heritage of antiquity and the "classical culture" of great European nations. However, the fulfilment of this aim in Slovakia was linked to the national revival's ideological framework, which was created by a linguocentric concept of national culture built upon the sacralization of the national language, a strong historicism reaching back to the distant past and the associated mythologization which highlighted the archetypal substance forming the national society. In addition to this, incidental results of the national revival's ideology in literature in Slovakia in the first half of the 19th century include a deeply rooted didacticism, excessive moralization and relicts of older (pre-enlightenment and pre-classicist) literary structures, particularly in the form of the accentuation of religious and sacred elements which are prominent in Hollý's epic poetry.

In addition to this, Hollý was exactly the type of poet who in the pre-Romantic period seemed to progress the most in the process of emancipating the aesthetic function in literature. Those of Hollý's texts which placed the aesthetic function in a superior position to extra-aesthetic functions (ideological, religious or didactic), such as Idylls and various odes and elegies, or where these elements are at the very least in mutual balance and proportion (e.g. *Svatopluk*) have maintained their attraction for the reader to the present day. By contrast, those works where extra-aesthetic functions play a more significant role in literary portrayal (e.g. *Cirillo-Metodiada*) are of marginal interest.

The primary common denominator of problematic places in the epic poem is the poet's "struggle" with the theme in terms of genre and composition. After the obligatory propositions and invocations, Hollý moves into an epic prologue which paints an image of Rastislav as a "Slovak monarch" bothered by the fact that the Christianity being spread by German priests was not making headway in his realm, and the people remained in pagan darkness. This is why he sent a delegation to the "Constantinople emperor" Michael with the request that he send him "evangelizers competent in Slovak". The canto contains descriptions of the envoys' preparations and descriptions of gifts for the emperor. Then it describes their journey through "the land of the Bulgarians", the entire Balkans and Thrace before mentioning the delegation's arrival in Constantinople. The whole process of the delegation's preparation and journey

is portrayed in a very truncated manner and without any epic dynamics. By contrast, Hollý gives much more room to the rhetorically stylized speech by the Slovak emissaries before Emperor Michael and the emperor's response. Everything in this canto seems to happen too quickly, too smoothly and without any conflict; the emperor immediately calls for the brothers Cyril and Methodius, who at the time had just returned from the Bulgarian lands. The brothers thankfully accept the offer immediately and set off for the land where the emissaries had come from. The *intermezzo* in the description of their travelling is merely a short visit to King Boris of Bulgaria and then their onward journey to "Slovak lands" via Belgrade. The canto concludes with the arrival of the brothers among the Slovaks and their welcome at Rastislav's court.

Already in the first canto there are a number of significantly problematic areas: Hollý avoided using extensively conceived digressions in the form of "large motifs" which are typical, for instance, in the epic poetic structure of *Svatopluk* and which are a structural constant of the "epic broadness" symptomatic of epic poems of the classical type. Rather, he uses an epic notation which gives up on any potential opportunity to dynamically develop the story. An example of this is the very schematic and even minimalistic depiction of the long journey to Constantinople and back without any troubles or obstacles (for instance, Hollý needed only seven hexameters to describe the journey to Constantinople!) However, an "overuse" of classical methods of epic poetry can be seen in Hollý's rather long and rhetorically styled speeches by the characters. The excessive accumulation of the monologically composed speeches by individual characters (Rastislav, Michael, Zemižizeň, Cyril and Methodius), which are not proportionally balanced with dynamic epic passages, comes across as stereotypical and leads to the notable weakening of the epic poem's dynamic. Even though this method is sometimes apologetically interpreted as simply being a part of Hollý's compositional intentions, in which he accentuates the power of the word over actions, the end result is merely the expression of a rather unfortunate conceptual grasp of the topic and genre.

The most problematic part of the epic poem is the second canto. With the exception of the short prologue and epilogue, the whole passage is made up of Methodius's sermon before King Boris. The whole canto is designed as an expansive monological and homiletically structured speech at a feast given by Rastislav in honour of the two

brothers in which Methodius reproduces the words which convinced King Boris to accept the Christian faith; Methodius had described the horrific details of the Last Judgement in a very detailed, expressive and naturalistic way. The character of this canto and its non-classicist content triggered discussion on the Baroque aspects of some of Holly's poetry.<sup>28</sup>

In Methodius's sermon before King Boris Holly dug very deeply into the tradition of Baroque eschatological production. The scenes of the Last Judgement are forcefully and in places naturalistically depicted in a Baroque and theatrical manner. The Baroque nature of this part of the epic poem becomes a prominent feature of it, especially when compared to the texts of the Slovak Baroque poet Hugolín Gavlovič (particularly his poetic composition *Škola kresťanská, k čítaní a spívání i k rozjímaní sporádaná O čtyřech posledních věcích člověka* [The Christian School Created for Reading and Singing and Contemplation: About The Four Last Things of Man]) and the older poet of the Bernolák school Vojtech Šimko (the poetic composition *O posledních věcích člověka* [About the Last Things of Man]).

In addition to similarities in the basic compositional and thematic construction,<sup>29</sup> it is possible to observe conformity between the two abovementioned authors in the particular poetic realization of individual motifs in terms of their poetic language. With great emotionality, suggestiveness and a focus on sensory perception, they describe the signs and phenomena which precede the apocalypse; for both authors the most likely source of inspiration for poetic portrayal was the Book of Revelation. With a frequent stress on naturalism, they describe the destruction of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the arrival of the holy judge, and the separation of people into the

saved and the damned with an emphasis on the illustration of the horrors which will accompany the final minutes of life on earth.<sup>30</sup>

In these poets' texts there is a great amount of effort spent on the plasticity of the poetic imagery with a clear focus on the acoustic and optic perceptions which underline feelings of horror and awe. The trans-sensory facticity (the hypothetical end of the world taking place in unreal contexts of time and space) is portrayed to the maximum sensory extent. Šimko and Holly in particular use the opportunities provided by theme and convention, and accommodate Baroque literary practice and characteristics "to make transcendence and the endlessness of space and time immediately perceivable, while also extending this to an illusory effect."<sup>31</sup> Like Šimko and other authors of eschatological literature before him, Holly totally fulfils the demands of one of the "Baroque theorists" – Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus and a foremost figure in the Counter-Reformation – who contemplated hell in his *Spiritual Exercises* and wrote the following, "To see in imagination the vast fires, and the souls enclosed, as it were, in bodies of fire..., To hear the wailing, the howling, cries, and blasphemies against Christ..., With the sense of smell to perceive the smoke, the sulphur [and] the filth ..., To taste the bitterness of tears, sadness, and remorse of conscience..., With the sense of touch to feel the flames which envelop and burn the souls".<sup>32</sup> This shows a typical Baroque tendency to "sensualize religion", something which both poets did to a great extent.

The imagery of apocalyptic scenes in the second canto of *Cirillo-Methodiada* forms an independent and closed compositional whole marked by elements of Baroque liturgical literature, which is very similar to Šimko and his rhetorical and preaching style as well as the Baroque homiletical literature of the 18th century; Methodius's speech is composed as a sermon, starting with a quote from the Bible (more specifically in poetic paraphrased form) and continuing with his development of thought, which is intertwined with a number of examples, and

<sup>28</sup> The first to identify these elements in Holly's poetry was the Polish Slovakist Władysław Bobek in his study *Barok Hollého* [Holly's Baroque] (Sborník Matice slovenskej, 14, 1936, pp. 464–481). Later on this issue was touched on by Jozef Felix in *O takzvanom klasicizme Jána Hollého* [On the So-Called Classicism of Ján Holly] (Romboid, 1969, No. 5, pp. 66–70). Bobek's study in particular modified the canonized literary historical image of Ján Holly as a paramount classicist poet. In a rather convincing way, Bobek shows that Holly's classicism was significantly marked with a multiple appearances of Baroque residue where eschatological themes were most prominently in the foreground.

<sup>29</sup> The unifying element of eschatological writing is primarily the "last four things of man", which theology defines as death, a personal and final judgement, heaven and hell. Individual eschatological compositions and poetic texts are built upon the basis of these four thematic areas. For more on this, see VOJTECH, Miloslav. *Literatúra, literárna história a medziliterárnosť*. Bratislava 2004, pp. 18–32.

<sup>30</sup> For more on this, see VOJTECH, Miloslav. *Literatúra, literárna história a medziliterárnosť*. Bratislava 2004, pp. 26–27.

<sup>31</sup> MIKO, František. Funkčný a výrazový synkretizmus v barokovej literatúre. In *Litteraria XIII. Literárny barok*. Bratislava 1971, p. 220.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted from "The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola", translated into English by Louis J. Puhl, SJ. Available at: <http://spex.ignatianspirituality.com/SpiritualExercises/Puhl>.

finishing with a concluding summary. This part of the text is very loosely connected to the structure of an epic poem – it only serves as an argumentative confirmation (backed by examples) of the righteousness of Cyril and Methodius's Christianizing activity.

The third and fourth cantos in the epic poem are basically identical in terms of character. The first of them focuses on a description of the Christianizing activities of Cyril, who set out on a journey northwards to the Tatra mountains via the Váh River, destroying pagan idols along the way; the second canto deals with Methodius's journey northwards along the Morava River, where like Cyril he also burns and destroys the statues and temples of pagan gods and idols. The essence and character of these cantos was aptly described by Vlček as follows, "[T]he poet's words do not lull us into the illusion that we are in the very distant past, where Slovak paganism was wrestling with Christianity. Everything is too smooth with no obstacles and with common words. Idols fall and no one rises up against this. The people dumbly leave their gods behind, their old faith with its thousand-fold embedded roots all disappears, so to speak, overnight, and in the blink of an eye it turns into a ready new confession."<sup>33</sup> The destruction of pagan models by Cyril and Methodius really happens with no conflict; the power of the word is once again decisive. However, once again the problem is the compositional handling of the theme; the cantos are once again conceived as a series of persuasive and homiletically stylized monologues by both saints which convince the simple people of the truthfulness of the one and only faith. The magical power of the word take effect very quickly; the people rapidly take on the new doctrine, and with Cyril and Methodius leading them they burn the statues of their old gods. Then there is the baptism and instruction in the new faith. Everything is repeated a number of times with a minimal amount of variability; the method is always the same and the only thing that changes is the geographical location.

However, the cantos are interesting for another reason. In them Hollý presented a wide selection of pagan Slavic gods. He created a particular Slavic pantheon constructed on the basis of an analogy of Greco-Roman mythology. The very creation of the analogy of the cultural message of antiquity is one of the central typological constants of classicism as an artistic and literary

<sup>33</sup> VLČEK, Jaroslav. *Dejiny literatúry slovenskej*. Turčiansky sv. Martin 1933, p. 65.

direction.<sup>34</sup> It was on the basis of detailed analogies with antique mythology that Hollý created his own variant of a Slavic/Slovak mythology.<sup>35</sup> It is in his epic poems in particular that Hollý tries to harmonize the world of Slavic pagan mythology constructed along the antique model with the Christian world. On the one hand, he attempted an ideal reconstruction of the Slavic pagan pantheon, which he systematically described as proof of national antiquity in the text *Bájosloví pohanských Slovákov* [The Mythology of Pagan Slovaks], but on the other hand, he labelled Slavic pagan beliefs as "shameful delusions" (verse III, 73) which must make way for the new Christian faith. Hollý's perception of Slavic mythology is therefore marked by a significant internal conflict. "Hollý's joining of Slavic mythology with the Christian worldview did not work out, and the result of this was the degradation of the Slavic Olympus to the level of hell,"<sup>36</sup> as can be seen in particular in *Svatopluk* (where the characters of the Slavic pantheon acquire a hellish stylization) and *Cirillo-Metodiada* (the pagan cults are degraded to the position of hell and retreat under the pressure of Christianity). Hollý's method offers proof that the poetic work of Slovak classicism took on antique cultural models primarily as forms which it tailored in terms of content and according to its own needs, making it oftentimes very distant from the values of antiquity. Forms of antique verse and genre were adopted, starting with their imitation and finishing with their creative adaptation, while they were often adjusted to meet the needs of the national revival culture and the authors' own religious limitations.

The fifth canto portrays the intrigues of the Bavarian priests towards both brothers and their voiced accusations to the pope, and it finishes with the journey of Cyril and Methodius to Rome. In the composition of the canto there is a domination of the rhetorically stylized speeches of those involved in the dispute. In the sixth canto, which set in Rome, the epic poem disentangles. It begins with a description of a religious service in St Clement's Cathedral, where Cyril and Methodius place the

<sup>34</sup> For more on this, see VOJTECH, Miloslav. *Od baroka k romantizmu. Literárne smery a tendencie v slovenskej literatúre v rokoch 1780 – 1840*. Bratislava 2003, pp. 88–92.

<sup>35</sup> Hollý theoretically elaborated on the Slavic/Slovak mythology which he used in his epic poems and in Idylls in his treatise *Bájosloví (Mythologia) pohanských Slovákov*. Published in HOLLÝ, Ján. *Cirillo-metodiada. Vítazská báseň v šesti spevoch... s pripojením životopisem svätich Cirilla a Metoda jako též Bájoslovim pohanských Slovákov a visvetlením některich slov*. Budín 1835, pp. 109–127.

<sup>36</sup> BOBEK, Władysław. Barok Hollého. In *Sborník Matice slovenskej*, 14, 1936, p. 476.

saint's remains on the altar and thus gain the favour of Pope Adrian. It continues with the defence of Cyril's and Methodius's creed before the pope, and it finishes with the pope granting them the right to conduct services using the Slavonic liturgy and the consecration of both brothers as bishops.

Hollý's epic poem finishes with the victory of both brothers over intrigue and the victory of the spiritual principle which they embodied through their actions. Compositionally this canto does not essentially differ from those that precede it. The one exception is the rather extensive epic digression where Cyril talks about finding the remains of St Clement in Crimea during his mission to the Khazars. This digression (which is the only significant epic digression in the whole work) has the character of a dynamic epic narration which is engagingly delivered and which stands out in its legendary quality of storytelling, making the whole canto (which is otherwise full of stereotypical homiletically stylized speeches) more dynamic.

In Hollý's brief depiction of the Cyrillo-Methodian theme there are multiple historical inaccuracies (e.g. the mention of the brothers being made bishops in the last canto and the mention of their joint journey back to Great Moravia) in a number of places. However, Hollý was aware of these errors, and they should be perceived as part of his aesthetic conception and his poetic perception in presenting events. In the supplement to this text entitled *Životopis svätích Cirilla a Metóda* [The Biography of Saints Cyril and Methodius], Hollý refines a number of historical facts, which are, of course, within the bounds of the historical knowledge of the time. The epic poem and its two supplements (The Biography of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and The Mythology of Pagan Slovaks) therefore need to be seen as an inseparable whole in a mutual duality with poetic fiction on one side and the attempt to objectively search for historical truth on the other.

However, Hollý's supplements to the epic poem are interesting in terms of Slovak-Macedonian relations and the relationship between Slovakia and the southern Slavic lands. They are evidence of how the term "Macedonia" and political and cultural life in the southern Slavic lands were perceived in the Slovak environment in the first half of the 19th century. In the introduction to the Biography of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Macedonia is mentioned in relation to the origins of Saints Cyril and Methodius as their homeland. Hollý pays special attention to Thessalonica, which he describes as the capital of a former Roman

province, and he calls its Slavic inhabitants "Slovaks from Macedonia".<sup>37</sup> In addition, he mentions other southern Slavic localities such as Belgrade and today's Sremska Mitrovica (Srem/Sirmium), and talks about the differences in venerating Saints Cyril and Methodius in "all of the hereditary lands of the most celebrated Austrian house" in comparison to practices among southern and eastern Slavs. However, he also points to the emergence and spread of Cyrillic writing among southern and eastern Slavs and the related questions of cultural differentiation within the Slavic world with its "dual alphabet", "dual rituals" and literature. When discussing the "old Slovak language", Hollý states that it was not "the mother of all other Slovak dialects"<sup>38</sup> but rather just a daughter. He asserts that it was a "Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian [dialect] of the type spoken in the 9th century on the right bank of the Danube from Belgrade eastwards towards the Black Sea, westwards to the Adriatic Sea and southwards from the Danube to Thessalonica, where in their youth Cyril and Methodius learned this tongue. Alongside this Bulgarian-Slovak or Serbian language, the language of the Moravians at the time (or present-day Slovaks) around Nitra in the 9th century could have formed one whole. Cyril brought them the translated Gospels, which they could at least partially understand even though it was written in the Macedonian-Serbian dialect."<sup>39</sup>

The contemporary reception of *Cirillo-Methodiada*<sup>40</sup> and its subsequent literary historical treatment show that this epic poem received much less of a response than *Svatopluk*. The reason why this was the case lies in the comparison of the two works; *Svatopluk* is a compositionally balanced and very precisely and cleverly structured poetic text, featuring both dynamic and more relaxing passages offering reflection, where Hollý successfully utilizes just about all the compositional and stylistic practices found in classic epic poetry to the utmost extent. *Svatopluk* was conceived along the lines of Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, which Hollý knew intimately as a translator. Svätopluk's story, which is full of twists and turns, and the epic dynamic which was artistically complemented in

<sup>37</sup> HOLLÝ, Ján. *Životopis Svätích Cirilla a Metóda slovenských blahozvestov*. In HOLLÝ, Ján. *Cirillo-Methodiada. Dielo Jána Hollého. Sväzok IV*. Trnava 1950, p. 101. This naming is due to the historical semantics of the time and the fact that the terms "Slovak" and "Slav" were interchangeable, which is evident throughout Hollý's work.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> For more on this, see FORDINÁLOVÁ, Eva. *Ján Hollý (1785 – 1849)*. Bratislava 2003, pp. 190–191.

an effective manner with Hollý's poetic fiction allowed him to do this. However, *Cirillo-Methodiada* did not offer Hollý such scope. The character of the Cyrillo-Methodian "story" did not provide space for monumental depictions in the style of classic epic poems or even the later spiritual epic poems, which Hollý in *Cirillo-Methodiada* only elaborated on in partial detail. In contrast to *Svatopluk*, *Cirillo-Methodiada* sees Hollý become paralyzed in stereotypical rhetoric, which pushes the epic potential of this theme to the background. He abandons the epic poem's elaborate and dynamic narration and broadness, and he struggles with the composition and actually the overall requirements of the genre. Presumably after Hollý's own experiences, the subsequent development of Slovak epic poetry and prose in the period of the national revival saw this theme become one of marginal interest to authors at the time. Except for a few allusions to *Cirillo-Methodiada* in incidental poems written by budding romantics, the Cyrillo-Methodian theme did not find a notable successor in Slovak literature. By contrast, *Svatopluk* made a very strong impact, and many writers who were inspired by its epic imagery depicted aspects of the history of Great Moravia as well as other themes. Such works include Ľudovít Žello's epic poems *Pád Miliducha* [The Fall of Miliduch] (1862) and *Rastislav* (extracts published in *Orol* magazine from 1871 to 1875); the heroic epic poem by Michal Miloslav Hodža on the early history of the Polabian Slavs entitled *Meč křivdy* [The Sword of Injustice] (1836), which on a stylistic and compositional level was directly inspired by *Svatopluk*; Hurban's epic poem *Osudové Nitry* [The Fate of Nitra] (1842); and Štúr's epic compositions *Svätoboj* and *Matúš z Trenčína* [Matthew of Trenčín] (*Spevy a piesne* [Poems and Songs], 1853). It can be seen that Slovak authors were more inclined to write about "heroes of the sword" rather than "heroes of the word", favouring dramatic stories with which they tried to find a readership.

РЕЗИМЕ: *Словачко-македонската кирилometодиевска традиција и нејзината рефлексija во литературата на словачката национална преродба.* Кирилometодиевската мисија до денес претставува неоспорлив конструктивен елемент на словенската културна традиција и на нејзиниот континуитет. Основите на писмената култура, кои оваа мисија ги постави со своите активности, имале исклучително влијание врз натамошниот развој на повеќето словенски литератури. Независно од комплицираниот историски процес, чиј резултат беше културната и конфесионалната хетерогеност на словенските народи, напати пројавувајќи се и низ заемните анимозитети и конфликти, кирилometодиевската мисија остана единствен интегрирачки чинител на многуобразниот словенски свет. Кирилometодиевската мисија стои и на почетокот на словачко-македонските книжевни и културни врски и се смета за заеднички почеток на словачката и на македонската книжевност. Рефератот, во прв ред, ја истражува проблематиката на генезата на кирилometодиевскиот култ во словачката културна традиција во периодот пред преродбата со акцент на неговите македонски и сесловенски културни и книжевни филијации како исходништа на неговата една рефлексija во словачката книжевна историографија во првата половина на деветнаесеттиот век (Б. Таблиц, П. Ј. Шафарик, Ј. М. Хурбан) и првенствено неговото прикажување во уметничката литература, кое својот нај-развиен облик го доби во духовната епика на поетот од словачкиот класицизам Јан Холи (1875 – 1849). Посебно внимание ќе биде посветено токму на епското прикажување на темата кај Холи во контекст на развојот на словачката епска поезија, на интерпретацијата на неговите тематски и мотивски компоненти, како и на прашањето за неговото амбивалентно восприемање од страна на словачката книжевна историографија. Ќе се посвети внимание, исто така, и на дополнителните белешки кон епиката на Холи, кои се интересни и од гледна точка на словачко-македонските врски и словачко-јужнословенските врски.

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