

The Kiev Leaflets as
Folia Glagolitica
Zempliniensia

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By

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Translated by Isabel Stainsby

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If our forefather had not
sinned, then he would have
lived forever, not receiving old age,
nor ever having sorrow,
nor having a tearful
body, but for ever
he would have lived. As
he was by the evil one's envy
cast out
from the glory of God, therefore
upon the human race
came pain and sorrow,
sickness, and eventually
death. Nevertheless, brothers,
let us remember
that we are also called
the sons of God. Therefore,
let us give up those vile
deeds, for they are the deeds
of Satan.

Freising Manuscripts II
(translated by G. Stone)

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ABBREVIATIONS

A	accusative
act.	active
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
aor.	aorist
arch.	archaic
Balt.	Baltic
Bulg.	Bulgarian
BSl.	Balto-Slavic
Čak.	Čakavian
Cr.	Croatian
CS	Church Slavic
CSl.	Common Slavic
Cz.	Czech
D	dative
dial.	dialect
Eng.	English
f.	feminine
fut.	future
G	genitive
Ger.	German
Gmc.	Germanic
Goth.	Gothic
Gr.	Greek
Hung.	Hungarian
I	instrumental
imper.	imperative
inf.	infinitive
Lat.	Latin
Latv.	Latvian
Lith.	Lithuanian
LSrb.	Lower Sorbian
m.	masculine
n.	neuter
OBav.	Old Bavarian

OCS	Old Church Slavonic
OCz.	Old Czech
OHG	Old High German
OPl.	Old Polish
OSax.	Old Saxon
OSlk.	Old Slovak
OSln.	Old Slovene
par.	participle
pass.	passive
perf.	perfect
pers.	person
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
pl.	plural
poet.	poetic
pres.	present
pret.	preterite
PSl.	Proto-Slavic
Rus.	Russian
S/Cr.	Serbian/Croatian
Serb.	Serbian
sg.	singular
Slk.	Slovak
Sln.	Slovene
SSL.	South Slavic
Ukr.	Ukrainian
USrb.	Upper Sorbian
V	vocative
WSl.	West Slavic

FOREWORD

The Treaty of Verdun, concluded in 843, was one of the most important treaties in the history of Europe, if not the most important. Twenty years later, however, on the eastern edge of the sphere that it directly affected, an event would occur that was no less significant in European history. Moravian culture germinated in Frankish soil mixed with nomadic, Avar-Viking nutrients, thanks to a few Byzantines, and became the focal point for both main civilisations of the future Slavic nations. Even today, this partly imported culture still casts a faint shadow from the east over central Europe, even though it was rejected before long by the local ruler, Svätopluk I, who was helped and advised in all matters by the excellent Bishop of Nitra, Viching (**Viking*), his closest confidant. Fortunately, the Byzantine import did not lead the local Slavs away from their original adherence to Christian Rome, whose civilisation developed into early parliamentarianism across mediaeval western Christendom, something of which eastern Christianity could only dream. In any case, this was the first time that the territory on either side of the modern Moravian-Slovakian border took centre-stage in the theatre of world history, and this premiere in the revolutionary decades following the Treaty of Verdun seems to also have been the last night, even after the passage of a dozen centuries.

Somewhere in the Moravian-Slovak border regions, or in the wider territory of Moravia, Slovakia or even Bohemia, or in modern Austria or Hungary or these countries' near neighbours, some manuscripts were written in a Slavic language, which testify to the culture of western Christianity. These manuscripts have been named the Kiev Leaflets, and writing something new about them, the oldest Glagolitic documents, after one hundred and fifty years of research, is not an easy matter. In 1987, Joseph Schaeken published *Kiever Blätter*, an extensive and comprehensive study which surpassed all previous work on the subject in its precision, critical arguments and overview (despite being the young linguist's PhD thesis), but even this work, as its contemporary reviewers (such as William V. Veder) pointed out, did not arrive at any new conclusions. Today, one generation after Schaeken's excellent work, any analysis of the oldest coherent Slavic manuscript, which is what the Kiev Leaflets are, cannot make any contribution that fundamentally furthers research. This, of course, also applies in part to

any search for the manuscript's origins, which is what this monograph attempts to do.

Key to the search for the Kiev Leaflets' origins is the fact that this Glagolitic document, unlike most other Old Church Slavonic documents, does not come from the Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic environment. Therefore, in this specific case, we can speculate that the Common Slavic dialect of these Glagolitic prayers is not merely edited classical Old Church Slavonic. This Glagolitic manuscript contains, however, not just West Slavic, but also unequivocally South Slavic features. Of all modern Slavic languages, it is primarily Slovak and Slovene that stand on the interface of West Slavic and South Slavic phenomena, and therefore they must be taken into serious consideration when attempting to identify the language of the Kiev Leaflets. In the same breath, however, it must be added that Slovene does not explain all the West Slavic features in the manuscript, nor Slovak the South Slavic features. Logically, then, if we reject the possibility that the Kiev Leaflets were edited, this places their origin somewhere between these two languages, or rather, between Slovak and Croatian, thus particularly in Pannonia, the principality of the ancient princes Pribina of Nitra and Kocel. This is possible. This monograph will, however, also indicate a second solution.

To conclude this foreword, I would like to thank all the anonymous reviewers of the journal articles that preceded the publication of this monograph for their material and valuable comments, and also the editors of both the English and the Slovak versions, Prof. PaedDr. Ľubomír Kralčák, PhD., and Prof. PhDr. Peter Žeňuch, DrSc., given the book was first published in a slightly different form in Slovak in 2018, under the name *Folia glagolitica Zempliniensia (Kyjevské listy a nárečie na užsko-zemplínskom pomedzí)*. I would also like to thank translator Isabel Stainsby for her highly nuanced translation of the Slovak text. The foreword began by talking about Verdun, which is known mainly for bloody battles at the time of the First World War. One of the long-term consequences of the Great War was the foundation of a republic, which claimed to be descended from the early mediaeval Moravians. By a curious twist of fate, its first president was a Moravian Slovak, whose father came from Kopčany in Slovakia, where a church from the Great Moravian period is preserved, and which, more importantly, probably formed a central agglomeration, with Mikulčice on the other side of the river, of the estates of the first Mojmirids, at the very least Mojmir I and Rastic. The significance of the glorious First Czechoslovak Republic, despite the sacrifices made by the legionaries and heroes of the resistance and particularly by members of the Slovak National Uprising, is still not fully appreciated on the eastern bank of the River

Morava; at the same time, the Slovak lands today are at the very least indebted to it for their first stable borders since the disappearance of the Slovak Principality, also traditionally known, not entirely in accordance with the sources, as the Principality of Nitra, in the twelfth century. Therefore I will attempt to repay this debt, at least in part, by dedicating this monograph to the memory of the President-Liberator, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and one of the most wonderful states in the modern world.

A la mémoire du divorce tchéco-slovaque
Nitra, 1 January 2020

INTRODUCTION

In the *Gesta Hungarorum*, *The Deeds of the Hungarians*, the following is written about Ung Castle (Uzhhorod): “Prince Álmos and his leading men... rode to the castle of Ung [*ad castrum Hung*] in order to capture it. As they encamped around the wall, the count of the castle, Laborec by name, who in their language was called duka, hastened in flight to the castle of Zemplín [*ad castrum Zemlin, Zemlun*], but the warriors of the prince, pursuing and capturing him next to some river, hanged him by a noose there, and from that day they called the river by his name, Laborec. Then Prince Álmos and his men, entering Ung Castle, made great sacrifices to the immortal gods and feasted for four days... And on the fourth day, having had counsel and taken an oath from all his men, Prince Álmos, while yet still living appointed his son, Árpád, as leader and master, and he was called Árpád, prince of Hungaria, and from Ung all his warriors were called Hungarians in the language of foreign nations, and that name persists throughout the whole world up to now” (*Kronika anonymného notára kráľa Bela*, 2000, pp. 54-57; *Anonymi Bele Regis Notarii*, 2010, pp. 37-38).

This text raises a number of questions. First and foremost there is definitely the question of who actually died on the road to Zemplín Castle, because the princely grave found there from the relevant period, inserted into a Roman burial mound, is considered more likely to be Hungarian (Magyar), sometimes even the grave of Prince Álmos himself (Budinský-Krička and Fettich, 1973), although the castle was inhabited by Slavs into the tenth century (see Tajkov, 2015, p. 210). Secondly, what made Ung Castle, or Uzhhorod, so significant that it allegedly gave its name to all Magyars? The anonymous author of the *Gesta Hungarorum* speaks even more precisely about it in another place: “It now remains to say why the people who set forth from the Scythian land are called Hungarians. The Hungarians are so called from the castle of Ung where the seven leading persons, having subjugated the Slavs, tarried for a time upon entering the land of Pannonia. On account of this, all the nations round about called Álmos, son of Ügek, the prince of Hungar and they called his warriors Hungarians...” (*Kronika anonymného notára kráľa Bela*, 2000, pp. 38-39; *Anonymi Bele Regis Notarii*, 2010, p. 13). Ján Steinhübel, a leading Slovak mediaeval historian, surmises that Ung Castle was the centre of

one of the principalities. He postulates that this principality covered the territories of the counties in the later Kingdom of Hungary, Zemplin (excluding Szerencs), Ung and Borzhava (along with the territory of Kisvárdy on the left bank of the Tisza, to the north of the later Szabolcs County, which was no longer part of the later Bereg County). Its northern border corresponded with the border between Russia and the Kingdom of Hungary, along the main ridge of the Carpathians, as the author of the *Gesta Hungarorum* himself writes (see Steinhübel, 2004, pp. 187-188).

In many studies, we have expressed the opinion that this was where the Eastern Obodrites lived, whom Steinhübel suggestively (and inaccurately) calls the Southern Obodrites, because he considers them brigands, in line with their other name, the Praedenecenti, as indeed does Dušan Třeštík; consequently, nothing prevents them from locating their settlements on the lower Tisza (see Steinhübel, 2004, p. 62; Třeštík, 2001, p. 103). In this, they both evidently allude to the Latin appellation *praeda*, ‘spoils’ and *necāre*, ‘kill’. The Bavarian Geographer’s *Osterabtrezi*, or Eastern, not Southern (*sic*), Obodrites, are usually located on the middle and lower Tisza (cf., for example, MMFH I, 1966, p. 51), but there are at least three arguments in support of the hypothesis that they were located somewhere in the northern Tisza region, and were therefore eastern, or south-eastern, neighbours of the other Upper Danubian Moravians mentioned by the Bavarian Geographer, the *Merehanos* (for more, see Pukanec, 2013, pp. 30-33):

1. The Eastern Obodrites are mentioned not just by the Bavarian Geographer immediately after the Moravians (*Merehanos*), but also in the *Annales Regni Francorum*: “*orientalium Sclavorum, id est Abodritorum, Soraborum, Wilzorum, Beheimorum, Marvanorum, Praedenecentorum*” (MMFH I, 1966, s. 50), in English “*all the East Slavs, that is Obodrites, Sorbs, Wilzi, Bohemians, Moravians and Predenecenti*” (*Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard’s Histories*, 1970, pp. 111-112), where these also explicitly emphasise that they were, in relative terms, eastern and not southern Slavs;

2. The ethnonym *Obodrites* meant ‘living near Bodrog’, because the Slovak hydronym *Bodrog* of the River Bodrog, part of which was later renamed the River Ondava, definitely gained the suffix *-og* only later, via Hungarian (see Lutterer, Majtán and Šrámek, 1982, pp. 55-56); the name *Obodrites* was therefore a typical Slavic ethnonym formed of a preposition and toponym (see also the *Polabians*, who were near the River Labe (Elbe); the *Pomorians*, near the Mor’e, ‘sea’; the *Posulians*, near the River Sula; the *Porosians*, near the River Rosa; the *Zachlumians*, beyond the

Xlum, ‘hill’; the *Zagozdians*, beyond the G(v)ozd, ‘big, dense forest’; the *Chrezpenians*, around the River Pena, and so on);

3. The word *vulgo* in the sentence “*Abodritorum, qui vulgo Praedenecenti vocantur*” (MMFH I, 1966, p. 51), “*the Obodrites who are commonly called Praedenecenti*” (*Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard’s Histories*, 1970, pp. 116) means ‘not Latin, but in a folk language’ (cf. Haefs, 2004, p. 179) and the Slavic ethnonyms *Praedenecenti*, *Praedevecenti*, *Praedenescenti* (see Šafárik, 1863, p. 225) and the area settled by those who bore them must be a reflection of the settlements of a Dacian tribe, called the *Predavensioi* by Ptolemy (in the same way, the Bohemians were called the Celtic Boii), and even Ptolemy places them further north than the Cotini, whom he locates in the north-eastern part of Upper Pannonia (see Hoops, 2003, p. 470; Mócsy, 1974, p. 57).

If, therefore, we recognise that the Eastern Obodrites settled the principality centred on Ung Castle (Uzhhorod), we can call their Common Slavic dialect East Obodrite. If, in line with the fables in *Gesta Hungarorum*, Ung Castle gave its name to the Hungarians, it could not have been an insignificant castle. Anonymus writes of the pre-conquest Ung region almost as if it were the promised land: “Prince Álmos and his chief men, agreeing to the counsels of the Rus’, made a most lasting peace with them... The seven leading persons, who are called the Hetumoger, and the seven dukes of the Cumans... came down to the region of Ung [*ad partes Hung*]. When they arrived there, they called the place that they first occupied Munkács [*Muncas*, Mukachevo], because they had arrived after the greatest toil at the land that they had chosen for themselves. Then they rested there for forty days from their labours and they loved the land more than can be said. The inhabitants of the land, the Slavs, ...of their own accord submitted... They extolled to them the fertility of their land and told how, after the death of King Attila, the great Kean, ...advancing with the aid and counsel of the emperor of the Greeks, had occupied that land, how the Slavs themselves had been led from the land of Bulgaria to the border of the Rus’...” (*Kronika anonymného notára kráľa Bela*, 2000, pp. 52-55; Anonymi Bele Regis Notarii, 2010, pp. 35-37).

Could it be that the final words here recall Bulgarian-Ung relations in the cultural sphere, which may indicate that the Ung (Uh) Principality could have included experts in Old Church Slavonic culture? Given the nature of Anonymus’s *Gesta Hungarorum*, this is pure speculation. What is certain, however, is that there can be no question about Bulgarian hegemony over this territory at the time the Magyars arrived, because it had been Moravian since at least the time of Svätopluk I, and Svätopluk I

governed it through his prince. If we were to search in this area for an ancient princely family to whom the invented “duka” Laborec could have belonged, the only family to come under consideration would be the Bogat-Radvan family. Simon of Kéza writes about this family in the *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum*, the oldest Hungarian chronicle; he was probably a member of this family himself. He states that the family’s origin was in Bohemia: “...illi, qui Rodoan et Bagath nominantur, eorum generatio de Boemia ortum habet”; however, the very name of the village Moravany, which belonged to the Bogat-Radvan family, indicates that they may not have originated solely from Bohemia, but also from Moravia (see Marek, 2006, p. 387, 391, 395). If a member of this family, Rad(o)van son of Bogat, really was the Hungarian *comes palatinus*, in other words, the second man in the kingdom, as early as 1067-1071 (see Kéza, 1999, p. 168), it must have been an indigenous Slavic princely family. The family’s residences were primarily in Zemplín County, implying that Anonymus could have been right on this point. It is highly likely that Zemplín Castle itself was both a religious and a cultural centre, and not just in the Bodrog region, although the Zemplín Archdeaconry is not directly mentioned until the 13th century (see Tajkov, 2015, p. 210).

This monograph is a linguistic work, so we will not discuss this historical account further. Its main aim is to search for the origin of the Glagolitic prayers found in the manuscript known as the Kiev Leaflets. The explanation that the Common Slavic dialect of these prayers is edited Old Church Slavonic from the modern Czecho-Slovak region, or the then Moravian region, is still prevalent today, and indeed, is largely well-founded. However, unlike most other Old Church Slavonic manuscripts, the Kiev Leaflets did not originate in the Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic environment, which means that we can reject the ‘editing’ hypothesis. Following the introductory chapter *Pre-Glagolitic Slavic manuscripts* and the extensive *The oldest Glagolitic prayers*, where we provide the Glagolitic text of each prayer with a transcription, a Latin original text and a glossary, we will outline that, of the candidates that could possibly be identified as the language of the Kiev Leaflets, the most likely is a variety of Proto-Sotak, in other words, the Common Slavic dialectal predecessor of the Sotak dialects in the Ung-Zemplín border country, the ancient border of the Slovak language’s eastern range, which we also call East Obodrite for the purposes of this work.

Crucial in this respect is the third chapter, *Supralinear characters*, especially the second sub-heading on diacritic marks, in which we express the hypothesis that the Sotak dialect of Koromľa, as recorded in the late 19th century by Olaf Broch in *Weitere Studien von der slovakisch-*

kleinrussischen Sprachgrenze im östlichen Ungarn, is highly archaic and, after comparing it with the language of the Kiev Leaflets, we state the most likely place of origin for these Glagolitic manuscripts could well be the Great Moravian Zemplín Castle from the accentological perspective. In fact, with a little hyperbole, the Kiev Leaflets could be the Zemplín Glagolitic Leaflets, or, in the Latin that was the original language of the prayers, the *Folia Glagolitica Zempliniensia*, as the name of our monograph states. This is either confirmed, or at the very least, not disproved, by the linguistic features enumerated in the book's fourth chapter, *West Slavic and South Slavic features*, in which we mainly focus on phonetics and morphology, but also look at syntax and the lexicon.

In these two chapters, we show that, based on the stress patterns and the phonetic and morphological features, it is possible to believe that the language or dialect of the Kiev Leaflets may not have been spoken only by the Moravians' southern neighbours in the Pannonia of the princes Pribina and Kocel, as has hitherto been assumed when rejecting the editing hypothesis, but also – and more likely, in terms of linguistic facts – by their eastern or south-eastern neighbours, called the Eastern Obodrites in contemporary sources. The Eastern Obodrites settled parts of the Tisza and Bodrog region, especially in the presumed principality centred on Ung and Zemplín castles. The Sotak dialects are found in the Ung-Zemplín dialectal border region, and both their location and particularly their archaic nature must constantly be borne in mind. Today, like archaic Pomeranian Slovincian, they have almost died out, but could once have been much more widespread than they are now (see Kováčová, 2010, among others), and therefore the fifth and final chapter, *Mediaeval onymy in the south-east of the West Slavic macroarea*, presents confirmatory onomastic evidence which supports the search for the origin of the Kiev Leaflets in Zemplín from the wider surroundings of the Sotak dialect territory, especially the putative Ung (Uh) Principality, and compares them primarily with the Pannonian Principality, where several scholars, including the above-mentioned Joseph Schaeken, locate them. Schaeken's hitherto unrivalled publication *Kiever Blätter* is the fundamental material starting point for this monograph.

1 PRE-GLAGOLITIC SLAVIC MANUSCRIPTS

Slavicists tend to claim that the Slavs suddenly emerged in the 5th and 6th centuries, as if new-born, with no precursors or explanations (cf., for example, Beranová, 1988, pp. 29-30), and that no one has an answer to the question of how half of Europe became Slavic in so short a period of time (see Wolfram, 1997, p. 52). This is true. We may, however, at least ask the right question, along with Johanna Nichols (1993); not where the Slavs came from, but rather where the people who spoke Slavic came from. There are essentially two solutions to this great mystery: the demographic solution envisages a population explosion and subsequent migration; the sociolinguistic is based on the dissemination of the language.

Regarding the demographic interpretation, Nichols states that migration or population movement on such a massive scale as might be assumed on the part of the Slavs is unprecedented in human history up to the colonial period; or at the very least, we do not know of anything like it. An exception could be the settlement of previously unpopulated territories, but there is no archaeological or historical evidence of extensive depopulation in Central and Eastern Europe in the middle of the first millennium CE (Nichols, 1993, p. 378). On the contrary, we can completely rule out the hypothesis that a territory belonging to no one existed in this period, a time of class-based states. Continuity with the previous settlement is shown in the names of rivers and mountains, which were taken from the previous population, such as *Morava*, *Hron* or *Carpathians* (cf. Pauliny, 1964, p. 13). And even if we accept this migration, it would still be very difficult to account for the formation of so huge a biological potential in the Slavs, a potential capable of occupying an area of approximately 3 million km² of the historical map of Europe in so short a period of time (for more, see Mačala, 1995, pp. 59-66). Population movement did of course occur, but certainly not to the extent traditionally assumed in Slavic Studies.

We are much more likely to explain this mystery if we primarily consider the spread of language, and thus also the spread of ethnicities. According to Johanna Nichols, we need to distinguish three concepts when considering the spread of language. The first is the centre from which the language spreads, called the *locus*. The original Slavic settlements, even with regard to the proximity of Baltic and Germanic to Common Slavic, are traditionally located in the region to the northeast of the Carpathians,

but the locus was later (also?) on the Danube or more generally in Pannonia. The second is the *trajectory*, which may be one-way, bidirectional or radial, and also changing or constant in time. The trajectory of Common Slavic is more-or-less radial. The third is the *impetus* for the language spread. This concept does not provide an entirely clear explanation, but states that the impetus may, for example, be a group of conquerors whose martial values and organisation are adopted by the subjugated group, or many other forms of cultural interaction (Nichols, 1993, pp. 377-380).

For language spread, it is necessary to establish whether the language in the process of spreading was an ethnic language when it started to spread, or a *lingua franca*. Common Slavic was an ethnic language, although Nichols states that the Slavs distinguished between two ethnicities: generic and local. The Common Slavic word for generic ethnicity was **jězykъ*, which also means ‘language’, so **slověnskъ(i) jězykъ* meant both ‘Slavic ethnicity’ and ‘Slavic language’. On the local level, this was the classic ethnicity of early mediaeval *Stämme*, about which much has been written. For example: they believed in a common origin, or rather, they have a common name, a common ancestor, history, culture, territory, solidarity (cf. Curta, 2001, pp. 19, 23, where the issue is analysed in detail). The Moravians, Czechs, and so on, can then be classified as such ethnicities (for more, see Nichols, 1993, pp. 379-382). Here it is important to indicate that, while Forefather Czech existed as such in the ethnicity’s faith, the Slavs have never believed in a common origin.

The Slavs did not believe in a common mythical ancestor, but they did believe – interestingly – in a common mythical place that was the potential locus, to borrow Nichols’ term, of language spread. This was the Danube, which is mentioned in the sources as the area from which the Slavs expanded. The ancient *Russian Primary Chronicle* reads: “Over a long period the Slavs settled beside the Danube, where the Hungarian and Bulgarian lands now lie. From among these Slavs, parties scattered throughout the country and were known by appropriate names, according to the places where they settled...” (*The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, 1953, pp. 52-53). There then follows an enumeration of specific tribes (see *Pramene k dejinám Velkej Moravy*, 1964, p. 386; MMFH I, 1966, pp. 191-192). And, for example, in an extract from *The Tale of Igor’s Campaign*, there is the indirect nostalgic memory of “on the Danube! Iaroslava’s voice is heard” or “I shall fly as a gull along the Danube” (see Shykyrynska, 2019, p. 280), although the individual lived on the Desna, a tributary of the Dnieper. Such elements also occur in Russian songs (see Тулаев, 2000, p. 134).

The *Russian Primary Chronicle* also tells us about the radial trajectory of the spread of Common Slavic from the Middle and Lower Danube, where the locus of the language spread was situated: “thus some came and settled by the river Morava, and were named Moravians, while others were called Czechs. Among these same Slavs are included the White Croats, the Serbs, and the Carinthians. For when the Vlakhs attacked the Danubian Slavs, settled among them... the latter came and made their homes by the Vistula, and were then called Lyakhs. Of these same Lyakhs some were called Polyanians, some Lutichians, some Mazovians, and still others Pomorians. Certain Slavs settled also on the Dnieper, and were likewise called Polyanians. Still others were named Derevljans, because they lived in the forests. Some also lived between the Pripet’ and the Dvina and were known as Dregovichians. Other tribes resided along the Dvina and were called the Polotians, on account of a small stream called the Polota, which flows into the Dvina. It was from this same stream that they were named Polotians. The Slavs also dwelt about Lake Il’men, and were known there by their characteristic name. They built a city which they called Novgorod. Still others had their homes along the Desna, the Sem’, and the Sula, and were called Severians. Thus the Slavic race was divided...” (see *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, 1953, p. 53; *Pramene k dejinám Velkej Moravy*, 1964, pp. 386-387; MMFH I, 1966, pp. 191-192).

Precisely this area undoubtedly formed the locus because the Avars lived here, and they were the impetus for the spread of Common Slavic. Třeštík (2001, pp. 20-21, 25-26) states that the incarnation of their empire was the khagan ruler, who had to prove his government with military successes and by subjugating ever more people. The Avars’ pride, which historical memory retains as their most significant trait, was their vision of a world in which the khagan and his people had an exceptional mission, the result of which being that all others seemed like slaves to them, or at least potential slaves. Their dominion over the surrounding ethnicities was founded on their pride. According to the sources, Avars were so proud that, if they wished to travel anywhere, they did not yoke horses or oxen to their carts, but Slav women, which, although a myth, reflects Avar supremacy over others. What is important from the linguistic perspective, however, is that the Avars habitually sought refuge with the Slavs in winter, when the Slav women must have served them as concubines. Their Avar-Slav children undoubtedly spoke Slavic and maybe also Avarian, if there was such a language.

What language the Avars originally spoke is uncertain, but they certainly used at least some Turkic terms in their society. Before them, the Huns used Slavic terms (e.g., *strava*, ‘funeral feast’, etc.), though they

were not Slavs, so nothing more substantial may be deduced from this. Omeljan Pritsak, the scholar of Slavic and Turkic languages, correctly pointed out that the nomadic empire consisted of followers of a warrior religion (*Männerbünde*) and the cyclical perception of time was one of their characteristics. When a tribe gained charisma, that clan ruled for a while and its language became the most influential in the entire warrior society. After losing prestige, however, it was supplanted by another charismatic clan, which replaced the previous clan's language with their own (see Pritsak, 1983, pp. 358-359). Pritsak also claims that the clan did not just replace the language, but also renamed the entire society, although it is clear to him that the Avars in the Middle Danube were not the real Avars, but only bore their name. So the specific name of *Avar* was retained despite all these changes and, after one particular change, could very well have been borne by a clan that was originally Slavic in ethno-linguistic terms, although this is not assumed.

In any case, and this is particularly important, these *Männerbünde* were not generally seamless ethno-linguistic communities. This was true not just of the Avars, but also, as is generally known, also of the Huns or Magyars. Moreover, another important matter that Pritsak mentions is Jordanes' *Getica*, or *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths*, Chapter 25, which includes two metaphorical phrases: *vagina nationum* and *officina gentium*; that is, a sort of group hatchery or factory of tribes, meaning a whole system to attract new recruits to the nomadic empires even from more distant regions, while these same recruits were first trained, then sent to attack other distant areas. Initially, conscripts will certainly have used some sort of *lingua franca* (see Pritsak, 1983, pp. 385-386), which in the Avar Khaganate was over time replaced by Common Slavic as the most important of its constituents.

Given the great number of Slavic toponyms in Pannonia, and given the fact that Hungarian and Romanian, being in the proximity of Slavic languages, later came under their intense influence, and the converse has not shown to be the case, we can assume that Common Slavic in this region quickly displaced the competing languages and the Avars, whoever they were, although remaining Avars in anthropological terms, learned Common Slavic well and very quickly. Of course, the differences between the Avars and the Slavs were gradually eroded, which is why Constantine Porphyrogenitus talks about "Slavic nations, who were also called Avars" and "the Slavs, who were also called Avars" (see Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, 1967, p. 123; *Pramene k dejinám Vel'kej Moravy*, 1964, p. 311; MMFH III, 1969, pp. 385-386). However, from the very beginning, the Slavs differed from the Avars not just in their language, but also in

their appearance and military abilities. They were reportedly great swimmers and builders of dug-out canoes, so they served in the Avar-Slav army primarily as a naval corps, some sort of marines, while the cavalry primarily consisted of Avars. It seems that the Avars began to use Common Slavic more intensively by no later than the time of Samo's Empire (623-658), after the catastrophic defeat at Constantinople, and at that time many of them were bilingual. This is also when the charisma of the original Central European Avars disappeared for good, because Samo defeated the Avars every time, as the chronicler says (see Pramene k dejinám Vel'kej Moravy, 1964, p. 59; MMFH I, pp. 20-21).

After peace had been re-established, the new, charismatic Avar-Slav alliances made Common Slavic the prestige language, so it spread very easily among the originally non-Slav recruits attracted by it and among entire local ethnic groups. However, migration can in no way be ruled out as an explanation for how half of Europe became Slavic in so short a period of time. During this migration, the Slavs would certainly have made use of their abilities in sailing and in fighting on water, and we must not forget that rivers were the main transport arteries at that time. This skill of theirs explains the speed with which Common Slavic spread. The Slavs' apparently inexplicable biological potential is partially resolved by the concept of *vagina nationum* or *officina gentium* of nomadic empires. This would seem to reveal the great mystery of Slavic Studies, or what was hitherto the great mystery (for more, see at least Boček, 2014, pp. 49-104).

All claims about the Central European Avars are dubious, because we have very little written information about them. The Avars certainly also created a relatively successful empire, but apparently, like their precursors the Huns, their civilisation had no literature (see Pritsak, 1983, p. 355). This claim is scarcely weakened by the few potentially Avar runic inscriptions, which cannot be reliably translated (see Vásáry, 1972; Szalontai and Károly, 2013), and an alphabetic inscription on a golden vessel from the treasure found at Sănnicolau Mare: *BOYHAA ZOAIAN TECH AYETOIΓH BOYTAOYA ZOIAN TAΓPOΓH HTZIΓH TAICH* (cf. Braun, 2015, p. 28), from which we can make out only a few names or titles (cf. Vykypěl, 2004, p. 150). We cannot then expect that the Slavs under Avar domination and cultural influence in their close proximity used a more systematic method of writing before the fall of the Khaganate. The illiteracy of the Avars is also, to a great extent, evidence that the Slavs too were illiterate, or at least that the Slavs of that region were.

Approximately a century after the Avar Khaganate disappeared, the monk Chernorizets Hrabar wrote that, before Saint Constantine, "Being still pagans, the Slavs did not have their own letters, but read and

communicated by means of tallies and sketches. After their baptism they were forced to use Roman and Greek letters in the transcription of their Slavic words but these were not suitable..." (cf., for example, *Pramene k dejinám Velkej Moravy*, 1964, p. 285). The Russian letters from the *Life of Constantine* (see *Pramene k dejinám Velkej Moravy*, 1964, p. 232; MMFH II, 1967, p. 77) were not known to him, because they were not used in that region, whatever it was. It is not entirely clear from the text whether Hrabar meant runes by those "tallies and sketches" that he knew of, that is, whether they essentially constituted a phonetic script, or were only notches on the sticks (rovashes) or pieces of wood that were used for recording tax payments or debts as late as the 19th century. Although it is highly probably that wood-notching existed, this cannot be considered writing in the strict sense of the term, and there is no reliable material evidence that runes were used, although it also cannot be entirely ruled out, given that the Avars possibly used them and particularly that the neighbouring Germanic tribes used them extensively.

Some paleo-Slavicists or paleographers therefore focus on the above-mentioned possibility of Slavic texts written in Roman and Greek letters and concede the existence of some sort of Proto-Cyrillic, at least for the first half of the 9th century, based on the Greek alphabet. However, we agree with Ľubomír Kralčák that we need to adhere to what Hrabar says about the use of Greek letters by the Slavs, and that this use was "not suitable". If we express the speculation that the Greek alphabet gradually became more Slavic to the extent that it ultimately became a model for a very original and specific script like Glagolitic, we thereby assume the creation of a significant written tradition with a substantial number of texts, which would inevitably have resulted in, at the very least, the foundation of schools and scriptoria. We have no knowledge of any such things and there is no evidence for them (Kralčák, 2014b, pp. 21-22).

For that matter, the possibility remains that the Middle-Danube Slavs used the Latin script for literary purposes. However, there is no convincing material evidence even for this. In recent times, for example, the Bojná plaques were discovered in Slovakia. They probably date from the first half of the 9th century and have two inscriptions; Pavol Žigo was the first to draw the attention of linguistics to these objects. One of the plaques bears the Latin graphemes NDE, which could possibly be identified as part of a profession of faith, while the inscription on the other is much harder to make out. It may read (?)VAVM (see Žigo, 2013, p. 257) and there is a lively debate among experts as to whether it is Glagolitic (Žigo, 2014a, 2014b), or Latin (Kralčák, 2014a, 2014c) and pre-Glagolitic, which is more likely.

If NDE stood for *credo iN unum DEum* on a material challenging to write on, like this first plaque, which is uncertain, as Žigo himself indicates (2013, p. 257), we could maybe hypothetically believe in the existence of entire texts, such as a Creed or the Lord's Prayer, in an "unsuitable" Latin script from the pre-Constantine era. Furthermore, if we were to accept the best (or least uncertain) interpretation of the inscription on the second plaque, that put forward by the theologian Juraj Gradoš (2015, p. 135), as *Est ex Veritate, Audit Vocem Meam* (Gospel of John, chapter 18, verse 37), that is "... (everyone) who belongs to the truth listens to my voice", we could expand the hypothesis from basic prayers to extracts from the gospels and similar. At the same time, however, we would definitively renounce what is essential: that the texts were written in Slavic. As Kralčák has already pointed out (see 2014b, p. 30), in the *Life of Constantine* we find *expressis verbis* official confirmation that the Middle-Danube Slavs had no literature of their own even in the first half of the 9th century: "And the Philosopher answered: Though I am weary and sick in body, I shall go there gladly if they have a script for their language. Then the Emperor said to him: My grandfather and my father, and many others have sought this but did not find it" (see *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, 1983, p. 67; *Pramene k dejinám Vel'kej Moravy*, 1964, pp. 244-245; MMFH II, 1967, pp. 99-100).

2 THE OLDEST GLAGOLITIC PRAYERS

The oldest literary manuscript with a coherent Slavic text to have been found so far is, in light of the above, written in Constantine's Glagolitic. It seems that Constantine largely created this script, as Kralčák shows in his major work of 2014, *Pôvod hlaholiky a Konštantínov kód*, using Euclidean geometry. Of the 38 graphemes in the Glagolitic alphabet, which is the number stated by Chernorizets Hrabar, it is possible to link so many of them with Euclid's *Elements* (see, for example, Kralčák, 2014b, p. 79) that this can hardly be a coincidence. In any event, the above-mentioned oldest literary manuscript with coherent Slavic text, known as the Kiev Leaflets, consists of precisely 38 short prayers, though this is probably a coincidence.

The Kiev Leaflets are a selected translation of part of the Latin sacramentary for use in religious services in Great Moravia, but they contain several fundamental peculiarities. The Glagolitic leaflets were found by the Jerusalem archimandrite Antonin Kapustin in St Catherine's Monastery in 1870. In 1872 he donated them to the library of the Kiev Theological Academy (today they are held in the library of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine), which is why they are known as specifically the Kiev Leaflets (see, for example, Schaeken and Birnbaum, 1999, p. 93; Lukoviny, 2014, p. 104). Chemical analyses of the manuscript have been conducted and its authenticity has been definitively confirmed. The preserved document is usually considered a crib of a slightly older Glagolitic original and it is usually dated to the 10th century. However, it cannot be entirely ruled out that the Kiev Leaflets are not a crib, but a protograph, or original, first written record of the text; to date, Radoslav Večerka in particular has put forward careful arguments for this hypothesis. The main argument for it being a crib, since the time of the Croatian scholar Vatroslav Jagić, is that the A pl. *rovanię*, 'gifts' is a *hapax legomenon* (word not found elsewhere) and was originally a corruption of *darovanię*; this argument became invalid with the discovery of a second document containing this expression (for more information see, for example, Večerka, 1989-1990, p. 69), so the reasons for claiming the leaflets are a crib are no longer well-founded.

Given various linguistic features in the prayers, such as the retention of nasal vowels and jers, we must date the text to no later than the late 10th or early 11th century. It is not possible to place its origin much earlier due

to evidence of contraction in the text; the earliest date that can be considered is the late 9th century, so we can talk roughly about the period from 875 to 1000. In 894, not long after the death of Prince, or King, Svätopluk, thus at a time of great chaos and civil war, the Magyars overthrew the Pannonian part of the Great Moravian Empire, even annihilated it completely (see *Pramene k dejinám Vel'kej Moravy*, 1964, p. 110; MMFH I, 1966, p. 121) and the highly original 20th prayer in the Kiev Leaflets, which is not taken from any Latin prayer, is probably the prayer for protection from them, meaning that we can concede, with a degree of uncertainty, that the Glagolitic prayers originated in the final decade of the 9th century. Before Svätopluk's death there was no reason to panic about the pagan nations, and the Magyars conquered the Tisza area and Transdanubia in 900, then completely destroyed Great Moravia in 906, so the text can probably be dated with reasonable accuracy to 894-906, or even better, 894-900. By this, of course, we assume that those who knew Glagolitic were not all expelled by Svätopluk from at least peripheral parts of the empire after Saint Methodius's death in 885, otherwise we would have to push the date back by a decade.

The Kiev Leaflets consist of seven small-format leaflets, written on both sides, while the first page of the first leaflet bears an inscription in less ancient Glagolitic letters. As we know from the literature, the original 38 prayers in the Glagolitic manuscripts were not written by one scribe. It is necessary to differentiate Scribe A, starting from the second side of the first leaflet 1^v down to the seventh line of leaflet 2^v, that is, prayers 1-7, which are dedicated to specific saints, from Scribe B, beginning at the eighth row of leaflet 2^v; the whole of leaflet 7^v and the remaining prayers, 8-38, are his (r=recto, v=verso). Furthermore, the preserved leaflets also, of course, contain the already mentioned inscription of Scribe C with the extract from the *Epistle of St Paul to the Romans* (Romans 13, 11-14 and Romans 14, 1-4) and a short Marian prayer, which is later and can be found at the start, as the first page of leaflet 1^r. This monograph will not discuss this. In addition, there are hypotheses that, due to the originally blank first page of the first leaflet, or the apparent incompleteness of the last prayer in the seventh leaflet, a leaflet is missing from this manuscript, so a better name for the Kiev Leaflets would be the Kiev Fragments. This issue, however, has no deeper meaning when searching for the text's origin, and moreover, the manuscript is considered a fragment in isolated instances only.

The said 38 prayers in the Kiev Leaflets include ten masses (cf. Schaeken, 1987, p. 4):