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**“Unity, Education, Language”: Cyril and Methodius in the Eyes of Slovenian Catholic Intellectuals from the Mid-Nineteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Century**  
*»Edinost, izobrazba, jezik«: Ciril in Metod v očeh slovenskih katoliških intelektualcev od sredine 19. do sredine 20. stoletja*

*Abstract.* From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, during the struggle against Germanization and other nationalist pressures, Slovenian Catholic intellectuals attributed significant merit to Cyril and Methodius in spreading education and strengthening national consciousness. The importance of Cyril and Methodius in the Slovenian environment was substantiated by intellectuals, such as the pedagogue and bishop of Maribor Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862), the Franciscan friar and linguist Stanislav Škrabec (1844–1918), and the diocesan priest and historian Ivan Vrhovnik (1854–1935). The highest expression of these efforts was the establishment of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius in 1885, whose purpose was to build schools with the Slovenian language of instruction in ethnically mixed areas. The establishment of Cyril and Methodius as bearers of religious and national ideals was crucially influenced by a series of anniversaries associated with the millennium of their work in Moravia and Pannonia (1863, 1869, 1885). The publication of the encyclical *Grande munus* (1880) by Pope Leo XIII also significantly contributed to the spread of their veneration. However, the role of Cyril and Methodius was comprehensively portrayed among Slovenian intellectuals not until Franc Grivec (1878–1963) in the first half and in the mid-twentieth century. Grivec was a priest and professor of ecclesiology and Eastern theology at the Faculty of Theology in Ljubljana, who also arranged for the first critical editions of sources about the holy brothers in the Slovene language.

*Keywords:* Cyril and Methodius, Christian unity, Slovenian national consciousness, language and education, Anton Martin Slomšek, Stanislav Škrabec, Ivan Vrhovnik, Franc Grivec

*Povzetek:* Od sredine 19. do sredine 20. stoletja – v času boja proti germanizaciji in drugim nacionalističnim pritiskom – so slovenski katoliški intelektualci Cirilu in Metodu pripisovali pomembne zasluge pri širjenju izobrazbe in krepitvi na-

rodne zavesti. Pomen Cirila in Metoda so v slovenskem okolju utemeljevali izobraženci, na primer pedagog in mariborski škof Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862), frančiškan in jezikoslovec Stanislav Škrabec (1844–1918) ter škofijski duhovnik in zgodovinar Ivan Vrhovnik (1854–1935). Najvišji odraz teh prizadevanj je pomenila ustanovitev Družbe svetega Cirila in Metoda leta 1885, katere namen je bila gradnja šol s slovenskim učnim jezikom na narodnostno mešanih območjih. Na uveljavitev Cirila in Metoda kot nosilcev verskih in narodnih idealov je ključno vplivala vrsta obletic, povezanih s tisočletnico njunega delovanja na Moravskem in v Panoniji (1863, 1869, 1885). K razmahu njunega čaščenja je pomembno prispevala tudi izdaja okrožnice „Grande munus“ (1880) papeža Leona XIII. Toda vlogo Cirila in Metoda je med slovenskimi intelektualci celovito prikazal šele Franc Grivec (1878–1963) v prvi polovici in sredini 20. stoletja. Grivec je bil duhovnik ter profesor ekleziologije in vzhodne teologije na ljubljanski Teološki fakulteti, ki je poskrbel tudi za prve kritične izdaje virov o svetih bratih Cirilu in Metodu v slovenskem jeziku.

*Ključne besede:* Ciril in Metod, krščanska edinost, slovenska narodna zavest, jezik in izobraževanje, Anton Martin Slomšek, Stanislav Škrabec, Ivan Vrhovnik, Franc Grivec

## 1. Introduction

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, when national movements were on the rise in Europe and a modern national consciousness finally took shape among Slovenians, Cyril (827/828–869) and Methodius (815–885), medieval saintly missionaries, became a central historical symbol in the reflections of Slovenian Catholic intellectuals, especially Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–1862), Stanislav Škrabec (1844–1918), a linguist, Ivan Vrhovnik (1854–1935), a historian, and Franc Grivec, a theologian (1878–1963). The saints' missionary activity among the Moravian and Pannonian Slavs in the ninth century was understood as the religious and linguistic foundation that enabled the integration of Slavic peoples into the cultural sphere of Christian Europe. In Slovenian lands, this heritage was used as a means in the fight against Germanization and similar nationalist pressures. Cyril and Methodius were thus not only an example of the (former) unity of the Church with its western and eastern dimensions, but also as an authority in the promotion of the Slovenian language in education and the general public. The most distinct expression of the importance of the language was the establishment of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, an educational organization for building schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction along the borders with German- and Italian-speaking areas, in 1885.

The paper<sup>1</sup> is based on the analytical method of cultural history and historical theology, which includes a critical interpretation of sources (hagiographies, eccle-

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of the research program "P6-0269 Religion, Ethics, Education, and Challenges of Modern Society" and basic research project "J5-4595 Between Tradition and Modernity: Slovenian

siastical documents, sermons, journalistic texts) and scientific literature. Particular attention is devoted to the ideational currents that shaped the perception of the holy brothers in Slovenia and to the roles of individual intellectuals in creating a religious–national interpretation of history. The article thus highlights how Cyril and Methodius became key bearers of ideas that went beyond the ecclesiastical framework and were at the core of Slovenian historical self-perception.

## 2. The Veneration of the Brothers from Thessaloniki and the Period of National Movements

Cyril<sup>2</sup> and Methodius were brothers by birth from Thessaloniki in the Greek–Slavic region of Macedonia within the Byzantine Empire. As highly educated priests and theologians, they made history with their missionary work among Moravian and Pannonian Slavs. Through the centuries, the collective memory of the “Slavic apostles” was not commonly spread across the whole of Christian Europe. Whereas Orthodox East and South Slavs venerated them as saints since the early tenth century, the situation in the Catholic world was different. In the Polish dioceses of Gniezno and Krakow, there were liturgical commemorations since the early fourteenth century, and around the same time, the cult of Cyril and Methodius asserted itself among the Catholic Slavs of Moravia, Istria, and Dalmatia. In Czechia, it appeared in the mid-fourteenth century but later fell into oblivion and only resurfaced in 1863. In present-day Slovenia, memory of them was likely preserved until the fourteenth century at the latest and gradually faded.<sup>3</sup> The feast day of the Slavic apostles began to be celebrated again in 1777 within the diocese of Ljubljana. As a holiday of the entire Catholic Church, it has been celebrated since 1881, on 5 July. Among all Slavs, but most prominently among Slovaks and Bulgarians, the veneration of the brothers from Thessaloniki was revived or strengthened in the second half of the nineteenth century. From the point of view of the national movements of that time, their work in spreading the Christian faith became a key component of the collective historical narrative in the ecclesiastical and general societal sense, based on the “glorious” events of the medieval past. (Orožen 2013, 97; 2003b, 262; Moszyński 2004; Maver 2021b, 22–23; *Apostolstvo* 1910, 2–3)

The mid-nineteenth century can generally be defined as a time when, among Catholic Slavs within the Habsburg monarchy, the veneration of the holy brothers spread, and knowledge of their achievements expanded. Discovering the example

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<sup>2</sup> In historical sources, Cyril is more often referred to by his baptismal name, Constantine. He was given the name Cyril in Rome when he received monastic tonsure right before his death in 869.

<sup>3</sup> An exception that points to the later existence of their veneration in a group of Slovenians’ ancestors is the altar of Cyril and Methodius in the Aachen Cathedral, a popular site of pilgrimage for Habsburg and German lands in western present-day Germany. The altar in question and the ecclesiastical fund (benefice) paying for a Slovenian-speaking priest in Aachen were maintained by the urban parishes of Ljubljana and Kranj in the first half of the seventeenth century. (*Apostolstvo* 1910, 6)

of Cyril and Methodius was realized not only through the cultural rise of the Slavic nations in Europe, which was part of the process of the spreading of modern national consciousness, but also in the Uniate movement, i.e. efforts to unite Orthodox Christians with the Catholic Church. In international terms, the Velehrad Academy deserves particular credit for raising awareness about the importance of Christian unity and solidarity among Slavs. Between 1907 and 1948, in the town of Velehrad in Moravia (present-day Czech Republic), which was the seat of Methodius' diocese at the end of the ninth century, the Academy held Uniate-oriented scientific congresses.<sup>4</sup> The initiative for the congresses came from Antonín Cyril Stojan (1851–1923), a Czech priest and politician, later archbishop in the nearby Olomouc (in office: 1921–1923), and the Slovenian professor Franc Grivec. (Orožen 2013, 97–98; Vovko 1994, 35)

A nationally conscious view of Cyril and Methodius became established in Slovenia as well. Emphasizing that Slovenians' ancestors were included in their mission in the Pannonian region reduced the significance of the wider and more long-term process of the establishment of Latin Christianity in Slovenian lands, which took place from two "foreign" ecclesiastical centers – the Bavarian Salzburg in the north and the Romance Aquileia in the west.<sup>5</sup> The biggest problem for Slovenian Catholic and other intellectuals was the fact that alongside the establishment of Christianity, the political independence of the Slavic principality of Carantania diminished in favor of "German nobility" within the East Frankish and subsequent Holy Roman Empire. Likewise, another factor was problematic from the national perspective of the time, which was pervaded by efforts to defend against Germanization and to generally consolidate the Slovenian language in public. It is that the main source for the early medieval history of Slovenian lands (*The Conversion of Bavarians and Carantanians*, Latin: *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*) was created in Salzburg in the late ninth century and was explicitly directed against the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Cyril and Methodius in the Pannonian Plain and eastern Alps. (Maver 2021b, 24–25; 30)

### 3. Cyril and Methodius as Bearers of the Values of Education and Language

Both later nationally conscious interpretations and the message of the original medieval sources emphasize that a significant dimension of the lives and mission of Cyril and Methodius was their love for literacy, education, and wisdom. Interestingly, most of the hagiography dedicated to Constantine (Cyril) – created in Greek around the year 900, translated to Church Slavic a few decades later, and traditionally known as *The Life of Constantine* – does not consist of a depiction of his missionary work among Slavs. It is his discussions about "true faith" with heretics, Muslims,

<sup>4</sup> For more detail on the Velehrad Congresses, see: Ambrožič 2003b.

<sup>5</sup> A fundamental modern overview of the Christianization process in the region between the eastern Alps, western Pannonian Plain, and northern Adriatic Sea: Štih 2015.

and Jews that are the core focus. The centrepiece is Cyril's visit to the court of the Khazar khagan, where he demonstrates the correctness of Christianity while rejecting the positions of Jewish scholars. This event is related to the acquisition of the relics of Clement I,<sup>6</sup> bishop of Rome (pope), in Tauris, the present-day Crimean Peninsula. Near the end of Cyril's life, the brothers from Thessaloniki transported them to the Roman basilica dedicated to the same St. Clement. The transportation is dated to the time they worked among Slavs in Moravia and Pannonia. Cyril and Methodius' successful proclamation of the gospel to pagan Slavs using a script adapted to them and their native language builds on their previous erudition and is its culmination. Thus, the hagiographer stresses the strength and nobility of Byzantine Christian culture. Through harmony between reason (ancient Greek rhetoric and philosophy), faith (the Bible and the works of Church Fathers), and personal example (Cyril and Methodius' renunciation of marriage and secular positions in favor of proclaiming the gospel) to the peoples and lands outside the empire, this culture supposedly brought "true wisdom." Such wisdom in turn led both to better education and to eternal life with God. In the same spirit, the hagiographer often complements Constantine's name with the nickname Philosopher,<sup>7</sup> i.e. lover of wisdom. (Ivanova 2024, 43–49; 51; 56; 60; 76–80; Ševčenko 1989, 13) Whereas *The Life of Constantine* emphasizes the strength of culture and Byzantine superiority vis-à-vis non-Christians, the second fundamental hagiography, i.e. *The Life of Methodius*, created in Church Slavic in the Macedonian region in the first half of the tenth century, has a theologically similar but politically different message. It was composed to substantiate the orthodoxy of the brothers from Thessaloniki, show the papal support of their activities, and present the independence of the Slavic ecclesiastical organization under Methodius' leadership. This text can largely be understood as an answer to the accusations of German clergy based in the archdiocese of Salzburg, which endeavored to have jurisdiction over western Pannonia. (Ivanova 2024, 139; 160–162; 164–166; 175; Betti 2013, 172–174)

From the early nineteenth century, it was Slovenian university professors of Slavic linguistics, working within the Austrian state-cultural framework of the time, such as Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844),<sup>8</sup> Franc Miklošič (1813–1891),<sup>9</sup> and Rajko Nahtigal (1877–1958), who were among the first European explorers to study and publish written sources composed in Old Church Slavic, the language created

<sup>6</sup> The Catholic Church considers Clement (in office: ca. 92–100) to have been the fourth pope, i.e. the third successor of Peter the Apostle (after Linus and Anacletus). An overview of Clement's life and veneration: Schmitt 2016.

<sup>7</sup> On the semantic nuances of the concept of philosophy in *The Life of Constantine*, see: Temčin 2021.

<sup>8</sup> It is worth mentioning the introduction to the first scientific grammar of the Slovenian language (there termed "the Slavic language in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria"), which Kopitar composed in German for intellectual readers in Central Europe. In the introduction, he enthusiastically speaks of the great geographic distribution of Slavs, their adoption of Christianity, and the introduction of liturgy in their own language owing to Cyril and Methodius. (1809, III–XX)

<sup>9</sup> Among such works, it is worth highlighting at least Miklošič's Church Slavic-Greek-Latin dictionary (*Lexicon palaeoslovenico-graeco-latinum*, 1862–1865). An overview of Miklošič's life and work: Hafner 1991.

by the holy brothers. The main basis for subsequent research was Kopitar's 1836 collection of sources (*Glagolita Clozianus*), dedicated to the earliest Slavic texts in the Glagolitic script, composed between the ninth and eleventh centuries. It also included the Freising Manuscripts, three manuscripts created between the mid-tenth and early eleventh century. These are the earliest texts in a precursor to the Slovenian language as well as the earliest known Slavic writings in the Latin script.<sup>10</sup> Kopitar and Miklošič were convinced that Cyril and Methodius formed the Slavic literary language in (western) Pannonia, thus building it on the foundation of the speech of Slovenians' ancestors, so many Slovenian nationally conscious priests, artists, and politicians declared this language "Old Slovenian." By the late nineteenth century, however, it had turned out that Church Slavic was based on Macedonian–Bulgarian dialects in the general vicinity of Thessaloniki, where the holy brothers had been from. In spite of this, due to the literary tradition and the widespread liturgical use of this language among different Slavic peoples, Slovenian patriots tried to further substantiate the language rights of modern Slovenian in education and public life at large. (Orožen 2013, 99–101)

In the period in question, Slovenian Catholic intellectuals consistently advocated certain fundamental views about Cyril and Methodius. They saw them as carriers of evangelical and general educational–cultural values, as bringers of "the light of faith and education" to the Slavic peoples, including Slovenians' ancestors. In this context, it was emphasized that they proclaimed the gospel in the native language and thus laid the foundations of erudition for the Slavs and enabled them to ascend to high culture,<sup>11</sup> integrating them into the European Christian civilization. In their activities, the intellectuals also saw the value of unity between the eastern (Orthodox) and western (Catholic) Christians. The first and foremost to advocate for unity was Bishop Slomšek, founder of the Brotherhood (after 1891 the Apostleship) of

<sup>10</sup> For more on Kopitar's breakthrough work, see: Toporišič 1995. The Freising Manuscripts (*Brižinski spomeniki*) are named after the Bavarian town of Freising or Brižinje, which is the Slovenian version of the name from the 11th century. In 1807, Bernhard Joseph Docen (1782–1828), a German librarian and linguist, discovered them in the Bavarian state library in Munich, where they had come from the Benedictine monastery of St. Corbinian in Freising and were likely part of the legacy of Bishop Abraham of Freising (died 994). His feudal estates had included Slovenian-speaking areas within what later became the lands of Carinthia and Carniola (especially Škofja Loka and its surroundings). The most complete critical edition of the Freising Manuscripts with a translation to modern Slovenian and English: Dolinar and Faganel 2004. A fundamental overview of linguistic and cultural history characteristics of the Freising Manuscripts: Kos, Jakopin, and Faganel 1996.

<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting the pithy words from a brochure made at the thousandth anniversary of Methodius' death, which, in the spirit of national consciousness and contemporary German–Slovenian antagonism, combine the themes of language, faith, and culture: "They rendered the most necessary holy tomes from the Greek into the Slovenian [Slavic] language. Sts. Cyril and Methodius are thus the pioneers of Slovenian writing, the fathers of Slovenian books." (Vrhovnik 1885, 8) "Slovenian church service recruited many Slavs to the holy faith. They rushed in droves to such churches, where holy sacraments were conducted in the native language. German priests fumed with anger. They were abandoned. Nobody took heed of them: nobody came to their Latin masses." (10) "Germans lied to the pope that the Slovenian language was wild, uncouth, and unsuited to holy service. Even then, they reviled our beautiful mother tongue, and they continue to revile it today." (18) "And the pope /... / allows that all church service as well as holy mass may be performed in the Slovenian language. Slovenian then became a holy language, as holy as Jewish, Greek, or Latin." (12) "No language had been honored like this before; no missionary had brought such a letter from Rome to his flock." (19)

Saints Cyril and Methodius, the main purpose of which was to pray and hold liturgical ceremonies for the unification of the Orthodox with the Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> Slomšek's brotherhood, modelled on a similar association in Moravia, achieved official endorsement by Pope Pius IX (in office: 1846–1878) in 1852, only a year after its establishment. Its membership grew rapidly and spread among Catholic Slavs in the entire Habsburg territory.<sup>13</sup> At the time of Slomšek's death, there were more than forty thousand members; two years later, the number grew to seventy-five thousand, and the quantitative peak was reached in 1883 with one hundred and fifty-three thousand members. In Slovenian lands, the clergy and school-attending youth held the largest shares among members. (*Apostolstvo* 1910, 1; 10; 12–14; 94; 96; 99; Orožen 2003b, 266; Filipič 2010, 84; Dolinar 2022, 24)

In parallel with Slomšek's brotherhood, Slovenian Catholic intellectuals were enthusiastic about discovering the earliest Slavic texts and used them to seek guidance for their own linguistic–educational and political future. Inter alia, this included the realization of the program of United Slovenia as a state unit<sup>14</sup> within Habsburg Austria encompassing the entire territory settled by Slovenian-speaking inhabitants. The example of Cyril and Methodius also filled them with enthusiasm about establishing many-sided connections with other Slavs, especially those professing the Catholic faith and thus living in a transitional area between the European West and East. (Orožen 2013, 102; 2003b, 266) Establishing connections between Slavs and recruiting Orthodox believers into the Catholic Church also had political reasons and was part of seeking ways to preserve Catholic influence in society. In 1861, Slomšek himself warned in the *Zgodnja danica* (*Early Morning Star*) periodical of religious disaffiliation due to "modern views" spreading in Slovenian lands too, by which he meant liberalism in particular. The gap created by "enemies of the Church" would be filled by "converted schismatics" from the East with the help of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius. (43)

#### 4. The Example of the Holy Brothers in Establishing the Catholic Faith and Slovenian Language

A more prominent commemoration of Cyril and Methodius among Slovenian nationally conscious Catholic intellectuals took place in relation to the thousandth

<sup>12</sup> The fervent sermons of Anton Martin Slomšek and his emulators about the spiritual and linguistic–educational value of the legacy of the holy brothers are published in the following anthology: Žlogar 1886a.

<sup>13</sup> Slomšek's initiative did not have only national and religious motives relating to the Slovenian and Central European environments. It also constituted "local" support to the "global" encyclical by Pius IX entitled "In suprema Petri". With this letter of 1848, Pius emphasized the primacy of popes as successors to Peter the Apostle and invited Orthodox patriarchs to return to the Catholic Church. The response of the Orthodox side was sharp – the same year, the "Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs" was published in Greek, summarizing the theological "errors" of Catholicism. (Dolinar 2022, 21; Tamborra 1992, 104–109)

<sup>14</sup> Fundamental work on the United Slovenia program of 1848: Granda 1999.

anniversary of their arrival to Moravia in 1863. That was a time of crowded church celebrations and patriotic rallies. The central event for the entire Slovenian-speaking area took place on 11 July in Maribor, sponsored by Slomšek's successor, Bishop Jakob Maksimilijan Stepišnik (1815–1889, in office: 1863–1889). The event consisted of two parts: mass in the St. Aloysius Church and a celebration held by the local reading society (*čitalnica*) in the garden of the Brandhof inn, which concluded with fireworks and bonfires on the nearby peaks of Pohorje. The same year, an augmented edition of the *Slovenian Grammar (Slovenska slovnica)* by Anton Janežič (1828–1869), a linguist and literary historian, was published, and the *Old Slovenian [Church Slavic] Grammar (Staroslovenska slovnica)* by Josip Marn (1832–1893), a priest and literary historian, was printed. That year also marked the establishment of Slovenska matica,<sup>15</sup> the central publishing and scientific institution for promoting the Slovenian language and culture, which brought together intellectuals of different political orientations. (Orožen 2013, 102–103) The second wave of enthusiasm for Cyril and Methodius came after 1880, when Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903, in office: 1878–1903) issued the encyclical *Grande munus (Great Gift)*. The encyclical unified their feast day to take place on 5 July and elevated it to a holiday for the entire Catholic Church. Alongside this, he stressed the church leaders' respect for Slavic nations, the acknowledgment of the ancient liturgical–literary character of the Church Slavic language, and a desire to unite Orthodox Slavs with the Catholic Church. (Orožen 2003b, 265; 271; Maver 2021a, 82–83; Filipič 2010, 88–89)

The following year, the pope's document was translated to Slovenian<sup>16</sup> and published in his specialized religious journal *Cvetje z vrtov sv. Frančiška (Flowers from the Garden of St. Francis)*<sup>17</sup> by Stanislav Škrabec (1844–1918),<sup>18</sup> a priest, member of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans), linguist, and long-time teacher (1873–1915) of Slovenian, Croatian, and Latin at the in-house Franciscan gymnasium in Kostanjevica near Gorizia. In a sermon delivered on the first joint Catholic feast day of Cyril and Methodius on 5 July 1881, the encyclical was extensively explained and linked to the situation in Slovenia at the time by Anton Žlogar (1850–1931) in St. Jacob's Church in the center of Ljubljana. Žlogar was a chaplain in that parish, the secretary of the school Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and later a canon in Novo Mesto. He highlighted the duty of Slovenian priests and believers to emulate the holy brothers in two spheres in particular – national and religious. He spoke both of efforts to consolidate the Slovenian language in education and the general public<sup>19</sup> and of loyalty to the Christian faith, which he said provided a clear

<sup>15</sup> An overview of the history of Slovenska matica is provided in the following edited volume: Jančar, Gabrič, and Stergar 2015.

<sup>16</sup> The first Slovenian translation of the encyclical was published in *Ljubljanski škofjski list (Ljubljana Diocesan Gazette)* on the same year as the original (Papeževa 1880, 92–97).

<sup>17</sup> Škrabec's works relating to Cyril and Methodius are reprinted in one place in the following collected works: Toporišič 1998. This includes Škrabec's translation of the "Grande munus" encyclical (74–86).

<sup>18</sup> Škrabec's importance for the development of Slovenian linguistics is highlighted by the following article: Toporišič 1970.

<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting the following thought by Žlogar: "The holy brothers of Thessaloniki realized a nation as a whole can ascend to a higher level of cultivation only based on its mother tongue." (1886b, 52)

direction in the "confused" present marked by the penetration of liberalism. The celebration of the holy brothers culminated in thanksgiving rallies, especially the one in Mary's pilgrimage site at Sveta Gora near Gorizia. On 5 July 1885, the thousandth anniversary of Methodius' death, around five thousand people gathered there to listen to an almost two-hour sermon by Anton Červ (1846–1891) the dean in Solkan near Gorizia. (Orožen 2013, 103; 2003b, 265; 271; Žlogar 1886b, 45–46; 51–53; Apostolstvo 1910, 95–96; Škrabec 1881) Inter alia, Červ advocated for Slovenian people to follow the example of the holy brothers and adopt the Catholic faith not only "in name," but as a comprehensive way of life in the personal and social spheres. In this sense, the dean of Solkan condemned the craving of rural and other inhabitants for money in the absence of a desire for spiritual progress and of trust in Divine assistance. On the other hand, he expressed hope about the numerousness and political-cultural rise of the Slavs, who would supposedly "rejuvenate Europe" as a bridge between the West and East. (1886, 163–166; 170)

With the millenary of Methodius' death (1885) in mind, the already mentioned Stanislav Škrabec systematically presented the historical, literary-linguistic, and legendary materials on the "Slavic apostles" in articles published in *Cvetje* over the course of seven years (from 1880 to 1887). Among these works by Škrabec, the 1882 article entitled "We Venerate Sts. Cyril and Methodius" ("Častimo sv. Cirila in Metoda") is telling in its very title. In this way, he attempted to enhance familiarity with the saints' lives among Slovenian readers. He proved that they missionized among Slovenians' ancestors in present-day Prekmurje and eastern Styria, as well as stressed the necessity of following their example in the contemporary process of promoting Slovenian in all areas of public life. Škrabec's thinking is imbued with pride in the former common Slavic history and is, inter alia, reflected in the following words: "Of course, we are only meager remnants of the once-mighty Slavic tribe that, in the time of the holy brothers, extended from the Adriatic to the Aegean and Black Sea, from the Tyrolean, Salzburgian, Czech-Moravian borders to Constantinople and Thessaloniki. Slovenian was spoken across this entire very extensive area." (1886, 231)

In this context, Škrabec advocated for the then original and bold idea of introducing the Slovenian language into the Roman Rite Mass of the Catholic Church. Although this was a minority opinion among Slovenian clergy, he was not quite alone in this; Andrej Einspieler (1813–1883), a Carinthian priest and national awakener, had striven for the same outcome, presenting the advantages of understandable liturgy in the native language from the perspectives of national consciousness and better religious knowledge in 1849 in the *Slovenija (Slovenia)* newspaper. (Maver 2021a, 81) Škrabec was convinced the Slovenian bishops had the right to ask the pope to allow performing mass and other rituals in the native language. The ancient endorsement of liturgical texts that had been originally valid for the brothers from Thessaloniki under Popes Adrian II (in office: 867–872) and John VIII (in office: 872–882) applied to the living Slavic languages at any given time, not just Church Slavic, he claimed. Whereas Church Slavic had been understandable to all Slavs at first, it had "fossilized" over the centuries. Škrabec's

reasons were not related only to national consciousness but were predominantly pragmatic as he envisioned that Slovenian liturgical texts, along with Slovenian mass singing, would enhance religious knowledge among various strata of the population and protect them from the rising influence of liberalism. For him, understandability of the language was the main criterion for the success of both the medieval mission among the Slavs and the contemporary revival of the Catholic faith. From the theological point of view, he demonstrated that the use of vernacular languages, including Slovenian, strengthened the “universality” of the Church and in no way diminished its unity. The principal sign of this unity was not Latin or any other language but papal authority, common doctrine, and sacraments, he said. (Orožen 2013, 103; 2003b, 268, 271–273; Toporišič 1986, 2–4; 7; 10; 14)

Škrabec’s proposal for Slovenian liturgy was not accepted by the Slovenian Church hierarchy,<sup>20</sup> but he did get a favorable response from liberally oriented cultural circles. He was supported by the *Slovan (Slav)* magazine, published between 1884 and 1887 by Ivan Hribar (1851–1941), a banker, politician, and subsequent mayor of Ljubljana (1896–1910). He was also joined by Josip Jurčič (1844–1881), a writer and liberal politician. Among Slovenian diocesan priests, the proposal was publicly backed by Ivan Vrhovnik (1854–1935), a historian and long-time parish priest in the Ljubljana district of Trnovo (1891–1918), who also published his history and theology articles in *Slovan*. In light of supporting the Yugoslav idea about four decades later, in 1925 and 1926, he presented the question of Slovenian as the liturgical language in more detail in a series of articles published in the *Slovenski narod (Slovenian Nation)* liberal newspaper. However, Vrhovnik’s opinion had a broader scope than Škrabec’s as he favored the introduction of either Slovenian or Church Slavic – believing the latter would bring the Catholic Slovenians closer to Orthodox Slavs in religious and cultural terms in a common Yugoslav state. (Orožen 2003b, 273–275; Toporišič 1986, 2–3; 13; 17; 22; Maver 2021a, 82–85; 2021b, 30–31)<sup>21</sup> The most radical opinion about Slovenian in Catholic liturgy was voiced by Davorin Hostnik (1853–1929), a Slovenian linguist and gymnasium professor living in Russia. In articles he published under the pseudonym Krutorogov in 1886 and 1887 in *Slovenski narod*, he advocated for the acceptance of the Eastern (Greek–Slavic) Rite with Cyrillic script and for performing it in Slovenian. He also envisioned the possibility of Slovenians converting to Orthodox Christianity. (Maver 2021a, 82–83; Čurkina 1968, 269–278)

<sup>20</sup> The following thought by Škrabec applied specifically to the future Church hierarchy: “We will be grateful to him [God] if we fearlessly pursue all legal pathways to revive our old right, which the Germans had suppressed, to once again hear holy mass in our native living language, as Slovenians a millennium ago had heard it uttered by St. Methodius. This should be said to and put to heart by you, Slovenian youth, in particular, who may now barely know what Latin declension and conjugation are but will in twenty, thirty, forty years be learned and respected bishops and archbishops of the Slovenian ecclesiastical area. When you are, do not forget what you owe to the Slovenian nation, do not forget what you owe to its messengers of the faith, Saints Cyril and Methodius!” (1886, 232)

<sup>21</sup> Vrhovnik had proposed the introduction of Church Slavic to enhance religious knowledge as well as defend the Slovenian language against the threat of Germanization as early as 1905 in a letter to the bishop of Ljubljana, Anton Bonaventura Jeglič (1850–1937, in office: 1898–1930) (Maver 2021a, 87; Čipić Rehar and Otrin 2015, 304)

It can be argued that in the second half of the nineteenth century, Cyril and Methodius became integral elements in the process of the propagation of the Slovenian national consciousness. In ecclesiastical and societal terms, the thousandth anniversary of Methodius' death, in particular, represented a consolidation of linguistic confidence, a stabilization of the veneration of the holy brothers, and an increase in the favorable attitude towards Orthodox Christianity among Slovenians. All three thousandth anniversaries, especially the last one, also reverberated loudly in Slovenian periodicals – such as the weekly *Novice (News)* or the cultural magazines *Zgodnja danica* and *Ljubljanski zvon (Ljubljana Bell)*. There were numerous rapturous reports on reading societies' events (so-called *besede*) and new books,<sup>22</sup> mass church rallies and ceremonious sermons, as well as on the pilgrimages of Slovenians and other Slavs to Velehrad and Rome. (Orožen 2003b, 261–262; 265; *Apostolstvo* 1910, 94) One of the biggest church rallies took place on 14 August 1863 in Gornji Grad, on the feast day of Saints Hermagoras and Fortunatus, the patron saints of the local church and of the Ljubljana diocese. On this rally, Slomšek was declared the Slovenian Cyril and Methodius, barely a year after his death. (Orožen 2003b, 268) The most ceremonious Slavic rally in wider terms, however, took place between 30 June and 6 July 1881, when a delegation of about one thousand seven hundred Catholic Slavs from Austro-Hungarian lands, led by Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905), a politician and the bishop of Đakovo, Slavonia (1849–1905), made its way to Rome. In the Basilica of St. Clement – whose relics had supposedly been brought to Rome by Cyril in 869, and where Cyril's grave is located – the pilgrims thanked Pope Leo XIII for his *Grande munus* encyclical and his favorable attitude towards Slavic nations. (Orožen 2003b, 272; *Apostolstvo* 1910, 96) In the final mass of this pilgrimage, there was a sermon by Matej Kožuh (1886, 55–59), a Slovenian priest and dean in Stara Loka, who spoke of the importance of Slomšek's brotherhood for unity between Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

## 5. Cyril and Methodius in Light of the Primacy of National Consciousness

In 1886, in connection with the recent thousandth anniversary of Methodius' death, the literary magazine *Ljubljanski zvon* started publishing installments of the historical novel *Slovenski svetec in učitelj (Slovenian Saint and Teacher)*. The liberally oriented writer and journalist, Fran Levstik (1831–1887), one of the central representatives of realism in Slovenian literature, could not finish the novel due to his death that soon followed; however, he had intended it to be a three-part patriotic literary monument to Cyril and Methodius. He was going to polemically juxtapose their life story with the contemporary fight against Germanization and for the

<sup>22</sup> Among popular and nationally conscious Slovenian books about the lives and merits of the holy brothers that were made to mark the three thousandth anniversaries, it is worth highlighting at least the following: Čebašek 1863 (adapted hagiography), Majar Ziljski 1885 (illustrated biography), Žlogar 1886a (sermons and speeches).

rights of the Slovenian language in public. (2013, 104; 2003a, 449–452) The connection between the holy brothers and the importance of language was expressed most distinctly on the thousandth anniversary of Methodius' death in 1885. That year, the culturally and politically influential Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius was established. Thus, an organization for building schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction in areas bordering German and Italian environments was created in a symbolically meaningful moment. The initiative for its creation came from Ivan Vrhovnik, the already mentioned priest and historian, in an article in the liberally oriented *Slovenski narod* newspaper, originally published on 28 November 1884.<sup>23</sup> It follows that at the time, nationally conscious intellectuals perceived the holy brothers also as patron saints of youth and, in the political sense, of the language rights and national rights of Slovenians. This fight for the language and nation, particularly oriented towards youth and thus towards the nation's future, became more important than the religious basis among Slovenian Catholic and other intellectuals around the year 1900. An indication of this, among others, is the rapid decline in the membership of the Brotherhood and the simultaneous rapid expansion of branches of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius. (Orožen 2013, 104; Apostolstvo 1910, 96–97; Filipič 2010, 90–91; Vovko 1985, 108; 1994, 35)<sup>24</sup> For example, in the article "On the Conclusion of the Thousandth Anniversary of St. Methodius" ("H sklepu tisočletnice sv. Metoda"), published in *Cvetje*, Škrabec emphasized that the establishment of the Society was the "principal result of the commemorative year," which continued the mission of the holy brothers in the contemporary situation. By defending the Slovenian language in schools against Germanism, which was often coupled with liberalism, the Society would supposedly contribute both to the respect for Slovenian national rights and to the preservation of the Catholic faith. In addition, the Society encouraged establishing connections to other Slavs and boosted Slovenian confidence by emphasizing the numerousness of Slavic nations both in the Austro-Hungarian and in the wider European context. (Toporišič 1986, 15–16; Škrabec 1885, 130–131; Vovko 1985, 110)<sup>25</sup> Ivan Vrhovnik rapturously cites the main reasons for establishing the Society in question:

<sup>23</sup> In a somewhat expanded format, the article was published in 1887 in the first volume of the *Vestnik šolske družbe sv. Cirila in Metoda* (*Gazette of the School Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius*; Vrhovnik 1887, 1–3).

<sup>24</sup> Notably, the bishop of Maribor, Mihael Napotnik (1850–1922, in office: 1889–1922) issued a pastoral letter in 1906, calling on believers to rejuvenate the Brotherhood and prayers to "unite the eastern schismatics" with the Catholic Church. The letter partly related to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Grande munus* encyclical. (Apostolstvo 1910, 97)

<sup>25</sup> In this context, a considerable role was played by the notion of the vast lands inhabited by Slovenians' ancestors in the Middle Ages. Supposedly, the contemporary time required defending what Slovenians had left. "In fact, 1000 years ago our ancestors owned thrice as much land as we do now. Then, Slovenians resided from the Adriatic Sea, i.e. Trieste and Istria, to the Danube and high up into Tyrol. Carinthia was the most eminent Slovenian land. There, even 600 years ago our language was in such high regard that the dukes of Carinthia swore an oath in it when they assumed their throne in Zollfeld. Nowadays, however, it is exactly in Carinthia that our language is doing worst. Villages that were purely Slovenian 50 years ago are German now. Deluded fools that disown their Slovenian mothers often also reject the Catholic faith. The schools are all German. The children of Slovenian parents must attend them for eight years, and when they finish, they are fluent in neither German nor Slovenian. They cannot read the catechism, nor mass books, nor books of the St. Hermagoras Society. The situation in Styria is not much better." (Vrhovnik 1886, 2)

"Slovenian had many enemies 1000 years ago, but yet more weigh it down today: Germanophiles, Italophiles, and Hungarophiles would like us to abandon our exquisite mother tongue and accept a foreign language instead. Sadly, so many of our people are complying. Village after village is being Germanized in Carinthia and Styria. /... / Fiercely, they strive that people do not learn to read Slovenian and that they are turned into Germans as fast as possible. So they have designed a society, called the German *Schulverein*, that pushes for German only in schools as well as, so it is heard, gives innocent Slovenian children scandalous books, thus weakening the holy faith in their hearts. Men who really love the Slovenian people have realized the great threat posed by the German *Schulverein*. So they have revived the school brotherhood [Society] of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the purpose of which is to promote the holy faith and love for the mother tongue among Slovenian youth. This is the same purpose that the holy brothers fervently pursued and lived for when they evangelized among the Slavs. You continue the work of Sts. Cyril and Methodius if you join this society. Enrol your children as well so they may grow up with the holy faith, wisdom, and intelligence at the intercession of the holy apostles." (1885, 27; 29)

In another text, the same author stresses that just as once the "Slovenian first teachers" Cyril and Methodius "enthused our youth for God and our language," thus the contemporary Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius "safeguards" Slovenian youth so that it stays loyal "to God and the Slovenian language" (1886, 5). In the spirit of a national view of history, Vrhovnik's explanation is confirmed with the opinion on the benefit of reviving the "old right" to use the Church Slavic language in Roman liturgy in areas inhabited by Slovenians and other Catholic Slavs. In his opinion, at least those Slavs for whom ecclesiastical authorities have prescribed the performance of rituals in Latin will sooner or later lose their political independence and "even today are at risk of being swallowed by foreigners" (29). He is convinced that reviving Church Slavic liturgy is not impossible as it has been a while since Rome had a pope "as friendly to Slavs as the current Holy Father, Leo XIII," as supposedly evidenced especially by his encyclical on Cyril and Methodius. If Slavic believers asked their bishops en masse to adopt this decision, and the bishops in turn asked the pope, and if the pope agreed to their requests, Church Slavic would act as the most prominent link between Catholic and Orthodox Slavic nations. It would thus "promote their unification" and strengthen the Catholic "faith and cultivation" in Europe. (29–30)

The Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius formed as the result of the situation in the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy around the year 1900. In spite of the legally guaranteed right to elementary education in one's mother tongue, the administrative arrangement of the state, which favored politically and economically stronger nations, foremost Germans, meant that members of other nationalities were often left without schools in their mother tongues. This applied particularly to borderlands or mixed-language lands, including Silesia (Germans vs.

Poles), Moravia (Germans vs. Czechs), Carinthia (Germans vs. Slovenians), and Trieste with Istria (Italians vs. Slovenians). At the elementary school level, it was important who controlled the local and regional school councils, which were often biased in addressing the issue of the language of instruction. A typical example of such practice was the issue of Slovenian state schools in Trieste, where children from Slovenian-speaking families could not obtain lessons in their own language due to decisions by the city and land authorities, even though they were entitled to it because of their numbers. (Vovko 1985, 107) Because German and Italian nationalist circles believed denationalization in Austrian state schools still did not proceed fast enough, they wanted to speed up the process with a network of private kindergartens and elementary schools under the aegis of school societies. The most active such societies were the German School Association (*Deutscher Schulverein*), established in Vienna in 1880, and the Italian National League (*Lega nazionale*), established in 1891 in Trieste. The Czech cultural and political elite, which was the most nationally conscious and economically strongest among Austrian Slavs, responded to such pressures by establishing a similar society, i.e. the Central School Association (*Ústřední matice školská*), in Prague as soon as 1880. Following the Czech example, the already mentioned Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius was established among Slovenians five years later. Its operation was enabled by members' contributions, gifts, special fundraisers, and proceeds from events. The main element of the Society was its branches in particular localities, which had to have at least twenty members. (Vovko 1985, 107–108; Vrhovnik 1886, 8; 1910, 9–10) The first ordinary annual session of the Society took place in Ljubljana on 5 July 1886 – symbolically on the holy brothers' feast day. It began with a holy mass at the altar of Cyril and Methodius in the Sacred Heart Church in the Tabor district. Tomo Zupan (1839–1937) was elected the president of the Society. He was the director of the Catholic male dormitory called Alojzijevišče (1881–1893) and a member of the center–liberal current of Slovenian clergy, the main representative of which had been the previous bishop of Ljubljana, Janez Zlatoust Pogačar (1811–1884, in office: 1875–1884). (Vrhovnik 1886, 12; Vovko 1985, 110–111; 1994, 39)<sup>26</sup>

In its first period, the Society operated in line with its national and Catholic orientation but was nonpartisan.<sup>27</sup> After 1907, when Zupan abandoned his presidential post, it became distinctly linked with the liberal National Progressive Party under the leadership of Gregor Žerjav (1882–1929), a jurist. Almost all priests who had until then held key positions in the central leadership and, even more so, the branches, withdrew from the Society. Their roles were mostly taken over by younger-generation teachers, who were mainly liberal supporters. Because

<sup>26</sup> A comprehensive biography of Bishop Pogačar: Ambrožič 2003a.

<sup>27</sup> In this sense, a comment by Ivan Vrhovnik regarding the “inadequacy of prayer,” written in a brochure on the purpose of the Society, is interesting. “It is good that you have enrolled in the brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius; do pray fervently that Slavs will be united in faith sooner. However, prayer alone will not suffice. With your actions, prove that your faith and your love for the abandoned brothers are not dead. /... / That is why you should join the Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, too; support it with money, with gracious gifts, so that it will be able to defend our most precious assets: our faith and the Slovenian language. Every Slovenian should be a limb of both associations.” (1886, 6–7)

support to the liberal party was weak in rural areas of Slovenia, the Society's branches frequently doubled as party branches. Regardless of the change in ideological orientation, membership in the Society expanded rapidly – just before World War I, there were more than eighteen thousand members in two hundred eighty-three branches (there had been fifty-five in 1886). The Society had proven particularly successful in Trieste and its vicinity, where, at the end of World War I, its kindergartens were attended by almost a thousand children, its elementary school by around two thousand four hundred, and its boys' urban school by more than a hundred and fifty. In this way, further assimilation of the Slovenian-speaking population into the politically and economically stronger Italian community was prevented. The operation of the organization in question fatally weakened after World War I. Then, the border or mixed-language areas for which the Society had directed the most resources and power by establishing schools (Gorizia region, Trieste, Istria, southern Carinthia, parts of Styria) became parts of Italy or Austria. A third of all branches fell outside the central Slovenian-speaking area within the new Yugoslav state. (Vovko 1985, 111–113; 115–116; Pahor 1970, 281–284)

## 6. Slovenian History and Human Dignity

Regardless of the importance of previous linguistic research and religious–cultural developments in the nineteenth century linked to the holy brothers' anniversaries, it was Franc Grivec who was the first to really distinguish himself among Slovenian intellectuals in comprehensively understanding, in terms of content, the historical circumstances and theological background of the work of Cyril and Methodius as well as their successors. In this context, five of his monographic works are key: both commented Slovenian translations of the hagiographies of the Slavic apostles (*Žitja Konstantina in Metodija (The Lives of Constantine and Methodius)*, 1936 and 1951); a German scientific monograph on their mission (*Konstantin und Method: Lehrer der Slaven (Constantine and Methodius: The Teachers of Slavs)*, 1960); a Latin edition of the main sources for the lives of the holy brothers prepared together with France Tomšič (1905–1975), a professor for Church Slavic at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts; and a popular scientific Slovenian book on their achievements and spiritual–linguistic legacy (*Slovanska blagovestnika sv. Ciril in Metod: 863–1963 (The Slavic Apostles Sts. Cyril and Methodius: 863–1963)* as the concluding piece in his prolific academic career and life.<sup>28</sup>

Grivec notes that the linguistic, historical, and theological link between the missionary work of Cyril and Methodius and the Freising Manuscripts as the earliest written monument in Slovenian as well as the oldest Slavic monument in the Latin script is key for understanding the early periods of early history and for Slovenian national consciousness asserting itself properly (Malmenvall 2023, 113–114)). In this vein, he claims that “whoever gainsays Cyril’s success in Pannonia”

<sup>28</sup> An overview of Grivec’s academic work: Trontelj 2019.

will undoubtedly try to explain the Freising Manuscripts “as only a slavish copying of Western patterns” (Grivec 1944, 30). The author continues that in Moravia and Pannonia, Cyril and Methodius used Western prayer formulae and adapted to the Roman Rite, “without, however, completely suppressing their Eastern Christian mindset.” Thus, if at least sporadic Eastern Christian or originally Slavic forms are attested in the second Freising Manuscript—and according to Grivec, they are<sup>29</sup>—“this is already solid evidence of contact with Sts. Cyril and Methodius” (31). The Freising Manuscripts allegedly confirm that contacts with the holy brothers were no “insignificant episode” at the extreme northeast edge of subsequent Slovenian territory, but rather “stretched deep into its center.” Allegedly, the Freising Manuscripts were first compiled in Carantania in the “Carantanian Slovenian dialect,” and in terms of content and style, their second sermon was similar to a speech by Methodius preserved in the so-called *Glagolita Clozianus*, one of the earliest miscellanies of Church Slavic literature as a whole. (32)<sup>30</sup>

Grivec transfers his historical justifications to his own time, stressing that “the contacts of Slovenian history with the brilliant work of the holy brothers from Thessaloniki” are characterized by an amalgamation of “the national and religious ideas.” In his opinion, it follows that “our theology has an even greater duty of taking part in solving and explaining religious and national values” (33). According to Grivec, the acts of Cyril and Methodius raise “another social peculiarity.” Their work reflects the generosity of Christianity, i.e. the respect of those who are not part of the political elite or who are not yet educated enough to accept the Christian faith. In this context, the Slovenian researcher asserts Slovenian cultural history features another person considered a “great teacher and educator,” whose personality and achievements “exemplarily amalgamated” national and spiritual values. “He avidly pointed out cherished memories of the ninth century

<sup>29</sup> He summarized his research on the Freising Manuscripts and their link with the mission of Cyril and Methodius in the monograph *Zarja stare slovenske književnosti* (*The Dawn of Early Slovenian Literature*; 1942).

<sup>30</sup> A different opinion is prevalent in modern Slovenian historiography and literary studies, namely that in terms of content, the Freising Manuscripts are part of the Latin Christian tradition, especially the one linked with the simpler theological (catechetical) writings and canonical provisions of Frankish polities of the eighth to tenth centuries, i.e. the period of the so-called Carolingian Renaissance. The prominent ecclesiastical and intellectual authorities that the message of the mentioned texts could be based on are Archbishop Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470–542, in office: 502–542), Boniface, a missionary and metropolitan archbishop of Mainz (ca. 675–754, in office: 745–754), and Pope Gregory I the Great (ca. 540–604, in office: 590–604). In terms of time and place, the creation of the Freising Manuscripts is considered part of the continuation of the Bavarian mission among Carantanians and other Slavs, the beginnings of which date to the late seventh century. The missionary centers were the archdiocesan seat in Salzburg and the diocesan seat in Freising. It is worth mentioning the fact the Carantanians were the first officially Christianized people among all Slavs. The Carantanian princes agreed to be baptized in the second half of the eighth century, about a hundred years before Cyril and Methodius’ time. At that time, there were no previous patterns for expressing Christian concepts and teaching in a Slavic language. (Grafenauer 1936; Kos 1996, 32–35; Štih 2015, 11; 17–19; Arko 2024, 40–43; 51–52) On the other hand, Grivec’s opinion can still be considered partly justified. The work of Cyril and Methodius, which also encompassed the western part of the subsequent Slovenian territory, brought depth to Slavic linguistic expression, introduced Slavic liturgy, and resulted in the creation of rich literature in Church Slavic. It is possible that after the death of Cyril and Methodius, Bavarian priests adapted texts that were available to them and that were connected to the holy brothers, which had not existed in a Slavic language before. Thus, they enabled a more effective continuation of the Salzburg- and Freising-led expansion of the Christian faith among Slovenian ancestors.

while his heart felt for the lower social classes." Here, Grivec refers to Anton Martin Slomšek, the already mentioned pedagogue, national awakener, and bishop of Maribor. (33)<sup>31</sup> In this context, he argues that national consciousness is part of the universalist Christian ideology, according to which each nation is equal before God and has an opportunity for coexistence with other nations. "The nation is a large family, a natural group of families." Just as an individual has a duty to their parents and family, they also have a duty to their nation and homeland. "At the same time, such Christian and humane love for one's nation promotes humane principles for dignified and bearable coexistence between nations." (34)

In reflecting on the spiritual and societal significance of Cyril and Methodius, Grivec was particularly attracted by the doctrine of human dignity or so-called forefather honors, which was allegedly the culmination and summation of Cyril's thinking (Sorč 2019, 204–205). The phrase above can be described as a theological concept of "original honor and unimagined similarity to God ingrained in humans since the creation." The Slovenian researcher sees versatile merits in forefather honors: the high value of a human being as a person, the purpose of the missionary work of the holy brothers, and an important message for his own time. (Škafar 2013, 84–85) Grivec bases this on a story in *The Life of Constantine*, when the priest and philosopher Constantine – before he entered monkhood and became Cyril – answered the Khazar khagan's questions on his family origins. "My grandfather was great and famous, standing close to the emperor, but he voluntarily discarded the honor bestowed upon him and was exiled and, having come to a foreign land, was reduced to poverty and gave birth to me there. I sought my previous forefather's honor and achieved no other, for I am a grandson of Adam." (Grivec 1963, 65) Constantine's reply to the Byzantine imperial secretary, Theoktistos, can be interpreted in the same sense: "I hold nothing in higher regard than learning, through which I wish to collect knowledge and seek forefather honors and riches." (1962, 55)

The Slovenian professor explains that Cyril came from a rich family and was a member of "the highly cultivated Greek nation" but realized, as a deeply religious Christian, that this honor meant nothing compared to "the nobility that his forefather Adam had had in paradise before the original sin and that Christ had restored." "Young and less cultivated Christian nations," such as Slavs in the ninth century, could be elevated to "original Adam's nobility" just the same as "old and educated ones." What is more, this "nobility" becomes applicable to every Christian at baptism, "no matter how poor his family and how despised his nationality." The Slovenian researcher adds that the forefather honors are a Christian expression of "humanity" or "humaneness," as written by numerous philosophers, such as Johann Herder (1744–1803) or Tomáš Masaryk (1850–1937), as well as essentially in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared by the United Nations in 1948. (1963, 23–25; 1962, 55)

<sup>31</sup> In many respects, Grivec's praise for Slomšek's achievements in the religious and social spheres matches the previously established positive image of the Maribor bishop in the Slovenian Catholic camp during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century. For more details on this image, see: Deželak Trojar 2016.

The forefather honors refer to the original human dignity of “the sonhood of God” before Adam’s fall to sin, which Christ as “the second Adam” restored to all humanity with his death and resurrection. These honors are semantically related to wisdom, the immortal value oriented towards eternal life. After all, wisdom should be the only asset that others are worth giving up for and that even life itself is worth risking for. It comes as no surprise then that in the hagiography, Constantine (Cyril) appears with the nickname Philosopher, i.e. lover of wisdom. He earned the name Philosopher not only for his great familiarity with Ancient Greek thinkers, but predominantly for his love for Christian philosophy as an integration of knowledge and virtuous Godward life. Preserving and cultivating wisdom, which points to humans’ original similarity to God restored and ennobled by Jesus Christ, are considered linked to asceticism. The relation between similarity to God, wisdom, and asceticism was discussed by many Greek Church Fathers from the first millennium of Christianity, especially John Damascene (676–749) and, even more so, Gregory of Nazianzus, also known as Gregory the Theologian (329–390).<sup>32</sup> It is Gregory’s view of humans that is said to be reflected the most in *The Life of Constantine*. (Grivec 1951, 61–62; 1960; 28–37; Sorč 2019, 207–208; 210; 216; 222–223) On the one hand, Constantine realized his devotion to wisdom by implementing the emperor’s and Church’s will when he promulgated “divine wisdom” among the Slavs in their own language; on the other, he confirmed this devotion fifty days before his death in Rome by entering monkhood, which is characterized by contemplation (Grivec 1963, 79).

When Professor Grivec recognized the idea of the equality of nations and human dignity applicable to all people and any time in Cyril and Methodius’ work, it was “forefather honors” that he placed at the identity core of Slovenianness. He noted that these honors, modeled on the brothers from Thessaloníki, were the central message of the first Slovenian texts, i.e. the tenth-century Freising Monuments. The first and third monument consist of formulae for general confession, and the second is a sermon on sin and penance. The Bavarian priests who spread the Christian faith in Carantania and other parts of the subsequent Slovenian territory supposedly adapted the texts based on templates in the Glagolitic script from the time of Cyril and Methodius’ mission in Pannonia. (Grivec 1951, 158–160; Sorč 2019, 209–210; 212; Arko 2024, 37–38; 42)<sup>33</sup> The goods possessed by Adam and then squandered under the influence of the evil spirit are described particularly in the second Freising Monument, which is said to reflect the influence of Cyril’s teachings: “If our forefather had not sinned, he would have lived for ages, would not have grown old, would have never had an worries or tears on his body but would have lived for ages.” (Grivec 1951, 165)

Generally, it can be claimed that the “forefather honors,” which are also present in the Freising Monuments, are a fundamental part of Christian doctrine as they concern humanity’s fall to sin and Christ, who saved humans from sin and eternal death. The “honors” that were restored to humanity and even strengthened are realized with bodily resurrection during the Final Judgment – just as the Savior rose,

<sup>32</sup> A comprehensive overview of Gregory’s life and thinking: Alfejev 1998.

<sup>33</sup> An analysis of the theological message of the Freising Monuments: Arko 2024.

so will supposedly rise those who have accepted the Savior's gift of new life. (Arko 2024, 45–47) Here, Grivec emphasizes the link between liturgy and language to restore the lost unity between God and humans, which is enabled by the salvatory acts of Jesus Christ. Through liturgy and the sacraments placed in it, a human enters God's domain and performs the highest service of worshiping. In the view of the Christian East, it is when performing liturgy that a human is at their greatest. This heralds those goods that the human can fully enjoy only in eternal life after Christ's Second Coming and Final Judgment, when they praise God ceaselessly. Cyril's efforts to make all peoples, even smaller and neglected ones, be able to perform liturgy in their own languages encourage the belief that there are no better or worse languages; they are all God's gifts through which humans can praise their Creator. (Sorč 2019, 214)

Professor Grivec stresses that the holy brothers understood the fundamental principle that the proclamation of the Church does not come to people in order to involve them in a specific cultural reality but to convey them "their true dignity" and "means of salvation." Thus, through the brothers from Thessaloniki, the Church enabled the Slavs to "praise the God of all people in their own language." The Slovenian researcher states: "[Cyril] considered basic human rights to include a free use of the mother tongue in particular. That is where his love for the despised Slavs and Slavic language and his efforts to accurately capture the nuances and spirit of the Slavic language come from. He creates a culture for the Slavs and places them in the company of cultivated nations as equal members." (1963, 24) The perspective oriented towards forefather honors was thus supposedly a driving force behind the Slavic literary–liturgical language and the entire missionary work of Cyril and Methodius and consequently the basis for linguistic, cultural, and religious unity in diversity. On this basis, the leading idea of their work seems to be "the equality of all nations" at a time when there began to appear political and cultural rifts between the Christian East, headed by Constantinople, and Christian West, headed by Rome. (Škafar 2013, 89–90; Grivec 1963, 47–48) Grivec's key message for his own present and future is the following: "Once, the Christian East was mostly Greek; now, it is predominantly Slavic. This is why Catholic Slavs are called upon to follow the example of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and intermediate between the East and West. This is the direction that Catholic theological science should take." (1962, 48) Here, it becomes obvious that Slovenians, too, are among the mentioned intermediaries.

## 7. Conclusion

In the socio-politically turbulent period between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century, Slovenian Catholic intellectuals exhibited a mostly goal-oriented and topical perception of Cyril and Methodius, who had missionized among Central European Slavs around a thousand years earlier. They consistently valued the brothers in light of their merits and later example in education, language rights, and national emancipation. Because it was supposedly owing to the brothers' Christianization and introduction of the literary language that the Slavs were able to integrate into the European medieval cultural milieu as equals, their exam-

ple and their intercession centuries later enabled the independence and cultural power of modern Slavic nations against the nationalist pressures of their (Germanic) neighbors, it was said. Thus, Slovenians started looking at the past and future from the perspective of national consciousness, which was a fundamental feature of the political and cultural thinking of the period in question.

The first and foremost person to advocate for the spiritual example of the holy brothers in establishing renewed unity between Catholic and Orthodox Christians was Anton Martin Slomšek, a pedagogue and bishop of Maribor. Religious reasons were accompanied by calls to promote Slovenian in public life, even in Roman liturgy, for which Stanislav Škrabec, a professor of linguistics and Franciscan monk, was the most fervent advocate. The most distinct expression of the importance of the language was the establishment of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, an educational organization for building schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction along the borders with German- and Italian-speaking areas, in 1885. The initiative for its creation came from Ivan Vrhovnik, a diocesan priest and historian. Among Slovenian intellectuals, it was Franc Grivec, a priest and professor of ecclesiology and Eastern theology at the Faculty of Theology in Ljubljana, who provided the most comprehensive and historically accurate depiction of the role of Cyril and Methodius; he also made the first critical editions of sources on the holy brothers in the Slovenian language. In the brothers, he recognized the idea of the equality of nations and human dignity (so-called forefather honors) applicable to all people and any time. In addition, he placed them at the identity core of Slovenianness, including their influence on the creation of the first Slovenian texts, i.e. the tenth-century Freising Monuments.

Each of the selected Slovenian Catholic intellectuals active between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century exhibits common opinions about the holy brothers: the desired unity between Slavic and other Christians under the aegis of the bishop of Rome (the pope) is intertwined with Slovenian national consciousness, and the latter is not imagined without Catholic belonging and a relationship of solidarity with other Slavs. Such a view originates in the conviction that in the second half of the ninth century, Cyril and Methodius missionized in a part of subsequent Slovenian territory and that Slovenians are successors to their spiritual–linguistic heritage. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the increasing popularity of Cyril and Methodius among Slovenians was encouraged by internationally commemorated anniversaries related to their lives – a thousand years since their arrival to Moravia (863/1863), a thousand years since Cyril's death (869/1869), and a thousand years since Methodius' death (885/1885). Familiarity with the lives of the holy brothers and their veneration increased in general in that period, in particular after 1880, when Pope Leo XIII issued the *Grande munus* encyclical. The encyclical unified their feast day (5 July) and elevated it to a holiday for the entire Catholic Church. Alongside this, he stressed the church leaders' respect for Slavic nations and a desire to unite Orthodox Slavs with the Catholic Church. The Slovenian favorable evaluation of Cyril and Methodius in religious and national terms was thus part of a wider interest for their heritage in the Catholic world.

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