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## Convolutd Transmission without Translation: Reassessing Latin Influence in the *First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas*\*

### 1. Introduction

The formation of the religious and linguistic boundary between Slavia Latina and Slavia Orthodoxa in Central and Southern Europe was a gradual and complex process that began even before the formal schism of 1054 (Garzaniti 2007: 34). In some of the frontier regions, where missionary efforts under the jurisdiction of Rome and those of Constantinople alternated with varying degrees of success, this emerging division gave rise to a particular linguistic situation. While these areas adopted Old Church Slavonic (OCS), which was created by Greek missionaries and, hence, was permeated by Greek loanwords and syntactic models, traces of Latin impact can also be observed, albeit limited. Such influence is particularly evident in the early medieval Moravian and Bohemian contexts (Reinhart 1986: 598; Večerka 2010: 99).

The fragile textual landscape of early medieval OCS literature of Bohemian origin complicates our understanding of these dynamics since almost all manuscript witnesses created in the region in OCS have been lost. More precisely, except for the surviving codex of Prague Glagolitic Leaves produced in the Sázava Monastery in the eleventh century (Genis 2020), the majority of the Bohemian OCS literary monuments are preserved in much later South and East Slavic copies. These codices' chronological and geographical distance reflects a complex process of transmission, redaction, and further interpolation according to local linguistic norms across the broad landscape of medieval Slavia Christiana. Nevertheless, initial challenges of working with these scattered and refracted textual corpora have led researchers to several well-founded arguments suggesting that numerous Bohemian OCS monuments, including, for example, the *Forty Gospel Homilies of Gregory the Great*, parts of the *Second Old Church Slavonic Life of St. Wenceslas*, the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and other works, are, in

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\* This research was conducted at the University of Turin as part of the project *The Transmission of Old Church Slavonic Texts*, funded by PNRR – Missione 4 “Istruzione e Ricerca” – Componente C2 Investimento 1.1 “Fondo per il Programma Nazionale di Ricerca e Progetti di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN)” – Decreto Direttoriale n. 104 del 02-02-2022 (CUP H53D23006810006). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Vittorio Springfield Tomelleri for his insightful comments to the earlier versions of this article.

fact, translations from Latin<sup>1</sup>. The presence of their Latin counterparts contributes to the compelling nature of these arguments as it allows to trace translation techniques and lexical correspondences between OCS and Latin with philological precision.

In parallel with this research, a more radical line of inquiry has sought to extend the translation hypothesis to other foundational texts of the Bohemian OCS literary canon for which no Latin ‘originals’ survive. One of the most important and contested among these monuments is the *First Old Church Slavonic Life or Legend of Wenceslas* (henceforth, FSL as in Ingham 2006: 501). Composed in the seemingly “sober” and “non-legendary” narrative style of OCS (Kantor 1983: 12; Folz 1984: 36)<sup>2</sup>, it serves as one of the earliest and most valuable sources to reconstruct the life of Wenceslas I of Bohemia (d. 935) thanks to a detailed account of the duke’s murder by his brother Boleslav (d. 972) and his accomplices, a feature that some scholars interpret as a potential marker of the legend’s historical reliability (Třeštík 1997: 225-248). The preserved manuscript tradition of the FSL is both chronologically sparse and geographically distant from Bohemia. As the **TABLE 1** (p. 67) indicates, the three known redactions<sup>3</sup> of the legend (the Croato-Glagolitic one as well as the Vostokov and Menology Cyrillic versions) are preserved in South and East Slavic manuscripts, copied centuries after the presumed composition of the source.

Despite the problematic nature of the manuscript tradition, the judgment of most researchers on the provenance of the FSL is almost unanimous: the archetype of the text is believed to be an OCS product of tenth-century Bohemia (Pekař 1906: 15; most recently, Konzal 1988: 123, 126). This conclusion rests on both internal linguistic features and external historical considerations. Thus, philologists have identified a range of lexical and morphological traits, known as Bohemisms<sup>4</sup>, which localize the text of the surviving manuscripts to the Czech milieu (Weingart 1934: 100-102; Večerka 1961). The available historical evidence accords with this placement, suggesting that the legend was written in OCS in the Přemyslid realm at a time when Wenceslas’ cult was gaining initial recognition (Kubín 2011: 149; 2018: 399). Attempts to reassign its origin – whether geographically (to Kyivan Rus’ by Vondrák 1903: 442; to Croatia by Třeštík 1967; and even

<sup>1</sup> As an entry point to the most recent research on these texts and their translation techniques from Latin to OCS, cf. Čajka 2020; Spurná 2023; and Ziffer 2010, respectively. It should be noted that the latter scholar opposes the common line of research that places the OCS translation of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* in the Bohemian territories (cf. Vaillant 1968). Instead, Ziffer locates the translation to the “Alpine Slavic” lands around modern-day Slovenia.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Denis Crnković’s thorough research of the FSL’s isocolic structure (Crnković 2022) has recently opposed the argument of the apparently simple literary style of the text.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this contribution, I will use the terms ‘redaction’ and ‘recension’ interchangeably to refer to “a regional variety of [OCS], particularly in its medieval form” (Bounatirou 2020). For more on the problematic aspects of this notion, cf. Vepřek 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Still, there exists a more critical stance on the relevance of these Bohemisms. According to Jan Podhorný, their number in the FSL is much smaller than in other monuments of the Czech-Slavonic literary tradition (cf. Podhorný 1976).

TABLE I  
Witnesses of the *FSL*

Recension	Manuscript	Region of Provenance	Dating
Vostokov (Cyrillic)	Rum, Moskva, RSL, F. 256/436	Rus' (Northern parts)	early 16 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Vif, Moskva, RSL, F. 556/95	Rus' (North-East)	second quarter of the 17 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Bars, Moskva, SHM, Bars 1466	Rus'	late 16 <sup>th</sup> -early 17 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Arkh, Sankt-Peterburg, RASL, D 142	Rus'	second half of the 16 <sup>th</sup> c.
Menology (Cyrillic)	Sof, Sankt-Peterburg, NRL, Sof 1317	Rus'	first half of the 16 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Usp, Moskva, SHM, Sin 986	Rus'	mid-16 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Tsar, Moskva, SHM, Sin 174	Rus'	16 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Mil, Moskva, SHM, Sin 797	Rus'	mid-17 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Tul I, Moskva, RSL, F. 304/I 664	Rus'	mid-17 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Tul II, Moskva, RSL, F. 304/I 665	Rus'	mid-17 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Trin, Moskva, RSL, F. 304/I 792	Rus'	last quarter of the 17 <sup>th</sup> c.
Jar, Jaroslavl' Museum, № 15497	Rus'	first half of the 17 <sup>th</sup> c.	
Croato- Glagolitic	Vat, Città del Vaticano, BAV, Borgo Illirico 6	Croatia	1387
	Ljubl, Ljubljana, NUK, Ms 161	Croatia	turn of the 14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Nov. Vin I, Novi Vinodolski, parish	Croatia	mid-15 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Nov. Vin II, Novi Vinodolski, parish	Croatia	mid-15 <sup>th</sup> c.
	Mos, Moskva, RSL, F. 270 51/1481	Croatia	mid-15 <sup>th</sup> c.

to Eastern Germany by Timberlake 2014: 322) or chronologically (Bartoš 1953: 15-19) – have not gained wide traction.

Nevertheless, the convoluted nature of the *FSL*'s transmission history has led a few researchers to hypothesize to different degrees that it could have derived from a now-lost Latin prototext. Despite the provocative character of these theories, they did not receive much reaction across the scholarly community. However, a further investigation of the linguistic and stylistic character of the *FSL* can allow us to assess the plausibility of this hypothesis critically and ultimately refine our understanding of how Latin and OCS literary cultures might have mutually affected each other in early Přemyslid Bohemia (before 1100).

After outlining the scholarly theories regarding the possible Latin origin of the FSL and presenting a methodology suitable to test these arguments, I examine this source for the translation markers typically present in other Latin-into-OCS translations from the same cultural milieu. As a result of this experiment, I argue that, even though the FSL sporadically exhibits certain features that could superficially suggest Latin influence, it largely lacks the most reliable translation markers, according to Aleksandr Griščenko's recent evaluation thereof (Grishchenko 2022). Therefore, I sustain the commonly accepted view that the legend is an original composition in OCS. At the same time, the very existence of the scholarly debate on whether the FSL might have originated in Latin emphasizes the broader issue of the complex and often opaque transmission history of medieval OCS texts.

## 2. *A Latin Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas?*

Since the early twentieth century, a number of scholars have developed various scenarios for how a Latin intermediary (whether a text or a person) might have served as the basis for the FSL. Initially, Václav Vondrák (1903: 153) observed that the OCS legend “clearly displayed pronounced formulas typical for the Roman rite practiced by the German clergy” in the following passage describing Wenceslas' virtue in the Vostokov and Glagolitic redactions:

АЦЕ БЖИА РАВЫ И ДОМАШНАА, И АЦЕ СТРАННИКИ ВСА, И АЦЕ ГДЪ ИНО ЗИМОИ СТРАЖДЪТЬ, ТО ВСА УДЪВАШЕ И КОРМАШЕ. АЦЕ ЛИ ЖЕ КОТОРЫИ ПОПИИЗ ПРОДАНЪ ПРИДЕ К НЕМУ, УИЗ ИСКУПАШЕ ВСЪМЪ (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 16)<sup>5</sup>.

If priests, servants, and if all wanderers, and if [they] suffer from the cold somewhere, he clothed and fed them all. And if any *sold* priest came to him, he *ransomed* him with everything<sup>6</sup>.

НЕ ТЪКМО ВО НИЩИМЪ И ОУБОГИМ И СТРАНЬНИМЪ И ПРОУИМЪ МНОГИМЪ, ТЪКОЖЕ С ПРЪДЪ РЪХОМЪ, ДОБРА ТВОРАШЕ, И ОИТЪХЪ КИ ПРОДАНИ БЪХОУ ИСКУПОВАШЕ (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 38-39).

For not only did he do good to the poor and the indigent, and to wayfarers and many others, as we have said, but he *ransomed* those who had been *sold* (Kantor 1990: 62).

Based on that, Vondrák concluded that the compiler of the FSL must have been a representative of Latin Christianity. Coupled with the Bohemisms present in the text, these

<sup>5</sup> For the sake of being more reader-friendly, I will cite the redactions of the FSL according to the corresponding editions prepared by N. Serebrjanskij and J. Vajs in 1929, which I consider relatively reliable despite their pitfalls outlined by B. Havránek (1931: 192-215). In the bibliography, I also provide links to the available manuscripts. Unfortunately, not all of the preserved witnesses are digitized.

<sup>6</sup> The English translation of the Vostokov redaction is mine.

calques of Latin religious formulas pointed toward an author of Bohemian background, who subsequently acquired competence in OCS (Vondrák 1903: 153, 155).

Building on these arguments, Václav Novotný proposed that a brief account of Wenceslas' life in Latin, perhaps based on eyewitness testimony, had existed and was subsequently expanded and translated into OCS at the Sázava Monastery in the eleventh century (Novotný 1929: 27, 35). Ultimately, this premise sought to explain the irregularities in the textual transmission of the FSL by positing a lost Latin source that would precede the OCS version. In line with this argumentation and partly that of Rudolf Urbánek (1947: 180; 1948: 286, most coherently summarized in Kalhous 2015: 76-85), Oldřich Králík argued for the existence of an unspecified Latin source that was written in Bohemia in the 980s and served as the immediate basis of the FSL, whose composition the researcher dated to the end of the tenth century (Králík 1966: 146). Consequently, the hypothetical Latin intermediary would have postdated the earliest extant Latin life of the Bohemian duke, *Crescente fide*. The concept of a 'lost Latin legend' was further elaborated by Dušan Třeštík, who labelled a certain "Legend x" the archetype for the whole Wenceslas hagiographic cycle, embracing both Latin and OCS monuments (Třeštík 1997: 248). In turn, this hypothesis suggested that the FSL directly stemmed from the unpreserved Latin 'original', which gave birth to multiple branches of the bilingual cycle, hence its complicated intertextual relationships and convoluted transmission.

A more radical version of the Latin origin theory has been articulated over the last decade by Alan Timberlake (2012a; 2012b; 2014), who repeatedly argued that the FSL shows direct correspondence with two Latin hagiographical models produced in Regensburg, namely the *Vita Haimbrammi* and the *Crescente fide*. According to the scholar, several specific motifs recur across these works and the FSL. Among them are the dismemberment and subsequent collection of a martyr's body, the construction of a church to house and venerate his relics, the saint's nonresistance to death, and, finally, the dispersal and persecution of the saint's followers (Timberlake 2012a: 122). Moreover, Timberlake considered the following FSL's phrasing, where the narrator explains the Czech origin of Wenceslas' father, Duke Vratislav (d. 921), a clarifying addition that would seem unnecessary if the text had been composed within Bohemia and for a Bohemian audience (Timberlake 2014: 322):

<p>БѢ ЖЕ КНАЗЪ ВЕЛИКЪ СЛАВОЮ ВЪ ЧЕХАХЪ ИМЕНЕМЪ ВОРОТИСЛАВЪ (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 14).</p>	<p>БѢ ЖЕ НЪБИТО КНІЗЪ ВЕЛИКЪ И СЛА- ВОЮ ЧЕСТЬНЪ ВЪ ЧЕХЕХЪ ЖИВЫИ ИМЕНЕМЪ ВРАТИСЛАВЪ (Min. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 20).</p>	<p>Биси (<i>sic!</i>) же кнез в Чехѣхъ именемъ Вратиславъ (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 36).</p>
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The last element of Timberlake's argumentation relies on the phraseology of the FSL that may resemble Latin linguistic structures. Thus, following Aleksej Sobolevskij's (1903) and Ladislav Matějka's (1973) critical research of the OCS *Life of St. Vitus*, he singled out several assumed cases of "mistranslation" that might have sought to render Latin words with inappropriate OCS terms in the earliest Croato-Glagolitic redaction of the FSL. More

specifically, these cases include an inaccurate rendering of the Latin word ‘vox’ with the metonymic sense of ‘speech’ or ‘teaching’ in the phrase “СТРАНЬИИ ПРИЕМАШЕ ПО ХЕЛЕСКОУ ГЛАСОУ” (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 37; for the argumentation, cf. Timberlake 2012a: 111) and ‘scio’ to refer to the process of perceiving emotions in “НА ВЕЩЕСЛАВЪ РАЗУМЪВЪ СТРАХЪ ВЪЖИ” (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 38; cf. Timberlake 2012a: 112). Taken together, these linguistic and intertextual examples led Timberlake to hypothesize that the FSL was initially composed in Latin in the tenth century, most likely at the Abbey of St. Emmeram in Regensburg, and only subsequently became translated into OCS in the scriptorium of the Sá-zava Monastery during the Slavic Renaissance a century later (Timberlake 2014: 314, 322).

As we can see, despite differences in rationalizing, all of the mentioned scholars converged on the idea that Latin influence on the FSL was not merely indirect but structural and involved either a translation or close adaptation from a Latin source. While some of the provided evidence seems to be unable to explain this theory adequately<sup>7</sup>, the hypothesis of the text’s Latin origin has not been systematically verified or contested. Given this lack of academic reflections, a question remains: can we suggest that the FSL might have been translated from a Latin prototext? And, if so, *how* do we prove or dispel this idea? The following section will describe the methodology that this paper will use to detect Latin-to-OCS translation features in the OCS legend.

### 3. *Methodology: What to Look for?*

In order to assess whether the FSL may have derived from a Latin *Vorlage*, this paper adopts a twofold methodological framework. First, it adapts Griščenko’s hierarchic typology of translation markers in Hebrew-to-OCS Biblical translations to the case of the FSL. Second, it examines the text for the specific features of local translation practices typical for the eleventh-century Bohemian OCS literature as described by leading specialists in the field, including Radoslav Večerka, Kateřina Spurná, Miroslav Vepřek, Václav Konzal, and others.

Griščenko’s taxonomy is a five-fold system that can be used to identify translation markers in OCS texts according to their evidentiary strength (Grishchenko 2022: 290). For instance, he puts simple loanwords transcribed into Cyrillic script (especially proper names) at the ‘weakest’ end of the evaluative spectrum (group v). Conversely, the ‘strongest’ marker of translation includes neologisms that are not only loanwords from a foreign language but also qualify as *hapax legomena* within the target-language corpus (group 1). Hence, contrary to the transcribed loanwords, each *hapax legomenon* that was not adopted into the regular lexicon of OCS and did not circulate widely in its literary tradition most likely suggests a direct transfer through translation rather than its broad lexical diffusion.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, the majority of the common hagiographical motifs mentioned by Timberlake may be considered as typical features of the genre that ultimately imitated *passio Christi* (for more on the genre and its characteristics, cf. Rapp 2010).

Between these two poles of validity, Griščenko describes three intermediate types. Two such categories comprise foreign-language loanwords that, while not being hapaxes, are attested only in a narrow set of texts from the same or a slightly later period. In turn, their distribution may suggest various channels of transmission. Another group includes individual semantic calques, which, although not revealing the language of the source text per se, may reflect the conceptual and idiomatic structures of their intermediary. Yet, Griščenko cautions that no single marker among these types can confirm dependency on a specific source text. Instead, considered cumulatively, these categories offer some indications of a translation trajectory and invite comparison with texts demonstrably belonging to the same network of textual transmission (Grishchenko 2022: 291-292).

While Griščenko initially developed his taxonomy to analyze fifteenth-century East Slavic translations from Hebrew, it can also serve as a useful heuristic framework for exploring possible lexical and semantic borrowings in texts that come from earlier periods, including the FSL. However, one must apply this methodological model to the legend with due caution: as we will see, the text's tenth-century origin, its hagiographic rather than biblical nature, and its survival in much later manuscripts, created in various geographical milieus, causes significant diachronic and regional complexities that may hinder the detection of reliable translation features. Despite this methodological limitation, the suggested framework remains a helpful tool for the initial identification of some potential cases of interlingual rendition, which should then be subjected to further analysis since Griščenko's approach alone cannot confirm or rule out the hypothesis of the FSL's Latin *Vorlage*<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, it is worth enhancing Griščenko's approach with a search across the FSL for lexical and grammatical features that characterize other Latin-into-OCS translations produced in the Bohemian eleventh-century context, particularly at the Sázava Monastery. To this point, particular progress has been made in classifying these characteristics in the *Homilies of Gregory the Great* and the *Second Life of Wenceslas* attributed to this milieu (cf. Bláhová, Ikononova 1993; Mareš 2000; Vepřek 2013; Spurná 2023).

Thus, at first glance, a potentially valuable indicator found in these translations is the use of rare or unusual grammatical constructions, especially those mirroring Latin verbal forms that are not native to OCS. The examples often referred to in this regard are Slavonic counterparts of the *futurum perfectum indicativi activi* (most commonly known as *futurum II*) and *participium futurum activum*, whose occurrence in OCS may suggest a close syntactic alignment with Latin (Konzal 1994; Hauptová 2008: 96-97; Spurná 2023: 152). However, due to their complete absence in the FSL, possibly linked to the historical-narrative purpose of the text, it seems impossible to use these forms in the analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, Jozo Vela has convincingly demonstrated the limited evidentiary value of speculations about a potential Latin origin of certain South Slavic OCS texts with a complex transmission history, particularly when such claims are based solely on the presence of loanwords from the donor language (cf. Vela 2023).

As opposed to grammar, the use of hendiadys represents a more promising trait, particularly when this stylistic figure appears to serve a gloss-like function. According to Konzal (2015), this strategy of rendering a single term from a foreign language by ‘doubling’ it in OCS may indicate a translator’s attempt to approximate a concept not fully present in the target lexicon. Notably, cases of hendiadys that rendered Latin words appear particularly often in the translated *Second Life of Wenceslas* (Bláhová 1993: 430-431; Spurná 2023: 139-140) and *Homilies of Gregory the Great*. In fact, Johannes Reinhart calculated circa 370 (*sic!*) occurrences of this figure in the latter source (1986: 599). Therefore, if found in the FSL with a comparable frequency, hendiadys may potentially indicate the FSL’s stylistic proximity to these OCS translations and, in turn, serve as possible proof that the legend could have been rendered from Latin as well. However, as we will see in the subsequent section, it is only possible to cautiously speculate on its occasional presence in the text, so this criterion should be approached with due limitations.

Apart from hendiadys, specific morphological features can also help identify traces of local translation practices. As Večerka has noted, OCS texts produced in Bohemia in the eleventh century, particularly in the Sázava milieu, exhibit a higher degree of Bohemization than the literary monuments created in the region prior to that period. Among the evidence of regional influence, he lists

the typically Czech first-person plural verb ending *-my*, the loss of final *-tb* in the third person singular and plural of the present indicative, the expanded use of the prefix *po-* to form future tenses, increased use of the supine, a preference for prepositionless locative constructions, and the nominative singular *-a* ending in masculine and neuter present active participles, which contrast with the *-y* ending in standard OCS (Večerka 2013: 14)<sup>9</sup>.

As will be shown later, none of these features is present in the legend, apart from the prefix *по-*.

In what follows, I will shortly discuss the presence of translation markers (from the most evident but weakest loanwords to exotic *hapax legomena*), hendiadys, and eleventh-century forms of Bohemization in the FSL. As I will point out, these lexical and morphological units appear in the text sporadically and do not provide sufficient evidence for the Latin origin of the legend.

#### 4. *Loanwords from Latin*

The issue of Latin loanwords adopted in Bohemian Church Slavonic literary monuments has been repeatedly addressed by Czech researchers (most recently, by Večerka 2006:

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<sup>9</sup> Apart from these features, Večerka also mentions phonetic developments of the spoken OCS such as the “contraction and depalatalization of vowels (e.g., ä > a between non-palatal consonants; more on depalatalization in the Bohemian context, cf. Komárek 1960), the emergence of fully syllabic r and l, and the fricativization of the occlusive g into γ, a feature also found in southern Russian dialects”.

243-244; Voček 2010: 33-142; Jamná 2015: 49-97, 147-170). Based on their lists of Latinisms, it is possible to identify lexemes of this kind in all of the three redactions of the FSL. Still, their number remains relatively small in each version of the legend<sup>10</sup>. Predominantly, these are nouns: *ОЛЪТАРЬ* (Vost., Min., Glag., cf. Serebrjanskij 1929: 20, 28; Vajs 1929: 43, borrowed from the Latin *altar* and used instead of more conventional *ЖРЪТЪВНИКЪ/ТРЪБЪВНИКЪ*), *СЛОУЖЬБА* (Vost., cf. Serebrjanskij 1929: 16, from the Latin *officium* instead of a more traditional Grecism *ЛИТОУРГІЯ*), *МЪША* (Glag., cf. Vajs 1929: 36, 39, from the Latin *missa* for the same Grecism as in the previous example)<sup>11</sup>, *КОСТЕЛЪ* (found in the Nov. Vin I Ms of Glag., cf. Vajs 1929: 43, from the Latin *castellum* but with the meaning ‘ecclesia’, instead of more common *ЦРЪКЪ*), and *ПОПЪ* (Vost., cf. Serebrjanskij 1929: 15, 16, instead of *ИЕРЪВИ* or the Grecism *ПРЕЗВЪТЕРЪ*)<sup>12</sup>.

Representing the ‘weak’ markers of Griščenko’s classification, these Latinisms lack relevant diagnostic value for our analysis. More precisely, they demonstrate traces of intensive and persistent contacts with the Latin religious environment and church-related material culture (Del Gaudio 2014: 64-65), particularly through German-speaking neighboring communities. As Večerka (1978: 340) aptly noted, terms of Latin origin relating to religion, administration, trade, architecture, nature, medicine, and other important spheres of daily life typically entered the OCS literary register via spoken language. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the listed lexemes could have been directly adopted from a supposed Latin ‘original’ of the FSL.

In addition to these ‘weak’ loanwords, the FSL contains semantic calques borrowed from Latin, such as the mentioned derivatives of the theological pair *ПРОДАТИ* – *ИСКОУПИТИ* for Latin *vendere* and *redimere*, which was also used in sacramental contexts in other OCS monuments<sup>13</sup>. Another illustrative case of the same kind is the term *БОЖИИ РАБЪ* (from Latin *servus Dei*), used to denote ‘clergyman’ instead of a traditional figurative noun phrase with a more general meaning ‘person/human being’<sup>14</sup>. Interestingly, as the following examples demonstrate, this semantic adaptation occurs only in the East Slavic redactions of the FSL<sup>15</sup>:

<sup>10</sup> According to Jamná’s estimations, there are 29 foreign words found in the FSL (Jamná 2015: 117). Most of them, including *ЕПИСКОПЪ* (found in Vost. and Min., with a variation *ВИСКОУПЪ* found in the Glagolitic redaction), *ДИАВОЛЪ* (all three redactions), and others, are Grecisms.

<sup>11</sup> Scholarship generally asserts that this term was ‘endemic’ for the Moravian area. For the most recent discussions and literature on the topic, cf. Voček 2010: 127-132.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the etymology of “попъ” remains a matter of debates in the scholarship. While the mainstream line of research accepts the Latin origin of this OCS lexeme, alternative theories about its Greek roots also exist. The latter strand of argument is presented in Stankov 2016: 108-110.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the corresponding entries of the SJS available at the digital database of Slavonic dictionaries: <<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=31378>>; <<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=5691>> (both accessed on 22.05.25).

<sup>14</sup> <<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=32323>> (accessed on 22.05.25).

<sup>15</sup> The examples merely serve to show the discrepancies in the readings of the term among the three redactions of the FSL, so I will not provide translations thereof for the sake of brevity.

Vostokov redaction	Menology redaction	Croato-Glagolitic redaction
1. [Вачеславъ] вѣдныя напитки и одѣваше по евагльскому оучению, <u>БОЛЬНЫЯ</u> ( <i>sic!</i> ) <sup>16</sup> <u>РАБЫ</u> питаше (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 15)	1. [Вачеславъ] <u>БЖІА РАБЫ</u> кормаше излиха, и вдовиць не дадаше увидѣти никомуже (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 22).	1. Вдовиць же увидѣти не дадише, люди оубоге и богате милобше <u>во[г]у работающимъ</u> слоужаше [...] (cited by Vajs 1929: 37).
2. Аще <u>БЖИА РАБЫ</u> и домашнага, [...] и аще гдѣ ино зимио страждѣть, то вса удѣваше и кормаше (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 16).	[no corresponding fragments]	
3. Цркви же бѣ оустроилъ по всемъ градомъ добръ велии, <u>БЖІА РАБЫ</u> собравъ ѿо всехъ языкъ воинъ (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 16).	3. И цркви же бѣ оустроилъ во всехъ градѣхъ и блготвораше имъ, и <u>БОЖІА РАБЫ</u> собравъ ѿо всехъ языкъ (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 24).	3. Цркви же бѣ оустроитель ва <u>всѣхъ градѣхъ</u> велии добарь, и <u>слоужителе БЖІЕ</u> в нихъ оуправи[тель] велии красно от многихъ ѣзыкъ (cited by Vajs 1929: 39).
4. А младенци избиша его, а <u>БЖІА РАБЫ</u> разгравнша изгнаша а изъ града (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 18).	4. А младенца избиша его ради, а <u>БЖІА РАБЫ</u> и нициихъ погравивше и выгнаше ихъ з земли (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 26).	4. Младенце же издравише, жени же многие иние моужи вдаше, <u>слоужителе же БЖІЕ</u> изгнаше (cited by Vajs 1929: 41).

According to Pastrnek (1904: 16), Isačenko (1943: 36), and Vašica (1958: 529-530), the idiomatic phrasing БОЖИИ РАБЪ pertains exclusively to OCS texts of Western origin, such as the *Freising Fragments*, *Life of Methodius*, and *Zakon Sudnyi Liudem* (*Court Law for the People*). Although it presents itself in a limited number of texts coming from the same geographical area (hence, it belongs to the fourth category of Griščenko's taxonomy), the mentioned calque does not necessarily point to direct Latin-to-OCS translation. Similarly to the case of ПРОДАТИ – ИСКОУПИТИ, the geographical distribution of this expression may suggest that it circulated as part of a broader ecclesiastical lexicon shared among Western communities of Slavia Christiana, which was primarily shaped by Latin liturgical and administrative norms.

Let us now turn to a seemingly more substantial translation marker found in the rare case of ЦИМИТРЪ, attested solely in the Vatican manuscript of the Croato-Glagolitic redaction of the FSL, when the author of the legend locates Wenceslas' burial place:

<sup>16</sup> While the available digitized manuscripts appear to be univocal in transmitting this reading (see Vif., fol. 56r, and Rum, fol. 57r), there are some editions of the Vostokov recension that prefer to consider this variant as a disseminated scribal mistake that incorrectly rendered the word БЖІА (cf. Turilov 1999).

И положише [Вещеслава] в **ЦИМИТРЪ** ꙗго Вида, о десноу страну олтаря овою и десете аплуу, идѣже себѣ рекалъ положити създавъ цркъвь (Ms Vat. cited by Vajs 1929: 43).

And Wenceslas was placed in the *Church* [alt. *graveyard*, cf. SJS 1994: 828<sup>17</sup>] of Saint Vitus, on the right side of the Altar of the Twelve Apostles, where he himself had said he would build a church (Kantor 1990: 64-65).

The *Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic language* classifies this lexeme as a *hapax* within the broader OCS corpus (SJS 1994: 828). Although the term's vocalism might suggest that it is a Grecism from *κοιμητήριον*<sup>18</sup>, its Latin origin from *coemeterium* remains equally plausible, especially if we consider the fact that this codex originated in the late medieval Franciscan liturgical environment (Ibler 2009: 225)<sup>19</sup>.

An alternative interpretation of this phenomenon can be developed from the observations of Josip Hamm, who stressed that all of the Croatian-Glagolitic codices containing the FSL were composed several decades after the founding of the Emmaus Monastery in Prague in 1347. Given that Croatian Glagolitic monks were active there, Hamm proposed that they could have transmitted the veneration of Wenceslas and his legend southward. According to this theory, either a certain Latin text was later translated into Glagolitic or a translation was undertaken directly at the Emmaus Monastery and subsequently was carried to the South (Hamm 1963: 47). In this context, the isolated use of **ЦИМИТРЪ** could reflect a lexical anomaly tied to the FSL's incredibly convoluted transmission history. Hamm's theory, however, has not gained significant traction in scholarship and should therefore be approached with a high degree of caution, especially given that some researchers date the initial stages of the prince's veneration in Croatia as early as the late-tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century (Kowalski 2021: 299).

The fact that **ЦИМИТРЪ** did not become part of the common OCS lexicon may suggest that it functioned as a loanword with localized connotations. However, despite its tempting uniqueness and semantic proximity to Latin religious vocabulary, we cannot classify this word as a 'strong' first-level exoticism in Griščenko's typology of translation markers. If we apply the logic of textual criticism to this case, we will see that, most likely, this term did not exist in the OCS prototext of the legend. As I have mentioned, the isolated occurrence of **ЦИМИТРЪ** in the Vatican manuscript appears to be a *lectio singularis*. In contrast, the more common term **ЦРЪКЪ** is used in the Ljubljana manuscript of the earliest Croato-Glagolitic redaction<sup>20</sup> and in the two East Slavic recensions (cf. Serebrjanskij 1929: 20, 28), which are generally dated to a later period. Despite the chronological and geographical distance,

<sup>17</sup> Also available online: <<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=36728>> (accessed on 22.05.25).

<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to Vittorio Springfield Tomelleri for this observation.

<sup>19</sup> The Franciscan Order was involved in the dissemination of the Glagolitic literary culture in Croatia (Šanjek 1991: 201-203).

<sup>20</sup> As I have mentioned, the Novi Vinodolski Glagolitic copy contains the Latinism **КОСТЕЛЪ** (Vajs 1929: 43).

these textual witnesses agree in their use of *црѣкы*, strongly suggesting that this lexeme represents the more authentic word preserved from the FSL's prototext.

Hence, from the perspective of textual criticism, the appearance of *цимитръ* in the single manuscript of the FSL does not indicate a direct translation from a Latin textual *Vorlage*. Instead, it should be interpreted as a secondary substitution, possibly influenced by the preferences of the Croatian scribe (Veprĕk 2006: 78-79), who was exposed to Latin or even Greek ecclesiastical terminology that circulated in Western parts of the Southern Slavic milieu.

### 5. *Hendiadys*

Having discussed the insufficient evidentiary value of loanwords in the FSL, let us now consider the legend's possible use of hendiadys, which is here understood as a stylistic figure that consists of two complementary or mutually reinforcing parts of speech used to express a single concept (most commonly, represented by adjective+adjective, noun+noun, or verb+verb, as indicated in Burkhard *et al.* 2000: 63-64). As the list below demonstrates, the number of expressions that formally correspond to this definition and demonstrably share the same Latin equivalent is quite limited and scattered across the redactions of the FSL<sup>21</sup>:

#### 1. Noun+noun:

- a. *НАУА ЖЕ [Вачеславъ] оумѣти книги [...] ѿкоже добры ѿпѣзъ или попѣзъ* (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 15)<sup>22</sup> → may correspond to Latin *sacerdos*<sup>23</sup>;
- b. *Погрѣвоша чѣстное его тѣло Вачеслава [...], слѣжи бо емѣ [Болеславъ] говѣннѣмъ и съ страхомъ* (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 19)<sup>24</sup> → may render Latin *reverentia*<sup>25</sup>;

<sup>21</sup> These interpretations are based on the corresponding entries of the electronic version of the *Dictionary of the Old Church Slavonic language* (SJS), which typically associates each OCS term with a Latin equivalent.

<sup>22</sup> Compare the phrasing with the Menology redaction: *[Вачеславъ] науа оумѣти книгамъ [...] ѿкоже ѿпѣзъ или сѣценникъ* (Min. cited by Vajs 1929: 22). The reinforcing pair is absent in the Glagolitic version.

<sup>23</sup> See the corresponding dictionary entries for *ѿпѣзъ* (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=3845>>); *попѣзъ* (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=30544>>); and *свацѣникъ* (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=33200>>)(accessed on 21.05.25).

<sup>24</sup> Compare with the Menology version: *Погрѣвоша же чѣстное тѣло сѣго и блаженнаго Вачеслава [...], служитель бо бѣ бѣгоу [Болеславъ] со бѣгоговѣннѣмъ и съ страхомъ* (Min. cited by Vajs 1929: 27). The Ljubljana manuscript of the Glagolitic version provides a similar reading: *Д[у]ша же его взиде к бо[г]у, емоуже и служи с говѣннѣмъ* (but: *з говореннѣмъ* (*sic!*) in the Ms Nov. Vin I and *с дѣновѣннѣмъ* in the Ms Vat) и са страхомъ (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 42).

<sup>25</sup> See the corresponding dictionary entries for *говѣннѣ* (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=2744>>); *страхъ* (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=33892>>, accessed on 21.05.25). Yet, the alternative lexemes of the Menology redaction and the Vatican and Novi Vinodolski Glagolitic manuscripts have other Latin equivalents.

с. Болеслав же помануѣса кѣ бѣоу со плачѣмь и со въздыханіемь (Min. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 28)<sup>26</sup> → may correspond to Latin *gemitus*<sup>27</sup>;

2. Adjective+adjective:

Не тѣкмо во ницимь и оубогимь [Вачеславъ] добра твораше (Glag. cited by Vajs 1929: 38-39)<sup>28</sup> → can reflect Latin *pauper / egenus / egens / inops*<sup>29</sup>;

3. Verb+verb:

Весь народъ чѣвческъ велми са каѣше и плакашеа в немъ (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 19)<sup>30</sup> → here, *lugere* or *plangere* might be considered potential Latin counterparts<sup>31</sup>.

It should be noted, however, that these instances do not offer convincing evidence of the systematic use of hendiadys as a potential translation technique. First, none of the preserved Latin legends of Wenceslas' hagiographic cycle contain matching formulations that could confirm a Latin counterpart behind each OCS pair. Furthermore, what may appear as a gloss-like hendiadys with a potential semantic overlap with a Latin term could simply be a standardized synonymic embellishment as the “boundaries [between these stylistic figures] are not always fixed” as Reinhart aptly stressed (1986: 599).

The case of ницимь и оубогимь is particularly illustrative in this regard because it closely mirrors biblical expressions of the Book of Psalms that were initially translated from Greek. For example, the original of Ps. 40:2 (“μακάριος ὁ συνίων ἐπὶ πτωχὸν καὶ πένητα”<sup>32</sup>) has a well-established OCS calque: “блженъ раздѣвѣдай на ница и оубога” (as noted by Bogoljubskij 1878: 42). Psalms 39:18, 69:3, 73:21, and 85:1 show the same conventional use of the pair. Given that the Greek-to-OCS translation of the Book of Psalms, dating back to the mission of Constantine and Methodius, would have been familiar to any medieval reader trained in ecclesiastical literature, it is far more plausible that this dual expression in the FSL was drawn from the long-standing biblical tradition rather than it glossed a Latin prototext. Moreover, the centrality of the Bible in medieval hagiographic writing allows us to further assume the author's familiarity with this text, further weakening any hypothesis that relies on this construction as evidence for Latin-to-OCS translation of the legend.

<sup>26</sup> The pair is absent in the Vostokov and Glagolitic versions.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. ПЛАЧЪ (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=29945>>); and ВЪЗДЫХАНІЕ (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=1974>>, accessed on 21.05.25).

<sup>28</sup> The two Cyrillic versions do not have these pairing elements in the corresponding paragraphs.

<sup>29</sup> See the entries for НИЦЬ (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=16807>>); and ОУБОГЪ (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=35529>>, accessed on 21.05.25).

<sup>30</sup> The Menology redaction uses only са плакаше here (Vajs 1929: 28), the Croato-Glagolitic version does not have this paragraph at all.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. КАѢТИ СА (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=5970>>); and ПЛАКАТИ СА (<<http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=29933>>, accessed on 21.05.25).

<sup>32</sup> <[https://www.bibbiaeud.it/GRECO\\_LXX/at/Sal/40/](https://www.bibbiaeud.it/GRECO_LXX/at/Sal/40/)> (accessed on 21.05.25).

As I have noted earlier, research has shown that hendiadys appears frequently and systematically in eleventh-century OCS translations from Latin. If the FSL's use of this figure were to exhibit similar frequency and functional logic, this would offer a stronger basis for arguing its stylistic proximity to such translations. However, the sparse and ambiguous nature of the examples discussed above fails to meet this threshold. In the absence of consistent usage, textual parallels in Latin sources, and unambiguous cases of semantic glossing, the few possible instances of hendiadys in the FSL remain inconclusive. Rather than supporting the theory of a Latin 'original', they point instead to the broader intertextual conventions of medieval hagiography, shaped by biblical rhetoric and fixed stylistic patterns.

### 6. *Traces of Eleventh-Century Bohemization*

The final element under consideration is the presence of regional morphological features attested in Latin-to-OCS translations produced in Bohemia in the eleventh century. As mentioned in the methodological section, Večerka systematically catalogued them in his 2013 study. While the FSL does preserve a small number of earlier Bohemisms<sup>33</sup>, both lexical and morpho-syntactical ones, it predominantly lacks the traces of later Bohemization with only one exception.

According to my examinations, the only potential instance of such kind may be the use of a future tense formed with the prefix *по-* in the Vostokov redaction when it narrates about the evil-doers' malice towards Wenceslas:

В тѣ же ноць снидошася ратници въ Гнѣвысынѣ дворѣ, и възваша собѣ Болеслава, и сотвориша злыи тои съвѣтъ неприазненѣ. Такоже и къ Пилатѣ събрася на Х[ристе] а мыслацие, такоже и внии злыи пси, тѣм са подобацие, съвѣща, како быша убити господина своего. Рѣша же: 'Поидеть на задустреннюю, тогда половимъ его' (Vost. cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 17).

That same night, warriors came together at Gněvysa's court and summoned Boleslav, and they made that evil and hostile counsel. Just as [the Jews] gathered at Pilate's, thinking [evil] against Christ, so too did those evil dogs, being like them, conspire how they might kill their lord. And they said: '[Wenceslas] will go to Matins, then we *shall capture* him'<sup>34</sup>.

At first glance, the verb "половити" may, indeed, seem to meet the criterion documented by Večerka. However, its lexical ambiguity results in complications with such interpretation. The *Dictionary of Old Russian Language (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cc.)* records *половити* with the meaning 'поохотиться' ('to hunt' in the perfective aspect) (SDJ 2004: 76), which raises

<sup>33</sup> This topic has enjoyed much scholarly consideration, so it is not worth listing these earlier Bohemisms here. For their extensive overview, cf. Večerka 1961: 417-422. For their quantitative assessment, cf. the note 4.

<sup>34</sup> The translation is mine.

questions about whether the verb here reflects a future prefix *po-* influenced by the Bohemian linguistic milieu or represents a distinct lexical unit rooted in East Slavic usage.

It is noteworthy that the verbal form *половимъ* is not attested in the other redactions of the legend. Instead, one witness of the oldest Croato-Glagolitic version and the representatives of the Menology redaction employ the variations of the more semantically and contextually coherent verb *оубити* ('to kill'):

Menology redaction	Croato-Glagolitic redaction (Vatican MS)
<p>Въ тѣ же ноць снидошася ратници иже тѣи злїи совѣтници въ Гнѣвесеи дворѣ, призваша к себѣ Болеслава, иже сотвориша злыи тѣи и непризненїи совѣтѣ. Иакоже к Пиллатоу снидошася Жидове на Х[рист]а мыслаше злаа, такоже вни злїи тѣи ѿи, тѣмже са подобаци, и съзвѣщаша, како быша оубити гна своего. Рѣша: 'Иако поидеть на оутреннюю къ цркви [...], тогда <u>оубиѣмъ</u> его' (cited by Serebrjanskij 1929: 25).</p>	<p>Ноци же приспѣ, и свраше се ти пси на дворѣ етера врага Гнѣвеси, и призваше же Болеслава, и оутврдише злиие свѣти о гѣи своемъ, ѣкоже Иудѣи о Х[рист]ѣ како оубиют и. Рѣше к себѣ: 'Ѣгда поидеть на ютрню, тагда <u>оубиѣмъ</u><sup>35</sup> его' (as in Vajs 1929: 40, notes 13-27).</p>

The partial agreement of these two widely separated textual families suggests that *оубити* may reflect the original reading of the OCS prototext, whereas *половити* may be a feature of one of the branches of the East Slavic transmission of the text<sup>36</sup>. In this case, the apparent eleventh-century Bohemism might not be a genuine trace of the legend's original linguistic environment but rather a regional interpolation introduced by a later scribe. This example clearly illustrates the broader methodological difficulty of tracing localized linguistic features through manuscript traditions that span multiple regions and centuries. The transmission history of the FSL, marked by its passage through Croatian, Bohemian, and East Slavic milieus, significantly complicates attempts to retroactively identify stylistic or morphological markers of a specific origin and, hence, cannot provide solid evidence in favor of the Latin-into-OCS translation hypothesis.

## 7. Conclusion

To conclude, this exploratory and experimental article has demonstrated the limitations of attempting to identify traces of translation in OCS texts that lack extant Latin

<sup>35</sup> Notably, the other Croato-Glagolitic witnesses use different verbs in this context: *лѣтимъ* 'we will seize' (the Nov. Vin I Ms, cited by Vajs 1929: 40) and *лѣнимъ* 'we will ambush' (the Ljubljana Ms cited by Vajs 1929: 40, note 27).

<sup>36</sup> The same logic can be applied to the peculiar case of *лѣтити* / *лѣяти* that might have been a result of the South Slavic linguistic influence.

exemplars. Predictably, such an endeavor often yields more conjecture than evidence. Although features such as hendiadys, loanwords, and morpho-syntactic peculiarities occur in eleventh-century Latin-to-OCS translations composed in Bohemia, they are not consistently or prominently present in the object of our study – *First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas*.

As we have seen, the presence of Latinisms in the FSL does not point to a Latin ‘original’ but predominantly reflects broader patterns of intercultural contacts or the adoption of specific formulas common in ecclesiastical discourse of the Western Slavic communities. Moreover, no direct influence can be conclusively demonstrated through the presumed cases of hendiadys. For some instances of this kind, the legend’s stylistic profile reflects a deeper dependance on biblical phrasing (typical for hagiographical texts) instead of borrowings from an alleged Latin ‘original’. Neither is it possible to definitively establish traces of morphological Bohemization typical for the eleventh-century literary monuments. In our case, potential candidates thereof may be, in fact, traces of editorial interferences linked to the convoluted textual transmission of the legend.

As such, the hypothesis that the FSL represents a translation from a now-lost Latin legend must remain ultimately unproven.

### *Abbreviations*

FSL:	<i>First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas</i> .
OCS:	Old Church Slavonic.
SJS 1983:	<i>Slovník jazyka staroslověnského / Lexicon linguae palaeoslovenicae</i> , XXXVI. s-si, Praha 1994.
SJS 1994:	<i>Slovník jazyka staroslověnského / Lexicon linguae palaeoslovenicae</i> , LXVIII. ch-c, Praha 1994.
SDJ 2004:	<i>Slovar’ drevnerusskogo jazyka</i> , VII. poklepanü-praščurü, Moskva 2004.

### *Referred Manuscripts*

Arch:	Sankt-Peterburg, RASL (Russian Academy of Sciences Library), Archangel’skoe sobranie D 142.
Bars:	Moskva, SHM (State Historical Museum), Barsovskoe sobranie 1466.
Ljubl:	Ljubljana, NUK (National and University Library), Ms 161, < <a href="https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-RYDYCFUG">https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-RYDYCFUG</a> >.
Mil:	Moskva, SHM, Sinodal’noe sobranie 797.
Mos:	Moskva, RSL (Russian State Library), Sevast’janovskoe sobranie F. 270 51/1481.

- Nov. Vin I: Novi Vinodolski, Parish office.
- Nov. Vin II: Novi Vinodolski, Parish office.
- Rum: Moskva, RSL, Rumjancevskoe sobranie F. 256/436, <<https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/256/f-256-436/>>.
- Sof: Sankt-Peterburg, NRL (National Library of Russia), Sofijskoe sobranie 1317, <<https://nlr.ru/manuscripts/RA1527/elektronnyiy-katalog?ab=DF82E287-0F6C-420B-A163-E4F03E9DFCA6>>.
- Trin: Moskva, RSL, Sobranie Troice-Sergievoj Lavry F. 304/I 792, <<https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/304-i/f-304i-792/#image-144>>.
- Tsar: Moskva, SHM, Sinodal'noe sobranie 174, <[https://catalog.shm.ru/entity/OBJECT/165149?query=%D0%A1%D0%B8%D0%BD.%20174&fund\\_ier=647760263&yes\\_pdf=true&index=0](https://catalog.shm.ru/entity/OBJECT/165149?query=%D0%A1%D0%B8%D0%BD.%20174&fund_ier=647760263&yes_pdf=true&index=0)>.
- Tul I: Moskva, RSL, Tulupovskoe sobranie F. 304/I 664, <<https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/304-i/f-304i-664/>>.
- Tul II: Moskva, RSL, Tulupovskoe sobranie F. 304/I 665, <<https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/304-i/f-304i-665/>>.
- Usp: Moskva, SHM, Sinodal'noe sobranie 986, <<https://catalog.shm.ru/entity/OBJECT/178435?query=%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BD.986&index=0>>.
- Vat: Città del Vaticano, BAV (Vatican Apostolic Library), Borgo Illirico 6.
- Vif: Moskva, RSL, Vifanskoe sobranie F. 556/95, <<https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/556/f-556-95/#image-38>>.
- Jar: Jaroslavl', Library of the Jaroslavl' Museum, Ms № 15497.

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*Abstract*

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*Convolutd Transmission without Translation: Reassessing Latin Influence in the First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas*

Although it is widely accepted that the *First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas* (FSL) is a tenth-century Bohemian composition written in Old Church Slavonic (OCS), some scholars have hypothesized a Latin original and subsequent translation. This article evaluates that hypothesis by testing the FSL against features typically associated with Latin-to-OCS translation, including loanwords, hendiadys, and morphological patterns. It argues that the FSL lacks consistent evidence of translation from a Latin source. While most Latinisms attested in the text are more plausibly explained as the result of cultural and religious contact with communities under Roman jurisdiction, even those expressions that appear more suggestive fail to meet the criteria of reliable translation markers and are better interpreted as scribal interpolations introduced during the text's exceptionally complex transmission. Similarly, the purported instances of hendiadys and Bohemian morphological features are too sporadic and contextually ambiguous to support the hypothesis of a Latin prototext. Cases of quasi-hendiadic synonymic reinforcement are more likely to reflect broader literary conventions, and what has been interpreted as Bohemization may instead result from local linguistic norms affecting the text at later stages of its transmission. The article therefore concludes that the FSL should be regarded as an original OCS composition with an unusually complex transmission history.

*Keywords*

*First Old Church Slavonic Life of Wenceslas*; Czech Church Slavonic; Translation Markers; Textual Transmission; Medieval Bohemia.