
THE ISSUE OF THE ORIGIN OF SAINT CLEMENT OF OHRID AND SAINT NAUM OF OHRID IN SLOVAK AND CZECH HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Abstract

Saint Clement of Ohrid and Saint Naum of Ohrid belong to prominent figures of European history. They were excellent scholars in the second half of 9th century and at the beginning of 10th century. They belonged to the most famous disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Despite the fact that nowadays several of their autobiographies were preserved some data about their biography have not been clearly solved yet. In my contribution, I focus on the issue of their origin as it is stated in the works of Slovak and Czech historians, linguists, literary scientists or in works of encyclopaedic nature after 1900. Although these figures contributed to Great Moravian mission of the Solun Brothers they are only marginally mentioned in both Slovak and Czech historiography, especially in overview publications of works on Saints Cyril and Methodius. Especially on the origin of Saint Clement several hypotheses may be found.

Keywords: Saint Clement of Ohrid, Saint Naum of Ohrid, Saint Cyril, Saint Methodius, life

1. Introduction

One of the fundamental factors that created the historical development of the Slavonic world not only in the Early Middle Ages is the multidimensional work of Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as of their disciples. Thanks to these Byzantine intellectuals, Byzantine values, culture and way of thinking penetrated the Slavic environment [1-6]. Saint Clement of Ohrid (also referred to as Bulgarian, Velikianian or Slavic) and Saint Naum belong to the most prominent disciples of the Solun Brothers. However, written sources do not mention they both certainly greatly contributed to Christianization of regions that fell under the administration of Great Moravia and Moravian archdiocese. After their forced leaving from this territory they went to the Bulgarian Empire where,

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especially in the surroundings of Lake Ohrid, they continued not only in their pastoral activity but they also developed and enhanced Slavonic literature. Especially Saint Clement of Ohrid greatly contributed to this. In my contribution, I focus on the issue of their origin as it is stated in the works of Slovak and Czech historians, linguists, literary scientists or in works of encyclopaedic nature after 1900.

2. Sources

There are only a few major works dealing with lives and works of Saints Clement of Ohrid and Saint Naum. Preserved sources about Clement of Ohrid inform mainly about his activities in Bulgaria. There is no reference to his childhood and adolescence. There are only a few references to his origin. The largest and most credible work about the saint's life is the Greek *The Long Life of Clement of Ohrid* by Saint Teofylakt de Ohrid (approx. 1050 - to 1107) that was written probably based on the Slavonic model that does not exist anymore. There is specifically mentioned about Clement, whose role model was Saint Methodius: "He knew his life better than anyone else because from his childhood and adolescence he followed him and personally saw all his master's works" [7]. Younger *Krátky život Klimenta Ochridského* (The Short Life of Clement of Ohrid) written by Dimitrios Chomatian (The Archbishop of Ohrid) states right in its introduction: "This our great father and an enlightor of Bulgaria coming from the Mysians understood by many as Bulgarians who firstly moved from Olympian Brusa to northern Ocean and the Dead Sea directed by Alexander and his commands". In the part dedicated to Clement is written following: "The thread of kin binds this honourable man to this place" [7, p. 141].

The Second Slavonic Life of Naum of Ohrid deals with the origin of Saint Naum as follows: "This equal-to-the-apostles and great father Naum was born in Mysia and after the upbringing by his noble (parents) he left his nobility and richness, everything like chaff and joined equal apostles Constantine the Philosopher and his brother Methodius" [7, p. 157]. This source was preserved later from the 16th century but the period of its existence is dated between 12th to 16th century [7, p. 155]. In The First Slavonic Life of Naum that was probably written earlier in 10th century there is a sporadic reference to the fact that Naum and Clement were brothers: "And brothers behold, let Naum be left without memory, who was a presbyter, the brother of blessed Climent (...)" [7, p. 151].

Based on the stated references, in the case of both saints there is a prevailing opinion in regard to scientific literature that they came from Slavonic inhabitants falling under the administration of Methodius when he was active in 40's and 50's of the 9th century as archon. Most likely it was a Strymon archontium that extends to the area north of present Thessaloniki [8, 9].

3. The origin of Saint Clement of Ohrid and Saint Naum in Slovak historiography

Knowledge of written sources related to Cyrillo-Methodian mission brought opportunities to voluminous publishing of secondary literature about the history of Great Moravia and the mission itself. Firstly, it is necessary to state that there are only several works that deal with the work and life of Saints Clement and Naum in Slovak historiography. There are only marginal references to both saints in other works (especially in publications about Saints Cyril and Methodius) However, they greatly contributed to the mission of the Solun Brothers and were their close co-workers. Especially Church historians, linguists and literary scientists capture only key facts from their lives in their works.

Professor Ján Stanislav, a prominent figure of Slovak Slavic studies who published *The Long Life* and *The Short Life* of Climent of Ohrid in Slovak language, dealt with the translation of sources about Saint Climent. He did so in the publication of 1950 called *Osudy Cyrila a Metoda a ich učeníkov v Živote Klimentovom. Preklad Bulharskej a Ochridskej legendy s úvodom* (Destinies of Cyril and Methodius and their Disciples in Climent's Life. The Translation of Bulgarian and Ohrid Legend with Introduction). He refers to the thesis of the Russian Nikolaj Leonidovič Tunický that the shortage of reports about the origin and youth of Clement and Naum in their old Slavonic autobiographies is caused by the fact that the author got to know them after the arrival in Macedonia [10]. Ján Stanislav published the most complex article about the work of Saint Climent later in the first part of a textbook named *Starosloviensky jazyk* (Old Slavonic Language) that was published posthumously in 1978. He uses a Slavonic designation referring to Clement. For the first time, he states a hypothesis that Clement came from the territory of Great Moravia, Slovakia respectively. It was based on the analysis of preserved works about Saint Clement and works that were probably written by him. He claimed that in Clement's works, especially in *Pochvala sv. Cyrilovi* (Praise to Saint Cyril), significant elements were found, which are known in central Slovak language [11]. These opinions of Ján Stanislav on the origin of Saint Clement were not left unsupported by the Slovak scientific community. *Slovník starovekých a stredovekých autorov* (The Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Authors), which was published in 1983 and written by the Slovak literary and cultural historian Jozef Kuzmík, states a Slavonic attribute referring to Clement. There is also mentioned that he is called as Clement of Ohrid or Velikanian. Based on the hypothesis of Ján Stanislav, Kuzmík inclines to the opinion that he came from the territory of Great Moravia [12]. In regard to Naum, whom he calls the Macedonian, he writes that he was born in Greek Macedonia in 835 and as a Macedonian student of Constantine-Cyril he achieved basic education [12, p. 169]. Jozef Kuzmík returned to the issue of Saint Clement in 1997 when he published a discussion post in the magazine *Slovenská literatúra* (Slovak Literature) - *Kliment slovenský – najvýznamnejší slovenský spisovateľ 9. – 10. Storočia* (Clement Slovak-the most prominent Slovak writer of 9th-10th century).

Although he claims that the birth place of Clement is not known he subsequently states that he was born most likely in 836 and most probably in Nitra area. He refers again to the opinion of Ján Stanislav on central slovakisms in his works [13].

Recently, the slavacist and theologian Andrej Škoviera, in his monograph *Svätí slovanskí sedmopočetníci* (The Seven Holy Slavonic Saints), argues against the opinion of Ján Stanislav and states: “Besides *The Short Life of Clement*, especially the reference on Clement that he was the closest co-worker and since his young age ... Methodius and also the fact that he was banished from Great Moravia is an argument against Stanislav’s thesis. It is also probable, based on information about his life from Mysia, that Clement came from the same region as Saint Naum who was. Naum together with Clement were a couple already prior to their arrival in Great Moravia and therefore they worked together until Naum’s death [9, p. 112]. He also refers to information from *The Long Life of Clement of Ohrid*. In regard to Saint Naum he states that he probably came from Slavonic residents of Roman (Byzantine) empire who lived somewhere near the borders with Bulgaria [9].

Linguists Ema Krošláková and Katarína Habovštiaková [14] in their publication called *From Works by the Solun Brothers and their Disciples* write about Saint Clement that he probably came from Macedonia from the surroundings of Thessaloniki. They also mention later the fact that based on the tradition having origin in Ohrid he was a born brother of Naum. They state about Naum that he probable came from Macedonia and came to Great Moravia together with the Solun Brothers.

However, Pavle Kocev, Peter Kondrla, Roman Králik and Marie Roubalová [15] have a prevailing opinion in their study stating that Clement of Ohrid was born in Ohrid but at the same time they also mention a well-known fact that documents reveal neither his birthplace nor his birth date.

Other works of Slovak researchers contain only basic information especially about Saint Clement, while Saint Naum is mentioned only sporadically [16]. They both are especially mentioned in the work dedicated to Saints Cyril and Methodius. Michal Lacko, a professor of Church history, is an author of one of them. In his monograph *Saints Cyril and Methodius* he writes about Clement that after his arrival in Bulgaria he was sent to his home Macedonia by Boris the emperor. He also focuses on his fortunes and activity [17]. Saint Clement is to a lesser extent mentioned by a medievalist, professor Richard Marsina [18], in his monograph *Metodov boj* (Methodius’s Struggle) (first edition in 1985) where he states that when Constantine arrived in Great Moravia in 863 he was accompanied by several of his disciples namely Saint Clement. He does not say anything about his origin.

In a representative publication called *Na písme zostalo* (On a Letter Remained), Saint Clement of Ohrid is presented as an author of *Pochvala Cyrilovi Filozofovi* (Praise to Cyril Philosopher), where basic information about his life are stated. The record also contains the fact that he had Macedonian

origin and came to Great Moravia together with Constantine and Methodius [19].

Brief biographical information about Saints Clement and Naum, in a chapter about disciples of Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius published in *Vplyv byzantskej misie sv. Cyrila a Metoda na kresťanský život Spiša* (Influence of Byzantine Mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius on Christian Life of Spiš), was provided by the professor of Theology František Dlugoš [20]. He states that Saint Clement of Ohrid came from Macedonia. He does not mention anything about Naum's origin.

The historian Peter Ratkoš, in his monograph *Slovensko v dobe veľkomoravskej* (Slovakia in the Era of Great Moravia) [21], in a reference to banishment of disciples of the Solun Brothers states that Clement, Naum and Sava came from Bulgarian area.

In the work of the Church historian Peter Sedlák called *Christianizácia západných Slovanov s osobitným zreteľom na Slovensko* (Christianization of West Slavs with Special Regard to Slovakia), he does not pay attention to the origin of Saints Clement and Naum but the author mentions them as members of accompaniment that came together with Constantine and Methodius to Great Moravia. Sedlák stated a specific opinion that Saint Naum and Saint Clement could have been brothers [22].

In *Slovesnosť a kultúrny jazyk Veľkej Moravy* (Literature and Cultural Language of Great Moravia) [23], professor Eugen Pauliny considered Macedonia to be Clement's country of origin and could not be omitted from older linguistic and literary works. He does not mention Naum's origin.

While discussing the origin of Saint Clement, it is necessary to mention the work of professor Ľubor Matejko that was published in 2004, named *Život stredovekého textu. O tzv. Metodovom kánone sv. (The Life of Medieval Text. About So-Called Methodius's Canon to Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki)*. He elaborated the hypothesis that *The Canon to Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki* was not written by Saint Methodius but by Saint Clement. In particular, he writes about this author: "Although there are no clear indications in favour of this or another author, the figure at slightly open door reminds of Clement of Ohrid Saint. It is not excluded that he came from the surroundings of Thessaloniki respectively at least he lived here so he meets the basic condition for 'the candidate' for authorship." [24]

Entries on Saints Clement and Naum may also be found in biographical or overview lexicons and dictionaries. They are based on several already published works. The fourth volume of *Biografický lexikón Slovenska* and *Reprezentatívom biografickom lexikóne Slovenska* (Representative Biographical Lexicon of Slovakia) contains several sentences about life of Saint Clement. Especially in *Biografický lexikón Slovenska* (Slovak Biographical Lexicon) information that he probably came from the area of Great Moravia may be found [25]. In the second of these dictionaries is stated that he came from Slavonic kin from Aegean-Macedonian or from Moravian-Nitra area [26]. There is no entry itself referring to Saint Naum. An interesting fact is that the known *Slovenský*

biografický slovník (Slovak Biographical Dictionary) does not contain a separate entry on Saint Clement but it does contain an entry referring to Saint Naum. Macedonia is stated as a country of his origin [27]. *Slovník slovenských spisovateľov* (Dictionary of Slovak Writers) was formed under the editorial authority of Valér Mikula. In regard to the entry Clement, there is a reference about the fact that no information about his birth place or his nationality are known. It is assumed that he came from Macedonia [28]. Naum is not mentioned in this publication.

In the overview history of Slovakia and synthesis of textbooks only Gorazd is mentioned among the disciples of Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. Opinions on banishment of disciples of the Solun Brothers after Methodius's death may be understood as unified. Direct reference about Clement and Naum is absent. Only in the first volume of *Kronika Slovenska* (The Chronicle of Slovakia) [29] Saint Clemenent of Ohrid is presented as a poet and writer who is the author of *The Life of Saint Constantine*. At the same time, there is a reference that he was a close co-worker and compatriot of Saint Constantine-Cyril and he was active in Great Moravia and later in Bulgaria. The fact that Naum came to Great Moravia with the Solun Brothers is stated there.

4. The origin of Saint Clement of Ohrid and Saint Naum in Czech historiography

Czech historiography that deals with Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as their cultural and literary heritage is relatively complex [30]. However, it deals with Saint Clement of Ohrid and Naum only marginally and particular references to their origin may be sporadically found. An excellent slavist, Václav Vondrák, greatly contributed to knowing the work of Clement de Ohrid in his monograph *Studie z oboru církevněslovanského písemnictví* (Studies in the Field of Old Church Slavonic Literature), but he does not mention his origin [31]. In the first volume of academic *Dejiny české literatury* (History of Czech Literature) [32] the Czech literary historian Josef Hrabák states that the author of *Pochvala svätému Cyrilovi* (Praise to Saint Cyril) and *Pochvalné slovo svätým Cyrilovi a Metodovi* (Prasing Word to Saints Cyril and Methodius) is the Moravian Kliment Velický. He does not mention how he came to such conclusion.

In the second volume of edition *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici* (first volume was published in 1967) there were several works published that were attributed to Clement of Ohrid and the lives of both saints. In *The Second Slavonic Life of Naum* and its reference to Naum's origin from Mysia, compilers added a commentary that it is the area of downstream of Serbian Moravia and northern bank of Danube or right side of the bank of Danube and central area of Bulgarian state [33].

In 1982 *Zlatý věk bulharského písemnictví* (Golden Age of Bulgarian Literature) was published and its introductory article was written by a prominent Bulgarian slavist Ivan Dujčev and translations with editorials to individual

works were prepared by Zoe Hauptová and Věnceslava Bechyňová. In the introduction, there is a reference that Naum was probably from his early age Clement's peer and co-worker. Ivan Dujčev refers to the reference in *The Second Slavonic Life of Naum* where he states that he was Mysian, Bulgarian. Zoe Hauptová who is the author of introductory commentary and translator of the work of Clement of Ohrid states about his origin following: "Both legends [The Long and Short Life of Clement of Ohrid - author's note] however remain silent about Clement's origin as well as about the period of his birth so we rely on assumptions and hypothesis only. According to N.L. Tunický (Sv. Kliment, episkop slovenskij, Serbiev Posad 1913) Clement was Slavonic from Macedonia either from the surroundings of Thessaloniki or from Slavonic province where Methodius was an archon as it is stated in the 2nd chapter of The Life of Methodius. He came to Moravia with the mission of Cyril and Methodius but he earlier participated in Khazarian mission with both brothers. His monk name Clement after Saint Clement whose alleged relics were found by Constantine-Cyril in Kherson may serve as evidence. Macedonian origin of Clement also seems to be confirmed by the fact that there is no linguistic moravism in his works." [34]

Zoe Hauptová in a separate study in a Croatian journal *Slovo* focused on the circumstances of creation and linguistic analysis of preserved old Slavonic lives of Naum. Based on the text of *Druhý slovanský život Nauma* (The Second Slavonic Life of Naum) she states that he came from Mysia [35].

The prominent Czech byzantologist Vladimír Vavřínek, in his last monograph *Cyril a Metoděj mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem* (Cyril and Methodius between Constantinople and Rome), does not mention the birth place of Saint Clement and Naum but he considers them to be the members of those which accompanied Constantine-Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia. He hypothetically assumes that the members came from Greek families of Slavonic origin or from regions where Slavonic language was used as a means of communication.

Information about Saint Clement and Naum may be found in publications on history of Balkanian states and in edition *Dejiny státov* (History of States) from the publishing house Lidové noviny, but the reference about their origin is only in two cases. Historian Jan Rychlík writes in *Dejiny Bulharska* (History of Bulgaria) that Clement's origin was Slavonic and he considers Naum to be Slavonic from Mysia [36]. In *Dejiny Macedónska* (History of Macedonia), written together with Miroslav Kouba, he mentions that they both came from Mysia [37].

Overview *Kronika českých zemí* (Chronicle of Bohemian Lands) [38] states that Saint Clement of Ohrid was Constantine's close co-worker and compatriot. Regarding Naum we learn that he belonged to close co-workers and disciples of the Solun Brothers and he came together with them to Great Moravia.

Entries on Saints Clement and Naum are included sporadically in Czech biographical lexicons and dictionaries. *Lexikón české literatury* (Lexicon of Czech Literature) does not contain entries on saints. The similar situation is in the case of *Biografický slovník českých zemí* (The Biographical Dictionary of the Czech Lands) available on the website of The Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences [<http://www.hiu.cas.cz/cs/download/biogr/bs4.pdf>]. Entries on Saints Clement and Saint Naum are a part of *Slovník bulharských spisovatel'ov* (Dictionary of Bulgarian Writers) and *Slovník balkánaských spisovatel'ov* (Dictionary of Balkan Writers) formed under management of Ivan Dorovský. Regarding both, south-western Bulgaria is stated as their birth place [39]. In the second one, south-western Bulgaria is also stated as Clement's birthplace but regarding Naum he is considered to be Macedonian Slavonic [40]. In the dictionary of Christian iconography *Postavy, atributy, symboly* (Figures, Attributes and Symbols) Clement of Ohrid is presented as a bishop who was Slavonic from Macedonia [41].

5. Conclusions

In conclusion of the overview of Slovak and Czech scientific production it may be said that unlike Saints Cyril and Methodius information, about Saints Clement of Ohrid and Naum are relatively fragmentary and brief in scientific literature in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, these figures greatly contributed to the mission of the Solun Brothers and were their close co-workers.

In Slovakia, complex elaboration of the knowledge of life, sources and work of Saint Clement of Ohrid were elaborated by Ján Stanislav and recently by Andrej Škoviera. More careful attention was drawn to Clement of Ohrid in the Czech Republic yet there are a few references about his origin in publications. Slovak and Czech historians, linguists and literary scientists capture only key facts from their lives in their works. They mainly focus on the work of Saint Clement of Ohrid. Majority of authors who mentioned this saint in their works however look for his birth place in the historical region of Macedonia. Ján Stanislav introduced a theory on Great Moravian origin of Saint Clement of Ohrid. This was supported especially by the literary historian Jozef Kuzník and a reference about it may be found in works of encyclopaedic character. Nowadays, regarding the world slavistics, an opinion that Saint Clement of Ohrid came from Slavonic population that belonged under the administration of Methodius when he was active in 40's to 50's of 9th century prevails. Restraints in Slovak and Czech historiography may be seen not only concerning the intensity of researches but especially in the transfer of research results that are comprehensively presented in foreign literature [42-47].

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