

THE QUESTION OF THE LEGENDARY WELEGRAD (VELIGRAD) AS THE ALLEGED SEAT OF THE MORAVIAN ARCHBISHOP METHODIUS

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The Czech popular tradition has a deep-rooted idea that the seat of Archbishop Methodius and the residence of Prince Svatopluk was a fortress called Welegrad (*Veligrad*) without any evidence in the contemporary sources. The place name does not appear in the legends from the 11th to the 13th centuries in which the bishop rank is attributed to Methodius and Constantine Cyril, and there is no reference to the place of their activities. *Welegrad* as the archiepiscopal seat of Methodius is reported for the first time in the legends and chronicles from the 14th century when this place name had already been transferred to the monastery founded in 1205 for the German Cistercian monks.

A significant number of speculations were put forward by modern historians on whether the Great Moravian Welegrad had ever existed or not. Recently a hypothesis was suggested, though without any corroboration in the preserved sources, that Bruno of Schauenburk, the bishop of Olomouc, invented this tradition to support the promotion of his bishopric into an archbishopric.

The place name *Veligrad* was first documented in 1141 as a staple-village. The composite of the Old Church Slavonic adjective *velii* (large) and noun *gradъ* (fortified settlement) shows that it must have been of the old origin. It is not likely that such a large staple-village was founded in the 10th century when South Moravia was ravaged by the Magyar onslaughts, or in the 11th century when it was conquered by the son of the Prince of Bohemia Břetislav who founded several fortresses for the protection of the Bohemian rule, one of them the fortress Sptyhněv with an archdeaconry to which the staple-village Veligrad was given in possession.

Both these localities are in the close vicinity of an archaeological site at the present-day townships Staré Město and Uherské Hradiště which in the 9th century was one of two largest and mightiest Great Moravian fortresses. Very close to it, at the Sady heights, an ecclesiastical compound was discovered, the oldest part of which was a church with the cruciform ground plan; this church was obviously constructed as early as the very beginning of the 9th century and was continually in use till the mid-13th century. Various indirect indications allow us to assume that this compound may have been the seat of Archbishop Methodius as well as the place of his burial. It is quite possible that even Prince Svatopluk was buried there. Therefore, it seems very likely that this locality had been called *Veligrad* already in the Great Moravian period and that this place name as well as the tradition connected with it may have remained in the awareness of the local population throughout the following centuries.

Key words: Great Moravia, Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, Welegrad

The Czech popular tradition concerning the Cyrillo-Methodian mission has a deep-rooted idea that the fortress Welegrad (the Czech spelling today: Velehrad) was the seat of the Moravian Archbishop Methodius and at the same time the residence of the Prince (or King) Svatopluk. Nonetheless, such a place name does not occur in any of the contemporary sources related to the Great Moravia. A significant number of hypotheses and speculations were put forward by modern historians on whether the Great Moravian Welegrad had ever existed, and if it had, where was it.¹ The most recent hypothesis considers the connection of the legendary tradition of Welegrad with the one-time agency of Archbishop Methodius to be an intentional invention of the bishop of Olomouc Bruno of Schauenburk, a friend and close adviser of King Přemysl Otakar II. This linkage would have supported his request sent to Pope Clement IV in 1267, in which he asked a promotion of the bishopric of Olomouc to become an archbishopric.²

Actually there are only three place names of Great Moravian settlements in the contemporary historical sources:³ *Dowina* (the present day Děvín), a border fortress on the confluence of the Morava and the Danube rivers, where Louis the German besieged Prince Rastislav in 864;⁴ *Nitrava* (the present day Nitra in Southwestern Slovakia) which had been the property of Prince Pribina expelled from there in 833 by the Moravian ruler Mojmir I,⁵ and to which the Swabian priest Wiching was appointed as a bishop by Pope John VIII in 880;⁶ and finally *Brezlauspurch* (Bratislava) close to the place where the Magyars defeated the Bavarian army of King Arnulf.⁷ The *Annales Fuldenses ad annum 869* mention also the original residence of Prince Rastislav which is called there *antiqua urbs Rastizi*⁸ (the old, or the former town of Rastislav). Reporting of the events in 855 the same *Annals* characterize it as *firmissimo ... vallo munitum*⁹ (fortified with very strong ramparts)

¹ SNÁŠIL 2001. provides a good survey of the hypotheses.

² TŘEŠTÍK 1999; WIHODA 2008.

³ The sources related to Great Moravia and the Cyrillo-Methodian mission are quoted according to *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici* (MMFH).

⁴ *Annales Fuldenses ad annum 864* – MMFH I, 98.

⁵ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, cap. 11 – MMFH III, 312.

⁶ *Epistola Industriae tuae* – MMFH III, 205.

⁷ *Annales Iuvavenses maximi* – MMFH III, 131.

⁸ MMFH I, 104.

⁹ MMFH I, 93.

and in 869 as *ineffabilis Rastizi munitio*¹⁰ (ineffable fortress of Rastislav). These three pieces of information are, of course, of Frankish origin and none of them indicates the actual proper place name of the fortress that in the time of Rastislav's rule was the central stronghold of the Great Moravia.

It is true that in the second *Life of Naum* we read that Archbishop Methodius went from Rome »to Pannonia, to the city of Morava«.¹¹ Some scholars take this statement as a proof that the central fortified settlement of Moravians might have been called *Morava*.¹² This legend, however, is of a very late origin (the only preserved manuscript dates from the 16th century); it is a compilation of several, probably Greek, texts and it is not very reliable as a historical source.¹³ It seems very probable that the mention of the »city of Morava« originated from the author's misunderstanding. In the contemporary sources the term *Morava* and its various derivatives were used only for the river, the region around it and the people inhabiting this land.

Nonetheless, several researchers have argued recently that the main fortress of the Moravian rulers might have been called *Morava*. They point out the fact that Pope John VIII in his bull *Industriae tuae*, issued in June 880, referred to Methodius as the *archiepiscopus sanctae ecclesiae marabensis*.¹⁴ In their view this adjective should be understood as a derivative of a place name as all bishops were referred to according to their residential seats. This principle was certainly established in the Late Antiquity when the ecclesiastical organization followed the model of the Roman administrative system; could it be, however, rigorously applied in the early Middle Ages in *barbarico* regions where the Roman cities have never existed? Let us remember that in 873 the same Pope John VIII in his several letters addressed to Louis the German and to the Bavarian bishops speaks of *diocesis Pannonica*, *episcopatus Pannoniensium* and, in the letter to bishop Anno, he even calls Methodius *archiepiscopus Pannonicus*,¹⁵ i.e. according to the

¹⁰ MMFH I, 101.

¹¹ MMFH II, 254.

¹² See SNÁŠIL 2001: 355-364 with a very good and exhaustive survey of opinions by various researchers; cf. also important critical remarks by CHAROUZ 1987.a, 1987.b.

¹³ HAUPTOVÁ 1986.

¹⁴ MMFH III, 199-200.

¹⁵ *Johannis VIII papae epistolae*: MMFH III, 159: ep. 46 – *Pannonicam diocesis*; MMFH III, 161: ep. 47 – *Pannoniensium episcopatu*; MMFH III, 163: ep. 49 – *Pannonica diocesis*; MMFH III, 169: ep. 51 – *Methodium, Pannonicum archiepiscopum*.

name of the whole province, and not according to any city, in spite of the fact that Hadrian II had appointed him to the »seat of St. Andronicus, one of the seventy« (i.e. Sirmium). Thus, the hypothesis that Rastislav's residence might have been called *Morava* cannot be rejected *a priori*, but there is nothing in the contemporary sources that would directly support it.

The place name *Welegrad* was reported for the first time in the connection with the Cyrillo-Methodian mission as late as the very end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century. In the legends of St. Wenceslas *Tempore Michaelis imperatoris*¹⁶ and *Diffundente sole*,¹⁷ the origin of which is reliably dated in the second half of the 13th century, i.e. in the time of the episcopacy of Bruno of Schauenburk (1245-1281), we read that Prince Bořivoj was baptized by Methodius at the court of Svatopluk, but in none of them the place name Welegrad is mentioned. Also in all the *Lives of St. Procopius*, the founder of the Sázava monastery, we read that »he was well educated in the Slavonic letters invented once by the most blessed bishop Cyril«, but it is only in the *Vita antiqua sancti Procopii F*, the so called Fejfalik's Legend (manuscript No. 230 kept in the Library of the Chapter of Olomouc) from the very end of the 13th century (if not slightly later) that we find this statement specified with the adjective *a sancto Cyrillo, episcopo Wellegradensi*.¹⁸ So there is really nothing in the legendary tradition that would support the hypothesis that Bruno of Schauenburk has invented the story of Welegrad as the ecclesiastical metropolis of Svatopluk's realm.

During the time of the Luxemburg dynasty the Welegrad tradion was definitely confirmed. According to the first rhymed chronicle written in Czech by a certain Dalimil at the very beginning of the 14th century, probably by 1314, Methodius, the archbishop of Velehrad, a Ruthenian (sic!), celebrated liturgy in Slavonic and baptized the Bohemian Prince Bořivoj at Velehrad, the seat of the Moravian king Svatopluk.¹⁹ Since then Welegrad has regularly been referred to as the ecclesiastical metropolis of the Great Moravia. The legend *Quemadmodum*, originating most probably from the time of Charles IV, placed the Moravian metropolitan cathedral in Welegrad.²⁰ According to

¹⁶ MMFH II, 255-268 (on the date of its origin 256-257).

¹⁷ MMFH III, 276-283.

¹⁸ CHALOUPECKÝ; RYBA 1953: 112; MMFH II, 235-237.

¹⁹ MMFH I, 274.

²⁰ MMFH II, 289-296. On its dating see LUDVÍKOVSKÝ 1973-74: 275-276.

it King Svatopluk had Saint Cyril consecrated as the Archbishop of Moravia in the church in Welegrad where he had brought the relics of Saint Clement from Cherson. It was only later that St. Cyril, foreseeing the destruction of Moravia, transferred those relics to Rome where he eventually died. After his death his brother Methodius is said to have been appointed Archbishop of Welegrad and it was there that he later baptized the Prince of Bohemia Bořivoj. Afterwards this theme was even more distinctly developed in an Old Czech version of this legend from late 15th century entitled *Život svatých Crha a Strachoty*.²¹

The Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was considerably boosted by Emperor Charles IV. He introduced their cult in Prague, founded the monastery *in Sclavis* and invited the monks from Dalmatia to celebrate liturgy in Old Church Slavonic in the church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, as well as to the Saints Vojtěch (Adalbert), Procopius, Jerome, and the Brothers from Thessalonica. In the Latin *Life of St. Wenceslas* written by the Emperor himself, St. Cyril is referred to as the Archbishop of Moravia. Afterwards his office was transferred to his brother Methodius who later baptized the Bohemian prince Bořivoj and his wife Ludmila in the metropolitan Moravian town of Velehrad in the Blessed Vitus' church. Literally the same story can be found in the Old Czech translation of that legend.²² Thus the Emperor has skillfully linked together St. Wenceslas' tradition, which he had perceived as a fundamental axis of the Bohemian statehood ideology, and the older Cyrillo-Methodian tradition of the Moravian origin.

The story of Methodius' archiepiscopate and his conflicts with Svatopluk was considerably developed in the world chronicle composed by Přibík Pulkava of Radenín at the incentive and with the help of Emperor Charles IV in the last years of his reign.²³ According to his narrative, the country of Moravia was ravaged and the city of Welegrad was completely destroyed by the onslaught of Magyars, and both the kingdom and the archiepiscopacy of Moravia ceased to exist. It was only Vratislav I, the first Bohemian ruler promoted to the rank of king (1085), who established a bishopric in Olomouc instead of Welegrad, which in the time of King Svatopluk used to be *sedes*

²¹ MMFH II, 314-316.

²² MMFH II, 297-298.

²³ MMFH I, 307-311.

archiepiscopalis. Thus, the theory of the transfer of the Moravian kingdom to Bohemia, which we have already found in Dalimil's chronicle, was extended in the sense that the Welegrad (archi)episcopacy was also transferred to Olomouc.

The monastery *in Sclavis* in Prague was founded in 1347. Only two years later, in 1349, Jan Volek, the bishop of Olomouc, ordered all the churches in his diocese to celebrate the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius on March 9. The place name Welegrad was not mentioned, but some time in the 15th century a short chronicle was compiled of the bishops of Olomouc entitled *Granum catalogi praesulum Moraviae*.²⁴ The chronicle begins with the statement that in 887 King Svatopluk achieved that Blessed Cyril be appointed Archbishop at the church of Welegrad where he later transferred the relics of Saint Clement, the Pope of Rome. In 892 Cyril is said to have resigned from his office which he transferred to his brother Blessed Methodius.

In the baroque period, the notion of Welegrad as the seat of Methodius' archbishopric and the ecclesiastical metropolis of Svatopluk's empire was already perceived in Moravia as an indisputable reality. Considerable credit in this respect can be attributed to Christian Hirschmentzel, a monk of the Welegrad monastery, who wrote a treatise *Vita SS. Cyrilli et Methudii, archiepiscoporum Moraviae, sive Vetus Wellehrad* published in 1667, under whose influence numerous other authors and preachers subsequently started to write. At first this tradition served the spirit of the Catholic counter-reformation as a counterbalance to the Hussite tradition. In the 19th century it was exploited for the promotion of unionist ideas in the spirit of the unification of the Slavonic peoples under the Roman papal jurisdiction. In the second half of that century it became, especially in Moravia, a significant element of the ideology of the Czech national revival. A century later it was an expression of the opposition of the Czech people against the totalitarian communist regime.²⁵

The basic component of these trends has always been a tradition closely linked with the monastery of Welegrad. This monastery was, however,

²⁴ MMFH I, 314.

²⁵ GRAUS 1963; KOPECKÝ 1965; LUDVÍKOVSKÝ 1965; ZLÁMAL 1969; HAVLÍK 1990; BLÁHOVÁ 1999; GALUŠKA 2002; VAVŘÍNEK 2006; WIHODA 2008.

founded only at the beginning of the 13th century, in 1205.²⁶ We can find the monastery name (*Welegrade nomine*) for the first time in a charter that claims to have been issued in 1202 by the Bohemian King Přemysl Otakar I, but this document was proved to be a fake produced several decades later (probably by 1257). There is no doubt that it truly repeats the provisions of the original foundation act regardless of whether it was written or not.²⁷ In this document *inter alia* the properties belonging to the monastery are listed as we also read in another charter issued in 1220, *Wellegrad villa forensis cum omnibus suis appendiciis*.²⁸ It is not, however, in these documents that we hear of the *villa* for the first time.

A locality called *Veligrad* was first documented as early as 1141 in an instrument of Bishop of Olomouc, Jindřich Zdík, where it was described as a *villa forensis*, i.e. a staple-endowed village.²⁹ Therefore it must have been a locality of some significance. But when did it receive its name with the meaning of a »large fortified place«? A settlement bearing such a name could hardly crop up in the 10th century because it was then that the Great Moravian state disappeared under Magyar raids, its administrative and social system was totally torn apart and the majority of its fortified settlements – as documented by archaeological excavations – were either pulled down or in decline.³⁰ It is not probable that it happened in the course of the 11th century because the staple-village *Veligrad* mentioned in the document issued in 1141, belonged to the archdeaconry established in the fortified settlement called Spytihněv.³¹ It was one of the fortresses founded in the early 1030s by Prince Břetislav when he seized Southern Moravia from the Magyars, finally acquiring it for the Bohemian state under the rule of the Přemyslids. In order to ensure his rule in the regained territory he founded a number of new fortified settlements, in most cases nearby the former, then already destroyed or decayed Great Moravian fortresses. Situated not more than 5 kilometres from this fortress, as one of the villages belonging to it, *Veligrad* was certainly not founded at the same time as another place of prominence,

²⁶ HURT 1934; ČECHURA 1981; FOLTÝN 2005; POJSL 2006.

²⁷ CDB II, N° 355, 370-372.

²⁸ CDB II, N° 195, 179-181.

²⁹ CDB I, N° 115, 116-123.

³⁰ MĚŘÍNSKÝ 1986; WIHODA 2006; MĚŘÍNSKÝ 2008.

³¹ MĚŘÍNSKÝ 1997.

but must have existed already for some time. Therefore, it seems justified to assume that this place name is much older and that its origin may be from the period of the Great Moravia.

Such a dating seems to be confirmed by the form of this place name which obviously originally read *Veligrad*. It is a composite of the Old Church Slavonic adjective *velii* (large) and *gradъ* (fortified settlement) which only later, in the course of the 12th or the 13th century changed into *Velegrad* or *Welegrad* (*Wellegrad*) as we read in the Latin sources.³²

The fortress Spytihněv was founded only some 10 kilometres from a major Great Moravian fortified settlement in the present day township called Staré Město. It is one of the two excavation sites from the Great Moravian period which are most prominent if we take into consideration the area, the massiveness of their fortifications, the wealth of the found objects, as well as the number of church structures, the other being the fortress located near the present-day village of Mikulčice. The results of the archaeological findings at both locations have been published several times, therefore it is not necessary to give a more detailed description here.³³ A generally prevailing agreement is that the Mikulčice settlement enjoyed its major boom in the first half or in the first two thirds of the 9th century. Everything indicates that it may be the very seat of princes Mojmir and Rastislav, that it was the *munitio ineffabilis* referred to in the *Annales Fuldenses* from 869.

On the other hand, the heyday of the other fortified settlement at today's Staré Město dates apparently from the second half of the 9th century. In its immediate vicinity at the heights called today Sady the fundamentals of an ecclesiastical compound of three connected church structures with a baptistery were discovered, as well as several dwellings.³⁴ The compound was built in three successive construction stages. The first church of the compound was obviously constructed in the very first decades of the 9th century. It had a ground plan in the shape of a free (Greek) cross and a rectangular presbytery; two rows of the base masonry within the nave parallel to the peripheral walls were probably serving as the foundation for the buttresses bearing a tower over the central part of the church. The architectonic models for this

³² *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského I*, Praha 1966, 171. Cf. HOSÁK; ŠRÁMEK 1980: 171.

³³ HRUBÝ 1965, 1972; POULÍK 1975, 1985.

³⁴ GALUŠKA 1996, 1998.

church were taken from Istria and Dalmatia (the chapel of Maria Formosa or St. Catherine in Pula). The construction of this church is attributed to the activities of the missionaries from the regions under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Aquileia who might have taken part in the Christianizing of the Great Moravia.³⁵

Later on, in the second half of the 9th century, a rectangular annex was added to this church on the western side with a shallow apse-like niche in its western wall. It seems that it served as a narthex and was added to the previously constructed church by the Byzantine mission, as also happened in the several other Great Moravian sites (Mikulčice – church Nr. 3, Staré Město – Špitálky, Břeclav – Pohansko). The findings of numerous styli (*stili*) both inside and near the narthex indicate the possible existence of a church school. One of many crosses found there displays a Greek inscription. All these indicate a transition from Latin to the Slavonic liturgy in the time of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission.

The narthex added to the earlier constructed cross-shaped church was not the only alteration of its structure. A cavity 210 cm long and 70 cm wide was made in the basement and over the ground wall of the apse from the interior of the church and was completed by a small wall built from outside adjusted with mortar to create a tomb. It was suggested that it had been the tomb of Archbishop Methodius himself.³⁶ This is only a hypothesis. The grave was totally devastated, and absolutely no relics or objects have been left in it, so that there is no way of knowing who might have been buried in it. Among all Great Moravian graves discovered so far, due to its location, it best corresponds to what we know about the burial ceremony of Archbishop Methodius. In the *Life of Methodius* it is said that he was buried »in the cathedral church« (VM 17). The *Prologue Life of Constantine and Methodius* specifies it in more details: »He (Methodius) lies buried in the great church of Moravia on the left side in the wall behind the altar of the Holy Mother of God«. ³⁷ The empty cavity within the wall of the apse, obviously added to serve as a tomb, is situated on the left side of the apse from the point of view of the priest standing behind the *mensa* facing the faithful. The

³⁵ VAVŘÍNEK 1963.

³⁶ HRUBÝ 1970; GALUŠKA 1996: 118-122.

³⁷ MMFH II, 162; MMFH II, 166.

designation »great church« should be understood not in relation to its size but with respect to its importance, as in Byzantium the expression *μεγάλη ἐκκλησία* meant the »main (cathedral) church«, and that corresponds exactly to the report of the *Vita Methodii*. Of course there is no mention in contemporary sources, as in all other similar cases, to which Patron Saint this church may have been dedicated. Nonetheless, a much later document, a charter issued in 1247, mentions a chapel standing »on a mount close to Kunovice that had been built in honor of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary«. ³⁸ And since the Sady Heights lie in the immediate vicinity of the latter village and the archaeological finds have proved that the graveyard around the cross-shaped church over there, though already in decline and partly collapsed, was in use through the entire 11th and 12th centuries, we are perhaps entitled to assume that the dedication of the church to the Holy Virgin dates in the very time when it was constructed. Although all conclusions to be drawn from these findings can be only hypothetical, it seems very probable that the church compound unearthed at the Sady Heights might have been the seat of Archbishop Methodius.

The compound itself had a manifestly churchlike character. Nonetheless, it must have also been a place of exceptional importance within the social structure of the Great Moravian state. The paraphernalia of the discovered graves – both within the churches and outside – clearly indicate that those buried in them must have come from socially important or even governing elites. In the third, last construction stage of the compound a funeral chapel was built inside where a remarkable tomb was found. A skeleton of a robust man, whose clothes were fastened by special golden buttons, lay in a wooden coffin bound with iron belts. The cover of the tomb, the walls of which were linked with wooden boards, was decorated with figurative paintings including a well preserved human face. The arrangement of the grave, its location and the anthropological examination of the skeleton led some archaeologists to the conclusion that Prince Svatopluk himself may have been buried in the tomb. ³⁹

This certainly is a hypothesis, though very probable. In any case, it is evident that in the time of Svatopluk's rule the fortified settlement at the pre-

³⁸ CDM III, N° 96, 70-71.

³⁹ GALUŠKA 1996: 122-125; 1998: 176-178.

sent-day Staré Město had attained the peak of its development. Considering the fact that this locality covered an area of about 230 hectares and was protected by fortification walls more than 2700 meters long, it can be acknowledged that long ago it may have been called *Veligrad*. It acquired the name »Staré Město« (Old Town) much later. It is true that *Annales Fuldenses* refer to *antiqua urbs Rastizi* (the old town of Rastislav) by 871, but the context indicates that it meant the original central fortress of Moravian rulers identical with the *munitio Rastizi ineffabilis* mentioned in the year 869. And if the author of the *Annals* emphasized that the Franks had been besieging *antiquam urbem*, it was surely because he was aware of another fortified residence of the Moravian ruler which had been established or had become more significant some time later.

Unlike the Mikulčice settlement and some others, the Staré Město settlement (*Veligrad*) did not disappear in the early 10th century.⁴⁰ Its settlement area got reduced, a decline in population may be detected and graves are much poorer than during the Great Moravian period. It is obvious that this settlement was gradually losing its previous function and significance but it kept its place name. The document quoted above (allegedly issued in 1202) speaks of the newly founded monastery *nomine Welegrad*. This document is, of course, a fake, but another, genuine document issued in 1220 also refers to the abbot and brothers of monastery *de Welegrad*. Among other provisions it states, as it was already mentioned, that the estates of the church included *Welegrad villa forensis cum omnibus suis appendiciis*.⁴¹

On November 27, 1228, King Přemysl Otakar I issued a privilege for this monastery in which *Welegrad civitas, primo modo burgus* is mentioned among the other estates belonging to the monastery.⁴² On this occasion in the presence of the King himself, and of Robert, Bishop of Olomouc, and many other witnesses, a new church – *ecclesia Welegradensis* – was consecrated. The staple village mentioned in this document certainly was not a real city in the medieval legal sense. But in its close vicinity King Přemysl Otakar II founded in 1257 another town that he endowed with full city privileges. At that time it was referred to only as *novum oppidum*, but only a

⁴⁰ GALUŠKA 2008.

⁴¹ CDB II, N^o 195, 179-181.

⁴² CDB II, N^o 321, 322.

year later, the king calls it *Nova Velgrad*.⁴³ The old staple village had kept its name *Velegrad* up to the beginning of the 14th century, and only since 1321 it began to be called *Antiqua civitas* (Old Town, Staré Město). It was to mark the difference from New (Nový) Velgrad, which gradually changed into a simple name *Hradiště* (Fortified Place), with the adjective *Uherské* (Hungarian) later added to indicate that the city had to serve as a border fort against the Magyars (Hungarians) similar to the fortress Uherský Brod (Hungarian Ford) founded in its close vicinity slightly later.⁴⁴

We can conclude that it seems highly probable that the place name *Veligrad* dates from the time of Great Moravia and that from all what we know it may have been the name of a major fortress of King Svatopluk that should be situated in the site of the present-day Staré Město. It cannot be proved beyond any doubt, but there is some indirect evidence that the site might have been not only an administrative, but also an ecclesiastical center of the Great Moravian state, and perhaps the archiepiscopal seat of Methodius. One can legitimately assume that the knowledge of the one-time existence did not disappear with the collapse of the Great Moravian state because the settlement of this locality continued uninterrupted, though considerably reduced, throughout all the following centuries. The question, however, remains whether also the memory of the ecclesiastical past of this place may have been preserved, as the church organization established in the 9th century obviously collapsed and had to be laboriously, step by step, built up anew in later centuries.

Nonetheless, the memory of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission has never been forgotten in the Czech lands. The legends – the one by a Christian from the end of the 10th century, those of St. Procopius from the 11th and 12th centuries as well as those of St. Wenceslas from the 13th century – clearly prove that throughout all those centuries St. Cyril never ceased to be remembered as the inventor of the Slavonic alphabet similarly like his brother Methodius to whom the credit for baptizing the Prince of Bohemia was attributed. That tradition may have become confusing in the course of time when St. Cyril was considered a bishop etc. but, as the story of the relics of St. Clement brought from Cherson to Moravia and later to Rome indicates, it was obvi-

⁴³ CDB V/2, N° 136, 218-220; N° 156, 245-248. Cf. VERBÍK 1981: 82-100.

⁴⁴ MITÁČEK; PROCHÁZKA 2007; PROCHÁZKA 2008.

ously based on some older, original sources.

It is true that Welegrad (Veligrad) as Methodius' archiepiscopal seat appears in the legends and chronicles only at the beginning of the 14th century but since then it becomes all of a sudden inseparably connected with the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. The monastery of Welegrad was founded in the beginning of the 13th century for Cistercian monks called from Germany who, naturally, did not have any link with the Slavonic history of the church in Moravia and we also do not find anything in the preserved sources that would indicate that the monks there had any knowledge of it. On the other hand, when King Přemysl Otakar II asked Pope Clement IV for the promotion of Olomouc to an archbishopric, he pointed out the fact that there already had been an archiepiscopal seat in Moravia in a distant past⁴⁵ but there is no mention that it was situated in Welegrad.⁴⁶ Thus, the hypothesis that Bishop Bruno of Schauenburk invented the story of Welegrad to substantiate the request with this specific detail lacks any support in the sources.

The appearance of the Welegrad tradition coincides roughly with the beginning of the rule of the Luxemburg dynasty in the kingdom of Bohemia. One could ask whether the two events were connected. Charles IV, whose mother Eliška was the last female member of the Přemyslid dynasty, was a great Bohemian patriot. He did not only devotedly venerate Bohemian Patron Saints, but also in his own literary work remembered that Bohemian Christianity had taken its origin in Moravia in the city of Welegrad and therefore he consecrated the church in the monastery *in Sclavis* to the two brothers from Thessalonica. Nonetheless, when his father Henry of Luxemburg came in 1310 to Bohemia he certainly did not have even a slightest idea of the Slavonic history of the country, and obviously did not care about it through all his reign; it was not without a reason that he was nicknamed, not only for his origin but also for his way of life, »King the Foreigner«.

Thus, the origin of the Welegrad tradition remains a puzzling enigma. Nonetheless, it is difficult to imagine that it was an artificial invention created in High Middle Ages, that someone could, after such a long time, invent a story that would so closely reflect the reality of the 9th century, at least as

⁴⁵ We read about it in the negative answer of the Pope dated January 20, 1208: CDB V/2, N° 539, 98-99.

⁴⁶ The negotiations were thoroughly discussed by NOVOTNÝ 1937: 155-162.

it is found and presented by the modern historical and archaeological research. Recently a hypothesis was suggested that because of the continuity of settlement at the Sady Heights an awareness of the Svatopluk's fortress and Methodius's archiepiscopal seat in Veligrad may have been surviving in the popular minds and was transmitted by the oral tradition throughout the ages.⁴⁷ It is a tempting idea that seems to provide a plausible solution of this puzzle; nonetheless, like all other suggestions, it suffers from the same disadvantage: the lack of a direct evidence.

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Shrnutí

LEGENDÁRNÍ VELEHRAD JAKO ÚDAJNÉ SÍDLO MORAVSKÉHO ARCIBISKUPA METODĚJE

Česká lidová tradice, podle níž arcibiskup Metoděj stejně jako velkomoravský vládce Svatopluk sídlili v pevnosti zvané Velehrad, nemá přímou oporu v soudobých pramenech. Neobjevuje se ani v legendách pocházejících z 11.-13. století, které přičítají biskupskou hodnost netoliko Metodějovi, ale i samotnému tvůrci slovanského písemnictví Konstantinovi, ovšem Velehrad jako místo jejich působení neoznačují. Toto spojení se objevuje až v legendách a kronikách ve 14. století, kdy ovšem název Velehrad byl už dávno přenesen na cisterciácký klášter založený roku 1205 pro cisterciáky povoláné z Německa, kteří se slovanskou minulostí moravské církve neměli

nic společného. Bylo proto vysloveno mnoho dohadů o tom, zda tradice spojující působení cyrilometodějské misie s Velehradem má nějaké historické jádro či nikoli, mezi nimi i hypotéza, písemnými prameny ovšem nijak nepodložená, že tuto identifikaci si vymyslel v polovině 13. století olomoucký biskup Bruno ze Schauenburku, aby podpořil žádost krále Přemysla Otakara II. z roku 1257 o povýšení Olomouce na arcibiskupství.

Místní jméno Veligrad je doloženo už k roku 1141, a to jako název vesnice obdařené právem trhu patřící k arcijáhenství ve Sptyihněvi. Už sama forma tohoto názvu, jež je kompozitum staroslověnského adjektiva *velii* a substantiva *gradъ* (opevněné místo) naznačuje, že toto místní jméno je velmi starého původu. Je velmi nepravděpodobné, že by tak významná a původně velká, nepochybně i opevněná osada byla mohla vzniknout v 10. století, kdy jižní Morava byla pustošena maďarskými nájezdy, či ve století jedenáctém, kdy ji dobyl syn českého knížete Břetislav; ten k ochraně českých mocenských zájmů založil síť nových hradišť, z nichž jedním byla Sptyihněv, kde bylo arcijáhenství, k němuž trhová ves *Veligrad* patřila. V blízkosti obou těchto lokalit se ovšem v 9. století nacházelo jedno ze dvou nejmocnějších a největších velkomoravských hradišť (na místě dnešního Starého Města a Uherského Hradiště), které ani v 10. století nepřestalo být, byť ve značně zredukované podobě, osídleno. Na výšině dnes zvané Sady stál chrámový komplex, jehož nejstarší část, kostel s půdorysem ve tvaru kříže vybudovaný na samém začátku 9. století, byl v užívání ještě v polovině 13. století. Podle různých nepřímých náznaků lze soudit, že snad byl sídlem arcibiskupa Metoděje, který tam byl asi i pohřben. Je možné, že v hrobové kapli přistavěné k hlavnímu kostelu byl pohřben i sám kníže Svatopluk. Zdá se tedy velmi pravděpodobné, že tato lokalita byla už v době Velké Moravy nazývána *Veligrad* a že tento název zůstal v povědomí místního obyvatelstva i během následujících staletí.

Klíčová slova: Velká Morava, cyrilometodějská tradice, Velehrad

S a ž e t a k

PITANJE LEGENDARNOGA VELEHRADA (VELIGRADA) KAO NAVODNOGA SJEDIŠTA MORAVSKOGA NADBISKUPA METODA

U češkoj narodnoj tradiciji duboko je ukorijenjena ideja da je tvrđava imenom *Velehrad (Veligrad)* bila sjedište nadbiskupa Metoda i rezidencija Princa Svatopluka, ali nema dokaza u suvremenim izvorima. Ime mjesta ne pojavljuje se u legendama od 11. do 13. stoljeća u kojima je biskupska čast pripisana Metodu i Konstantinu Ćirilu bez spomena mjesta njihova djelovanja. *Velehrad* kao Metodovo nadbiskupsko sjedište spomenuto je po prvi put u legendama i kronikama iz 14. stoljeća kad se to ime mjesta već bilo prenijelo na samostan osnovan 1205. godine za njemačke redovnike cistercite.

Postoji znatan broj nagađanja modernih povjesničara o tome je li *Velehrad* u Velikoj Moravskoj ikada postojao ili ne. Nedavno je predložena hipoteza, bez potvrde u sačuvanim izvorima, da je Bruno Šauenburški, biskup Olomouca, izmislio tu tradiciju radi promaknuća svoje biskupije u nadbiskupiju. Ime mjesta *Veligrad* prvi put je dokumentirano 1141. godine kao selo s posjedima. Složenica od staroslavenskoga pridjeva *velii* (veliki) i imenice *gradъ* (utvrđeno naselje) pokazuje da je podrijetlo te riječi staro. Nije vjerojatno da je takvo veliko naselje s posjedima osnovano u 10. stoljeću kad su mađarska haranja uništila Južnu Moravsku, odnosno u 11. stoljeću kad je sin češkoga kneza Bretislava pobijedio i osnovao nekoliko tvrđava za zaštitu češke vladavine, a jedna je od njih bila tvrđava Spytihněv s arhiđakonatom kojemu je naselje Veligrad dano u posjed.

Oba lokaliteta nalaze se u neposrednoj blizini arheološkoga nalazišta današnjih gradića Staré Město i Uherské Hradiště koji su u 9. stoljeću bili među najvećim i najmoćnijim velikomoravskim utvrdama. U blizini, na visoravni Sady, otkriven je crkveni kompleks. Najstariji je dio kompleksa crkva s križnim tlocrtom. Bila je u uporabi sve do sredine 13. stoljeća. Razne indirektna naznake omogućuju pretpostavku da je ovaj kompleks mogao biti sjedište nadbiskupa Metoda i mjesto njegova pokopa. Moguće je da je čak i knez Svatopluk tamo sahranjen. Dakle, čini se vrlo vjerojatnim da se u velikomoravskom razdoblju taj lokalitet zvao *Veligrad* i da su ime i tradicija povezana s tim imenom ostali u svijesti lokalnoga stanovništva tijekom narednih stoljeća.

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Ključne riječi: Velika Moravska, ćirilometodska tradicija, Velehrad

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